

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



PHONE: 860-442-0553
www.waterfordct.org

RECEIVED AUG 31 2020
2020 AUG 31 AM 11:54

AGENDA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 1, 2020
5:00pm
Waterford Town Hall

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83975207695>

Meeting ID: 839 7520 7695
One tap mobile
+19292056099,,83975207695# US (New York)
+13017158592,,83975207695# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83975207695>

(Procedural Action: Check register to be signed by Board of Selectmen in accordance with CGS 7-83)

1. **Call to order.**
2. **Public Comment:** Regarding Agenda items 3-9.
3. **Finance Department:** To consider and act on a request from Kim Allen, Finance Director for the attached end of FY 20 Out-of-Series transfer and forward onto the Board of Finance as required.
4. **Youth and Family Services:** To consider and act on a request from Dani Gorman, Director, to waive uncollectable funds from FY19/20 in the amount of \$2,420.
5. **Building Department:** To consider and act on a request from Abby Piersall, Planning Director for the attached end of FY 21 Out-of-Series transfer and forward onto the Board of Finance as required.
6. **Recreation and Parks:** To consider and act on a request from Brian Flaherty, Director for an appropriation of \$10,347.50 from undesignated fund balance # 205-31520 to project # 20537-57824 – *Waterford Beach Park Causeway* for payment of an outstanding invoice and to closed out project. This request will be forwarded onto the Board of Finance as required.

Agenda, Board of Selectmen
9/1/20 Regular Meeting
Page 2

7. Appointments and Resignations:

- 7a.** Youth and Family Services: To consider and act on the following resignations effective immediately:

Ellen Bellos

Aimee Fador

8. Disposition of Town Property (Ordinance, Chapter 2.112.020):

- 8a.** **IT Committee** – Attached list of replaced Library computers for disposal.

- 9. Tax Collector** - To consider and act on a request from Alan Wilensky, Tax Collector for the attached end of FY 21 Out-of-Series transfer and forward onto the Board of Finance as required.

10. New Business:

- 10a.** Discussion of Quaker Hill Fire Company/Residents petition.

11. Correspondence:

- 11a.** Agreement by and between The Town of Waterford and The Waterford Ambulance Service, LLC. 4/16/2020

- 11b.** Letter to Quaker Hill residents from Chief Vincent Ukleja, QHFD

- 11c.** Letter from Bruce Miller, Director of Fire Services regarding Quaker Hill Staffing Concerns.

- 11d.** Resident correspondence regarding QHFD

- 11e.** The Day articles regarding the history of Waterford Fire Services from 2010 to present.

12. Consent Agenda:

- 12.a.** Tax Refunds

- 12.b.** Meeting Minutes: August 18, 2020

13. Adjournment:

3.

TOWN OF WATERFORD TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Inter-Department Transfer Request

Finance
DEPARTMENT

FY20

Line No.	Org. Code	Object Code	Object Description	APPROVED Budget Amount	CURRENT Budget Amount	ACCOUNT	ACCOUNT	REVISED Budget Amount
						INCREASE	DECREASE	
								0.00
1	10101	53119	Emergency Expenditures	0.00	0.00	191,482.31		191,482.31
2	10121	59010	Contingency	250,000.00	239,800.00		(191,482.31)	48,317.69
3								0.00
4	10112	52240	Insurance (unemployment)	15,000.00	17,806.00	25,693.00		43,499.00
5	10112	52250	Insurance (deductible)	40,000.00	40,000.00	8,865.00		48,865.00
6	10112	52251	Insurance (healthcare)	3,391,864.00	3,391,864.00	18,822.00		3,410,686.00
7	10139	56028	Debt Service (Interest)	314,375.00	290,761.00		(53,380.00)	237,381.00
8								0.00
9								0.00
10								0.00
								0.00
								0.00
TOTAL						244,862.31	(244,862.31)	

Explanation

The total COVID-19 expenditures need to be expensed for year-end because the revenue reimbursement has not been received to offset the expenditures. Expenditures include supplies, cleaning services, labor and benefit charges.

The final June Invoices have been received which put the insurance budget in deficit.

Department Head

Date

Director of Finance

Date

First Selectman

Date

Commission/Board Approval

Date

TOWN OF WATERFORD

TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Out of Series Transfer Request

Building
DEPARTMENT

FY21

Line No.	Org. Code	Object Code	Object Description	APPROVED Budget Amount	CURRENT Budget Amount	ACCOUNT INCREASE	ACCOUNT DECREASE	REVISED Budget Amount
1	10118	51120	Inspection	159,207.00	159,207.00	0.00	(15,000.00)	144,207.00
2	10118	52030	Professional Fees	750.00	750.00	15,000.00	0.00	15,750.00
3								0.00
4								0.00
5								0.00
6								0.00
7								0.00
8								0.00
9								0.00
10								0.00
								0.00
								0.00
TOTAL						15,000.00	(15,000.00)	

Explanation

The position of Assistant Building Official has been open since January 2020. The current rate of applications coupled with the long-term vacancy has led to the need to hire a third party professional to assist with completing permit reviews in a timely manner. This need is temporary and the third party would be used only as required to meet legal deadlines until the department is fully staffed.

Abby Piersall
Department Head

8/27/2020
Date

Kim Allen
Director of Finance

8/27/2020
Date

First Selectman

Date

Commission/Board Approval

Date

8a

WATERFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
49 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford, CT 06385

TO: Brett Mahoney, IT Committee Chair
FROM: Roz Rubinstein, Library Director
SUBJECT: EQUIPMENT FOR DISCARD
DATE: March 5, 2020

The following computers were removed by IT and replaced by new machines:

DC 7900	2UA9090Q3N
DC 7900	2UA9090Q31
DC 7900	2UA9090Q2V
DC 7900	2UA9090Q35
DC 7900	2UA9090Q2X

Please put the disposal of this equipment on
agenda of the next IT Committee meeting.

Thank you.

TOWN OF WATERFORD TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Out of Series Transfer Request

Tax Collector _____
DEPARTMENT _____

FY21

Line No.	Org. Code	Object Code	Object Description	APPROVED Budget Amount	CURRENT Budget Amount	ACCOUNT INCREASE	ACCOUNT DECREASE	REVISED Budget Amount
1	10106	51210	Clerical	77,769.00	77,769.00		(500.00)	77,269.00
2	10106	52050	Dues, Conferences	685.00	685.00		(500.00)	185.00
3								0.00
4	10106	53010	Office Supplies	30.00	30.00	1,000.00		1,030.00
5								0.00
6								0.00
7								0.00
8								0.00
9								0.00
10								0.00
								0.00
								0.00
				TOTAL		1,000.00	(1,000.00)	

Explanation

I need to replace my desktop printer as my 11 year old printer is starting to malfunction. I would like to purchase wireless headsets for the phone system for productivity purposes. I have money in these accounts due to my Summer part-time employee not being hired and the annual conference is being paid for by last year's expenditure.

Alan Wilensky _____
Department Head

7/27/2020 _____
Date

Kim Allen _____
Director of Finance

7/28/2020 _____
Date

First Selectman

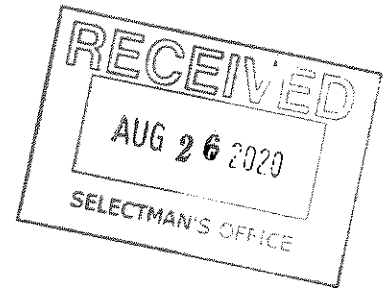
Date

Commission/Board Approval

Date

100.

Chief Vincent B. Ukleja
Quaker Hill Fire Company
17 Old Colchester Road
Quaker Hill, Ct, 06385
August 24, 2020



Board of Selectmen
Town of Waterford
15 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford, Ct. 06385

Board of Selectmen,

My name is Vincent B. Ukleja. I am the current Fire Chief of the Quaker Hill Fire Company which is now all volunteer fire department. I have enclosed over 470 signatures to have the part time hours put back at the station. I am also asking that this request be added to the Selectmen's agenda at the first meeting in September. Any questions please feel free to contact me anytime at 860-625-6584.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vincent B. Ukleja".

Chief Vincent B. Ukleja

Quaker Hill Fire Department Petition

We, the members of the Quaker Hill, CT Community, are concerned about the recent changes to the emergency responses affecting the Quaker Hill Fire Co. and request that the former part-timers be instated for 8 hour daily shifts, 7 days a week, effective immediately.

* Required

1. First Name *

2. Last Name *

3. Zip Code *

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Google Forms

Timestamp	Email Address	First Name	Last Name	Zip Code
8/17/2020 17:54:53		Therese	Foss	06375
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8/17/2020 17:58:48		Belinda	Brozyna	06375
8/17/2020 17:59:04		Brian	Brozyna	06375
8/17/2020 17:59:34		Traci	Brennan	06375
8/17/2020 18:00:05		Scott	Brennan	06375
8/17/2020 18:00:07		Daun	Browne	06375
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8/17/2020 18:00:46		Kristen	Rowe	06375
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Timestamp	Email Address	First Name	Last Name	Zip Code
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8/20/2020 10:40:20		Graham	Pelka	06375
8/20/2020 20:53:20		Kara	Barczak	06375

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

August 16th, 2020

We, the members of the Quaker Hill, CT Community, are concerned about the recent changes to the emergency responses affecting the Quaker Hill Fire Co. and request that the former part-timers be reinstated for 8 hour daily shifts, 7 days a week, effective immediately.

Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Karen Bartelli	9 Dogwood Drive	Karen Bartelli
James Bartelli	9 Dogwood Drive	James Bartelli
Jeff McPhail	70, old Colchester Rd	Jeff McPhail
Linda McPhail	70, old Colchester Rd	Linda McPhail
Bonnie Hanna	72 old Colchester	Bonnie Hanna
John Hanna	72 old Colchester	John Hanna
Margaret Sullivan	74 Old Colchester	Margaret Sullivan
Robert Sullivan	74 Old Colchester	Robert Sullivan
Bethany Boada	77 Old Colchester Rd	Bethany Boada
Benjamin Boada	77 Old Colchester Rd	Benjamin Boada
GONDO SHONEBARGER	79 OLD COLCHESTER RD	GONDO SHONEBARGER
Susan Ukleja	81 old Colchester Rd	Susan Ukleja
Diane Shonebarger	79 ^{old} Colchester Rd	Diane Shonebarger
Raymond Briggs	22 PORTER ST.	Raymond A Briggs
Richard Andevrch	11 Wintergreen DR	Richard Andevrch

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

August 16th, 2020

We, the members of the Quaker Hill, CT Community, are concerned about the recent changes to the emergency responses affecting the Quaker Hill Fire Co. and request that the former part-timers be reinstated for 8 hour daily shifts, 7 days a week, effective immediately.

Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Andrés Luciano	17 Richards Grove Rd	<i>Andrés Luciano</i>
Ricardo Medina	22 Richards Grove Rd	<i>Ricardo Medina</i>
Lidys Rosario	22 Richards Grove Rd	<i>Lidys Rosario</i>
Raymond Pike	12 Cove View Dr	<i>Raymond Pike</i>
Bonnie McCall	6 Cove View Dr	<i>Bonnie McCall</i>
Michael Champin	29 Scotchcap Rd	<i>Michael Champin</i>
Kimberly Rouisse	17 Quaker Lane	<i>Kimberly Rouisse</i>
Laurie Schlink	Laurie Schlink	17 Quaker Lane
Joshua Rouisse		17 Quaker Lane
BRIAN ROUISSE		17 QUAKER LANE
Nancy L. Tyree	Nancy L. Tyree	12 PORTER ST Quaker Hill
Logan Smith	9 Miller Ave	Logan Smith
Margaret Margaster	10 Miller Ave QH	Margaret Margaster
Jeanette Astrachas	24 Dunbar Rd	Jeanette Astrachas
A. J. SAVARD	23 DUNBAR RD.	<i>A. J. Savard</i>

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Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

SUSAN COUTURE Scout	22 Dunbar Rd	Scouture
Julio Anzures	"	<i>[Signature]</i>
Timothy Malootian	20 Dunbar Rd	Timothy Malootian
Tracey Malootian	20 Dunbar Rd	Tracey Malootian
Gloria Kunge	19 Dunbar Rd	Gloria Kunge
Michael Viret	19 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Ibair Monzav	28 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
GLENN DREYER	27 DUNBAR RD	Glenn Dreyer
Jobson Oliveira	79 OLD NORWICH RD	<i>[Signature]</i>
Iris TARAZONA	79 OLD NORWICH RD	<i>[Signature]</i>
Ursula Tarazona	480 MOHEGAN AVE TRUCKY	Ursula Tarazona
Marcella Lamoureux	65 Old Norwich Rd	Marcella Lamoureux
Steven Lamoureux	65 Old Norwich Rd	Steve Lamoureux
GEORGE HARRIS	64 Old Norwich Rd	HARRIS
Lina Hajj	64 Old Norwich Rd	Lina

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Jill Norton	19 Porter Street	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jonathan Norton	19 Porter Street	<i>[Signature]</i>
Dennis Dunbar	6 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
HAROLD B. KYDD	75 OLD NORWICH RD	<i>[Signature]</i>
Timothy R. Kodel	4 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Joan A Dunbar	2 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Brenda Weston	1 Dunbar Road	<i>[Signature]</i>
Bern Weston	1 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
^{Colleen} William M Gordon	8 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
STEPHEN LAQUY	7 DUNBAR RD	<i>[Signature]</i>
^{Eileen} Eileen Clendennin	15 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
ANDREA MARSHALL	14 DUNBAR RD	<i>[Signature]</i>
^{Edna} Edna Brusca	16 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Daniel Giordano	17 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Emily Smith	17 Dunbar Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Kathy Crandall	181 Oil Mill Rd	Kathy Crandall
Debbie St Denis	13 Mallard Lane	Debbie St Denis
Quiana Simon	363 Lane West	Quiana Simon
Kourtney Story	47 Ocean Ave	Kourtney Story
Sean Johns	123 Spittard Rd	Sean Johns
Joe Story	25 Canterbury Rd	Joe Story
Carly Story	25 Canterbury Rd	Carly Story
Bev Blackstone	42 Powerhouse Rd	Bev Blackstone
Karen Drago	19 Rhode Island Dr	Karen Drago
Tobias McKee	16 Shoreline Rd	Tobias McKee
Eloise Belonger	190 Col. John Rd	Eloise Belonger
Jennifer Carner	186 Kinney Rd	Jennifer Carner

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
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Quaker Hill, CT 06375

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Judith Kent	11 Pennicott Rd.	Judith Kent
Judith Kent	Quaker Hill	
Raymond Valente	139 Old Colchester	Raymond Valente
Margaret Satterlee	9 Hadley Rd	Margaret Satterlee
Tim Satterlee	5 Ladley Rd	Tim Satterlee
Nicole Popp	28 Millers Pond	Nicole Popp
James Sausati	28 Millers Pond	James Sausati
Thomas Ostronic	202 R. Bloomington	Thomas Ostronic
Valerie Ostronic	202 R. Bloomington	Valerie Ostronic
Jesse P. Benware	4 Sixth Cap Rd QH	Jesse Benware
Merin Moltz	4 Scotch Cap Rd QH	Merin Moltz
Patricia A Snyder	10 Applewood Dr QH	Patricia A Snyder

August 16th, 2020

Chief Vincent Ukleja

Address:

Signature:

[illegible]

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

August 16th, 2020

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Janet Messina	11 Bella Vista St	Janet Messina
Richard Silva	11 Bella Vista St	Richard Silva
Kenneth Chapel	4 Maple Ave	<i>[Signature]</i>
KARINA COPPOTELLI	167 old NORWICH RD	K. GP
Sebastian Coppotelli	167 old Norwich Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
DANA S. CHAPEL	41 MAPLE AVENUE	<i>[Signature]</i>
<i>[Signature]</i>	2 Maple Ave	<i>[Signature]</i>
Richard W <i>[Signature]</i>	2 Maple Ave	<i>[Signature]</i>
Frank & Perkins	85 Old Colchest. Rd.	Carole E. Perkins
Greg Chapel	104 R Old Colchester Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>
Heidi	11 Bella Vista St	Heidi Silva

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
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Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

STEPHEN SLATTER	221 BLOOMINGDALE RD	<i>Stephen Slatter</i>
Robert Schlink	17 QUAKER LANE	<i>Robert Schlink</i>
HERBERT SALT LITTON SALT	295 BLOOMINGDALE RD	<i>Herbert Salt</i>
Shelley Canning	295 BLOOMINGDALE RD	<i>Shelley Canning</i>
James R. Conover	11 Quaker Ln.	<i>James R. Conover</i>
Alicia Henderson Alicia Henderson	9 Quaker Lane	<i>Alicia Henderson</i>
Maxayla Carson	123 5 Laurel Bren	<i>Maxayla Carson</i>
PHILLIP Brown	6 Quaker Lane	<i>Phil Brown</i>
Linda Brown	6 Quaker Lane	<i>Linda Brown</i>
Candy Miesen	2 Quaker Lane	<i>Candy Miesen</i>
Walter Kent JR	11 PENNICOTT RD.	<i>WALTER KENT JR</i>
Katie Sohns	123 SPITHEAD RD	<i>Katie Sohns</i>
Somnatha Willey	9 Cortland Pl	<i>Somnatha Willey</i>
Elise Couillard	31 Wintergreen Dr.	<i>Elise Couillard</i>
Merri St. Denis	53 Pleasant St.	<i>Merri St. Denis</i>

Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
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Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Kramer Sullivan	92 Old Colchester	<i>Kramer Sullivan</i>
Carla Olson	508 Mokegan Ave. ^{Mary}	<i>Carla Olson</i>
Ken R. Olson	528 Mokegan Ave. ^{Ray}	<i>Ken R. Olson</i>
<i>Bob Don</i>	288 Old Colchester Rd	<i>Bob Don</i>
<i>John</i>	288 Old Colchester Rd	<i>John</i>
Andrea M. Deedy	14 Pennicott Rd	<i>Andrea M. Deedy</i>
ERNEST LARIMORE	67 OLD COLCHESTER RD	<i>Ernest J Larimore</i>
Taylor Samuel	51 Old Colchester Rd	<i>Taylor Samuel</i>
Bryan Howard	16 Totoket Rd	<i>Bryan Howard</i>
Brittany Howard	16 Totoket Rd	<i>Brittany Howard</i>
MARY G. WHITE	17 Totoket Rd	<i>Mary G White</i>
Gena Scognamiglio	17 Totoket Rd	<i>Gena Scognamiglio</i>
Marl J. Duplice	8 Woodward Dr	<i>Marl J Duplice</i>
Michelle Duplice	8 Woodward Dr	<i>Michelle Duplice</i>
Sherrin Dayton	4 Town Ave	<i>Sherrin Dayton</i>

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Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:	Address:	Signature:
Jessie S. Luff H	10 Riches Grove Rd Quaker Hill CT	<i>Jessie S. Luff</i>
JIM CRAMER	8 CANT VILL ON QUAKER HILL CT	<i>Jim Cramer</i>
Kelly Smith	9 MILLER AVE OH, CT 06375	<i>Kelly Smith</i>
Lon Allen	8 MILLER AVE	<i>Lon Allen</i>
Hugh C Teel JR	11 Miller Ave.	<i>Hugh C Teel JR</i>
Irma DAVIS	12 Miller ave	<i>Irma Davis</i>
TAMMY DAVIS	12	<i>Tammy Davis</i>
Michael Marsch	14 Porter St QH, CT 06375	<i>Michael Marsch</i>
TOM Miner	14 Porter St OH 06375	<i>Tom Miner</i>
Christina Gavitt	14 PORTER ST QH, CT 06375	<i>Christina Gavitt</i>
Claire Ramus	9 PORTER ST QUAKER HILL	<i>Claire Ramus</i>
Yaher Delgadillo	8 porters st. Quaker Hill	<i>Yaher Delgadillo</i>
WILLIAM & JOANNE Soboski	5 PORTER STREET Quaker Hill, CT 06375	<i>William & Joanne Soboski</i>
David Dine	1 Porter St	<i>David Dine</i>
Michael	1 PORTER ST	<i>Michael</i>

