

**PUBLIC SAFETY STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021, 6:35 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

A. Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairwoman Carol Anderson Blanks.

B. Attendees – Deputy Mayor Leon Davidoff, Councilor Lee Gold, Councilor Chris Williams, Town Manager Matt Hart, Police Chief Vernon Riddick, Assistant Chief Lawrence Terra, Fire Chief Greg Priest, Assistant Chief Hugh O’Callaghan, Assistant Chief Michael Sinsigalli, Battalion Chief Mark Bassett, Deputy Fire Marshal Bob Grimaldi, and Dispatch Supervisor Todd Hungerford.

2. Business Items

A. Meeting Minutes May 5, 2021 – The minutes were accepted without objection.

B. Fire Department Efficiency and Effectiveness Study – Mr. Hart reminded everyone of the schedule reviewed at the last meeting to walk through the Study, which was conducted by Fitch a couple of years ago. Mr. Hart reported on a few updates that have taken place since the Study was received. The study is still relevant because of some key decisions the Council will need to make either this term or next term regarding ALS deployments and potentially future building projects. The study will be broken down into a series of conversations over the next couple of months. There were links attached to the report for the future. Mr. Hart stated the bulk of the information was in the Executive Summary and there was an appendix as well. The focus today was on the emergency medical system including dispatch, system design and Fire and EMS deployment.

Chief Priest reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Fitch study including the limitations, key takeaways, and recommendations, as well as some of the changes that have occurred since receiving the Study. The Fitch study was commissioned in 2018 and the report was issued in April 2019. A review of the study was started, but it was paused due to the pandemic. Some of the limitations of the study include the data set, which was from FY2013 to FY2018, and the Town unilaterally was uncertain about the reliability of the data. Also, two years have passed since the study was completed and changes have occurred since that time. Some of the key takeaways included a 6.5 min travel time, the call volume was reasonably distributed across the 5 stations, the workload on the street was reasonable, the fire stations were all at capacity and needed modernized. These takeaways were all based on the data set provided for the Fitch study.

Additional takeaways were the EMS to Fire ratio is 70 to 30 and staffing is not too high but not too low either. Chief Priest briefly went of NPFA 1710, which is a guiding consensus standard, including the number of firefighters required per square footage of property, i.e., 2000 sq. ft. single family home with no basement and no other properties close to it requires

15 firefighters and an open-air strip mall between 13,000 and 196,000 sq. ft. requires 28 firefighters. Chief Priest also went over some recommendations by Fitch where action has already been taken including a training tower for FY2024, a vehicle replacement plan, and hiring of a dispatch manager with improvement in the dispatch center, as well as better involvement in the data and programming of the system and consolidation of the records into a single ESO solution platform, and implementation of Emergency Medical Dispatch, which is a way of triaging calls.

Dispatch Supervisor Hungerford went over the Fitch study recommendations for dispatch including EMD and maximizing the use of technology, updating the workflow (processing of calls) and looking at data and issues with fire response times. Everything is now software-based, which has helped with response times, deployment, etc. The EMR CAD link is the link between EMR and AMR (ambulances), which helps expedite response times as the computers talk to each other. Should the system go down, back-ups are used (phone call) to EMR but it makes it easier for dispatchers to focus on the calls. A radio-only position was added. Previously dispatchers were taking the calls and dispatching at the same time now a call taker can focus on the call and the dispatcher focuses on dispatching units, both AMR and the Fire Department. EFD was running off of 4 call types and there are now 13 including structure and rescue responses, fire alarms and hazardous materials.

The biggest change in EMD was between taking a call and sending everybody no matter what and having a more precise approach for each call. There are lower acuity calls where the Fire Department does not need to go and some calls with higher acuity, which are dispatched faster with better information. There is quality control now, which is based off of the priority dispatch system, and 98% of the time the exact resources are at the emergency.

Chief Priest went over other recommendations where changes have already been made in the Fire Marshal's office. The staffing vacancies have been filled. The Deputy Fire Marshal position was created and filled with one of the inspector positions. This has improved the capacity of the Fire Marshal's office to do a plan review. The Fire Inspectors are now doing investigations and the company officer inspection program has been reworked, which the company officers assigned to the operations division can assist the Fire Marshal's office with that. They have been working on getting the statutory inspection history up and Assistant Chief Sinsigalli provided the metrics showing the inspection history was up.

Chief Priest went over some terminology including differentiating between an EMT and a paramedic. EMTs receive approximately 200 hours of training and are taught to recognize conditions and provide basic medical treatment and they are an integral part of the EMS and are the first layer of the EMS. Paramedics have an Associate Degree with a lot of clinical training, i.e. hands-on training with live patients in hospital settings. They are licensed, independent medical providers by the State and they require a certain amount of skills every year.

Chief Priest stated the pandemic expedited the way the Fire Department is deployed. They moved to three ALS light units, increased minimum staffing on a daily basis to a 22-person minimum, specifically to accommodate the third unit and that position was funded via

reimbursement measures available through COVID-19 emergency protective measures. This move sent less people to calls, less exposure to the virus, and improved operations as the heavier apparatus were no longer required to retrieve paramedics. It also increased the fire suppression crew integrity as all of the fire apparatus stayed at three personnel all the time and allowed the officer to facilitate training and be less concerned about having to pick up paramedics and come back. Pre-pandemic all five fire districts each had a paramedic on apparatus. During the pandemic, three EMS intercept and transport districts were created. Having the light-duty models cover the three sectors of Town, it equally distributed the call volume for the light-duty medics and the response times. Now that we are on the back half of the pandemic, returning to normal authorized staffing of 21 has to be considered and the FEMA reimbursement emergency protective measures need to be reevaluated.

