



*Town of*  
*North Stonington, Connecticut*

**Emergency Services Operations Committee Special Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

1. Meeting called to order at 6:04pm including Sarah Nelson, Charlie Steinhart and Carol Johnson.
2. Approval of Previous Minutes – tabled to the next meeting
3. Survey Data Review – Reviewed survey data and identified the following observations for the first draft of the ESC Report to the North Stonington Selectmen Board including:
  - North Stonington Demographics
    - North Stonington is the 9th largest town by square mileage at 54.31 square miles
    - North Stonington's annual revenue is ~\$21.5M
    - NSVFC covers has largest area square mileage covered by a single station
    - NSVFC manages ~375 calls per year including ~75 calls for EMS
    - NSVFC has ~40 volunteers equaling ~0.7% town population
    - North Stonington has higher amounts of high hazard traffic compared to towns demographically similar including the interstate and the casino
  - 8 Fire department responded which representing 6 towns and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.
  - Fire Stations – 6 Towns of similar square mileage had multiple fire stations
    - Thompson has 5 stations covering 46.9 square miles
    - Woodstock has 3 stations covering 60.54 square miles
    - Haddam has 3 stations covering 44.03 square miles
    - Stonington has 6 stations covering 38.69 square miles
    - Ledyard has 2 stations covering 38.14 square miles
  - Towns responding to survey with entirely volunteer staffs includes:
    - Haddam call volume is ~460 calls per year (#1) including ~120 EMS calls per year
    - Thompson call volume is ~1000 calls per year including ~800 calls EMS calls per year
    - Pomfret call volume is ~300 per year including ~200 EMS calls per year



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- 5 of the responding fire departments indicated a limited availability of volunteers to respond to daytime calls (Haddam, Pomfret, West Thompson, Thompson Fire Engine Co and Westerly)
  - 4 of the fire departments responded that they do not have enough new volunteers in general
  - 2 towns had 2-3 paid fire fighters including Mystic (\$1.2M) and Westerly (\$1.6) and are using a fire tax funding model
  - Towns with high volunteer retentions provide additional services to volunteers including access to a gym, members room equipment, municipal tax credit,
- Recommendations
    - Shortage of daytime volunteers
      - Some level of paid staffing is required to ensure adequate and timely response during daytime hours
      - Selectmen should evaluate option of an annual salary stipend to incentivize Town Employees participation in the Volunteer Fire Department
    - Increase volunteerism
      - Referral bonus for new recruits that pass probationary period
      - Town wide volunteer drive (volunteer fair) for all commissions, boards, emergency services
    - Retain volunteers
      - Add municipal tax credit for volunteers
      - Add physical fitness program benefit
      - Increase length of service awards program for active members
4. Status of Current Action Items
- Charlie Steinhart motioned to approve first draft of Emergency Services Report containing Fire Department Observations and recommendations to share with the Board of Selectmen at there 2/23/2021 meeting
5. Review timeline – Agreed that one more meeting is required to clean up the draft and recommendations prior to the 2/23/201 meeting



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6. No public comments
7. Charlie Steinhart motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Sarah Nelson, motion passed and meeting adjourned at 8:29pm