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Helen Roche	17 Fodley Rd	Helen Roche
Beryl Hobart	197 Bloomingdale Rd	Beryl Hobart
Melodie J. Desrosiers	197 Bloomingdale Rd	Melodie J. Desrosiers
Helena M. Valentini	139 Old Colchester Rd	Helena M. Valentini
Joanne White	103 Bloomingdale	Joanne White
John Olbrys	111	John Olbrys
Terry Korth	101 Bloomingdale	Terry Korth
LISA Korth	101 Bloomingdale	Lisa Korth
Diana Smz	2 Quaker Lane, OH	Diana Smz
Helen Muscarella	143 Bloomingdale Rd	Helen Muscarella
Karen Hirschtik	117 Bloomingdale	Karen Hirschtik
Samantha Adams	141 Bloomingdale Rd	Samantha Adams
Tyler Adams	141 Bloomingdale Rd	Tyler Adams
Jordan Scott	461 Mohegan Ave	Jordan Scott
Katherine Church	461 Mohegan Ave Prkw	Katherine Church

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:	Address:	Signature:
Kristen Paschello	8 Donald Ave	<i>Kristen Paschello</i>
Christina Lewis	10 Donald Ave	<i>Christina Lewis</i>
MARY M PICKETT	14 RICHARDS GROVE	<i>Mary M Pickett</i>
Ramela Strollo	13 Richards Grove Rd	<i>Ramela Strollo</i>
Timothy Padua	20 Richards Rd	<i>Timothy Padua</i>
CHERYL WALLACE	22 Porter St.	<i>Cheryl Wallace</i>
Wendy Kelly	20 Porter St	<i>Wendy Kelly</i>
Jos Santiago	20 Porter St	<i>Jos Santiago</i>
Susan Fvents	21 Richards Gr.	<i>Susan Fvents</i>
Lon Wadsworth	11 Richards Gr.	<i>Lon Wadsworth</i>
Mary Buckle	9 Richards Grove Rd.	<i>Mary Buckle</i>
Theresa Albright	15 Porter St.	<i>Theresa Albright</i>
George Abbott	"	<i>George Abbott</i>
Craig Wolski	21 Porter St	<i>Craig Wolski</i>
Maureen Wolski	" "	<i>Maureen Wolski</i>

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Quaker Hill Fire Co.
17 Old Colchester Rd.
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

August 16th, 2020

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Chief Vincent Ukleja

Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Dana Silveira	4 Cove View Dr.	<i>[Signature]</i>
Bryan Silveira	4 Cove View Dr.	<i>[Signature]</i>
Curtis Lovell	69 Old Colchester	<i>[Signature]</i>
Kibby Champlin	6 Cove View Dr.	<i>Kibby Champlin</i>
Melanie Futhon	8 Cove View Dr.	<i>[Signature]</i>
Riley Litterer	17 Richards Grove	<i>Riley Litterer</i>
John A. Mammillo	15 Richards Grove	<i>John A. Mammillo</i>
KENNETH D COLYER	15 RICHARD GROVE	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jan McCarthy	6 Miller Ave.	<i>Jan McCarthy</i>
<i>[Signature]</i>	" "	<i>[Signature]</i>
Catherine C Smith	4 Miller Ave	<i>Catherine C Smith</i>
<i>[Signature]</i>	7 Miller Ave	<i>[Signature]</i>
DAVID LANZAROTTO	5 MILLER AVE	<i>David Lanzarotto</i>
Cynthia Lanzarotto	5 Miller Ave.	<i>C. Lanzarotto</i>
Melissa Bael	8 Miller Ave.	<i>[Signature]</i>

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Vincent Ukleja

Name:

Address:

Signature:

Charles L HARRIS	27 SCOTCH CAP Rd	Charles L Harris
Linda Harris	"	Linda Harris
James Nuttal	34 Scotd Cap Rd	James Nuttal
Betha Besier	"	BETH
Pawl Hansen	92 Norwich Rd	Pawl Hansen
JO Anna Hansen	"	JO Anna Hansen
Alex Korbawich	28 Scotch Cap	Alex Korbawich
Cheryl Korbawich	" "	Cheryl Korbawich
Jamie Sullivan	2 Pe Cab Lane	Jamie Sullivan
Marybeth Stanford	3 Decab Lane	Marybeth Stanford
David Stanford	3 Decab Ln	David Stanford
Diana Corazzelli	21 Broad View Cr. QH	Diana M. Corazzelli
Joseph Strazzo	21 Broad View CT QH	Joseph Strazzo

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AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN
THE TOWN OF WATERFORD AND
THE WATERFORD AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC.

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into this 16th day of April, 2020, effective July 1, 2020 by and between THE TOWN OF WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT (hereinafter "TOWN"), a Connecticut municipal corporation with a place of business at 15 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford, Connecticut 06385 and the WATERFORD AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC., a Connecticut non-stock corporation with its principal place of business in Waterford, mailing address: P.O. Box 286, Waterford, Connecticut 06385, (hereinafter "WAS").

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §7-148, the TOWN has the power to provide for ambulance service by the municipality or any person, firm or corporation; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to CGS §7-148, the TOWN has the authority to enter into an agreement with WAS for the provision of ambulance services by its Emergency Medical Technicians; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies §19a-179-4, WAS holds the First Responder and Basic Ambulance Primary Service Area Responder (PSAR) designations within the geographical boundaries of The Town of Waterford; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to said power and authority, the TOWN is desirous of entering into an agreement with WAS for the provision of emergency medical services and ambulance services to the residents of Waterford in accordance with the standards established in state statutes and regulations; and

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WHEREAS, WAS is desirous of entering into an agreement with the TOWN for the provision of emergency medical services and ambulance services in accordance with the standards established in state statutes and regulations to the residents of Waterford; and

WHEREAS, WAS is and will continue to remain a non-profit, §501(c)(3) corporation.

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FOREGOING AND THE MUTUAL PROMISES CONTAINED HEREIN, THE PARTIES HEREBY AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. DEFINITIONS

The definitions as contained in Connecticut General Statutes §19a-175 and applicable emergency medical services regulations, as amended, established by the Commissioner of the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (hereinafter "DPH") shall be applicable to and incorporated in this agreement.

2. PRIOR AGREEMENTS

Any and all prior agreements between the TOWN and WAS for the provision of ambulance services are hereby superseded and replaced as of the effective date of this Agreement, July 1, 2020.

3. PRIMARY PROVIDER

The TOWN agrees to designate WAS as the primary provider of ambulance service and WAS shall be called whenever an ambulance is needed by or on behalf of the TOWN.

4. PRIMARY SERVICE AREA RESPONDER (PSAR)

WAS shall provide emergency ambulance and emergency medical services within the geographical boundaries of The Town of Waterford. All vehicles and

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equipment necessary to carry out such services shall be equipped and staffed pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes and State regulations. WAS will render the highest level of ambulance services to the TOWN that it is certified by DPH to provide. Upon execution of this agreement, WAS will provide the TOWN with a copy of the Certificate issued by the DPH verifying that WAS is the Primary Service Area Responder at the FIRST RESPONDER (R-1) and BASIC AMBULANCE (R-2) levels. Said certificates shall be annexed hereto as Exhibit A and updated as necessary. WAS shall also provide appropriate documentation of any other levels of emergency care that it is authorized to provide, either by the DPH or any other regional or local medical control or sponsor hospital. When provided, the additional certificate(s) shall be annexed hereto as Exhibit B with a table of contents updated as necessary.

5. LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS

During the term of this agreement, WAS will maintain all licenses and certificates required by DPH.

6. CERTIFICATE OF OPERATION

During the term of this agreement, WAS will provide the TOWN Finance Department and TOWN Attorney with a copy of each annual Certificate of Operation issued by the DPH within 30 days of receipt from DPH.

7. MINIMUM STANDARDS OF SERVICE

WAS shall provide ambulance services, in accordance with state statutes and regulations, twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, fifty-two (52) weeks per year. WAS will meet this obligation through, at a minimum, staffing one (1) ambulance twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, fifty-two (52) weeks per year and one (1) ambulance sixteen (16) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, fifty-two (52) weeks per year. Through, or in addition to, the coverage above, WAS will provide a second ambulance for simultaneous calls


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when needed. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit WAS from providing additional ambulance(s) for simultaneous calls when additional WAS personnel and resources are available. All medical services provided by WAS shall be in accordance with all area medical and hospital protocols, as well as state, federal and local laws and regulations.

8. MUTUAL AID

In the event that one or more requests for ambulance service are made while WAS's ambulances are already committed to other calls, both parties realize that mutual aid ambulances may be deployed to the TOWN and that "system overload" will be in effect. Mutual aid ambulances, when deployed, will be called utilizing existing mutual aid protocols. During a "system overload", it is recognized that ambulance response could be delayed to some 9-1-1 callers.

9. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

WAS will conduct all of its business (including banking business) under the name "Waterford Ambulance Service, Inc." The TOWN shall be notified in the event WAS creates any new business entities or organizations, or affiliates with any other organizations. WAS agrees to use its best efforts to notify the TOWN of any changes prior to such changes taking effect; however, both parties recognize that such notice may not always be practical, in which case, the TOWN shall be notified of these changes not more than ten (10) business days after they take effect. WAS shall conduct its activities and business in such a manner as to maintain full compliance with Internal Revenue Service statutes and regulations pertaining to §501(c)(3) entities. The TOWN only recognizes WAS and no part or whole of this Agreement is transferable to any other party or entity without prior agreement of the TOWN.


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10. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

The status of WAS as it relates to the TOWN is that of an independent contractor. Under no circumstances shall WAS, its volunteers, employees or agents be considered as officers, employees or agents of the TOWN nor shall WAS represent that it or any of its agents or employees are agents or employees of the TOWN. This Agreement shall not constitute a contract of employment and shall be considered as an agreement for independent services.

11. USE OF TOWN-FUNDED PERSONNEL

The Parties agree that TOWN-funded personnel may respond to calls for emergency medical assistance as supplemental medical responders. TOWN-funded personnel shall not be utilized to primarily staff WAS response vehicles. However, the Parties agree that such TOWN-funded personnel may be requested and/or utilized as supplemental crew members in the event that additional personnel are necessary to assist with transportation of patients to the hospital when additional personnel are required for patient care above and beyond the State minimum staffing requirements (i.e., critical trauma patients, cardiac arrests, etc.). In such instances, the Parties agree that TOWN-funded personnel shall not be considered to be employees of WAS for purposes of payroll or insurance. The TOWN agrees to provide appropriate insurance coverage (both Worker's Compensation and Professional Liability coverage) for all TOWN-funded personnel in such instances, and to indemnify and hold harmless WAS and name WAS as additional insured on all applicable TOWN insurance policies covering such TOWN-funded personnel.

12. USE OF TOWN-OWNED FACILITIES

In furtherance of WAS's mission and the mutual interest of the Parties to provide emergency medical ambulance services to the residents of Waterford, the TOWN agrees to provide suitable office/administrative space in TOWN-owned facilities for WAS to conduct its administrative operations at no cost to WAS.


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13. NONDISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

WAS represents that it complies fully with all applicable State and Federal anti-discrimination laws, rules, regulations and requirements.

14. DISPATCH SERVICES

WAS shall pay the TOWN twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) annually in recognition of the utilization of TOWN dispatch services for WAS calls. The TOWN agrees to invoice WAS monthly with each invoice representing one-twelfth of the annual payment due under this agreement. Payments due under this Agreement shall be due and payable in full within 30 days of receipt of invoice from the TOWN.

15. FUEL

WAS agrees to reimburse the TOWN for TOWN-supplied fuel for WAS vehicles, on an exact dollar-for-dollar basis. Fuel charges shall be billed monthly on a separate invoice from the annual payment monthly invoice.

16. ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Using the most recent audited Fiscal Year financial data, WAS shall annually develop an Operating Budget. Included in the budget shall be a line item entitled "Dispatch Services".

No later than June 30th of each year, the WAS President shall submit a copy of WAS's annual Operating Budget to the First Selectman, Board of Finance and the TOWN Finance Director.

17. INSURANCES

During the terms of this agreement, WAS agrees to maintain any and all insurances, including worker's compensation, medical malpractice, motor vehicle, and directors and officers insurance, at its own cost and expense for the benefit of WAS, its officers, members and employees. Under no circumstances shall the

levels of insurance coverage drop below any State-mandated minimum requirements. WAS agrees to use its best efforts to ensure no lapse of any insurance coverage occurs. WAS shall provide evidence of insurance coverage to the TOWN annually, within 15 days of renewal. WAS shall also provide a copy of its Certificate of Insurance to the TOWN Finance Department, naming the TOWN as an additional insured on its vehicular and liability policies.

18. WAS PERSONNEL

Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent WAS from hiring its own personnel, either directly or through a third-party staffing company.

19. EMERGENCY REQUESTS / SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS

Any requests for emergency appropriations shall be made to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and the Waterford Representative Town Meeting in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes, and the Charter and Ordinances of the Town of Waterford.

20. BILLING

WAS shall have the right to bill any person for ambulance services according to the *Maximum Schedule of Rates* as assigned by the DPH and/or the Fee Schedules promulgated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (hereinafter, "CMS") as may be amended from time to time. WAS shall follow the guidelines set forth by the DPH for filing and processing an annual billing rate application.

21. MONTHLY AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTING

On or before the 15th of each month, WAS shall submit to the TOWN First Selectman and TOWN Attorney copies of monthly Financial Statements (and year-end annual Financial Statement), including a Budget-to-Actual analysis, which shall be prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant in accordance

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with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and/or Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS).

22. LIAISON

The President of WAS or his/her designee shall act as the liaison between the TOWN and WAS. Said President or his/her designee shall also serve as the TOWN's representative on any other EMS boards or committees requiring such representation from the TOWN.

23. EMS PLAN

The parties agree that they will establish a local emergency medical services plan and that, in accordance with that plan and the requirements of PA 00-151, they will enter into a separate agreement between themselves and the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for all 9-1-1 emergency calls within The Town of Waterford.

24. TERM

The initial term of this agreement shall be through June 30, 2021. Not less than 90 days prior to June 30, 2021, WAS and the Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), shall meet to confirm, revise or alter the terms of the Agreement for the future year(s) as may be mutually agreed to by both parties.

25. RENEWAL

If it is mutually agreeable to both parties, the terms of this contract shall be extended for additional years as determined and agreed upon prior to June 30, 2021. A minimum of 90 days written notice by both parties is required to extend and/or cancel the Agreement. This Agreement may be renewed annually under the same provisions hereof for as many terms as mutually agreed by both parties. This Agreement may not be terminated for illegal purposes or in violation of any law or regulation governing the provision of emergency medical services.

RB
Init.

46
Init.

26. TERMINATION OF SERVICES BY WAS

If WAS ceases to provide ambulance services in accordance with this Agreement, this Agreement shall be of no further force and effect.

27. WAIVER

No waiver of right hereunder shall be effective for any purpose unless it is in writing and signed by the party waiving such right. The waiver by either party of a breach of any provision of this Agreement by the other party shall not operate or be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach.

28. AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION

This Agreement cannot be modified or altered except by written agreement signed by both parties.

29. CONSTRUCTION

Section headings herein are for convenience only and shall not affect the construction thereof.

30. GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Connecticut. Venue shall lie with the Judicial District of New London, Connecticut. In any action or legal proceeding, the Court shall apply such rule of law of the State of Connecticut, including any conflicts of law rules as may be applicable. The prevailing party in any dispute under this Agreement shall be entitled to recover its reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and expenses of litigation.

31. SEVERABILITY

PB
Init.

SG
Init.

The invalidity or unenforceability of any terms or provisions hereof shall in no way affect the validity or enforceability of any other terms or provisions.

32. NOTICES

All notices, requests, claims, demands and other communications hereunder shall be in writing and shall be given by hand delivery or mail (registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested) to the respective parties as follows:

If to The TOWN: 15 Rope Ferry Road
 Waterford, CT 06385
 ATTN: First Selectman

If to WAS: P.O. Box 286
 Waterford, CT 06385
 ATTN: President

Or to such other addresses as either party may have furnished to the other in writing in accordance herewith, except that notices of change of address shall be effective only upon receipt.

33. COUNTERPARTS; FACSIMILE SIGNATURES

This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed to be an original, but all of which shall constitute one and the same instrument. Facsimile signatures shall be treated as original signatures.

34. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Agreement shall be effective as of July 1, 2020, subject to approval by the Waterford Board of Selectmen and the Waterford Ambulance Service, Inc. Board of Directors and execution by an authorized representative of both parties.

Witnesses:

**WATERFORD AMBULANCE
SERVICE, INC.**


Init.


Init.

Thomas J. DeLiber

THOMAS J. DELIBER

By: [Signature]
Name: Steven Graevin
President

**TOWN OF WATERFORD,
CONNECTICUT**

[Signature]
David L. Campo

[Signature]
Robert A. ARENA

By: [Signature]
Name: Robert Brub
First Selectman

RB
Init.

SB
Init.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)
)
COUNTY OF NEW LONDON.)

ss.: Waterford

On this the _____ day of _____, 2020, before me, the undersigned officer, personally appeared _____, who acknowledged himself to be the President of the **WATERFORD AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC.**, and that he as such officer, being duly authorized so to do, executed the foregoing instrument for the purposes therein contained by signing the name of the corporation by her/himself as such officer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand.

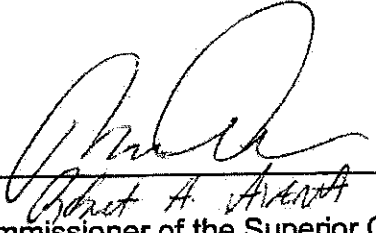
Commissioner of the Superior Court
Notary Public
My Commission Expires:

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)
)
COUNTY OF NEW LONDON)

ss.: Waterford

On this the 16th day of April, 2020, before me, the undersigned officer, personally appeared Robert Bunde, who acknowledged himself to be the First Selectman of the **TOWN OF WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT**, and that he, as such officer, being duly authorized so to do, executed the foregoing instrument for the purposes therein contained by signing, in the name of The Town of Waterford, by her/himself as such officer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand.



Commissioner of the Superior Court
Notary Public
~~My Commission Expires:~~

Exhibit A

First Responder (R-1)

and

Basic Ambulance (R-2)

Certificate(s)



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CERTIFICATE OF OPERATION C152B1

FOR

**WATERFORD AMBULANCE ASSN.
89 ROPE FERRY RD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2617**

Is hereby authorized to operate **6** vehicle(s) in a FR/BA category beginning **10/01/2019** and ending **09/30/2020**.

Of the **6** authorized vehicles, the certificate holder will be permitted to equip and use not more than **6** ambulance(s), **0** invalid coach(es), as defined by Chapter 368d, Section 19a-175 of the Connecticut General Statutes, **0** as non-transporting emergency medical service vehicle(s) as defined in Section 19a-180-1(b)(4) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The applicant is also authorized to operate **0** branch locations. Addresses of the authorized branch locations are on file in the Department of Public Health.