As of June 1, each fire district will have a paramedic assigned to it at all times and the light-duty vehicle will be pulled from the night shift and 4 people will be put back onto Ladder 4 as an ALS apparatus and will be responsible for retrieving the paramedic if necessary, but there is an agreement with AMR to try and return that particular paramedic. Another change is the two fire suppression apparatus in the center of Town are going to be BLS, they will not be required to have paramedics on them, and this is paired with the hiring initiative to remove barriers, provide an inclusive workforce and also make sure there is no overstaffing of paramedics to right-size the department. For deployment, three light-duty units will be running during the busiest times with backup responders in Districts 1 and 2. At night, there will be 2 ALS units for transport and there is an agreement with AMR to return them and data will be gathered over a period of time.

Going forward, more work needs to be done in the area of ALS deployment, the facilities will need more attention, the vehicle stock needs consideration of increasing the number and replacement of the lighter-duty vehicles to support current deployment models, there needs to be more discussion about the Fire Marshal resources and a plan to increase inspections. The training division needs to ensure consistent training and currently, Chief Bassett coordinates training rather than administers due to the size of the department. The EMS training is outsourced, as well as its quality assurance, which needs to be looked at.

The Fitch study discussed station consolidations but it suggested maintaining the same effective response force to continue the same level of service with no reduction in staff. The study presented some ideas on transport, but it was Chief Priest's opinion that the AOS intercept first needs to be better because there are a significant amount of complexities to be taken into consideration before embarking on that next step if that is the direction the Town chooses to go.

Chief Priest reported both EMS and the Fire Department are regulated. The Fire Department is more regulated by OSHA for worker protection but there are some statutory obligations. Many of the implications for how the fire service is regulated comes through the consensus standard or benchmarks. EMS is highly regulated. It is part of the healthcare system. There are legal obligations, statutory obligations and regulatory obligations to perform in a certain manner. The study focused on EMS and staffing but it brought in other things.

C. Training Outline for Civilian Police Review Board – Mr. Hart stated the review board held its inaugural meeting last night. The curriculum has been slightly modified since the Public Safety meeting. They wish to condense the classroom training to 8 to 10 hours and there would be 2 voluntary elements they would highly recommend. There would be an orientation where the purpose was discussed and why the Council established the review board. There would be a discussion about the town government, how it is organized and set up. There would be conversations regarding various legal considerations like freedom of information and various state and local laws that relate to police officers and their personnel rights. There would also be ethics training. A condensed version of the Citizen's Police Academy would be provided including patrol practices and procedures, use of force guidelines and First Amendment activities. There would be a discussion on community-based policing including what it means in theory and practice. There would also be a discussion on professional standards. The next category would be on board procedures; what does intake look like, how they review the cases, how to conduct the meetings, communications, etc.

Finally would be the voluntary activities. The recommendation is every member participate in a ride-along by themselves or with another member with one of the police officers and that would provide them an opportunity to observe firsthand what the officers face in a given shift. Another recommendation is to bring the members in small groups to a use of force simulator the Milford Police Department has and they have agreed to do this. The members would be transported down and it would give them an opportunity to experience how the officers are trained to respond to use of force situations and the de-escalation techniques the officers are taught.

3. Communications

Mr. Hart reported there were no communications.

4. Staff Reports

A. Fire Department – Chief Priest submitted a written report, located in BoardDocs. The only notable item was the call volumes have been increasing, which was reflected in the stats.

B. Police Department – Chief Riddick reported the only addition to the Action Plan was 19 rifles were returned to the military on May 5. Chief Riddick also reported of the 22 officers eligible to retire this year, 11 police officers have retired thus far this year and Captain Perruccio intends on retiring by the end of this month. With the changes in the contract, there is hope that between five and eight officers eligible for retirement will remain. [Review 1:38:17] quality also started a partnership through the Mayor's connections with Interval House, which has been positive and productive. The personnel are utilizing that. There have been 41 [lethality 1:38:32] screenings. That assessment is a point system officers use in domestic violence cases and when you hit a certain threshold it is a requirement to contact some type of emergency service help and resource for the victim of domestic violence and 19 of the 41 screenings were considered high risk and out of those 19, 5 were immediately placed in some type of shelter or care. Regarding the pistol permit applications and

temporary permits, there has been a dramatic increase. For example, in 2018 there were 172 pistol permit applications and signatures for temporary permits. In 2019, 183 for a 6% increase, from 2019 to 2020 there were 235 for a 28% increase and through May 2021 there are already 153. At the current trend, it will be 300 plus this year.

The year-to-date crime comparison, Part 1 crime (murder, sexual assaults, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft and building thefts) was done 15% compared to last year. As a result of the police accountability bill, there have been 31 drug tests with no failures. There are 10 additional tests scheduled for tomorrow. The 41 tests will cost \$10,250, which was not budgeted for. This has to be secured from the training line item. There have been 10 psychological exams with another 5 scheduled for this Friday and that cost will be an additional \$3700.

C. Town Manager – Mr. Hart reported they continue to work on the panhandling initiative, which is a collaboration between social services, the police department and corporation counsel. The staff is looking to convene a regional roundtable call in July. There will also be a draft ordinance at the next Public Safety meeting and the plans for signage and education.

5. Future Agenda Items

There were no future agenda items identified.

6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

/axb