



TOWN OF VERNON

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Town of Vernon Streamlines Land Use Offices and Enhances Fire Department Administration

(VERNON, Connecticut) – The Town Council unanimously approved a plan to consolidate and reorganize the land use offices to enhance efficiency and increase customer service and responsiveness to the public. Under the plan, all land use offices will be overseen by a new Director of Development.

Shaun Gately, Economic Development Coordinator and Acting Town Planner, will serve in the new position. Gately will oversee the Building, Engineering, Economic Development, and Planning and Zoning offices.

The Town Council also unanimously approved the creation of a part time Fire Administrator. Fire Marshal Dan Wasilewski will serve in that role and report to the Town Administrator.

“We are constantly evaluating the roles of town employees with an eye toward getting the best value for our residents,” Mayor Dan Champagne said. “This reorganization achieves that by assigning two highly capable employees to key roles and ensuring town residents receive the best service possible.”

Town Administrator Michael Purcaro said having Gately oversee what were previously independent departments ensures a greater unity of effort and collaboration, which will provide better customer service and efficiency.

“The result will be a strategic vision focused on enhancing our community’s character and stewardship of our open spaces and natural resources, creating stronger neighborhoods, and increasing commercial vitality,” Purcaro said.

“I look forward to bringing a unified vision to our land use functions as we implement our Plan of Conservation and Development and build Vernon’s future,” Gately said.

In his new role, Wasilewski will work with chief officers and assist the Vernon Fire Department and its Emergency Medical Services division with daily administrative functions, budgeting, human resources-related matters, compliance with state and federal requirements, enhancing training, seeking grants and collaborating with surrounding communities to implement best practices in the delivery of fire and EMS services.

“Our volunteer firefighters provide an incredible value to our community and taxpayers through their selfless and heroic service,” Purcaro said. “The administrative burden is growing only more intense and the Fire Administrator will provide support in that area and allow the department to focus on its primary mission.”

Fire Chief Stephen Eppler said each volunteer chief has a full time job and the new Fire Administrator will take on time-consuming administrative tasks.

“Having a fire administrator on board will allow us to focus on managing the fire department and the emergency services we provide,” Eppler said.

“Recruitment and retention of firefighters and emergency medical technicians is a challenge that all communities face, and I will work closely with Chief Eppler and his team to ensure we are providing our staff with the tools they need to perform their jobs at the highest level,” Wasilewski said.

Gately and Wasilewski start their new positions effective July 1.

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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