Applicant has furnished evidence of financial responsibility as required by Section 19a-180 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended

Applicant has met the minimum standards of the State Department of Public Health in the areas of training, equipment and personnel for operation of an emergency medical service or is presently operating under a waiver of certain provisions of the regulations

Applicant has demonstrated its suitability to provide emergency medical service.

A copy of this certificate shall be displayed prominently in the above stated operational headquarters and at each location from which the provider is granted to operate under this certificate.

Dated: October 24, 2019

Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH
Commissioner



Phone: (860) 509-8100
Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 12EMS
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
An Equal Opportunity Employer

116.

Quaker Hill Fire Company

17 Old Colchester Road

P.O. Box 96

Quaker Hill, CT 06375-1007

Serving the Quaker Hill Community since 1927

To the Residents of Quaker Hill Fire District,

The Officers of the Quaker Hill Fire Company invite you to an informational meeting on Sunday, August 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the pavilion located to the rear of the Fire House.

The discussion will be about the loss of funding to provide a paid firefighter at the Quaker Hill Fire Company. We have listed below some important points to be aware of as we prepare for this discussion.

- The QHFD was founded in 1927 as the second fire company in the Town of Waterford because the then residents of Quaker Hill saw the need for improved fire protection rather than depend on a response from the other end of Town.

- From 1927 to 1962 the QHFD operated as a volunteer only Fire Company.

- In 1962 the need was identified to hire the first full time paid firefighter to work in QHFD on Monday through Friday during the daytime hours (8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.).

- In 1983 the need for additional coverage was determined and part time firefighters were hired to work on Friday evenings (4:00p.m. to 11:00p.m.), Saturdays days and evenings (7:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. and 3:00p.m. to 11:00p.m.) and Sunday days (8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.).

- From 1983 to 2018 there was a need for a paid firefighter during the daytime hours seven day a week and additional coverage on Friday and Saturday evenings.

- In 2018 the full time firefighter assigned to the QHFD was removed and assigned to other fire departments within the Town of Waterford. At a meeting with the residents of Quaker Hill concerned with the removal of the full time firefighter, then First Selectman, Daniel Stewart, promised the residents there would always be a paid firefighter at QHFD Monday through Friday day shift and it would be staffed by paid volunteers. He went on to promise that if a paid volunteer was not available to fill a specific shift a full time paid firefighter would be assigned to cover.

- On March 1, 2020 the Town stopped providing the resources to pay the part time employees who were working the Friday evening through Sunday day shift hours.

- In June 2020 the Town of Waterford planned on eliminating all part time hours effective July 1,2020. So as of now there are no more paid firefighters at the QHFD.

- It should be noted that the Town has separated the operation of Town of Waterford Fire Service from the operation of the Waterford Ambulance Service. This was apparently done through an ordinance change that the Town residents were not made aware of. The Waterford Ambulance Service is under the direction a full time manager.

- There are currently 11 full time firefighters working for the Town of Waterford. They are assigned to work out of the Jordan, Oswegatchie and Cohanzie Fire Houses. Jordan and Cohanzie have two (2) firefighters working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Oswegatchie has two (2) firefighters working 10 hour day shift, Monday through Friday. They report only to the Fire Administrator, not the local Fire Chief.

As of now there are no paid personnel assigned to the QHFD to respond to fires or emergency medical calls. The residents of Quaker Hill must rely on a response by paid firefighters or paid medical personnel from Cohanzie or Oswegatchie Fire Companies.

- The 2020-2021 " Waterford Fire Department" budget is \$3,170,000 and is administered by the Fire Administer.

This new organizational structure has and will lead to longer response times in the event of a fire or other emergency in Quaker Hill.

The Officers of the Quaker Hill Fire Company

P.S. Any questions please contact Chief Vinnie Ukleja at 860-625-6584.

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD



110.
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886

TO: Robert Brule, First Selectman
FROM: Bruce Miller, Director of Fire Services
DATE: August 21, 2020
RE: Quaker Hill Fire Station Staffing Concerns

I am pleased to note that following the implementation of a new agreement between the Town and the Waterford Ambulance Service ("WAS") effective July 1, 2020, the Town and WAS continue to have an excellent relationship. I am in regular contact with the manager of WAS, with the key goals of ensuring prompt, safe and effective service throughout Town in the event of medical emergencies. I will continue to share information and bring any concerns regarding ambulance coverage to WAS, and am confident that WAS management and staff will address any issues that may arise.

On the fire services side, I continue to evaluate the Town's staffing needs and to modify staffing models when appropriate. Over the past several years, our staffing model (for example, how many paid firefighters are assigned to a particular location at a particular time), has changed as the Town proactively analyzes and adapts to changing needs. Currently, a combination of volunteer, part-time paid and full-time paid firefighters provide fire services throughout the Town. Paid staff are presently assigned to Cohanzie and Jordan; these are centrally located firehouses that provide the best means of access throughout Town and the ability to respond to calls within time frames outlined in applicable guidelines.

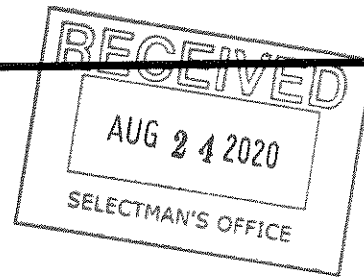
I appreciate and understand that some residents of Quaker Hill feel that they do not have adequate access to fire and/or ambulance services. I am confident, however, that these services are available throughout the Town in a manner that meets applicable time frames. I will continue to monitor the provision of these services and, with regard to fire services, make any appropriate staffing modifications to meet changing needs.

Respectfully,

Bruce A. Miller
Director of Fire Services

Kathleen Peterson

From: dugbysummitrail@aol.com
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 5:40 AM
To: First Selectman
Cc: Kathleen Peterson; David Campo
Subject: What is happening in Quaker Hill?



**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the
content is safe.**

Dear Mr. Brule,

(Ms. Peterson - I formally request copies of this communication be forwarded to all Board of Selectman members)

(Mr. Campo - I formally request copies of this communication be forwarded to all Representative Town Meeting Members and all Board of Finance members)

On Thursday, August 20, 2020 I was forwarded a social media message written by Town of Waterford Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller in what appears to be a request from you. It was an interesting read, to say the least.

First, to the point that Mr. Miller makes about part-time employees working from the Quaker Hill Fire Station. If Mr. Miller's statement is correct, could you forward me a copy of the document that he sent to Chief Ukleja? The Town must have sent us something in writing to let us know that the Town, as tenants of our property, would be ceasing to use our property effective on a certain date; correct? I am sure the Town would not want to be held liable for damage to our property caused by one of it's employees after the date the Town was no longer going to be a tenant; correct?

Second, the confusing issue of what the Town of Waterford, or is it Mr. Miller, is really doing in the Quaker Hill Fire Station. In June of 2020, Town of Waterford part-time firefighters attempted to sign-up for shifts at the Quaker Hill Fire Station only to be informed by Mr. Miller that there were going to be no more shifts there, and those hours had been transferred to shifts at the Cohanzie Fire Station. Again, where was the notice to the owners of the property, the Quaker Hill Fire Company Incorporated, that the Town of Waterford was no longer going to be a tenant of our property? Please forward me a copy of that notice. Since the Town of Waterford through Mr. Miller contends that the Town always intended to end using the Quaker Hill Fire Station effective July 1, 2020, and that we as Officers of the department are misleading them, why does the Town of Waterford continue to send it's employees to our property to work?

Third, Mr. Miller makes a statement that we are misleading the members of our community by not telling them that there is a new contract being signed between the Town of Waterford and the five independent fire companies and/or fire departments that currently exist in the Town of Waterford. I would like a copy of a draft version of each contract, which I know you will deny that you have to provide me, so I will settle for a draft copy of the supposed contract between the Town of Waterford and the Quaker Hill Fire Company Incorporated, which as the Assistant Deputy Chief of the Company I would be entitled to. I would also like a copy of the signed Ground Rules established between the Town of Waterford and the Quaker Hill Fire Company Incorporated pertaining to the negotiations of this contract, a list of the dates that negotiating sessions took place, the names of people in attendance at these sessions, and who the people in attendance represented.

Fourth, Mr. Miller on behalf of the Town of Waterford refers to the creation of the Town of Waterford Fire Department. According to the Connecticut General Statutes, no municipality may create a fire department on top of an existing volunteer fire service organization without a pre-existing written agreement between the parties that details indemnification / remuneration of the volunteer organization. I would like a copy of the written agreement between the Town of Waterford and the Quaker Hill Fire Company Incorporated. I don't seem to have a copy of that agreement for some reason, but I do have in my notes from the multiple Public Safety and Protection committee meetings that I attended that Town Attorney Robert Aveena stated, repeatedly, that "a new agreement" would have to be made with each organization before the ordinance could be enacted. Again, I would like a copy of that "new agreement" between the

Town of Waterford and the Quaker Hill Fire Company Incorporated so that I may share it with the members of the community that I serve.

Please send the information as requested to any of the locations listed below.

Thank you

Kevin M. Ziolkovski

E-mail: DugBySummitTrail@aol.com

Residence: 10 Millers Pond Road
Quaker Hill, CT. 06375-1315

Alternate: Quaker Hill Fire Co., Inc.
17 Old Colchester Road
P.O. Box 96
Quaker Hill, CT. 06375

From: Robert Castronova <robert.castronova@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 3:16 PM
To: First Selectman
Subject: Quaker Hill Fire Department

11/1/20

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe.**

Rob,

As a property owner in Quaker Hill, I am concerned about the lack of a paid fireman at the QHFD.

Can you explain the rationale for this?

I only know what I have read in the paper, so an explanation from you would go a long way in helping me understand the situation.

Thanks

Bob Castronova

From: cmsmailer@civicplus.com on behalf of Contact form at Waterford CT
Sent: <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
To: Monday, August 17, 2020 8:19 AM
Subject: First Selectman
[Waterford CT] Quaker Hill Fire House (Sent by Edna Silva, esilva135@yahoo.com)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe.

Hello firstsel,

Edna Silva (esilva135@yahoo.com) has sent you a message via your contact form
(https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.waterfordct.org%2fusers%2ffirstsel%2fcontact&c=E,1,GW6sWYpTQ-y2ig4ivqhgtwVv21Wjsa78bWpNhiqp1cl-jBM99VfL4nPFAYTJDB0vG_D6K3Hkdb9sNMxjadp6kKTPHrxMer_PTkoUZHRjhZxhIQux-LqtLKe44zQ,&typo=1) at Waterford CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at
https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.waterfordct.org%2fuser%2f441%2fedit.&c=E,1,TII-CCMyCcu-jrSP2AMxFGmbR9zYbVLpt6ZZuESf2KzI5zRXc4DLD-IHv8trk_U3zCBq2dkt_w2bhosvW4weS7N2J5s3ZlpiY6JXHoH-I_LtqQL99Q,&typo=1

Message:

My husband and I have been paying taxes in Waterford for over 35 years, owning two houses. We attended an informational meeting last night at the Quaker Hill fire house about the town lacking funds to employee ANY paid firefighters.

fighters. Now this station is housed by only volunteers. This is completely unacceptable as this could be a matter of life or death. To come all the way from Cohanzie to my house would be over 5 miles. QH firehouse is 3/4 of a mile. I moved here to have a safety net in place for my family.

In 2018 Dan Stewart promised that there would always be a paid firefighter in Quaker Hill during the work week. So its politics again, nothing but lies.

Why were you not at this gathering last night??? We would told that you were asked to attend. I guess it is because you live in Oswegatchie and have sufficient coverage at your firehouse. Maybe because the houses out there are worth more?

This town has 11 full time firefighters working but Quaker Hill cannot have one? We have a wonderful firehouse, state of the art vehicles and equipment, but no one to run the show.

Spend millions on the schools. I have not children but still have to pay for that. Give us our firehouse staffing back. Its a matter of life or death...

From: cmsmailer@civicplus.com on behalf of Contact form at Waterford CT
<cmsmailer@civicplus.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 9:14 AM
To: First Selectman
Subject: [Waterford CT] Quaker Hill Fire (Sent by Carole Stepp , cfs.jezebel@gmail.com)

11d.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe.

Hello firstsel,

Carole Stepp (cfs.jezebel@gmail.com) has sent you a message via your contact form
(https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.waterfordct.org%2fusers%2ffirstsel%2fcontact&c=E,1,8Nscyzbx5SoYkr3COKc2LxKYWADD0plrGLvIaEpQ7f15C0taDCyQBIkEL4jZNGSoj7K7V3eY7S-HcPbTh0hJHw_9CLsp_wKwyrVoEMsZ4GWPJswYuz37T7U2_s,&typo=1) at Waterford CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at
https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.waterfordct.org%2fuser%2f441%2fedit.&c=E,1,l6wNRGXqbTrN0wUGzfDbKUilEleYV8_ghEW15qyH3k8N-CVpZygj-SDpCIVLGB4D8dox99-N5QBu3dm_IVy2mi17-2PIUJ5-1xbi78EzbpWw_2IsL7xihyix_Q,,&typo=1

Message:

I have grave concerns about the loss of our Quaker Hill fire personnel.

The response times from other Waterford EMS could be life altering.

I pay taxes here in Quaker Hill just as Waterford residents do and should be entitled to the same service.

11e.

Fire Services News Articles

- **Finding Middle Ground: Firefighters volunteer incentive program approaches finish line** – The Day 8/21/20
- **Norwich City Council approves fire services study** – The Day 8-17-20
- **Waterford ambulance agreement eases burden on firefighters** – The Day 7/1/20
- **Waterford fire chiefs say staffing changes could lead to delayed responses.** – The Day 2/24/20
- **What does the creation of a Waterford Fire Department mean for Firefighters?** – The Day 10/12/19
- **Proposed townwide fire department sparks debate in Waterford** – The Day 8/5/19
- **Waterford to hold public hearings on creating townwide fire department** – The Day 7/28/19
- **East Lyme to hire two overnight firefighters** – The Day 6/22/19
- **With policy change, Waterford may lose two fire chiefs** – The Day 5/16/19
- **Waterford firefighter seeks payment for 30 years of volunteer hours** – The Day 5/7/19
- **Waterford to hire 2 full-time firefighters as labor issues heat up** – The Day 5/4/19
- **Salem latest to ponder: Can paid firefighters also volunteer?** – The Day 5/3/19
- **Montville budget unlikely to include 3 new firefighters urged by fire marshal.** – The Day 5/1/19
- **Labor laws force shakeup of Montville fire services** – The Day 4/27/19
- **Committee to review Waterford Fire Service** – The Day 4/6/18
- **Deleted Instagram page exposes rift in Waterford fire services** – The Day 3/26/18
- **Waterford residents speak out against fire district staffing changes** – The Day 2/28/15
- **Waterford first selectman talks about fire departments** – The Day 2/5/15
- **Fire staffing raises concerns in Waterford** – The Day 12/2/14
- **Fire departments agree: We need more volunteers** – The Day 7/27/14
- **Waterford considers paying fire volunteers on per-call basis** – The Day 3/24/14
- **Waterford approves five of six proposed charter changes** – The Day 11/3/10
- **Six charter changes facing Waterford voters on Tuesday** – The Day 10/28/10
- **Waterford to vote on new fire command** – The Day 8/9/10

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Finding Middle Ground: Firefighter volunteer incentive program approaches finish line

Published August 21, 2020 1:06PM

John W. "Bill" Sheehan, Special to The Times

After months of consideration and discussion, the Representative Town Meeting Public Protection and Safety Standing Committee held a public hearing on the volunteer firefighter and fire police incentive program ordinance as drafted by the town labor attorney and town attorney. As a result of the hearing, there were a few corrections to the ordinance voted on by the committee members present. A draft of the ordinance with these corrections has been sent to members for consideration at the next meeting of the standing committee.

The proposed ordinance makes the incentive program retroactive to July 1. The Director of Fire Services is already keeping the records necessary for program implementation upon passage of the ordinance. Although not yet scheduled when this column was written, it is anticipated that the committee will meet before the Oct. 5 RTM meeting to consider the revised ordinance and forward to the RTM for final approval. If passed, it would become effective 15 days after the Oct. 20 RTM meeting.

The ordinance defines a volunteer member in good standing as a certified firefighter who has participated in the minimum training sessions designated by the Director of Fire Services or a member of the fire police who has participated in the minimum training sessions designated by the Director of Fire Services. It further defines an active volunteer member who would be eligible for the volunteer stipend.

The ordinance then outlines the various qualifications and training required to be the active volunteer. It then defines the stipend as the amount of money awarded to the active volunteer based on the number of points that represent the participation by the volunteer in fire response or approved training drills.

It specifically states the volunteers or employees of the Waterford Ambulance Service when responding to an incident will not receive points related to the incident.

The stipends will be issued on a quarterly basis in October, January, April, and July for the preceding quarter.

The ordinance then outlines the reporting requirements needed to document eligible incidents and volunteer attendance at the incident. The Director of Fire Services is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the documentation and reporting to the Human Resources Director the necessary information to pay the quarterly stipend and to the RTM the status of the program.

To earn a stipend, an active volunteer firefighter or fire police member must accumulate a minimum of 50 points. Once the volunteer reaches the 50-point mark, the volunteer will receive a stipend of \$7 for each point, including the 50 earned to become eligible for the stipend. The ordinance gives an example that a volunteer who earns 55 points would receive a stipend payment of \$385. The Director

8/24/2020

The Day - Finding Middle Ground: Firefighter volunteer incentive program approaches finish line - News from southeastern Connecticut

of Fire Services may propose changes to the mandatory/minimum eligibility criteria, point value, or stipend rate to the RTM.

In its consideration of such changes, the RTM must evaluate continued compliance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and then approve by a majority vote.

If the Director of Fire Services awards points for reasons that are not expressly set forth in the ordinance, the decision must be documented in the quarterly reports.

In addition, active volunteer firefighters who are certified fire officers who have had additional training requirements as outlined in the ordinance will receive an additional \$150 annually. The Director of Fire Services may propose changes to the higher level of training stipend to the RTM for approval by majority vote.

The ordinance then has a paragraph discussing ineligibility due to misconduct or separation from the Waterford Fire Department. The ordinance "incorporates by reference the Waterford Fire Department Policy 103 - Disciplinary Procedures, as may be renumbered and/or amended from time to time."

The stipend will be funded through the annual budget process. This process "shall determine whether or not to fund the program and, if so, in what amount." As is normal for budgeted amounts from the general fund, portions not expended during the fiscal year do not carry over to the next fiscal year.

If total expenses of the program exceed the annual approved appropriation, the stipends for the current quarter will be prorated to reflect the amount available for distribution for that quarter and if not the final quarter of the fiscal year, the program may be unfunded for quarters following the prorated quarter. The ordinance does not prohibit or require the Director of Fire Services to request an additional appropriation to keep the program funded during a fiscal year.

Finally, the ordinance requires that modifications under the ordinance that are allowed without an ordinance change will be recorded in an annual program update each July and maintained on file in the office of the Director of Fire Services. The ordinance also notes that the RTM may terminate the program through the normal ordinance process.

It is possible there will be other changes, either by the Public Protection and Safety Standing Committee or the RTM before the final approval of the ordinance. I am sure that the volunteer firefighters will be in attendance at the October RTM meeting if it is on the agenda.

John W. "Bill" Sheehan is a member of the Waterford Board of Finance.

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Waterford ambulance agreement eases burden on firefighters

Published July 01, 2020 3:40PM | Updated July 01, 2020 4:18PM

By **Sten Spinella** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=s.spinella) Day staff writer

✉ s.spinella@theday.com (<mailto:s.spinella@theday.com>)  [SSpinella927](https://twitter.com/SSpinella927)
(<http://www.twitter.com/SSpinella927>)

Waterford — Rather than having firefighters staff ambulances in town, Waterford Ambulance Service personnel now will be the primary responders to emergency medical situations, with help from qualified firefighters if necessary.

