

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FIRE DEPARTMENT FUNDING SUBCOMMITTEE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
125 MAIN STREET
BROAD BROOK, CONNECTICUT

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

AMENDED

Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

1. TIME AND PLACE OF SPECIAL MEETING

First Selectman Robert Maynard called the meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. at the Broad Brook Fire Department, 125 Main Street, Broad Brook, CT.

2. ATTENDANCE

Present:

Robert Maynard, First Selectman

Andy Hoffman, Selectman

Charlie Szymanski, Selectman

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Robert Maynard stated that the public can participate during the meeting.

4. DISCUSSION OF EAST WINDSOR FIRE PROTECTION

Charlie Szymanski thanked everyone for coming out on such a cold night and stated the purpose of the meeting is to pursue the interest in a single fire district for the Town and explore how it will be accomplished. He suggested a type of map or schedule of events that will need to occur over a certain time period. Keith Yagaloff, the Town Attorney, will be working on assessing what will need to be accomplished to achieve the result. Charlie indicated that the first thing will be to develop new bylaws. He then turned the conversation over to Andy Hoffman.

Andy Hoffman indicated he put together a trial milestone schedule but emphasized that one of the first things would be to decide if one district is what the Town wants. (See attached schedule.) He stated they would like to accomplish this within this year, preferably by September 15th. He asked that the audience take the preliminary schedule home and review it and asked for feedback at the next meeting. He agreed with Charlie that the formation of new bylaws was essential. He then asked for comment from the audience.

Robert Maynard agreed the most important thing is the bylaws which will tell us how we will run the "East Windsor Fire District". He indicated that the bylaws would have to be fair to both districts and the Town will have to agree to them by assessing a town-wide fire district. He turned the floor over to Keith Yagaloff.

Keith Yagaloff stated that this is all up to the two districts, if they want it. They would work on the bylaws and decide if the districts want to pursue a combined fire district and is contingent on whether this would service the purposes of one district. Both departments have the right to say it is not working out and only move forward if both agree. The only part the Town plays is to make sure there is appropriate fire coverage for the Town. The process is also going to involve the residents voting to expand the fire district. The Town will also want a relationship to evaluate equipment, monies, coverage, etc.

There was a question from the audience as to why they can't compare the bylaws for the two districts to see where they are different and how to make them compatible or improve them. Keith Yagaloff indicated that this is what the meeting is about. To see how to go about achieving this. One option is to compare the bylaws and the other option is to go out to other communities to see what their bylaws are like. Mr. Yagaloff discussed with the board the timeframe of September 15th and why it will be the best timeframe. Anticipating three to four work sessions to come up with draft bylaws. There was discussion on organization and membership of the "working sessions".

Charlie Szymanski added that the group would probably be 4 people, Chief, Deputy Chief and a couple of other people that have good writing and organizational skills and have an interest in the project. But ultimately, it is up to the district to decide. Andy and Charlie and Keith will be participating and sitting in and provide directive to what is needed.

There was a brief discussion about how the bylaws will be written. An audience member indicated that if they start from scratch, they will get nowhere. Mr. Yagaloff stated attorneys rarely start from scratch. They usually take documents from previous clients and work from there. Mr. Yagaloff said, participation of the fire districts is key to come up with ideas for the bylaws.

First Selectman Maynard suggested finding towns with two separate departments under one fire district and reviewing the bylaws to get ideas. Bob indicated Amy O'Toole the Town Treasurer has direct experience in the Barkhamstead Fire District and their bylaws and feels she would be a good person to bring in and offer advice.

There was discussion regarding how many people should be involved in reviewing and writing the new bylaws. There was a suggestion that all the membership should be involved so they all agree upon it. There was a suggestion to start each working session larger to see if it will work and what participation there will be.

Many suggestions regarding possibly getting someone to draft an outline to build on, looking at other Towns like Barkhamstead, South Windsor and Ellington to see what type of department they have and what their bylaws look like.

At the first meeting they will make sure they have Barkhamstead's bylaws and another set of solid bylaws to review and compare with the department's current bylaws.

Discussion of the Budget. The Town could have a referendum as to how the budget would be handled moving forward.

