



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

TEL 860-870-3100 FAX 860-870-3102

www.ellington-ct.gov

Ted Graziani
Chairman

Tom Palshaw
Vice Chairman

Bill Correia
Keith Durao
Jim Prichard
John Ridzon
Heather Stavens

Charter Revision Commission

JOINT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2018

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Correia, Ted Graziani, Tom Palshaw, Jim Prichard, John Ridzon and Heather Stavens

MEMBER ABSENT: Keith Durao

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lori Spielman, James Prichard, David Stavens, Ronald Stomberg, John Turner, Melinda Ferry and Sarah Cook

OTHERS PRESENT: John Elsesser, Town Manager, Town of Coventry; James McLoughlin, Fire and EMS Administrator, Town of Coventry; Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr., Finance Officer/Treasurer; Allan Lawrence, Fire Marshal; Gary Feldman, Chief, and other members of the Ellington Volunteer Fire Department; Chuck Pippin, Chief, and other members of the Crystal Lake Fire Department; Peter Hany, Chief, Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps; Peg Busse, Board of Finance

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Graziani called the Joint Special Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) and Board of Selectmen (BOS) to order at 6:34 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Hall, 55 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

II. CITIZENS' FORUM [Non-agenda items]:

No one came forward.

III. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO ADD TO THE CHARTER THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF FIRE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Chairman Graziani welcomed guests John Elsesser, Coventry Town Manager and James McLoughlin, Coventry Fire and EMS Administrator.

Mr. Elsesser explained that the Town of Coventry has two independent Fire Departments that provide firefighting, rescue and emergency medical services throughout the Town. Both are time-honored associations that do a lot of good for the community. Of the 1,100 annual calls,

700 of them are for ambulance services. A crisis within one of the Fire Departments prompted the Town of Coventry to establish the Fire and EMS Administrator position. See attached job description.

The position was created by Ordinance to establish a unified Fire and EMS Department. The Ordinance also created a Board of Fire/EMS Services to coordinate training, recruitment, equipment and apparatus purchase requirements and develop annual budget recommendations to the Town Manager and then the Town Council.

Mr. Elsesser explained that this position relieves the burden of the day-to-day operation, authorizes payment of all the bills, centralized the budget which has allowed for substantial savings; i.e., combining insurance policies saves \$5,000-6,000 annually; jointly purchasing apparatus through HGACbuy.com, which is a nationwide government procurement service (and affiliated with CRCOG), which resulted in a savings of over \$150,000 for the purchase of a tanker truck; and, implementing new procedures has increased revenue for ambulance services. Mr. Elsesser stated that the salary of the Administrator position is in the low \$80,000 range and the Administrator is assigned a Town vehicle.

Mr. McLoughlin reviewed his background, noting that he is a retired Deputy Fire Chief for the City of Hartford.

Mr. McLoughlin stated that his role is to better coordinate and consolidate the Fire/EMS services and promote volunteer services. The goals are to enhance training for volunteer Fire/EMS personnel including joint training exercises to promote safety, collaboration and partnership. They have reviewed the current ambulance service staffing, financing and response time and made adjustments by reducing the ambulance fleet from three to two ambulances. They hired Vintec Staffing Agency to staff the ambulances and free up the volunteers.

Other cost measures implemented included using the Department of Public Works to maintain the fire trucks and apparatus for oil changes, wipers and light bulbs replacement instead of utilizing a specialized service; using one company for HVAC instead of two; and improving the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Rating with the installation of one fire hydrant.

Mr. McLoughlin stated that his goal is to provide a new image and branding of the Fire Departments, tapping into each Department's strengths and to part with the history of the Hatfields and McCoys. He stated that it's a time-consuming and ongoing task and the target of much criticism, noting that change is difficult. He is working on creating an atmosphere where volunteers want to stay and have a sense of pride. When asking people to give their time you need to recognize and appreciate their efforts. Mr. McLoughlin stated that he promotes volunteer fire services in an effort to avoid paid staff. He stated that his salary looks cheap compared to the cost savings he is providing to the Town.

Mr. McLoughlin noted that there are five towns in Connecticut that have implemented the Fire and EMS Administrator position: Waterford, Farmington, Berlin, Windsor and Coventry. He pointed out that these Towns have formed a peer networking group and he regularly meets with them. When asked why the other towns have hired a Fire and EMS Administrator, Mr. McLoughlin stated that this structure provides stability and accountability to agencies where Chiefs come and go.