Effective Wednesday, the town has begun contracting WAS for its emergency medical needs, in a departure from its previous agreement with the service. The change is mainly internal, and the decision was codified by the town earlier this year. First Selectman Rob Brule, Fire Services Director Bruce Miller and WAS EMS Manager Charles Bynum promised residents that little would fundamentally change in the town's emergency services coverage.

"In the last 10 years, Waterford Ambulance was depending on our guys to staff, along with their volunteers, the ambulance," Miller said. "In 2010 there were 1,250 calls, and just nine years later we were up to 3,570 calls, so you can see that it tripled within a 10-year period. The ambulance service knows they need to step up. We couldn't continue to go on the way we were, having our guys out on ambulances all the time and not on firetrucks."

Brule, Bynum and Miller all said the new system is meant to shorten response times and shore up coverage. At minimum, WAS is expected to staff one ambulance 24/7 every day of the year and another for 16 hours every day of the year, according to its one-year contract with the town. WAS can provide additional ambulances for simultaneous calls when personnel is available.

The town will provide office and administrative space in town-owned facilities, and WAS will pay \$12,000 annually for town dispatch services. WAS will reimburse the town for town-supplied fuel and will continue to pay its own insurance, as its employees are not employees of the town.

"There's been a contract in place with the town for several years, but part of that contract was the ambulance service was paying the town essentially to utilize the fire staff," Bynum said. "The new contract removes those provisions, and now we're self-staffing. Waterford Ambulance is a private, nonprofit organization."

The 2012 contract stipulated that WAS would pay 5% of the budgeted firefighter payroll and fringe benefit expenses plus 12% of the budgeted subsidy to the five fire companies and 33% of the budgeted operating costs of the town dispatch center.

8/19/2020

The Day - Waterford ambulance agreement eases burden on firefighters - News from southeastern Connecticut

Changing how its ambulance service operates isn't the extent of the emergency services overhaul, which started in earnest when Waterford moved to a townwide fire department (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20191012/what-does-creation-of-waterford-fire-department-mean-for-firefighters>) in 2019. Brule is pushing for a stipend program for volunteer firefighters, as well. He urged the Representative Town Meeting to take action on the issue.

"We've had to reschedule multiple Public Safety Committee meetings for lack of a quorum," Brule said. "I'm hoping the chairman calls this committee in immediately. They've had the draft of the stipend program that's been worked on by attorneys for years. I just want people to be transparent, vote for this, get it done, then we can actually see how the whole system works together."

The Committee has a meeting scheduled for July 7.

Bynum said to email him at waterfordemsmanager@outlook.com (<mailto:waterfordemsmanager@outlook.com>) if interested in volunteering for WAS.

"I want to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to not only the first selectman and to Bruce but also the town in general and the fire departments individually for having our ambulances there, especially Oswegatchie and Cohanzie, who have taken our crews in and allowed them to station there," Bynum said. "Thank you to the employees and the volunteers — they've all done a fantastic job of bobbing and weaving."

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What does the creation of a Waterford Fire Department mean for firefighters?

Published October 12, 2019 5:46PM | Updated October 13, 2019 8:36PM

By **Erica Moser** Day staff writer

e.moser@theday.com [Erica Faith13](#)

Waterford — By a 16-2 vote, the Waterford Representative Town Meeting on Monday passed an ordinance creating a townwide Waterford Fire Department, which will go into effect Oct. 22.

This came after an 18-month review of fire services by the RTM's Public Protection and Safety Standing Committee, the proposal of the ordinance and two public hearings, which involved pushback from some volunteer firefighters concerned the move would decimate the volunteer system.

"The national trend is we have less and less volunteers, so towns have to figure out how to adapt to these changes, and this is how," committee Chairman Tim Condon explained Thursday.

Condon doesn't believe the ordinance will have a budgetary impact, noting that if anything, the town might see some savings. But he said that wasn't the goal; the goal was to make sure the department was operating up to standards.

The town has five volunteer fire companies: Cohanzie, Goshen, Jordan, Oswegatchie and Quaker Hill. In addition to the volunteers, the town earlier this year added two full-time paid firefighters, bringing the total to 11.

The ordinance creates one set of guidelines and procedures for the companies instead of five, and Condon said it makes it easier for the companies to share resources. He referred some questions to Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller, since he is responsible for developing the uniform standards, but Miller did not respond to messages seeking comment.

Condon said this "is not a move away from volunteers. This is the way the town is coming off the sidelines and really assisting in trying to maintain what it has and grow."

The union representing the career firefighters **tweeted Monday night**, "History was made tonight in the creation of the Town of Waterford Fire Department. Thank you to all who were involved in finally creating this uniform organization. #onetownoneteam."

But that's not how the volunteer firefighters see it.

In April, the five volunteer companies and the Waterford Ambulance Service registered Waterford Fire & EMS LLC and are represented by New London attorney Brian Estep.

"The concerns are that they're going to be, in essence, pushed aside through the creation of the consolidated fire department," Estep told The Day on Wednesday.

Estep said his clients will have to decide whether they want to seek a referendum, and will explore whether the ordinance impacts agreements the fire companies previously signed with the town.

In August 1979, each of the five companies signed a brief agreement stating the company will convey its property to the town if it dissolves or ceases "to provide fire fighting service other than as a result of circumstances beyond its control," the town will make annual appropriations to the company, and no mortgage will be placed on the property without the written consent of the town.

Estep indicated that what happens in the future depends on whether the town violates the agreements.

The Public Protection & Safety Standing Committee began the public hearing Aug. 5 and continued it Aug. 19. At the latter meeting, minutes show, the committee voted to postpone sending the ordinance to the full RTM until Sept. 18, to allow the volunteer companies time to review the standard operating procedures that Miller would be enacting.

A change made before passage Monday was including the names of the five companies in the ordinance.

Estep and Cohanzie Fire Co. spokesperson Steven Frischling previously lamented the lack of input from firefighters and company leaders in the standards, which Quaker Hill Chief Vincent Ukleja also noted as a sticking point, in a conversation with The Day on Friday.

Ukleja said a lot of the policies and procedures have to do with training, and he said Miller is going to try to implement the new standards by Jan. 1.

In a letter to fellow RTM members before Monday's meeting, Michael Perkins asked that the next order of business for the Public Protection and Safety Committee — after the election — will be to enact "a long overdue Stipend Program for recruiting and retention of our brave and dedicated volunteers. It is becoming more and more difficult to find the time to volunteer and this group of men and women, our neighbors, deserve to be rewarded."

Waterford changed its policy earlier this year such that firefighters can't volunteer for their company if they're also working there part-time, which Ukleja said resulted in Quaker Hill Co. losing five volunteers who went part-time.

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Proposed townwide fire department sparks debate in Waterford

Published August 05, 2019 8:23PM | Updated August 07, 2019 7:02PM

By **Benjamin Kail**

Waterford — Residents, firefighters and town officials crammed into Town Hall on Monday night to debate a proposed ordinance creating a townwide fire department, with several supporting uniform qualifications and operating procedures and others claiming the move amounts to a takeover of the town's independent volunteer companies.

The ordinance was proposed after a roughly 18-month review of fire services by the Public Protection and Safety Standing Committee of the Representative Town Meeting and labor and town attorneys. It comes as towns across the region struggle with dwindling volunteer numbers and upheaval associated with changes in interpretations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Tim Condon, chairman of the committee, said in a recent interview that creating "one cohesive department" helps the town enforce proper training and qualifications while better enabling volunteer and career firefighters to service the town anywhere they're needed.

Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller recently said the move would essentially create one set of standards "instead of five."

But the proposed ordinance took some heat Monday, with speakers arguing that it placed too much authority in the director of fire services, who, per the ordinance, would establish qualifications and policies for all the town's fire personnel. Others pushed for greater incentives for volunteers, given that Norwich and Montville offer volunteers pensions and stipends, respectively.

"Placing the development of a unified set of fireground and operations standards within the sole purview of the Director of Fire Services is shortsighted and goes against the best interests of not only those served by Waterford's fire services, but also against the potential safety of the firefighters themselves," Cohanzie Fire Co. spokesman Steven Frischling said in a statement.

Frischling said unified policies were a good thing but that they should be established by a working group of the involved parties, including volunteers, paid firefighters and Waterford Ambulance Service, not just an administrator.

New London attorney Brian Estep, legal counsel for Waterford Fire and EMS LLC, argued the ordinance was premature until the standards were created, and said they should include input from fire company leaders. He also said the ordinance may violate the existing memorandums of understanding the town maintains with each of the five volunteer companies.

"The new ordinance doesn't name the companies at all," Estep said.

Longtime resident and firefighter Wayne Gilpin called the proposed ordinance the "next step to total annihilation of the volunteer system" and said it could lead to taxpayers footing the bill for a paid fire department costing millions of dollars.

Some speakers backed the move by the committee, however, saying it could resolve some of the longstanding complexities of town fire services. The town relies on five independent volunteer companies that own their stations but use town equipment, and are staffed by a mix of volunteers supported by career firefighters and part-timers. Waterford Ambulance Service is an independent nonprofit staffed as well by volunteers and part- and full-time firefighters.

Longtime Oswegatchie Fire Company member Vic Ferry and Finance Board member Bill Sheehan suggested the ordinance include references to state statutes and National Fire Protection Association standards to make it clear where the director of fire services receives guidance on standards and procedures.

"The key to success is agreements with the five companies and the ambulance service. It will probably take five to 10 years to get the correct balance," Sheehan said. "In any case, this is a good first step and a momentous change to the culture of Waterford fire services."

Ferry, who's been active in emergency management planning for four decades, said he was working with Miller on uniform policies, noting that in the current system, the five separate companies have subtle differences in requirements, including in qualifications for chiefs.

"Congrats on trying to bring some order to Waterford fire service and calling it a fire department," he said. "The volunteer folks have done a superb job for our community. The problem is in coverage. They work full-time jobs elsewhere so they do need support. The qualifications for the paid guys are all the same. There should be the same qualifications for chief. Someone should stand up and say that."

The debate comes a few months after Waterford and Montville, on the advice of lawyers looking to comply with federal labor laws (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190507/waterford-firefighter-seeks-payment-for-30-years-of-volunteer-hours>), told dozens of firefighters they cannot be both part-timers and volunteers — at least not at the same station. The 1938 federal labor law, which bars town employees from performing "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed," shields workers from missing out on compensation.

Firefighters say the move has left several shifts unfilled in recent weeks, but Miller says staffing levels should be shored up by September.

The town this spring bolstered overnight and weekend coverage by boosting its full-time staff (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190504/waterford-to-hire-2-full-time-firefighters-as-labor-issues-heat-up>) from nine to 11 firefighters. The two new hires are completing training, Miller said.

Waterford Ambulance Service has stepped up to add staff, officials say, with EMS calls on the rise.

Condon, First Selectman Dan Steward and other town officials have repeatedly said the town needs both volunteers and career firefighters working together. Condon said after the ordinance passes, town officials should discuss incentive programs in depth.

Waterford currently offers a property tax abatement but only to volunteers who live within the town.

In a recent letter to the RTM, members Joshua Steel Kelly and Beth Sabilia propose the town take action following the General Assembly's late June passage of Public Act No. 19-36, which allows an increase to the property tax abatement — up to \$1,500 — offered to volunteers. The act also allows municipalities to enter interlocal agreements to expand the tax break to volunteers who live out of town.

The public hearing will continue on Monday, Aug. 19, at Town Hall, before the committee votes to send the proposed ordinance to the RTM.

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Editor's Note: *This article has been updated to clarify Vic Ferry's involvement in Waterford fire services and emergency management.*

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Waterford firefighter seeks payment for 30 years of volunteer hours

Published May 07, 2019 5:46PM | Updated May 07, 2019 7:44PM

By Benjamin Kail

Waterford — A longtime town firefighter recently filed a claim seeking payment for all hours worked as a volunteer over the last three decades, igniting potentially lengthy negotiations at a time when Waterford and other towns are shaking up fire services (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190504/waterford-to-hire-2-full-time-firefighters-as-labor-issues-heat-up>) to address increasing concerns over manpower and labor laws.

In an April 16 letter to the town, obtained by The Day in a Freedom of Information Act request, Kevin Ziolkovski formally requested "financial compensation for all hours worked as a volunteer firefighter ... from Jan. 1, 1989, to the present."

Ziolkovski, a 57-year-old Quaker Hill Fire Co. volunteer since 1979 who's worked part-time shifts since the early 1980s, cited potential violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the 1938 law that shields workers from missing out on compensation by barring town employees from performing "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed."

Ziolkovski filed his letter in accordance with the state Department of Labor's statement of claim for wages form (<https://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/forms/wcalprint.pdf>), asking the town to contact him "as to when I might expect payment so that I may accurately advise" the DOL.

Several towns for decades have employed part-time firefighters who also are volunteers conducting the same services at private, independent volunteer firehouses. Whether the private firehouses count as separate entities or municipal employers remains a matter of debate among attorneys, town officials and firefighters.

But on the advice of lawyers looking to comply with FLSA and avoid ongoing liabilities, officials in Montville (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190427/labor-laws-force-shakeup-of-montville-fire-services#comments>) and Waterford recently told firefighters they can't be both part-timers and volunteers — at least not in the same firehouse. The Salem (<https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20190503/salem-latest-to-ponder-can-paid-firefighters-also-volunteer>) Board of Selectmen reviewed the matter in executive session on Tuesday, and East Lyme officials are discussing the issue with town attorneys.

'Tough decisions'

The filing from Ziolkovski, who now works for Groton Utilities after almost 20 years as a full-time firefighter for Groton City, comes with a bit of irony amid ongoing debate over the FLSA. Like many firefighters, Ziolkovski disagrees with recent interpretations of FLSA, and he doesn't actually believe the town of Waterford owes him a dime. He argues state law appears to conflict with federal law,

because municipal contracts in Connecticut cannot prohibit town-paid firefighters or emergency personnel from serving as active members of a volunteer fire department in the town in which they reside.

"Someone needs a hard and fast decision on this so we can move on," said Ziolkovski, who estimated there are as many as 50 volunteers who've also worked part-time in Waterford. He said in an average year, a firefighter may volunteer "anywhere from a couple hundred hours to 1,000 or more."

When asked why he's seeking payment for hours he willingly volunteered for years, he responded that town officials, in public meetings over the last several months, "are the ones who said they owe me money. I didn't go to them and say, 'You're in violation.' They said, 'We need to change the way we're doing things.'"

Ziolkovski, who ran for first selectman as a write-in candidate in 2015, said when the town last week told firefighters they could no longer serve as both part-timers and volunteers, he stuck with volunteering.

"There's a lot of my friends facing tough decisions," he said. "We're going to lose officers, we're going to lose part-time people who choose to volunteer, and volunteers who choose to be part-time. It's going to leave us short-handed. It's a tough situation."

'Tip of the iceberg or whole iceberg'

Waterford First Selectman Dan Steward said it was "the first time we've seen a letter of this sort," and that Fire Services Director Bruce Miller and attorneys were trying to ascertain how many volunteer hours Ziolkovski worked during the period of his claim. While tax forms show how many hours Ziolkovski worked as a part-timer, "it's not clear at all" how many volunteer hours he may have racked up, Steward said.

Ziolkovski said for the last several years, paid and volunteer hours have been tracked through software at the individual firehouses. But "in a previous world, we filled out a paper copy and sent it to the fire marshal's office. I don't know that the town has records that go back 30 years."

Steward declined to comment further when asked if the town would fight the claim, saying the matter was in the hands of attorneys and officials.

"They have to figure out what's right," he said. "This might be a tip of the iceberg or it might be the whole iceberg. Even if we come up with X amount of hours, he might say it's Y." Negotiations might go on for a while, he added.

The town received warning of FLSA violations back in 1989, according to Ziolkovski, who cited public statements by Miller. Messages left with Miller and the state Department of Labor were not immediately responded to Tuesday afternoon. Steward confirmed the town was made aware of FLSA issues several years ago.

No claims in nearby towns yet

Montville Mayor Ron McDaniel, Salem First Selectman Kevin Lyden and East Lyme First Selectman Mark Nickerson said their towns had not seen similar claims.

"The FLSA issue is affecting every community," Lyden said. "We have to get it right and get it right with our volunteers and paid staff, whether part-time paid or full-time. It's causing some anxiety, but we'll get it right."

In East Lyme (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190123/east-lyme-officials-hoping-to-hire-two-overnight-firefighters>), seven full-timers and a couple dozen volunteers, several of whom work part-time shifts, serve the Niantic and Flanders fire stations.

"We are talking to our lawyers about what we think might be the interpretation of the law," Nickerson said on Tuesday. "We have not created a policy yet."

The structural shakeups in departments across the region come as towns are looking to ramp up staffing (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190425/NWS01/190429624>) in the wake of dwindling volunteer (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190501/montville-budget-unlikely-to-include-3-new-firefighters-urged-by-fire-marshal#comments>) numbers and increased emergency calls.

Ziolkovski blamed what he described as Waterford's lackluster incentives — compared to volunteer stipends and pensions available in Montville and Norwich, respectively — and the volunteer firehouses themselves for inadequate recruitment efforts over the years.

"In the '90s and 2000s, we didn't do a great job introducing ourselves to new residents in the community," he said. "Back in the early days, people understood that the town is protected by volunteer fire companies and you should go right down and join because they're protecting your house. Now people think Waterford is a big rich town with all these fire services and say, 'I don't need to help them, I just need to call them.'"

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Waterford to hire 2 full-time firefighters as labor issues heat up

Published May 04, 2019 8:21PM | Updated May 04, 2019 8:32PM

By Benjamin Kail

Waterford — The town plans to boost its staff of full-time firefighters from nine to 11 to bolster overnight and weekend coverage, a move that comes as Waterford and several other area towns are confronting yearslong concerns over noncompliance with federal labor law while grappling with higher emergency call volumes and smaller pools of trained volunteers.

Waterford First Selectman Dan Steward said the town would dip into fire services' roughly \$600,000 annual budget for part-time firefighters to fund the additional full-timers, whose combined salaries and benefits could approach \$200,000. Town records obtained by The Day show almost three dozen part-time firefighters — many of whom also serve as volunteers at the town's five private volunteer firehouses, including multiple officers and chiefs — earned a combined total of almost \$420,000 in 2018.

"We're looking to get more coverage out there, people who are readily available and show up to go on calls. Sometimes part-timers aren't available," Steward said. "We believe we're doing what's right for the public."

The job posting comes as Preston (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190425/NWS01/190429624>) and Montville (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190501/montville-budget-unlikely-to-include-3-new-firefighters-urged-by-fire-marshal#comments>) have considered hiring more full-time firefighters in the wake of higher call volumes and dwindling volunteer numbers.

Keith Truex, chief of the Chesterfield volunteer fire company in Montville, noted in a recent interview that the hundreds of hours of training and expenses involved in volunteering make recruitment challenging.

"People are also busier nowadays. From when they get up to bedtime, a lot of people are just constantly on the go," he said, adding that Montville's four firehouses and town officials were working on recruitment efforts to avoid potentially heavy budget increases for paid staff.

The town of Bozrah (<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/20190306/bozrah-firefighters-officials-strike-hiring-deal>) in March reached a hiring agreement to supplement a formerly all-volunteer department with paid firefighters, and earlier this year East Lyme (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190123/east-lyme-officials-hoping-to-hire-two-overnight-firefighters>) officials were negotiating with the East Lyme Ambulance Association to hire two full-timers to cover overnight shifts.