Charlie Szymanski said we need to have a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to discuss the bylaws and how the transition will go.

Keith Yagaloff stated that unless everyone comes together this will not be accomplished. He added, the bylaws are essential, operate as a district, and then organization as hierarchy, how the Board of Commissioners are going to manage the district.

Discussion of the bylaws continued. There was discussion of the differences between Charter and the Bylaws and how each will work.

Charlie Szymanski feels not only there should be a charter and bylaws but also working agreement between the two departments and feels it's important before the first working meeting to get the bylaws from each district and compare them to see what to change or keep.

First Selectman Maynard said Enfield is a bad example because the taxes got out of control. He stated if the Town has one district, and not competing districts and present it to the Town in a reasonable way, the Town may consider will having full time firefighters.

Keith Yagaloff stated part of the purpose of these meeting is to discuss what your leadership will be like. Will there be two chief reporting to the Commission or will there be one.

Another discussion about the size of the group making the decisions and that all members will need to be kept up to date on what is being decided and what is going on.

Keith Yagaloff suggested setting working meetings a few hours every two weeks and establishing the day and times tonight when everyone is present.

Charlie Szymanski concurred and recommended beginning the meetings at 7 and ending at 9 and reiterated that the other charters and bylaws from other Towns should be available beforehand.

There was a question as to what the Town has to do with this. Keith Yagaloff responded that for this to work and to get the money, it's going to have to be supported by the Board of Selectmen and ultimately by the Town.

Discussion ensued about the day of the meeting and whether they needed to have a subcommittee of the committee to meet and if it needed to be announced to the public.

There was a question clarifying if there will be a Town Fire Department or a Town Fire District and if there is one Department, will it be funded by the Town?

First Selectman Maynard replied that there can be an East Windsor Fire Department that can be funded by the Town and no fire district or there could be an established fire

district having to generate its own funds and having its own ability to tax. He stated that he believes in the fire district because the district knows what it needs and is can make its own budget that should be voted on.

Keith Yagaloff stated it had been decided that the working group is going to meet on Wednesdays starting on the 23rd, for two hours alternating every other week starting at 7pm with the first meeting at the warehouse point fire district and then alternating from here. He suggested someone send out a reminder of the location and time and that a joint email list be created with all the names of the people involved. (Decision to use the district secretary as secretary to carry out this task.) He will make sure that they have the documents from Vernon and South Windsor as well as the other documents at the next meeting to review.

A suggestion as made to send all the documents to Bob's office and to get all the items converted to Word and ensure everyone gets a copy.

Keith Yagaloff made himself available to review documents and to be at the meetings if necessary.

There was discussion of the budget and how the money will be allocated and spent. It was then asked if the same type of budget report will be required from both units?

Further discussion of the budget procedure and a comparison of the Broad Brook Fire Department and Warehouse Point Fire Department funding ensued.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION made (Szymanski) and SECONDED (Maynard) to adjourn.

All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa LaBelle

Reviewed by First Selectman Robert Maynard

East Windsor Fire Companies
Fire Department Consolidation Plan

Goal

Integrate the Warehouse Point and Broad Brook Fire Departments into a single fire department that serves to town in a cost effective efficient manner going forward.

Milestones

- Hold kickoff meeting December 18, 2018
- Broad Brook Fire Dept. fire district exploratory meeting January 8, 2019
- Hold joint meeting (outline fire department approach "how to") Jan. 15
- Agree to projected completion date Sept 15
- Develop joint fire department goals
- Obtain bylaws from other fire departments
- Review bylaws from BB, WHP and others
- Write bylaws for combined East Windsor fire departments
- Create a working agreement – Statement of Work (how BB & WH will function)
- Develop an Organization Chart
- Develop a fire commission organizational structure
- Make press release
- Present to Broad Brook and Warehouse Point Fire Depts.
- Create a combined 2019 budget
- Develop a presentation to define the new organization/operation
- Present plan to Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance
- Make press release
- Hold town meeting
- Hold town meeting
- Hold town referendum to accept town wide fire department

December 31, 2018

A. Hoffman