

**Central Coventry Fire District
Board of Directors Monthly Meeting
April 20, 2010 – 7:00 pm
240 Arnold Road**

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:02

2. Roll Call

President: Girard Bouchard Jr.

Vice President: Joe Bonn

**Directors: – Bob Crowe – Linda Giguere – Ronald Gizzarelli -Anna
Mae Lapinski, Armond Niquette**

Treasurer: Tom LaColle

Tax Collector: Jeanne Graemiger

Clerk: Christine Moniz

Chief : Robert W. Seltzer

Asst. Chief – Scott Tucker

Union President Dave Gorman

**Not Present – Treasurer Tom LaColle, Tax collector Jeanne
Graemiger**

3. Approval of Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting – 04/20/2010

Addition made to the 3/16/2010 minutes for adjournment from executive session.

Also add the word man in front of power. Insert the wages for tax collections clerks. Motion to approve as amended.

**Motion to Approve Director Giguere Seconded: Director Lapinski
All Vote Aye**

4. Communications- Letter from Lori Fiocco in regards to the 18% charge on past due taxes. Would like to discuss this matter further with the Board of Directors.

Action item on this is to send out a form letter to Ms. Fiocco addressing the charge of interest to her account.

5. Old Business – Director Gizarelli presented to the Board for discussion a proposal to look into auto pay for tax payers so they can set up payment through the bank to make auto payment for their fire district taxes. He feels that this is the way of the future. He made copies of a vacation ownership application for the board to review so they can have an idea on how auto pay would work and how it would benefit the tax payers of the CCFD. He also suggested that we could

use the example he passed out as a guide to establish our own process to allow for auto payment. He asked the board to look into this and see if it would be a route we would want to pursue and also if the tax department can.

He also reviewed the worksheet that he passed out as an example and proceeded to go over how we could change it to suit our needs and the needs of the tax payers. He also suggested that giving the taxpayer access to their information on the internet that they can update the address so we would have correct mailing addresses on everyone.

Director Gizzarelli also inquired if any other City or Towns have auto pay and that maybe the Tax Collectors office could look into this and see if this is something that we should continue to pursue and if the tax payers are interested in setting up auto pay. He also asked to look into the cost of setting up something like this and also a time frame. He proposed this idea based on the fact we may get the money from the tax payer more timely. He also stated that if you do not want auto pay you can very easily cancel your payment schedule with one phone call. Director Lapinski felt that in her opinion she would feel uncomfortable with someone taking money from her account and did not feel that this would be something that the district would want to pursue. Director Bonn discussed just keeping things simple because we already offer the choice to pay taxes with a credit card or a debit card. He also stated with the economy the way it is

people wait until last minute to pay their taxes and may not want to set up auto pay. Also, do we want to go through the expense to set this up and not have any of the tax payers use this method of payment when we really only have about 55 tax payers that pay by debit or credit card now out of a possible 15,000 payments in the last three quarters. Director Gizzarelli stated that it would be minimum to set up the auto pay. President Bouchard stated that if we had a lot more tax payers paying by credit card then he would maybe consider looking into auto pay but at this time he does not see going through the expense of offering this type of payment and it not being utilized. The Chief asked Director Gizzarelli since he is so familiar with the process if he could look to see if any municipalities are using this system. Director Gizzarelli said he did not mind but he felt that maybe the Treasurer or a clerk in the tax department could do it instead. He felt that maybe someone else had the expertise to look into it that is why he left it so general. Director Gizzarelli wanted to make a motion that the tax department and the treasurer look into this program in the next few months and see if it is feasible.

Motion made to have the tax collector and/or the treasurer look into the electronic transfer for tax payment and seconded by Director Lapinski

5 Vote Aye 2 are apposed

6. Presidents Report –

Met with Chief Seltzer and Chief Labaddia and the President of the Coventry Fire Board over a dispute over boundaries. One on Sweet Fern Lane and Mountain Laurel Drive. Went out on the properties and had some discussion with maps in hand and could not come to a conclusion at the time so the President looked over the tax maps in CCFD and Anthony and decided all four properties were in fact Anthony's and they agreed to abate the money back to the tax payer and that we did not have to pay the money back. The home owners cannot come after CCFD for the money already paid. Anthony turned over a piece of property back to us. With the Board members and Chiefs getting together to settle this it cost a lot less money.

Met Several times with the Chief during the fire emergency and offered his help with anything that was needed. Talked about the members of the Department and wanted to commend them on a job well done. Also, thanked the Chief who wore many hats during this historic event. The President stated that it was a job well done. Everyone worked well together.