Waterford Town Attorney Rob Avena said with two-thirds of emergency calls being "ambulance related," the nonprofit Waterford Ambulance Service (<http://waterfordambulance.org/who-we-are/>) — staffed by a mix of volunteers and town-paid part- and full-time firefighters — may "look at taking on their own staffing ... to begin to offset some of the emergency services that our full-

timers do."

"We don't get a lot of fire calls, but EMS calls are out of sight," Steward said, noting the town ran 3,000 ambulance calls last year, almost 800 to area nursing homes.

'Very challenging' labor conundrum

Talk of beefing up career firefighter rosters in multiple towns has picked up steam amid efforts to restructure long-standing practices that could leave the door open for rampant violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>).

The 1938 federal labor law, which bars town employees from performing "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed," shields workers from missing out on compensation.

But several towns for decades have employed part-time firefighters who also are volunteers conducting the same, or similar, services at private, independent volunteer firehouses. Whether the private firehouses count as separate entities or municipal employers remains a matter of debate among attorneys, town officials and firefighters.

"I could have two attorneys in the room and they'd have two different opinions. Four attorneys, four opinions," Steward said. "It's very challenging."

The U.S. Department of Labor has said "even when there is no evidence of coercion ... allowing paid employees of a nonprofit organization to perform the same type of services for their employer on an uncompensated, volunteer basis would in effect allow employees to waive their rights to compensation under the FLSA."

Because the law bars employees from waiving their rights to compensation, towns theoretically could be on the hook for payment to firefighters for untold volunteer hours.

This past Wednesday night, the Waterford Board of Fire Chiefs held a special meeting, in executive session, to "discuss strategy and/or negotiations concerning pending claims and/or litigation related to wage and hour issues and/or attorney-client privileged communications related to the same."

The Day on Friday filed a Freedom of Information Act request for copies of any claim or litigation related to wage and hour issues filed with the town.

With similar discussions on the well-known FLSA issue over the last few months in Salem, Montville and Bozrah, Avena on Friday said, "We're beginning to realize that the model of trying to both volunteer and be a part-timer is not one that we think should be followed."

Steward and Avena on Friday said the town would work to resolve the issue in the coming weeks but did not state a firm timetable for the policy shift.

"We appreciate everybody for what they're doing," Avena said, describing volunteers' and paid firefighters' dedication as impressive and admirable. "But we can't continue a model that doesn't meet every standard. We have to obligate ourselves to respect the state statutes and federal law. We can't overlook you even though we know in your heart of hearts, you want to do your job."

The Day has obtained a letter recently issued to firefighters laying out instructions to paid part-timers, informing them that if they want to continue serving as town employees, they must elect to do so by June 14, 2019, while understanding they are "no longer eligible to volunteer such services."

According to the letter, issued by Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller, part-timers who do not respond by June 14 will be ineligible for any paid shifts but may, in the future, apply for part-time employment with the town if positions are posted.

Chief Todd Branche of Waterford's Cohanzie Fire Company on Friday declined to comment on the past week's Board of Chiefs meeting. But he said if the town were to ask volunteers and part-timers to decide to pick one or the other, it potentially could lead to some experienced firefighters not volunteering as many hours and could deal "a significant blow to an already fragile volunteer system."

Last month, Montville (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190427/labor-laws-force-shakeup-of-montville-fire-services#comments>) attorneys Halloran & Sage — after telling firefighters to pick just one category, part-timer or volunteer — said that firefighters could volunteer at one firehouse and work paid part-time shifts at another.

Multiple Montville firefighters said they weren't interested in volunteering in one firehouse while covering part-time shifts in another, and Avena said such a workaround wouldn't be manageable in Waterford.

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Montville budget unlikely to include 3 new firefighters urged by fire marshal

Published May 01, 2019 7:56PM

By Benjamin Kail

Montville — A steady decline in volunteering, combined with a 15-percent increase in call volume over the last decade, recently prompted Fire Marshal Bill Bundy to push for hiring three new full-time firefighters, a \$161,500 expense that the mayor and town councilors do not want to tack on to the 2019-20 budget.

Bundy made his case before the Finance Committee on Monday, saying he was concerned the town — which employs 10 full-time firefighters and has volunteers at four private firehouses — was not maintaining the Occupational Safety and Health Administration policy known as **two-in, two-out** (<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1998-04-29>). The OSHA policy mandates that firefighters don't go into dangerous fires or rescues alone and that two remain outside away from danger, should they need to begin a rescue of firefighters inside.

The discussion came a week after town officials looking to comply with **federal labor laws** (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190427/labor-laws-force-shakeup-of-montville-fire-services#comments>) altered a long-standing practice employed by many fire companies across the state, telling volunteer firefighters who also work paid part-time shifts that they cannot serve the same firehouse in both paid and volunteer capacities.

Officials in towns like Preston (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190425/NWS01/190429624>) and Waterford, also facing higher call volumes and smaller pools of trained volunteers, likewise are considering addressing staffing and qualification concerns, with Preston potentially doubling its fire department budget and Waterford debating the creation of an official town fire department under which its five volunteer fire companies would operate. The town of Bozrah in March struck a **hiring deal** (<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/20190306/bozrah-firefighters-officials-strike-hiring-deal>) to add paid firefighters and EMTs to a previously all-volunteer department.

Bundy's budget request included 13 firefighters for a total of \$801,499, but Mayor Ron McDaniel's proposed \$22.5 million **municipal budget** (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190409/NWS01/190409439>) included no new staff, with firefighter personnel projected to cost about \$640,000, Finance Committee Chairman Wills Pike said on Wednesday.

Bundy's proposal garnered support from a few members of the public, including full-time firefighter Tim Condon — who said the declining number of volunteers forces the firehouses to rely on mutual aid — and Public Safety Commission members Karen Perkins and Vic Lenda. Chesterfield Company Chief Keith Truex also said he supported the additional firefighters, especially if it allowed for 24-hour coverage at his station.

8/24/2020

The Day - Montville budget unlikely to include 3 new firefighters urged by fire marshal - News from southeastern Connecticut

Town Council Chairman Tom McNally said the town needs more EMTs, but he believed Bundy, McDaniel and the fire chiefs should discuss staffing requirements before any potential budget increase.

Asked if any meetings were planned before the budget is finalized and voted on by the Town Council in the coming weeks, McDaniel said Wednesday that he submitted his spending plan "and that is where I stand right now."

McDaniel noted that the town could see funding later this year for two new firefighters if it is successful in a recent grant application.

Combined with a school budget of \$38.9 million, the mayor's total 2019-20 budget of \$61.9 million called for a 1.74-mill tax increase.

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Labor laws force shakeup of Montville fire services

Published April 27, 2019 6:45PM | Updated April 28, 2019 5:55PM

By Benjamin Kail

Montville — Town officials looking to comply with federal labor laws recently altered a long-standing practice employed by many fire companies across the state, telling volunteer firefighters who also work paid part-time shifts that they cannot serve the same firehouse in both paid and volunteer capacities.

Earlier this month, law firm Halloran & Sage said in an email to Mayor Ron McDaniel that the Fair Labor Standards Act (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>) bars town employees from performing "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed," potentially creating a situation ripe for FLSA violations at each of the town's four volunteer fire companies.

At least eight volunteer firefighters, including some officers and two chiefs, also have worked part-time shifts for the last several years. But Montville, Waterford and other towns recently have revisited labor laws and staffing concerns, partly inspired by Bozrah after that town earlier this year reached a firefighter hiring agreement (<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/20190306/bozrah-firefighters-officials-strike-hiring-deal>) a year after concerns cropped up about potential FLSA violations (<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/20180227/lawyers-town-deal-with-bozrah-fire-company-problematic>).

Even if firefighters in the past willingly agreed to both volunteer and cover some part-time shifts, the U.S. Department of Labor has said that "even when there is no evidence of coercion ... allowing paid employees of a nonprofit organization to perform the same type of services for their employer on an uncompensated, volunteer basis would in effect allow employees to waive their rights to compensation under the FLSA."

Because the Department of Labor says employees cannot waive FLSA rights, a volunteer firefighter could be entitled to payment for volunteer hours if his or her volunteer duties for the town are precisely the same as when he or she is working for the town part-time.

Earlier this month, town officials told the eight firefighters to pick just one category moving forward: volunteer or part-timer. But McDaniel sought a clarifying opinion from Halloran & Sage, and the law firm this past week recommended that "part-time firefighters work at one department for wages and then volunteer their services at another department without compensation."

"Since each department is its own separate corporate entity, we believe this will not be an issue with the Department of Labor," the attorneys wrote.

"This way they can belong to their local station as a volunteer and it gives them an opportunity to work part-time at another station," McDaniel said Thursday.

McDaniel added that based on a volunteer firefighter's level of training and the number of calls they respond to, they are eligible for stipends under the Volunteer Firefighters Relief Fund. But Halloran & Sage said the U.S. Department of Labor would find it illegal for a part-time firefighter to receive stipends from the town "for their volunteer efforts for the same, or similar, services." So firefighters that serve both as part-timers and volunteers would not collect the usual stipends for volunteer time, McDaniel said.

Keith Truex, Chesterfield Company's chief and one of the eight volunteers who's worked part-time shifts for several years, said some firefighters may not "necessarily agree" with the recent legal opinion. Truex said some firefighters have argued that state law (<https://www.state.ct.us/law/rel-stat/2017/7-323t.htm>) appears to conflict with federal law (https://www.dol.gov/whd/opinion/FLSA/2018/2018_01_05_16_FLSA.pdf), in that municipal contracts in Connecticut cannot prohibit town-paid firefighters or emergency personnel from serving as active members of a volunteer fire department in the town in which they reside during personal time.

Messages left with the state and U.S. Department of Labor were not immediately responded to.

Truex said neither he nor two volunteers in his department who have worked part-time were interested in working in other departments.

"We did it to make sure the shifts were covered at our station," Truex said Friday. "It's not like a part-time firefighter makes a lot of money."

In Waterford — where officials looking to address staffing, command structure and qualification concerns are proposing to create a town fire department under which its five volunteer companies would operate — First Selectman Dan Steward said town officials and attorneys also were discussing some of the same labor issues recently.

Steward added that he believed Montville's attorneys interpreted the labor laws correctly, but noted "I've got volunteer chiefs who work part-time shifts," and if part-time work must be performed at another station, "maintaining that separation is very difficult."

Montville Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Director Bill Bundy said the "situation is being looked at through the office of the mayor and counsel. As department heads, we're maintaining the staffing and there's been no gap in coverage. We're supplementing volunteers with the current allotment of part-time and full-time staff."

Montville currently employs 10 full-time firefighters, and McDaniel said the town applied for a grant that could lead to the hiring of two additional firefighters.

McDaniel said to date "there has been no uptick in overtime as a result of the volunteer/part-time issue."

Overtime has cost the town between about \$112,000 and \$147,000 annually over the last five years, with McDaniel noting the fluctuations are "more due to attrition and rehiring lags and coverage for paid time off or worker's compensation."

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Salem latest to ponder: Can paid firefighters also volunteer?

Published May 03, 2019 3:22PM | Updated May 09, 2019 11:39AM

By Lindsay Boyle

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Salem — The Board of Selectmen on Tuesday privately will discuss a question many towns are pondering: Can a paid firefighter legally volunteer for the same firehouse?

First Selectman Kevin Lyden said the conversation about federal labor laws — one that has been discussed before — came up again after The Day wrote about Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Co. Chief James Savalle in March.

Savalle, one of two full-time paid firefighters in town, had been cited with creating a public disturbance (<https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20190325/gardner-lake-volunteer-chief-cited-in-firehouse-scuffle>) — an infraction — in relation to a March 2018 scuffle at the firehouse.

But Savalle's paid hours are on weekdays. The incident happened on a weekend, when he was volunteering.

Lyden determined he couldn't place Savalle on administrative leave while the case was pending because he doesn't oversee volunteers. But he also said the situation highlighted a "murky area" the selectmen would need to discuss.

Though Savalle's case was dismissed March 27, that conversation continues, Lyden said.

At the crux of the issue is the Fair Labor Standards Act (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>), which was designed to protect employees' rights to compensation. Among other things, the act says town employees can't volunteer to provide their employer the same services they are paid to provide.

But full- and part-time paid firefighters in towns including Salem, Preston, Montville and Waterford have been doing just that for years.

Speaking to *The Day* last month (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190427/labor-laws-force-shakeup-of-montville-fire-services>), Keith Truax, chief of Chesterfield Fire Co. in Montville, said some firefighters believe a state law (<https://wcc.state.ct.us/law/rel-stat/2017/7-323t.htm>) contradicts the federal law. The state law says municipal contracts can't prohibit town-paid firefighters or emergency personnel from volunteering at fire departments in the towns where they live during their personal time.

Montville Mayor Ron McDaniel said a possible solution would be to allow the paid firefighters to volunteer at companies other than the ones where they work.

In Salem, Lyden said each full-time paid firefighter — one is assigned to Gardner Lake, the other to Salem Volunteer Fire Co. — also volunteers at his respective company.

The town pays three part-time fire marshals, too, and has list of "about a dozen" firefighters who are paid to fill in when one of the regulars is sick or on vacation.

Under an on-call system, Lyden said some firefighters get \$25 for a six-hour period to be available and in town on certain weekends and evenings. Volunteers additionally can get a tax abatement of \$1,000 or a stipend of \$550 if they earn enough points under an ordinance that was adopted in 2011 and amended in 2017.

Lyden said he has spent many evenings over the past month deliberating the paid/volunteer issue with a labor attorney, the fire marshals and McDaniel. He said he expects the attorney to provide a letter with his suggestions before Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting.

Lyden said he'll outline the attorney's advice during the executive session.

"I'm not trying to hide anything," he said when asked why he chose to have the conversation in private. "I have to bring the selectmen up to speed. I'm not sure if I will have the attorney there, or what questions they'll ask. I'm trying to balance being transparent and open, but sensitive about certain information."

Lyden, who himself was a volunteer firefighter in the 1970s, vowed to follow the attorney's recommendations, whatever they may be.

"Back then, you went to the Windham fire school for three hours, threw on some old boots and a jacket and you were good to go," he said. "Now it's 100 hours of training and all sorts of laws and regulations."

"We can't just say, 'Well, it was done this way 30 years ago,'" he said. "So what? Things have changed. Laws are laws. And they're not trying to be restrictive — they're trying to protect people."

Because of the potential labor issue, Bozrah decided to hire more firefighters (<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/news/20190306/bozrah-firefighters-officials-strike-hiring-deal>) in March. Following Bozrah's lead, the Montville fire marshal also is pushing for three new paid firefighters, though the budget is unlikely to fulfill his request (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190501/montville-budget-unlikely-to-include-3-new-firefighters-urged-by-fire-marshal>).

"Around here we have a lot of good people volunteering, some very dedicated emergency service personnel," Lyden said, noting how volunteerism is declining nationwide. "Bozrah, Montville, Salem, Colchester ... we all work together anyway. We'll work together and we'll get through this."

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Editor's Note: *This version removes a reference to a town that was incorrectly identified as having allowed paid firefighters to volunteer for their departments.*

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East Lyme to hire two overnight firefighters

Published June 22, 2019 8:37PM | Updated June 22, 2019 8:41PM

By **Mary Biekert** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=m.biekert) Day staff writer

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East Lyme — Amid higher call volumes and declining volunteerism, the town, its two fire departments and the independent East Lyme Ambulance Association signed an agreement this past week to hire and split the costs for two full-time firefighters, further ensuring resident safety overnight without spending more taxpayer money to do so.

Deemed as "precedent-setting" by First Selectman Mark Nickerson in an interview Thursday, the five-year agreement offers a solution to issues impacting coverage and response times, while also potentially providing a framework should the town ever need to hire additional fire personnel as **municipalities in the region debate** (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190504/waterford-to-hire-2-full-time-firefighters-as-labor-issues-heat-up>) over federal labor laws dictating that town employees may not perform "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed."

The town and its fire departments have not taken a hard stance on the **Fair Labor Standards Act** (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/reg/statutes/FairLaborStandAct.pdf>), keeping with the "status quo," Nickerson said, even as other towns such as Montville and Waterford have, on the advice of attorneys, forced firefighters to pick either to serve as volunteers or work as paid part-timers.

Nickerson said the town has been working with its attorney to determine an exact legal definition of the law, stating that each town has its own way of organizing fire services and that East Lyme's system might not violate those laws.

He said paid East Lyme part-time firefighters still are picking up volunteer shifts when necessary, especially as was the case during the **Guy's Oil fire** (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190505/NWS01/190509695>) in May.

"It was all hands on deck. Some of the volunteers that came out were part-timers working outside of their designated shifts," Nickerson said. "The bedrock of fire departments in New England is based in volunteerism. You can't change that. So we may have to find a way around that, but we can't change the need of volunteers."

Fire coverage in East Lyme currently is managed by seven full-time firefighter/EMTs — soon to be nine — and 13 part-timers hired by the town, as well as about 35 to 40 active volunteers, spread across the two fire departments in Flanders and Niantic.

"Enmeshed" with the East Lyme Ambulance Association, as Nickerson explained, the fire departments work closely together with the ambulance association, which functions out of both departments, to respond to emergencies, often sharing volunteers.

Volunteers hired by either the fire departments or the ambulance association, however, are not under town jurisdiction, Nickerson said. Both the ambulance association and the two fire departments are responsible for the hiring and management of their volunteers and do not go through a town hiring process.

"This (agreement) is a positive step," Nickerson said. "This might be a piece of that solution in the conflict of paid versus volunteer firefighters."

The agreement, signed by Nickerson on Wednesday after receiving unanimous approval from the Board of Selectmen, outlines that the ambulance association will pay the salaries of the two town-employed firefighters — amounting to about \$140,000 between the two annually — through quarterly reimbursements to the town. The ambulance association also will pay both employees' overtime costs, while the town will cover their health benefits.

The ambulance association's budget is funded through money received from medical fees billed to patients and their insurance plans, not through town taxes.

Nickerson said both firefighters are expected to be in their positions by July 1, or as "close to July 1 as possible," and one will serve in each department.

"This is the first time we are saying, 'Let's hire two people together. I'll pay for this part, you pay for this part,'" Nickerson said, while explaining that the town did not want to increase its spending on added fire personnel, of which it paid approximately \$822,000 last year toward both full-time and part-time salaries, including overtime, according to town records.

"Through this, we have made the town better, we made firefighting better and we made the ambulance better," Nickerson said. "It is precedent-setting. It is new ground."

Hiring the two firefighters, according to Flanders Fire Chief William Rix, fills a need to cover overnight hours with paid staff rather than rely on volunteers who, especially on weekdays, are less able to respond to emergencies due to having families or full-time jobs. The firefighters will work 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Sunday through Friday.

Presently, both fire departments are staffed from 8 a.m. to midnight, with gaps in staffing throughout the night, except during summer months, when overnight part-time positions are scheduled during those hours, Rix said Friday.

In other non-summer months, however, both fire chiefs said that their departments can be left empty after midnight some nights, though volunteers often do stay overnight in both. On those other nights, however, volunteers are relied upon to respond to emergency calls from their homes.

Rix explained that volunteers, when responding to calls from home, must receive the call, get up, get dressed and drive their vehicle to the fire station before responding to an emergency in the appropriate vehicle, either an ambulance or fire engine.

"This (hiring) should make the call responses quicker," Rix said. "You are cutting out the time it takes a volunteer person that's leaving from their home to drive there and get the ambulance. With someone already in the fire house overnight, it will save that much time."