Mr. Ridzon thanked Mr. Elsesser and Mr. McLoughlin for taking the time to attend the CRC meeting and for educating the members on how the Fire and EMS Administrator works in the Town of Coventry.

Mr. Elsesser stated that it is not an easy path to implement the Fire and EMS Administrator position and all parties need to work collaboratively and cooperatively. He encouraged the CRC to reach out to him if they have further questions.

Mr. Graziani thanked all in attendance for their input.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (PALSHAW), SECONDED (RIDZON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CRC AND BOS AT 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Marie Sauve
Recording Secretary

Town of Coventry
Fire Department
Fire and EMS Administrator
Final 2/24/2015

POSITION SUMMARY

This managerial position oversees the administrative functions of the municipal volunteer Fire and EMS services for the Town of Coventry.

Position includes administrative work for fire and emergency medical services, including budgeting, record keeping, grant writing, purchasing, management analysis, policy development, maintenance, and repairs to facilities and apparatus.

GENERAL DUTIES

Collaborates and assists fire and emergency medical services with recruitment, retention and recognition programs for volunteer members including verifying member's eligibility for pension plan credits and life insurance benefits. Monitors and reviews incentive plans such as point system, stipends, and reimbursements to assure proper payment.

Reviews and assists fire departments with annual budget and monitors department expenditures and receipt of payments to insure sound fiscal management and the efficient use of budgeted funds, personnel, materials, and time. Reviews financial statements and reports.

Responsible for purchasing oversight including: apparatus service contracts, annual vehicle inspections, ambulance billing contracts, equipment purchase orders, facilities upkeep and repair. Prepares and assists in preparing bid documents and RFP's. Seek vendors for hose, ladder, SCBA testing. Responsible for assuring proper billing practices of EMS revenue recovery program and the costs of the regional paramedic intercept program.

Maintains training records and assists with planning and scheduling of mandatory training and combined drills for fire departments. Ensures training complies with OSHA and safe work practices. Serves as custodian of various documents and records: maintains data on employees including training, certifications, rank and vital statistics.

Facilitates standardization between two fire departments to improve efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Develop and maintain written safety programs, policies, and procedures to comply with OSHA requirements

In accordance with membership guidelines, oversees the screening process of new volunteers including entrance physical exams, background checks, and probation training requirements.

Town of Coventry
Fire Department
Fire and EMS Administrator
Final 2/24/2015

Monitors fire department administration of Junior Firefighting Program.

Reviews departmental disciplinary actions and provides guidance and recommendations for resolving grievances or concerns. Receives direct appeals for issues concerning sexual harassment, ADA or discrimination.

Monitors timely completion of incident reports and patient care reports.

Compiles information and submits reports to state and federal agencies including NFIRS, ISO, MIC License renewal, and Ambulance Rate Applications

This position communicates regularly with Fire/EMS Officers to determine the needs of the Department.

Collaborates with the Town Manager and Fire Department leadership to establish, maintain, and fulfill fire department goals and objectives.

Participates on various local and regional task forces, agencies, and town committees.

Performs related work as required.

Additional duties as required

SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

Works under the general direction of the Town Manager.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

Provides non-emergency supervision to all Fire Department members on Town policies and regulations.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS:

Strong computer skills including proficiency with word processing, spreadsheets including Quickbooks, and presentation software.

Knowledge of fire radio equipment and communications

Ability to work collaboratively with varied personalities to establish and maintain effective working relationships

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Ability to effectively manage change

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities perform the essential function. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to use hands to handle, feel, and operate office equipment, or controls, and reach with hands and arms. The employee is regularly required to sit. The employee is occasionally required to walk, talk, hear, sit, and smell. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus. Must pass physical examination and drug screen.

QUALIFICATIONS:

A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university required.

Plus a minimum of six years volunteer fire department and EMS experience (ambulance experience preferred)

Connecticut Fire Officer I Certification or higher preferred.

Connecticut Fire Service Instructor I or higher preferred

Connecticut Certified Fire Marshal preferred

Emergency Medical Technician certification preferred

Valid Connecticut Driver's license required, Class B or Q preferred

Additional appropriate experience may be allowed as a substitute for required qualifications.