The President also attended the Town Council Meeting of March 22, 2010. He is disappointed that the Town is buying 10 acres of land and taking it off of tax rolls and we are losing the money from the area where the old town dump was. President Bouchard made a point to make the council aware that they never contacted the District to inform us of this transaction.

Also a reminder to all Board members to fill out their reports for the State Ethics Committee.

**Motion to Approve Director Crowe Seconded: Director Lapinski
All Vote Aye**

7. Chiefs report –

New fire station project progress: I have a meeting with the Town Manager on Thursday, April 22nd to discuss further negotiations concerning the Wood Street facility.

1. Department of Homeland Security, Fire Station Construction Grant progress: All of the grants have been distributed and there is a small amount of money left to assist any of the projects that the Feds determine they underfunded. Therefore, unless we are extremely fortunate and there is some money left, we could get some funding. I believe it is highly unlikely and I will continue to look at other sources of grant funding for fire stations.

2. No further information regarding the accident that occurred prior to the consolidation involving the Washington Fire District incident when call firefighter James Buckley was injured.

3. Lieutenant Michael Stevens has requested permission to take the Public Administration Bachelor's Program at Roger Williams University. He is completing his Fire Science Associate's Program this spring. (ACTION ITEM)

4. The Public Utilities Commission had a hearing scheduled for 4/7/10 regarding the KCWA request for a hike. I am not sure whether it took place or not. With all the flood related events and after-action issues, I had totally forgotten about the KCWA hearing.

5. We started with an outside payroll service on April 1st. The company is CSC Paymaster. Our Administrative Assistant now does all of the payroll entry. To say the least, the payroll as it was turned over to CSC Paymaster prior to our Administrative Assistant taking over, was in much disarray.

6. For the last several years I have been involved with the Rhode Island Urban Search & Rescue Team (RIUSAR), a totally volunteer team made up of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and structural engineers. My involvement included being a member on the original steering committee; one of three fire chiefs that serve as an oversight committee; and a purchasing agent for the Team since the grants are overseen through our department. This arrangement actually allowed this department to receive money and some equipment over the years to repay us for oversight of the grant money. I was recently

approached by the Executive Director of RIEMA, David Smith, asking if I would take over as the RIUSAR Task Force Leader. I pondered the request and decided to accept the Task Force Leader position. I also decided that I would resign from the West Warwick/Coventry Haz-Mat Team and remove myself from a few committee positions I hold in order to lead the team. The change in leadership was due to some serious management issues with the team leadership and the request of some of the upper management to take a subordinate backseat to the team leader role.

With that I advised Director Smith that I would only take the position if he would allow some reimbursement to our District for my services. We agreed that our District would be awarded a grant to purchase a command vehicle for the Chief of CCFD, which would be mutually used by me as CCFD Chief and used by RIUSAR as I serve as the Task Force Leader. The vehicle would hold all the necessary equipment that I carry as chief and the equipment required as Task Force Leader. If I should leave the department or leave RIUSAR, the vehicle will remain property of our District. The vehicle will be a 2010 Chevrolet Suburban. In the past we had received Management and Administration (M&A) reimbursement fees for coordinating the RIUSAR grants. For the grants that we are managing now, the vehicle will be in lieu of the M&A fees.

7. During the last two rain storms the Fire Marshal's Office and Tax Collector's Office was affected by the leaks in the roof at the Town

Hall Annex. Those leaks became worse and a small section of the roof collapsed from the weight of the air handling unit on the roof. The Offices will have to be temporarily moved across the hallway into the old library until repairs are complete. I referred this situation to VFIS Insurance who sent an adjuster out to review the damage that is forcing us out of the office area.

I spoke with VFIS on Monday and they will not cover the claim due to the original damage cause was lack of maintenance on behalf of the Town of Coventry. It is going to “Management Review”, but the agent told me that most likely the outcome will remain the same.

Relocation Cost: Walls & Furniture = \$5,800

Electrical & Phone & Computers = \$5,030

Total: \$10,830(ACTION ITEM)

- 1. The flood event caused damage to the following fire stations.**
 - a. Station #1, 945 Hill Farm Road: No damage.**
 - b. Station #3, 2 Station Street: Cars drove between the station and river because the access road was closed. Damaged grass and railroad ties. Septic system overflowed and needed to be pumped.**
 - c. Station #4, 240 Arnold Road: Septic system was pumped. No damage to property.**
 - d. Station #5, 701 Main Street: North branch of Pawtuxet River flowed through the station. Station closed for about 1 ½ weeks. Significant**

damage to the paved lot and structure itself.

e. Station #7, 2847 Flat River Road: Part of apparatus ramp washed out and generated a sink hole. Another sink hole occurred next to the building.