Both Rix and Niantic fire Chief John Dwire said Friday that weekend nights, which include Friday and Saturday, still will be covered by volunteers and coverage on those nights typically is not an issue.

Considering that firefighter volunteerism has been on the decline nationally due to people's busier schedules and lengthier and costlier firefighter training processes, Dwire also explained that it's become increasingly more difficult to keep up with growing call volumes over the years.

Dwire said the Niantic Fire Department expects to receive a total of 2,300 calls this year by the end of June — 200 more than the 2,100 the department received in the same period last year. Dwire said he could not differentiate which percentage of those calls have been made between fire and medical emergencies.

And while Rix couldn't give exact call volume numbers Friday, he said the Flanders Fire Department also was on par with the same increased call volume this year.

"The volunteer system is not what it used to be. Our numbers aren't what (they) used to be. We are relying more on paid staff and paid personnel," Dwire said. "Collaborations like this are occurring more and more, and we're just happy we were able to come together to keep our service and provide the same level of service."

"This is recognizing a need to maintain the level of service our departments provide to the community," he said. "We both identified that response times and staffing matters and in order to keep that level of service going, we thought this was the best way to continue that."

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Waterford to hold public hearings on creating townwide fire department

Published July 28, 2019 7:59PM | Updated July 28, 2019 8:49PM

By Benjamin Kail

Waterford — A public hearing is planned next week on a proposed ordinance that officials say will create a town-wide fire department and establish uniform qualifications and operating procedures under which the town's five volunteer companies would operate.

The proposed ordinance follows a roughly 18-month review of fire services by the Public Protection and Safety Standing Committee of the RTM, and labor and town attorneys. It also comes as towns across the region continue to grapple with manpower issues amid dwindling volunteer numbers and upheaval sparked by tighter interpretation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Tim Condon, chairman of the committee, said in an interview that creating "one cohesive department" helps the town enforce proper training and qualifications while better enabling volunteer and career firefighters to service the town anywhere they're needed.

"By setting up one department it makes everybody answer to one central location, the director of fire services, and his office can create policies, including training, and standards that are town-wide," Condon said. "The idea behind this is that we've got five companies and we're trying to mold them while being respectful that they're steeped in tradition. The attempt is to put everybody on the same page. The five independent companies are still going to exist and be independent, it's just how the town is looking to assist volunteers and provide service."

The ordinance states that "any individual, volunteer or paid, wishing to serve in the Waterford Fire Department, must meet and maintain the qualifications for said volunteer or paid position as set forth by the Director of Fire Services and Director of Human Resources ... All personnel are responsible for operating in conformance with unified policies, rules and procedures established by the Director of Fire Services."

"Instead of five policy manuals, there will be one," is how Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller described the change in an interview. "It's essentially the same content but improved and updated with the times."

First Selectman Dan Steward said while the ordinance has produced rumors about the direction of fire services, it's about "standardization and programs that will work and protect our public."

"We're trying to do what's right for the town yet respecting what these fire companies do," he said. "It's been a long process to get standardization and we're making sure what we have will work and not get anyone hurt."

Steven Frischling, spokesman for the Cohanzie Fire Company, said the ordinance has concerned some volunteer firefighters. He argued establishing "one set of guidelines would make it easier for everybody, career, volunteer, part-time ... but a singular fire service would require a charter change. They're seeking to get around that each of the five fire companies are wholly independent."

Officials and firefighters alike acknowledge the complexity of the town's fire services, which rely on five independent volunteer companies that own their stations but use town equipment, and are staffed by a mix of volunteers supported by career firefighters and part-timers.

Earlier this year, Waterford and Montville, on the advice of lawyers looking to comply with federal labor laws, told dozens of firefighters they cannot be both part-timers and volunteers — at least not at the same station. The 1938 federal labor law, which bars town employees from performing "volunteer services for the same entity by which they are employed," shields workers from missing out on compensation.

Frischling said the town's decision to not let volunteers also pick up part-time shifts has created a situation forcing part-timers to work excessive hours — to the point where they could eventually demand benefits.

"They went from not having an FLSA problem to having one," he argued.

Miller countered that while the town has used some overtime following the changes, the "numbers should be back up in full force by September, with more part-timers and the full-timers in training out on their own. The key to it is, we didn't lose anybody. The choice wasn't to stay or go, the choice was, are you part-time or volunteer."

The town this spring bolstered overnight and weekend coverage by boosting its full-time staff (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190504/waterford-to-hire-2-full-time-firefighters-as-labor-issues-heat-up>) from nine to 11 firefighters, and the nonprofit Waterford Ambulance Service — also staffed by a mix of volunteers and town-paid part- and full-time firefighters — "has stepped up ... to figure out how we get these shifts filled," Steward said. Waterford receives few fire calls, but "EMS calls are out of sight," Steward said recently, noting the town ran 3,000 ambulance calls last year, almost 800 to area nursing homes.

In April, longtime town firefighter Kevin Ziolkowski (<https://www.theday.com/article/20190507/NWS01/190509562>) formally requested "financial compensation for all hours worked as a volunteer firefighter ... from Jan. 1, 1989, to the present." He later sent a formal complaint to the state. As of last week, he was waiting to hear from the town how many hours he had worked during the period.

Ziolkowski said he sent letters asking state representatives and the governor's office if the town has the authority "to attempt to start a brand new department."

Ziolkowski and other firefighters have acknowledged that volunteer numbers are dwindling across the state and country. In Waterford, they point to a lack of incentive programs compared to Norwich or Montville; a property tax break for volunteers only applies to those living in Waterford.

"They talk a great game but they don't ever start a program," Ziolkowski said about two officials.

Condon said following the passage of the new fire services ordinance, town officials want to "work with volunteers and administrators in trying to put together a stipend program. Anything we can do to slow the loss of the volunteer system and help bolster it — that's what we're looking into."

"Communities across America are dealing with the same thing," Condon added. "You need in excess of 500 hours of training before you can help mitigate an emergency scene. That's a tall order."

Condon said the public hearing, which begins Monday, Aug. 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, would be continued on other days and an RTM vote would come later.

"We want to make sure people have ample time to digest this," he said. "We want to hear from the public and if real concerns are brought forward, then there's time to consider them."

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With policy change, Waterford may lose two fire chiefs

Published May 16, 2019 5:30PM | Updated May 16, 2019 7:48PM

By Lindsay Boyle

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Waterford — As part-time firefighters consider whether to keep volunteering and stop getting paid — or vice versa — at least two departments could find themselves without chiefs next month.

In a May 2 letter, Fire Services Director Bruce Miller told the town's 33 part-time firefighters they no longer could volunteer their services in town starting June 14. He said the town will remove anyone who doesn't respond by the deadline from the part-time paid list.

Cohanzie Public Information Officer Steven Frischling, who has been trying to determine the impact to his own company, said Oswegatchie Chief Mark Schenking and Quaker Hill Chief Monte Fielder plan to resign their volunteer posts.

Messages left for those two chiefs weren't returned. Miller and the Goshen chief also didn't respond to messages, and no one answered the Jordan Fire Co.'s main line, which wasn't accepting voicemail messages.

First Selectman Dan Steward said it isn't yet clear how many firefighters will choose to stop volunteering or whether any chiefs or high-ranking officers will be among them.

"But we do expect some serious changes to occur," he said.

The policy change in Waterford, which has five fire companies, comes amid discussions about whether towns including Montville, Preston, Salem (<https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20190503/salem-latest-to-ponder-can-paid-firefighters-also-volunteer>) and Waterford are violating the Fair Labor Standards Act by allowing paid firefighters to volunteer for their departments.

Among other things, the act says town employees can't volunteer to provide their employer the same services they are paid to provide.

8/19/2020

The Day - With policy change, Waterford may lose two fire chiefs - News from southeastern Connecticut

In the past, the same discussion has delivered no results, in part because state law says towns can't prohibit town-paid firefighters or emergency personnel from volunteering at fire departments in the towns where they live during their personal time.

This time around, with Montville giving its part-timers the same ultimatum (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190427/labor-laws-force-shakeup-of-montville-fire-services>) and Preston trying to nearly double (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190508/preston-residents-to-hear-pitch-for-paid-firefighters-thursday>) its fire staffing budget, seems different.

"This is the federal law," Steward said. "This is not something that we've made up, and (the firefighters) know it."

The policy change also came after Kevin Ziolkowski, a 57-year-old town firefighter, filed a claim last month seeking payment for all the hours he worked as a volunteer over the last three decades. Ziolkowski told The Day (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190507/waterford-firefighter-seeks-payment-for-30-years-of-volunteer-hours>) earlier this month he didn't do it for the money — he did it because "someone needs a hard and fast decision on this so we can move on."

Despite everything, Steward said homeowners shouldn't be worried. The town has nine full-time paid firefighters who "are more than capable of running a fire scene" and is working to add two more (<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20190504/waterford-to-hire-2-full-time-firefighters-as-labor-issues-heat-up>).

Steward also said house fires are rare — the town had five last year — and that "everybody goes" to each blaze, so manpower shouldn't be an issue.

"We're looking at some changes within the fire department that we may have had to make anyway," he said. "We've been having issues with who's in charge at the fire scene."

But Todd Branche, part-time firefighter and volunteer chief of the Cohanzie company, said manpower is a major concern.

Branche said while some part-timers only volunteer for a shift or two, others respond to up to 20 percent of fire and medical calls.

"The numbers (of volunteers) are thin already," he said. "Not just here, but around the whole country. It's definitely going to have impact."

"When you throw into the mix those officers who have knowledge and service to the town of 20 years, 10 years," he said, "we're going to lose hundreds of years of experience and knowledge for them to (be paid for) a few hours."

Branche said he has decided to stop getting paid June 14 so he can stay on as a volunteer chief. He figures he'll only lose one volunteer — he has three part-time firefighters and believes two are choosing to volunteer — but said other companies may suffer more.

As the town figures out what to do next, Branche said it should further incentivize people to become volunteer firefighters — something that requires hundreds of hours in training.

Waterford's volunteer firefighters can get an up to a \$1,000 tax abatement, but only if they own real property, volunteer enough hours and live in town.

"That's the direction they need to go in," Branche said. "Otherwise we're looking at the end of the volunteer system as we know it in Waterford."

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Committee to review Waterford fire services

Published April 06, 2018 8:43PM

By Benjamin Kail

Waterford — The town's Public Protection and Safety Committee plans to conduct an extensive review of the way Waterford manages fire and emergency medical services.

In a letter to the 22-member Representative Town Meeting this week, Republicans Tim Condon and Mike Perkins called for the review, in part because constituents had voiced "concerns regarding response times, equipment and a well-defined chain of command."

The RTM voted to send the matter to the committee, which will meet with staff from all five fire departments, fire union representatives, a range of town officials and the Waterford Ambulance Service (<http://waterfordambulance.org/>), a nonprofit serving the town's five EMS districts.

"We are currently at a turning point in town in which this charge has the potential to save taxpayers ... tens of millions of dollars, as well as improving the safety of the public, and possibly saving lives," the letter states.

The committee wants to review response times; staffing requirements and procedures for both paid employees and volunteers; fleet and equipment management; the number and locations of current firehouses; purchasing and costs; and overall procedural and operational effectiveness.

Officials said the committee, which will provide recommendations to the RTM, has not yet scheduled its next meeting.

"It's healthy every now and then to peek under the hood and see how things are running," Condon said in an interview Friday. He added that an article published by The Day about the fallout after Cohanzie Fire Co.'s Instagram account (<https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20180326/deleted-instagram-page-exposes-rift-in-waterford-fire-services>) was deleted prompted "a lot of questions" including about "the whole system in its entirety."

First Selectman Dan Steward said it was not necessarily "a new idea to study fire services," and added the town "continues to try to find ways to make fire service a better entity."

"I want my firefighters, whether volunteer or paid, to have a safe operation," Steward said Friday. "Anything less than that is unacceptable."

Condon's and Perkins' letter suggested officials should suspend orders of fire apparatuses until the review is completed and hold off on "any further action of the Oswegatchie Firehouse Building Committee until a needs-based review of numbers and locations of existing firehouses has been completed."

But Steward noted the RTM only voted to conduct the fire services review — not to suspend potential repairs to the firehouse, or to stall an already ordered firetruck being manufactured for Oswegatchie.

8/19/2020

The Day - Committee to review Waterford fire services - News from southeastern Connecticut

Matthew Carson, chief of Quaker Hill Fire Co. for the last dozen years, said he was aware there are "some concerns with some of the fire services, ambulances and apparatus having difficulty getting out at night."

He said at Quaker Hill, "once in a great while, we have to have another company come in and help us out. But we cover our own pretty good. I look forward to the committee getting together and seeing what suggestions they have. We're always willing to work with other companies and the town."

Condon said the review would be open, transparent and constructive, as opposed to adversarial.

"You see Ledyard doing the same thing right now, and East Lyme has had a fire study done," he said, noting it would not be a quick process. "Anytime you talk about emergency services, an important service, it takes time. It's better to slow things down and make sure everybody's heard."

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Deleted Instagram page exposes rift in Waterford fire services

Published March 26, 2018 8:34PM | Updated March 27, 2018 8:51PM

By Lindsay Boyle

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Waterford — A member of the Jordan Fire Co. last month deleted an Instagram account the Cohanzie Fire Co. had been using, prompting town officials and police to open investigations and leading to an outcry from the parents of those involved.

The incident dates to Feb. 24, when Steven Frischling, a local photographer who was named the Cohanzie department's public information officer two weeks ago, noticed the waterford_fire_co5 Instagram page had been deleted. Frischling has been running the account for more than a year, using it to spread positive messages about the department and ideally to attract younger members. The page has nearly 1,000 followers.

Frischling is a former free-lance photographer for The Day.

Despite Frischling's involvement, someone else launched the account several years ago — the same person, it turns out, who deleted the account last month in the company of four fellow Jordan firefighters.

That person is Peter Ewing, who volunteers for the Jordan company now but used to do so for Cohanzie. According to an email sent to Cohanzie fire Chief Todd Branche, Ewing was with Austin Rheume, John Campbell, Mitchell Clapsadle and a minor when the account was deleted. All five were on leave for about two weeks as the town and police investigated the incident.

The Day left various messages for the four adult firefighters, only Rheume responded Monday.

Speaking by phone last week, Brian Rheame, Austin's father, said Ewing deleted the account — an account still attached to Ewing — because he was concerned some of the photos violated federal medical law. The senior Rheame said the photos in question showed the faces of victims of car crashes.

At the Jordan firehouse Monday, Austin Rheame repeated the same reasoning in the company of Heather Martin, mother of the involved minor. The two of them ended the interview a short time later, when The Day explained that it was the town, not Branche, that involved police. They said that information conflicted with what they had been told and they wanted to learn more before saying anything else.

Frischling said he has digitally removed patients' faces in the past out of sensitivity, but added that federal medical law doesn't prohibit someone who's not in the medical field (http://davidkonig.com/blog/2009/10/14/on-hipaa-and-photography/#.WvTe_IQ-cps) from taking photos of vehicles — and the people in them — on public roads. It's less clear how such laws would apply to a social media account using the moniker of a fire department that provides medical services.

Since the Instagram deletion, Brian Rheame has been vocal on Facebook, calling into question the way the Cohanzie company operates and wondering why five people were placed on leave when just one deleted an account. Rheame also noted there's no official policy governing social media that the town or the Cohanzie chief could say the young firefighters violated.

Rheame comes from a family that has been involved with the fire service in various ways for 30 years, he said.

The senior Rheame acknowledged that Ewing could have taken several other steps, such as changing the password, or asking Frischling to desist if there was a potentially law-breaking post. Still, Rheame said he is appalled the investigation into the incident took so long.

Launched not long after the account was deleted in late February, the town's investigation wrapped up in mid-March. First Selectman Dan Steward said the delay happened because of issues scheduling interviews with involved parties, but Rheame said the firefighters were told they'd only be off the job for a couple of days.

"I don't want this to happen to the kids again," Rheame said, quickly acknowledging most of them aren't actually children. "Three of the five are qualified to enter burning buildings and had to sit out all of these nor'easters. Ultimately it hurt the residents of the town."

No formal discipline

Upon learning the account had been deleted, Branche, the Cohanzie chief, contacted Waterford human resources personnel and the director of fire services, who in turn asked all five Jordan firefighters not to report to work pending an investigation.

Branche, upset about what appeared to him to be an attempt to hurt his department, also posted a sign outside the station banning the five firefighters from the premises. Rheame took issue with that, calling it an attempt to damage the reputations of those named. The sign has since been taken down.

According to Steward, the town conducted interviews and reviewed surveillance video in its investigation of the five Jordan company firefighters. That's how it learned Ewing deleted the account from a room within the Jordan headquarters as the others looked on.

Toward the end of the week of March 11, Steward said, the town allowed all five members to continue volunteering.

"Once the interviews were completed, we basically said 'don't do it again,'" Steward said.

None of the five was formally disciplined.

At the request of the town — not Branche, as some social media posts have suggested — police also looked into the matter to see whether Ewing committed a crime by deleting an account being handled by a fire department. Last week, Police Chief Brett Mahoney said officers found no criminal aspect to the case and as such will not be releasing it.

'It's not just a playhouse'

On March 6, after much legwork, the Cohanzie Instagram account was restored. Four days prior to that, Heather Martin, mother of the involved minor, had called on the town to investigate Branche for alleged harassment.

In a letter she sent to Bruce Miller, the director of fire services, Martin said Branche on Feb. 25 called Clapsadle, who is one of the involved firefighters but is not Martin's son. Martin said Branche threatened Clapsadle during the conversation and alluded that her son, the minor, would have trouble getting work in Waterford in the future. Martin further accused Branche of "malicious gossip and libel." She asked Miller to investigate Branche's "appalling behavior."

On Thursday, Branche denied those claims and provided an email chain from that day in which Clapsadle reached out to him.

8/24/2020

The Day - Deleted Instagram page exposes rift in Waterford fire services - News from southeastern Connecticut

At 3:16 p.m. Feb. 25, Clapsadle emailed Branche, saying that he and the other three adult firefighters "realized (deleting the account) was a big mistake" and weren't thinking about how much time Frischling had put into it. After a neutral back-and-forth, Clapsadle asked Branche if he would like to meet "to try to resolve this problem." Branche then asked Clapsadle to call him, which Clapsadle did. The conversation that followed was cordial, Branche said.

Steward said to his knowledge the town did not open an investigation into Branche after receiving Martin's letter — a fact Brian Rheume found odd considering how quickly the town placed the Jordan firefighters on leave.

"People need to realize there's consequences to some actions," Steward said. "These are young people who care about fire services, and we hope they can continue, but they need to know they have to be appropriate. It's not just a playhouse at the firehouse."

Going forward

Branche, who said he only spoke for himself and the members of Cohanzie, said the social media firestorm over the last few weeks has "been like the worst time in my life."

"I have been in the fire service for 30 years," he said. "I have a lot of experience and training and for them to totally discredit me with falsehoods is beyond anything I would ever think."

Branche said the firefighters involved in deleting the Instagram account all were "members of my company at one time or another, and I've supported them" in the past.

He argued some of the firefighters were influenced by parents and other relatives, and claimed the ruckus was tied to efforts of union firefighters to expand in the area. Many who spoke out against him on social media, he pointed out, are connected to the union in some way.

"They want to grow their thing and discredit the volunteers," said Branche, who has been chief for four years.

Last week, Steward sat down with Brian Rheume and the other four parents to hear their concerns after learning some of them had taken to social media over the ordeal.

Rheume said the meeting left him wary but hopeful that the ordeal would lead to overall changes in the professionalism and organization of Waterford fire services. A combination of full-time paid, part-time paid and volunteer firefighters staff the town's five fire companies, with the paid employees being members of a bargaining unit. The staffing of the stations and the rules governing each have been points of contention (<https://www.theday.com/local/20141202/fire-staffing-raises-concerns-in-waterford>) for years.

Steward said he wishes the parents had chosen a forum other than Facebook, where misinformation easily spreads, if they felt their children shouldn't have been placed on leave or temporarily banned from the Cohanzie station.

"I felt we came to a reasonable understanding, for the most part," Steward said of the meeting. "We all protect our children."

Day Staff Writer Benjamin Kall contributed to this report.

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Norwich City Council approves fire services study

Published August 17, 2020 9:14PM

By **Claire Bessette** (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=c.bessette) Day staff writer

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Norwich — The City Council Monday approved hiring an Illinois consulting firm for \$81,150 to conduct a controversial comprehensive study of the city's fire service.

The council and the three-member Public Safety Committee have been debating a plan to hire an outside firm to do an in-depth study of the city's fire services, with the council's four majority Democrats advocating for the study and the minority three Republicans, including Mayor Peter Nystrom, opposed to the move.

Opponents cited the unbudgeted cost of the study and poor timing as city leaders and emergency response agencies are dealing with coronavirus challenges. Supporters of the city's five volunteer fire departments also are concerned that the study could lead to a revival of a failed effort to spread the city's paid fire district tax citywide.

The council voted 4-3 along party lines to approve the study, which is slated to be done by Dec. 31.

During the debate, Republican Alderwoman Stacy Gould, a volunteer firefighter, reiterated arguments she has made at meetings. She said the city is in no financial position to be spending more than \$81,000 on a study while many Norwich residents have lost their jobs and more job losses are expected when the Mohegan Sun Casino lays off many workers who were furloughed during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Democratic Council President Pro Tempore Mark Bettencourt admitted it is "not the perfect time" to be doing the study, but the problems will still be there when the pandemic is over. Democratic Alderman Derell Wilson repeated his long-standing argument that the city cannot stop functioning during the pandemic and city leaders have an obligation to look for improvements and efficiencies in government.

"If we keep kicking the can down the road, it will continue to stare at us," Wilson said.

The Public Safety Committee voted 2-1 last week, with Bettencourt and Chairman Alderman Joseph DeLucia in favor and Republican William Nash opposed, to recommend the full council contract with McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. of Wonder Lake, Ill., to conduct the study.

The firm was recommended by an in-house committee appointed by City Manager John Salomone that included the city manager, Comptroller Josh Pothier, Purchasing Agent Robert Castronova, Yantic volunteer Fire Chief Frank Blanchard and acting Norwich paid Fire Chief Keith Wucik. The committee interviewed four finalists from the eight firms that submitted proposals.

The proposal calls for a detailed study of fire emergency call response and the order in which departments are dispatched to calls and an assessment of apparatus response practices, response time data, radio communications and dispatch staffing, fire apparatus inventory and replacement, equipment purchase and inventory control and staffing.

Fire services and the relationship between the city's five volunteer departments and the central city paid department have been contentious for decades, including following an Aug. 3 fire (<https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20200803/norwich-house-fire-displaces-several-tenants-firefighters-suffer-heat-issues>) that caused heavy damage to a four-family house on Prospect Street.

Salomone told the City Council Monday that on Aug. 5, he met with Nystrom, two volunteer chiefs and paid department acting Chief Wucik regarding complaints that the city's five volunteer departments, all of which were called to the fire, were not utilized to "the greatest extent necessary," Salomone said. Salomone said the meeting "cleared the air," with Wucik explaining the situation.

"The chief (Wucik) explained what happened, and I think the explanation was agreeable to all concerned after a dialogue on it," Salomone said. "I was satisfied with the resolution."

Nash repeated his position that he does not oppose conducting an in-depth study of fire services, but is frustrated that the city couldn't resolve the six issues with its own fire experts. But Nash said now is not the time to spend \$81,150 cost — to be taken from the city's contingency fund — on a study he fears will not be comprehensive.

"I'm not against the study, I'm just against the price that we're paying for a partial study," Nash said. "There's no way this is going to be a full study. Their own admission is they're not going to give us a full study for this price."

The Public Safety Committee in 2019 had asked Salomone and the six fire chiefs to study the fire services and responses by departments that could allow a phase-out of some apparatus over time to save money. Aldermen became frustrated with lack of progress in the in-house study and called for an outside firm to do the study.

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Waterford residents speak out against fire district staffing changes



Chief Todd Patton answers residents' questions during a meeting Saturday at the Goshen Fire Department regarding department staffing changes. Patton is standing next to a vehicle exhaust ventilation apparatus, on left.

Published February 28, 2015 5:56PM | Updated March 01, 2015 1:03AM

Rick Koster (mailto:r.koster@theday.com)

Concerned and upset Waterford residents spoke out against staffing structure changes in their fire districts during informal, separate and simultaneous meetings Saturday morning at the Goshen Fire Department and the Quaker Hill Fire Company.

"This could be death or life," said Dee Burdick, who attended the Goshen meeting with her husband, John, who suffers from muscular dystrophy. Burdick addressed the crowd, saying, "I call (this station) more than anyone. John has had a heart attack and fallen in the shower. The firefighters here are phenomenal and they know all of us. They show up off-duty to help. I'm very worried that we won't get the same care."

The structural changes, which go into effect today, move one full-time firefighter position from Goshen and one from Quaker Hill to rotating shift positions at the other three districts in Waterford. This means Goshen and Quaker Hill will be staffed exclusively by a combination of volunteer and paid part-time firefighters.

The changes were announced in early December by First Selectman Daniel Steward and Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller after a Representative Town Meeting approved a new four-year contract with the Waterford Professional Firefighters Association.

The meetings were announced in a letter to citizens from the Goshen Chief Todd Patton and the Quaker Hill Chief Matthew Carson in which they expressed concerns that the personnel shift could result in potential delayed response in the two districts for those served by the two companies. The letter also said, "In the event that a Part Time Fire Fighter is not available then the Town will leave the Fire Station vacant."

About 80 people attended the Goshen meeting and close to 100 appeared in Quaker Hill. While worries about whether citizens can still count on adequate coverage seemed to be the primary concern at both gatherings, questions ranged from detailed inquiries on budget appropriations to how much additional time it will take to get a response from the other Waterford fire stations. One person asked whether home mortgage rates could be raised as a result of the slimmed down staffing, and others wanted to know if there were staffing guarantees for the summer, when the Goshen population rises with summer visitors and kids attending Camp Harkness.

At both meetings, people wanted specific instructions on how best to galvanize public forces to overturn the decision. Petitions were available for signing, and copies of the Board of Finance meeting agenda for March 16 — including Item No. 3, discussion of Fire Services — were handed out.

"I've lived here 54 years, and we've needed these guys in my home for fire and ambulance services many times," said Kerry Sullivan in Goshen. "It's very important what they do, and they're very much part of this community. And I just think a lot of these services will be delayed."

Steward attended the Quaker Hill meeting. He fielded questions and spoke individually with citizens and firefighters.

"It was challenging," he said afterward. "People have heartfelt concern for their safety. We have heartfelt concern for that, too. Our goal in making these changes is not to impact service, and we're doing everything we can not to affect it. Most of these decisions were made for efficiency within the fire department and not so much because of economics."

Patton, who stood in front of the crowd for an hour answering questions and coordinating commentary, said, "I'm not a politician, I'm just trying to do the best I can for my firefighters and the people in my district. Anyone who's in this station — whether they're full- or part-time or a volunteer — will do the best they can. But it's also true there's a certain familiarity and rhythm that comes with the job when you're here all the time. You know where everything is and what might need attention at any given time. We know the people. And now I worry that, while calls can be very similar, sometimes the response is just going to be different."

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Waterford fire chiefs say staffing changes could lead to delayed responses

Published February 24, 2015 9:31PM | Updated February 25, 2015 12:12AM

Tess Townsend (mailto:(Unknown address))

Waterford — A letter from the chiefs of Goshen Fire Department and Quaker Hill Fire Co. to residents in their districts expresses concerns that changes in the staffing structure of Fire Services will lead to delays in responses for those served by the two fire departments.

On March 1, Fire Services will move the two full-time firefighter positions — one at Goshen and one at Quaker Hill — to the other three districts in town. The change will mean Goshen and Quaker Hill will be staffed exclusively by a combination of volunteer and paid part-time firefighters.

"In the event that a Part Time Fire Fighter is not available then the Town will leave the Fire Station vacant," reads the letter, signed by Goshen Chief Todd Patton and Quaker Hill Chief Matthew Carson.

The letter tells recipients, "You can make help make a difference!" by calling First Selectman Daniel Steward and Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller to ask if they support the shift in staffing.

"If the answer is yes, ask them why the safety of life and property for the residents of the Quaker Hill and Goshen Fire Districts is not as important as that of residents in the other Fire Districts," the letter reads.

Patton said he hoped getting residents involved in advocating for the departments might eventually lead to the town considering hiring two additional full-time firefighters so that both Goshen and Quaker Hill can have a full-time person at the stations.

The chiefs will hold informational sessions at their respective fire stations Saturday at 10 a.m. The sessions are to be held simultaneously, according to Patton.

Steward and Miller said the changes, which were announced when Fire Services was negotiating a new contract with the Waterford Professional Firefighters Association, are intended to improve service at the fire departments.

Miller said the proposed Fire Services budget for 2015-16 includes an addition of about 2,500 hours for part-time firefighters to the existing budget that allows for 20,000 total hours for the 2014-15 year.

"We're not predicting any lapses in coverage or any delays," Miller said.

"We're not taking away, we're adding," he continued.

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The Day - Waterford fire chiefs say staffing changes could lead to delayed responses - News from southeastern Connecticut

He said the concentration on fire departments in the town's "center triangle" is meant to beef up coverage of commercial areas that typically generate more calls. He referenced Crystal Mall, the big box stores near Cross Road and commercial development along Route 1.

Steward said that for the month of March, all shifts are filled at all fire stations — except for three half-day shifts at Goshen.

"It's a very upsetting letter, and it's intended, I believe, to upset the population, and it isn't necessary to do that because there isn't necessarily a large change happening," Steward said.

"I'm very disappointed in the chiefs," he said.

The transfer of full-time firefighters from Goshen and Quaker Hill will allow Jordan, Oswegatchie and Cohanzie departments to be staffed with two full-time firefighters from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., and one of the three stations would have two full-time firefighters from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., volunteers will staff the town's five stations. Weekends will continue to be staffed by volunteer and paid part-time staff, with no changes.

As part of the WPPFA contract, one of the town's two fire inspectors will become a full-time firefighter. This will bring the total number of full-time firefighters to eight and put the number of inspectors at one.

Goshen Road resident Orlando Gengo, 68, said he was upset by the letter. He commented that his neighborhood contains institutions that he thinks require their own coverage: Great Neck Elementary School, Eugene O'Neill Theater, Millstone Power Station, Harkness Memorial Park and Waterford Town Beach.

"I understand that they probably want to centralize everything, but to me I think I'm getting short changed as a taxpayer and as a citizen of Waterford," he said.

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Waterford first selectman talks about fire departments

Published February 05, 2015 12:01AM

The following was submitted by Waterford First Selectman Dan Steward

Residents and members of local fire companies throughout Waterford have recently questioned how the town will staff and provide fire and ambulance services going forward.

Today, the town is in the fortunate position of having five active volunteer fire companies, with volunteer members supported by full-time and part-time paid firefighters. While the level and nature of staffing these fire companies has changed throughout Waterford's history, one thing certainly remains constant - the commitment of the town's residents, volunteer members of the five fire companies, and paid full-time and part-time firefighters to provide quality, responsive and efficient services throughout our community.

The structures of the separate fire and ambulance services are somewhat complicated, and residents understandably may be uncertain as to how these services operate. From an historical perspective, our five volunteer companies have provided the personnel for both fire and ambulance services since the early 1900s. The town's ambulance service was formally established as a separate entity from the fire companies in the 1940s, and the service continues today. The staffing for the ambulance service today includes volunteers and paid firefighters, all of whom are fully qualified as EMTs.

On the fire services side, the town began hiring full-time firefighters to support the volunteer companies in 1962, and has gradually increased the number of paid firefighters over time. Each of the five companies has different requirements based on geographic location, and, in turn, each has varied equipment needs. For example, one company might benefit from a ladder truck, another a brush truck, and another a boat. The current structure allows for the assessment of the needs of each company and the allocation of resources (financial, personnel, training, equipment) on a fair and equitable basis. Our full-time paid firefighters, who are members of a collective bargaining unit, are vital to the town's provision of fire services, and, as noted in their contract, serve in support of the town's volunteers and under the direction of the director of fire services.

Waterford considers every fire district critical when making decisions of any kind regarding fire and ambulance services. Over the years - whether under the direction of the fire commission or the director of fire services - adjustments have been made to the allocation of paid part-time and full-time staff to best meet the needs of the town. At present, the town provides paid coverage through full-time and part-time firefighters during weekdays, certain weekday evenings and weekends. While individuals may differ at any particular time as to how best to allocate part-time and full-time staff, the town must ultimately make the decisions as to the best interests of the town in utilizing its paid firefighter staffing, and, under the guidance of the director of fire services, will continue to ensure fire and ambulance coverage meet the needs of all fire districts and residents through our combination of volunteers, part-time and full-time firefighters.

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The Day - Waterford first selectman talks about fire departments - News from southeastern Connecticut

The town, in the course of its history, has engaged and will continue to engage, in an on-going evaluation of its fire and ambulance service needs. While I cannot guarantee that resources - whether financial, personnel, training or equipment - will remain allocated or fixed exactly as they have been most recently, I can emphatically state that the town's resolve and commitment to its citizens' safety, whether in the past, the present, or looking ahead, has not wavered. The decisions of the town and its director of fire services, in conjunction with the volunteer fire chiefs, regarding resources, safety and fire coverage will continue to be made in consideration of, to promote, and to ensure all citizens' safety.

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Fire staffing raises concerns in Waterford

Published December 02, 2014 12:01AM | Updated December 02, 2014 12:22AM

By Tess Townsend (mailto:(Unknown address)) Day Staff Writer

Waterford - The Representative Town Meeting approved a new four-year contract with the Waterford Professional Firefighters Association Monday.

The vote drew roughly 100 people to Town Hall, but it wasn't the contract that inspired concern among attendees - it was proposed scheduling changes for staffing at stations. The RTM wasn't voting on the scheduling changes, which were not part of the contract.

As part of the staffing changes, Fire Services is considering staffing Goshen and Quaker Hill departments only with volunteers and paid part-time firefighters, according to Director of Fire Services Bruce Miller.

Jordan, Oswegatchie and Cohanzie departments would be staffed with two full-time firefighters from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., and one of the three stations would have two full-time firefighters from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Miller said.

Between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., volunteers would staff the town's five stations.

Currently, all stations have at least one full-time firefighter on staff during the day shift. Part-time firefighters staff stations from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. and volunteers work the overnight shift.

Weekends are staffed by volunteer and paid part-time staff and there currently are not plans to change that, according to Miller.

Niantic River Road resident Pat Lewis, whose home falls into the coverage area of Oswegatchie Fire Department, said she was shocked about the current level of coverage and concerned about the impact of the changes.

"This is Waterford and we don't have coverage? What about if you need an ambulance at night. Has anybody thought of that? I have," she said during public comment of the meeting.

Miller said that it was critical to sufficiently staff Jordan and Cohanzie departments because those stations have the most important equipment. He explained after the meeting that both stations have ladder trucks, and Cohanzie also has a rescue truck.

Miller said he needed to discuss changes with station chiefs before Fire Services made final decisions about staff schedule changes. He said the department is exploring options for incentivizing volunteer firefighting, such as a cost-per-call system where volunteers would be paid for responding to calls.

The contract stipulates that one of Fire Services' two fire inspectors become a full-time firefighter, according to Steward.

Currently, both inspectors sometimes act as firefighters and that the remaining inspector will continue to sometimes participate in firefighting, according to association president Tom Martin.

The change will bring the total from two inspectors and seven inspectors to one inspector and eight firefighters.

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The Day - Fire staffing raises concerns in Waterford - News from southeastern Connecticut

The vote was 17 to 1 in favor of the four-year contract with three members who were present not voting.

Voting against was Republican William Auwood. Didn't vote though they were present -- basically, they abstained, but counsel asked them not to refer to it as abstaining. Republicans Timothy Condon, Thomas Dembek and Steven Garvin.

Pay for the nine positions represented by the union is slated to increase by 1.75 percent retroactively to July 2013, then increase by 2 percent retroactively starting July 2014, according to Steward. July 2015 and July 2016 will each bring 2.25 percent pay increases across the board, Steward said.

The total personnel cost increase to Fire Services from the pay increases will over the four years will be approximately \$58,000, according to a summary of the contract.

First Selectman Daniel Steward said changes in health insurance for members of the union will nearly exactly offset the increases.

The contract stipulates a shift from a preferred provider organization (PPO) plan to health savings account (HSA) plan, which will include increases in premium costs for union members enrolled in the plan, according to Steward.

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Fire departments agree: We need more volunteers

Published July 27, 2014 12:01AM | Updated July 27, 2014 12:26AM

By Greg Smith (mailto:g.smith@theday.com) Day Staff Writer

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The diminishing number of volunteers in the fire service over the past few decades has local departments continually looking for creative ways not only to attract, but to retain their members.

The Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, is using a \$1.2 million federal grant this year to tackle the problem. Over the coming weeks, the groups plan to develop applications and distribute funds to 15 departments with the greatest need for volunteers.

Fire Chief Association President Robert Shea, chief of the Portland Fire Department, said along with marketing campaigns, mentoring programs and leadership training, a key factor in the retention of firefighters is support for the municipalities they serve.

The municipalities can provide the key incentives, he said, in the form of tax abatements, pensions or pay-per-call stipends. Leadership is also another major factor, he said.

The more robust the volunteer service, he said, the lower the cost to the towns.

"Recruitment is one thing, but to keep a volunteer today is different because of time commitments in their everyday life. That trickles back to cities and towns," he said. "What are they going to do to keep them?"

Similar to national numbers, Connecticut's fire service is dominated by volunteers, according to state Fire Administrator Jeffrey Morrisette, a volunteer in his hometown of Wethersfield. Nationally, 69 percent of the nation's 1.13 million firefighters were volunteers in 2012, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

New London County has about 50 departments and just three municipalities covered at least in part by a paid department: Norwich, Groton and New London. Other towns have volunteer departments supplemented by paid firefighters. Other paid departments are at the two Indian reservations, the U.S. Naval Submarine Base and on the grounds of private companies such as Electric Boat and Pfizer.

The reasons for the decreasing supply of volunteers vary, but among them is the fact that nationwide, fewer residents work in the towns where they live, making responses to daytime calls difficult. Training requirements also have become more stringent, leading to months of training before a volunteer can participate in fighting a fire.

"Each town has their own unique challenges, some are geographical," Morrisette said. "For those rural communities ... a town of 3,000 people just doesn't have the populace to draw from."

In towns where a volunteer department is also the emergency medical service provider, volunteers are stressed because the vast majority of calls are EMS related, he said.

As to a solution to the problem, Morrisette said, "I don't think there is any silver bullet per se."

Towns have responded in a number of ways. Mutual aid agreements have evolved to include automatic responses from neighboring towns to assure proper manpower. It's common to see East Lyme's Niantic and Flanders departments respond to the same call regardless of the district.