2. Our main copy machine died at Station #4. I replaced it with a comparable machine at the cost of \$3,700 with a one year full warranty. I am taking the money from the plan review fee account.

1. Engine 7 broke down during the flood event and we were concerned that water was brought into the motor through the air intake. We were concerned the motor was blown. Our mechanic dried out the truck and got it running again. It is back in operation.

2. VFIS insurance came out and inspected all of apparatus after the flood. Based upon the conditions that the apparatus ran under for a week straight, VFIS recommended a complete and extensive preventative maintenance (PM) to all department apparatus. VFIS insurance will be reimbursing for all of the PM work on the apparatus.

TOWN OF COVENTRY – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at the Coventry Town Hall Annex was in full operation during the flood/rain event.

2. All of our Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement paperwork will be completed and submitted to the Town of Coventry. The Town will submit one package to FEMA and will reimburse the District our portion when payment is received from the Feds.

3. We are attending meetings with FEMA the week of April 19th to get instructions on paperwork submittals and long-term recovery assistance.

SPECIAL REPORT: "GREAT FLOOD of 2010"

- Calls for flooded basements started on Monday evening, March 29th.**
- The major flood event started during the early morning hours of March 30th.**
- We demobilized and went back to normal day-to-day operations on Tuesday, April 6th at 5:00 pm.**
- Our department answered 528 alarms during this one week event, Tuesday to Tuesday. The alarms included water emergencies and 9-1-1 calls.**
- Expenses for the flood event were \$9,500 which is FEMA reimbursable.**
- Overtime cost for the flood event was \$90,000 which is FEMA reimbursable.**
- (It is unclear at this time if FEMA reimbursement will be at 75%**

federal/25% local or 100% federal.)

- **Insurance claims to VFIS are at \$1,700 at this time. More claims will be paid as we hear back from VFIS as they review the adjuster's report of damages.**
- **The EOC was staffed by Coventry Police, Department of Public Works, and Central Coventry Fire personnel.**
- **We received assistance from Western Coventry Fire and Anthony Fire during our basement pump outs.**
- **Three water rescues were conducted where people were trapped in deep water and had to be removed from an auto, house, etc.**
- **Water from Johnson's Pond shut down Hill Farm Road, part of Route 117 in Coventry Center, the end of Indian Trail, Isle of Capris Road, and Clubhouse Road.**
- **Water from the North branch of the Pawtuxet River shut down Main Street in Harris and temporary closure of the bridges crossing the river.**
- **Water from the South Branch of the Pawtuxet River shut down Parker Street, Ferncrest Avenue, Main Street in Washington Village, Sandy Bottom Road, and Tiogue Avenue at Flare Restaurant.**
- **Runoff water shut down Route 117 at Industrial Drive, Circlewood Drive, and one lane of Route 3 at Jefferson Drive.**
- **The Coventry Senior Center was setup as a short-term shelter for people displaced from their homes. Long-term sheltering was located at a Red Cross Shelter at the West Warwick Civic Center.**
- **The first two days were extremely hectic. We concentrated on basements that had 4 to 5 feet of water encroaching on utilities. We**

then worked our way backwards to lesser amounts of water. Emergency calls took precedence over basement flooding.

- There were a handful of homes condemned by the building official due to utility disconnects and septic sewage in the basement.**
- Parts of Hill Farm Camps were evacuated due to washed out roads that were not accessible by personal automobiles. Taller vehicles were used to move people out.**
- Some houses were evacuated in the Harris section of town along the river.**
- Several properties around the District accumulated enough water in low lying areas that several good size ponds were formed. These ponds caused flooding into basements of adjacent homes. We provided gas pumps to pump down these “ponds”.**
- Of great concern during the rushing waters of the South Branch of the Pawtuxet River, was the washing out of the Laurel Avenue Bridge. There was a partial collapse of its supporting structure and there was concern that if it went, the dam just west of the bridge may breach. Therefore, Anthony Village was evacuated for a period of time until the Pawtuxet subsided and water levels returned to a safe level.**
- At the peak of the flooding we had 30 firefighters on duty answering alarms and assisting at the EOC.**
- President Bouchard was kept informed of progress on a daily basis and he visited the EOC several times.**
- I spent one day at the Laurel Avenue Bridge assisting Chief Labaddia in my capacity as Fire Chief and in my capacity as Deputy EMA Director.**

- Updates regarding latest weather forecast were posted on the Home page of our website.
- Recovery information and access to 2-1-1 was also posted on our website.
- A demobilization meeting was held with all of our key staff personnel and President Bouchard on Tuesday afternoon, April 6th, to get the department back to normal operations in an orderly fashion.
- A critique/lessons-learned meeting was held on Monday, April 12th with all interested members of our department. The substance of that meeting will be transformed into an after-action report.
- Our firefighters worked long hours for the first few days, working professionally and diligently the entire time.

Motion to Approve Chief Report: Director Crowe Seconded: V.P. Bonn

All Vote Aye

ACTION ITEM: Lt Stevens to take a class at Roger Williams University Motion made by President Bouchard and seconded by Director Giguere and Director Gizzarelli All voted Aye.

Action Item on the lease of temporary walls for the tax and fire marshal office, and moving the electric. Director Crowe had some concerns on the cost and if they should stay in the temporary location longer than anticipated that the cost would increase. He also

asked if there was another location Director Gizzarelli inquired on who has the insurance policy on that location the School Department or the Town. Director Gizzarelli was also concerned with the building being safe and not having a sick building with poor air quality. The Chief Stated it is a Town building now. The insurance will not cover the damage due to the fact the building was not maintained and the roof leaked. The Town is going to repair the damage in the office and replace the rugs.

ACTION ITEM: vote on the expense of the new location of the tax office. The Board voted to allow the Chief to spend up to \$11,000.00 or less two and from.

Motion to made for expenses to move the tax office by President Bouchard and seconded by Director Giguere. All voted Aye.

The Chief went over the removal of the fire alarm wires by Providence Communications and Director Crowe wanted to know if we can now contact National Grid to repair the telephone poles because that is the excuse they use as to why to poles have not been replaced. The Chief wanted to know which ones. He stated some of the ones on Tiogue Ave. President Bouchard stated that a lot of the poles that need repair are in Anthony District. Also the cable company needs to remove their lines then the phone company if the butt is removed then the company that is last to pull their lines off owns the pole and needs to replace it. Director Crowe would like to

have the Chief send a letter to the Town Manager to get us off the hook for have our fire alarm wires on the poles. We will no longer have the wire in place. They can't blame us about not replacing the poles. He also thought it was a wonderful idea to have Providence come in and remove the pull boxes and alarm wire.

8. Treasurer's Report – President Bouchard briefly went over the treasurers report we have \$105,000. 00 in the bank and about \$85,000.00 in the checking account. The overtime is up because of the payment from the storm. We need to put a sub line in the budget because we will get reimbursement for the excessive overtime from the government. The rest of the overtime is for manpower for those FF that are out on OJI. Director Gizzarelli requested that maybe this would also be a good time to put some money aside for equipment repair and replacement due to wear and tear. Director Crowe asked if we bring in the guys from Hill Farm Rd to cover the FF out on OJI if we would eliminate the OT that is created from injuries. Chief stated that again we would have to change all our run cards and change everything around and we would start to lose rescue recovery money by not manning the rescue 7. Again it was stated that the recovery money far outweighs the overtime expense and now that we have a new billing company we are getting in more revenue and it goes into our accounts monthly. Director Crowe was just concerned we won't have breathing room in the budget. He also stated that the Chief is still doing a wonderful job. The Chief stated that it is still the will of

the Board and what they wanted to do as far as the overtime. He also stated it is not that simple to change things around for a few nights to save on overtime. Removing a truck from the run cards is a long process. Director Crowe still wanted to look into just running the rescue out of Hill Farm for certain days and certain nights to save on the overtime. He was also wondering if there was some way to eliminate the third shift. Chief stated we do not have a third shift it is an overnight shift. Again, it would not be that easy to shut down a rescue. Director Crowe even stated the way we are going now we could even use more FF on staff. We are still short FF and will need to hire more in the near future. Director Crowe stated that the Board counts on the Chief to keep a close eye on the budget and the overtime.

Motion to Approve: Director Crowe Seconded: Director Giguere

All Vote Aye

9. Tax Collector's Report – report attached to packet. Tax collector was absent from the meeting. President Bouchard read aloud the report and we have collected 72% of taxes.

Motion to Approve: Director Lapinski Seconded: Director Bonn

All Vote Aye

10. Good and Welfare – Board members requested that the Chief draft

a thank you letter from the Board congratulating them on a job well done during the flood incident

Motion to write letter made by Director Lapinski 2nd by Director Gizzarelli

All Vote Aye

11. Executive Session - Board went into executive session Roll Call taken. Motion made by President Bouchard seconded by Director Lapinski. All Directors present voted aye to go in session at 8:17 pm

12. Adjourn: Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm. Adjournment of the Executive Session at 9:58 pm Motion made by President Bouchard to seal the minutes and 2nd by Director Lapinski. Back in Session at 9:58 pm. Motion made to adjourn at 9:58 pm.