Many towns have hired paid staff to cover the times when volunteers are least available. Montville, Waterford and East Lyme are among towns staffing multiple fire departments and fire houses with paid staff.

Additionally, Waterford has hired a fire administrator to help cope with the increasingly taxing job of managing things like budgets and training schedules.

Some departments, like Old Mystic, which is funded in part through a fire district tax, offer multiple incentives. Old Mystic Fire Chief Kenneth Richards Jr. said the department employs stipends and pay-per-call incentives that are based on qualifications.

"You really have to make it attractive to volunteers with their busy lifestyles," Richards said. "You also have to have well-thought-out training. The little bit of time they have, you have to make it worthwhile. The busier the department, the lesser the problem."

Richards will speak at a conference in Dallas next month on the "do's and don'ts" of attracting volunteers. He was president of the fire chiefs association during the first round of federal grants aimed at attracting new recruits.

With a core of 35 volunteers and five full-time staff, Richards said, and a schedule of three to five volunteers staying at the station on rotating shifts, someone is always ready to respond. Volunteers are paid \$15 plus a per-call stipend.

He said it helps to keep volunteers active with training opportunities, such as sessions with the department's successful dive team or technical rescue classes.

In Waterford, Cohanzie Fire Chief Todd Branch heads one of five volunteer departments. He said finding and keeping volunteers is a constant struggle. Todd is helping to organize a recruitment campaign involving the use of a new website, banners and a presence at the Crystal Mall.

He said the economy also has taken a toll.

"Because of that, the way we respond generally to every call is two departments simply to give a better response, but also for manpower," he said.

His said he has 10 to 12 core active volunteers, and the town has hired paid daytime staff to man each of the departments. The town offers a tax abatement of up to \$1,000 based on the number of calls to which each volunteer responds. The tax abatement is good for residents and older members with property but Todd said it does little to attract younger volunteers or those from outside the district. The department responded to 1,300 calls last year.

In Norwich, home to five volunteer departments and one paid, Chief Frank Blanchard attributed his Yantic Volunteer Fire Company's high number of active volunteers - 58 - to regular community involvement.

"Our facility is very social," Blanchard said. "There are a lot of events that attract membership. Our primary focus is lives and property but when we get down time, we're always active in the community. In Yantic, you're a member of the fire department and a member of the community."

Norwich offers each of its volunteer departments tax abatement and pension programs based on their number of calls and years of service.

Blanchard said there is still a strong tradition of family members continuing to volunteer as firefighters.

"There is a history of fathers, sons, grandsons serving. I can go through my roster and show lineage of four or five generations that participate."

Blanchard said it also helps to be able to fund firefighter training, something that can lead a volunteer to a career in the fire service.

Morrisette said community service is still a part of what attracts people to a volunteer department and said, for some, "it's about giving back."

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New London County fire departments

* denotes a department with a fully paid staff.

Bozrah: Bozrah Volunteer Fire Company

Colchester: Colchester Hayward Fire Department

East Lyme: Flanders Fire Department; Niantic Fire Department

Franklin: Franklin Volunteer Fire Department

Griswold: Griswold Volunteer Fire Company; Jewett City Fire Department

Groton: City of Groton Fire Department (combination of paid, volunteer staff); Center Groton Fire Department; Groton Long Point Volunteer Fire Company; Noank Volunteer Fire Company; *Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department; *U.S. Naval Submarine Base Fire Department; *Pfizer Protective Services; *Electric Boat Fire Department

Lebanon: Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department

Ledyard: Ledyard Fire Company; Gales Ferry Fire Company

Lisbon: Lisbon Fire Department

Lyme: Lyme Fire Company

Mashantucket: *Mashantucket-Pequot Fire & Emergency Services

Mohegan: *Mohegan Tribal Fire Department

Montville: Chesterfield Fire Company; Mohegan Fire Company; Montville Fire Department; Oakdale Fire Department

New London: *New London Fire Department

North Stonington: North Stonington Fire Department

Norwich: *City of Norwich Fire Department; East Great Plain Volunteer Fire Department; Laurel Hill Volunteer Fire Company; Occum Fire Department; Taftville Fire Department; Yantic Fire Engine Company

Old Lyme: Old Lyme Fire Department

Preston: Poquetanuck Fire Department; Preston City Volunteer Fire Department

Salem: Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company; Salem Volunteer Fire Company

Sprague: Baltic Fire Department

Stonington: Mystic Fire Department (covers portions of Groton and Stonington); Old Mystic Fire Department (covers portions of Groton and Stonington); Pawcatuck Fire Department; Quilambaug Fire Department; Stonington Borough Fire Department; Wequetequock Fire Department

Voluntown: Voluntown Volunteer Fire Company

Waterford: Cohanzie Fire Company; Goshen Fire Department; Jordan Fire Company; Oswegatchie Fire Company; Quaker Hill Fire Company

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Waterford considers paying fire volunteers on a per-call basis



Part-time Jordan Fire Company firefighter P.J. Masterson, left, assists volunteer firefighters Chris Venditti and Jacob Reagan, right, in re-packing fire hose onto the fire engine as part of work duties around the station in Jordan Village on Saturday.

Published March 24, 2014 12:01AM

By Tess Townsend (mailto:(Unknown address)) Day Staff Writer

Waterford - For about six months now, a sign has hung on a pole by Jordan Fire Company soliciting volunteers. The sign is not the first of its kind the station has posted, and it reflects an issue that has persisted for the five fire companies of Waterford Fire Services for years.

As the time required for firefighter training has increased, the amount of time part-time and volunteer firefighters commit has decreased.

"The fire service as a whole requires a lot more of the volunteers of today," said Timothy Condon, chief of Waterford Fire Engine Company No. 1, better known as Jordan Fire Company. "Now people live with two incomes. People have to work constantly just to be able to afford to live right now."

To counteract these long-term trends, Waterford Fire Services is exploring a cost-per-call system to incentivize its unpaid volunteers to respond to more calls and pursue higher-level certification.

Fire Services Director Bruce Miller said the issue is not lack of interest in volunteering.

"The numbers are still there," he said.

The issue is that the department has had trouble filling some part-time shifts even with its 55 part-time staff, forcing it to rely on paying its seven full-time firefighters overtime to keep them on call at night.

The department requested \$30,000 for overtime in its proposed budget for 2014-15, which the Board of Finance trimmed down to \$25,000 during a budget hearing last week. For fiscal years 2010 through 2013, the department usually spent around \$20,000 on overtime, about twice what it budgeted for the line item. Superstorm Sandy and bad winter storms drove the expenditure up to about \$73,000 in 2012-13.

Part-time firefighters start as unpaid volunteers with the department, then rise to paid positions as they fulfill necessary training, which the department covers and usually provides in-house. In addition to basic firefighter certification, as of 2001, they must complete additional training such as hazardous materials and safety procedure training. Achieving the combination of necessary certifications takes about 400 hours of study and practice, according to Miller.

In order to incentivize its 175 unpaid volunteers to respond to more calls and hopefully seek higher levels of certification, the department is considering instating a cost-per-call system in which volunteers would receive payment each time they respond to a call.

Payment would likely be partly based on the level of certification of a volunteer. If more volunteers met greater certification requirements, more would qualify to work as part-time staff.

Waterford Fire Services' struggles to fill shifts are not unique. Nationwide, stations are facing decreasing numbers of volunteers, even as the number of calls rises.

The National Volunteer Firefighter Council reports that the number of volunteers nationwide in 2012 was 783,000, down from close to 900,000 in 1984. The number of calls nationwide meanwhile jumped from 11.9 million in 1986 to 31.9 million in 2011.

Niantic Fire Chief John McDonald said his hybrid volunteer and paid staff department has seen a rise in medical calls as the East Lyme population ages. Meanwhile, the number of volunteers has decreased.

He said the time commitment necessary to contribute as a volunteer is a factor.

"It takes a lot of time to get a person qualified," he said.

Not having enough volunteers can increase response time in some cases. Miller said that ideal response time is 5 minutes or less, but Waterford stations on a few occasions have taken more than 10 minutes to get to a scene.

"That's when the station wasn't staffed," he said, but added that the delay has only happened in the case of minor calls.

While Waterford Fire Services explores options, the department is working with its resources to streamline operations. The department recently introduced a new online scheduling system, allowing paid staff to sign up for shifts from home. Before, the firefighters had to sign up on paper at their stations.

"Some of the part-time issue before might be that guys didn't know there were any open shifts," said Miller.

8/19/2020

The Day - Waterford considers paying fire volunteers on a per-call basis - News from southeastern Connecticut

Creating a cost-per-call system in Waterford would require additional appropriations that the Board of Finance and Representative Town Meeting would have to approve. Miller said he was unsure what the ultimate cost would be, but that it would be an improvement over the department's current means of incentivizing volunteering.

The department currently offers volunteers a rebate on property taxes based on time commitment. Rebates can range between \$300 and \$1,000 for volunteers who own property such as homes or cars.

"It's a program, it's something, but it's limited in the number of volunteers it actually helps," Miller said.

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Waterford approves five of six proposed charter changes

Published November 03, 2010 3:04AM

By Amy Renczkowski (mailto:(Unknown address)) Day Staff Writer

Waterford — Voters agreed Tuesday to eliminate the Fire Commission and to lengthen the treasurer's term and that of the selectmen from two to four years.

In backing all but one of the six proposed charter changes, residents also voted to make two changes to the budget review process.

But residents disagreed that the Personnel Review Board should be disbanded. In unofficial figures, 3,567 voters said to keep the board, while 3,278 said it should be eliminated, a difference of 289 votes.

"I'm surprised by the [Personnel Review Board] vote," First Selectman Dan Steward said. "It is not a big functioning group." Its duties were to have been assumed by the Human Resources Department.

Residents flocked to the polls to vote but didn't have strong feelings about the proposed charter revisions. Some admitted they didn't know the questions were on the ballot.

The questions were the result of a report issued by the seven-member Charter Revision Commission, which met from April 2009 until June. The Board of Selectmen approved the panel's recommendations in July.

Waterford resident Joe Parise said Tuesday he voted to approve all the revisions, but said he particularly favored changing the length of the selectmen's terms.

"I think it's long overdue. I think we'll find a better selection of candidates," Parise said.

The unofficial vote to eliminate the Fire Commission was 4,572 to 2,332. The five-member panel will be replaced with a director of fire services.

In unofficial results, residents voted 4,085 to 3,130 to lengthen the selectmen's terms, and voted 4,045 to 3,133 to lengthen the term of the elected town treasurer.

In backing a change to the budget process, residents agreed that the selectmen will approve the budgets of all town departments, except for education, and that departments can appeal the selectmen's decision to the finance board.

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Six charter changes facing Waterford voters on Tuesday

Published October 28, 2010 2:03AM | Updated October 28, 2010 5:10AM

By Stephen Chupaska ([\(Unknown address\)](mailto:(Unknown address))) Day Staff Writer

Waterford - The elimination of the Fire Commission and lengthening selectmen's terms to four years lead the list of six charter changes residents will consider Tuesday, Election Day.

The disbanding of the Personnel Review Board and two changes to the town's budget review process are also on the ballot.

The ballot questions are the result of a report issued by the seven-member Charter Revision Commission, which met from April 2009 until June. The panel made recommendations, and the Board of Selectmen approved them in July.

Commission Chairman Clifford Grandjean said that questions about the future of the town's fire service "generated the most heat."

"We got the most comments on that," he said.

The charter commission found that the town's five volunteer fire companies lack clear guidelines regarding the "chain of authority" among the current fire administrator, fire commissioners and the fire chiefs.

"We heard testimony that it could become a safety concern," Grandjean said.

He also said that the fire commission often had to cancel meetings because it lacked a quorum.

If residents vote to eliminate it, the five-member commission would be replaced with a new "director of fire services," who would oversee the fire companies.

If it passes, the Representative Town Meeting would have until Nov. 1, 2011, to enact an ordinance codifying the duties and responsibilities of the new position.

The current position of fire marshal would be unaffected by any potential charter change.

Neither Bruce Miller, the current fire administrator, nor Eric Munsell, the fire commission chairman, responded to phone messages seeking comment on the charter change.

The commission also voted to lengthen the terms of first selectman and other two selectmen from two to four years.

Grandjean said the commission heard from former selectmen who argued that two years is not long enough to get a handle on the job.

Former First Selectman Tony Sheridan called lengthening the terms "a good idea."

8/19/2020

The Day - Six charter changes facing Waterford voters on Tuesday - News from southeastern Connecticut

"Four years is a good amount of time for a first selectman to dig their heels in," Sheridan said. "You can make good decisions without looking at the next election."

Grandjean argued that in the future it could be difficult to find qualified candidates for the position if it remains two years. "It's not easy to put your life on hold for what might be a two-year job," Grandjean said.

The commission also voted to lengthen the term of the elected town treasurer from two to four years to bring it in line with the four-year terms of members of the boards of Finance and Education.

Voters will also decide on a proposed change to the budget approval process. Under this plan, selectmen would approve the budgets of all town departments - except for the education budget - before they are sent to the finance board for approval and the RTM for ratification.

As the result of an earlier charter change, some town departments bypass the selectmen and submit their budgets directly to the Board of Finance.

In concert with the budgeting change, voters will decide whether departments can appeal a decision made by the selectmen to the finance board.

The charter commission also voted to disband the Personnel Review Board, whose duties were assumed by the town's Human Resources Department.

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OK Waterford fire service change

Published October 13, 2010 2:02AM

The upshot of Waterford's public discussion about what to do about its "dysfunctional" fire services administration led to a unanimous and singular conclusion: Get rid of what's broken.

And that is what voters will be asked to do in one of the six charter revision-related questions on the Nov. 2 ballot.

It's a smart move. The charter commission is recommending eliminating the current Board of Fire Commissioners - which it describes as "more of an impediment than a help" - and creating new fire services director and fire marshal positions.

Restructuring the fire services' administration is the topic that generated the most discussion and thought among the public and seven-member charter revision panel during its deliberations.

"It was the unanimous view of all the various constituencies which appeared before the commission that the current administrative structure of the town's fire services is dysfunctional," stated the commission's final report. Eliminating the fire commissioners and adding the director and fire marshal positions will end the dysfunction and establish a clear chain of authority. We recommend a yes vote on Question 4.

As for the other charter questions, we recommend a no vote on Questions 1 and 2, which would increase the terms for all three selectmen and the town treasurer to four years from two. Supporters say two years is too short because of the learning curve for new office holders, but we see no convincing evidence that two-year terms cause great difficulties. This appears to be a case of a solution in search of a problem.

Question 3 asks to eliminate the Personnel Review Board. Do it. Vote yes. The board rarely meets because it doesn't have to. The town's personnel director fills the bill of this outdated volunteer panel.

That leaves Questions 5 and 6, which are budget-related. The first requires the submission of all town budgets to the Board of Selectmen, to which we say, yes, of course they should be. The beneficiaries will be taxpayers who will appreciate the additional oversight.

Question 6 would essentially modify time constraints on appeals of annual budget decisions made by the Board of Finance to the Representative Town Meeting. Approval of this question simply relaxes the current 14-day requirement to more reasonable language, albeit "the next regular meeting at which such budget is scheduled to be reviewed." And assuming Question 5 passes, it also allows new budgets scrutinized by the selectmen to be appealed to the finance board.

We urge yes votes for Questions 5 and 6.

The ballot questions and charter panel's report are available on the town's website.

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Read Your Referendum Questions

Published October 28, 2010 2:54PM

The following referendum questions will appear on the Nov. 2 ballot in Waterford. The questions are being re-printed this week due an error in last week's edition.

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Annual budgets

Shall Town Charter Section 3.2.5.1 be amended, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendation, to require all boards, commissions, agencies, department heads, and administrative bodies to submit their annual budgets to the Board of Selectmen prior to Board of Finance review, in such manner as may be provided by ordinance?

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Board of Fire Commissioners

Shall Town Charter Section 4.3 be amended, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations, eliminating the Board of Fire Commissioners and adding new sections to the Town Charter providing for the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of the Fire Marshal and a Director of Fire Services, effective upon adoption of an ordinance on or before Nov. 1, 2011?

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Budget appeals

Shall Town Charter section 3.1.15 be amended, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations, to allow appeals from annual budget decisions made by the Board of Finance to be heard by the Representative Town Meeting during the next regular meeting at which such budget is scheduled to be reviewed and to add a new section to allow appeals of budgetary decisions made by the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Finance in the same manner as Board of Finance decisions are appealed to the Representative Town Meeting at any other time during the fiscal year?

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Personnel Review Board

Shall Town Charter Section 4.5 be deleted, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations, thereby eliminating the Personnel Review Board?

The proposed revision would eliminate the Personnel Review Board and its remaining functions would be performed by the Director of Human Resources.

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Selectmen term

Shall Town Charter Section 3.2.1 be amended, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations, to establish the term of office for Selectman at four years instead of two years?

The proposed revision would increase the term of office for all three selectmen from the current two years to four years.

Waterford Charter Revision Question - Treasurer term

4. Shall Town Charter Section 4.3 be amended, in accordance with the Charter Revision Commission's recommendations, eliminating the Board of Fire Commissioners and adding new sections to the Town Charter providing for the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of the Fire Marshal and a Director of Fire Services, effective upon adoption of an ordinance on or before November 1, 2011.

Explanation: The proposed revision would eliminate the Board of Fire Commissioners and , upon adoption of an ordinance by November 1, 2011, add new Charter Sections providing appointment of the Fire Marshal and a Director of Fire Services by the Board of Selectmen.

Pro: It was nearly unanimous among the members of the Fire Service (Fire Company Chiefs, Volunteer Firefighters, Professional Firefighters, Fire Administrator, and most of the Fire Commission) that the current system was dysfunctional and not working. Action Items are being delayed because the Fire Commission did not meet for lack of a quorum. During meetings it was difficult for the Fire Commission to agree. Since the 1995 Charter Revision that made the First Selectman responsible for all town employees there has been friction between

the Fire Commission and the First Selectman as to who was in charge on a day to day basis. In the Fire Service, there should be no question as to who is in charge.

Con: The Fire Service needs adult supervision and the Fire Commission was established to provide that leadership. If system is dysfunctional, change the people, not the system. The Fire Commission understands the Fire Service since it is traditionally former firefighters.

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Waterford to vote on a new fire command

Published August 09, 2010 2:02AM | Updated August 09, 2010 3:52AM

By Stephen Chupaska (mailto:(Unknown address)) Day Staff Writer

Waterford - The elimination of the Board of Fire Commissioners and the addition of a director of fire services leads the list of charter changes residents will vote on in November.

The Board of Selectmen recently approved the Charter Revision Commission's changes, which will be sent to the Secretary of the State to be put on the ballot.

The charter changes will be presented on the ballot as four separate questions.

The commission's final report, which called the elimination of the fire commission the most "hotly debated" topic it dealt with, said the current structure of the town's mostly volunteer fire service is "dysfunctional."

The commission found there was "lack of clear guidelines regarding the chain of authority and division of management among the Fire Administrator, Board of Fire Commissioners, and the fire chiefs."

The charter commission found that infighting among the fire commissioners have left budgets incomplete and could result in "real implications," for the town.

The commission recommends jettisoning the fire commission in favor of a director of fire services, who would report to the first selectman.

"This was driven by a lack of oversight of the fire companies," First Selectman Daniel Steward said. "It takes accountability and brings it to this office."

In addition to the changes to the fire service, the commission, which began its review of the charter in May 2009, recommends extending the selectmen's term of office from two to four years; mandating that all town departments submit annual budgets to the selectmen for approval before they are voted upon by the Board of Finance; and eliminating the Personnel Review Board.

Steward said the extension of the term of the selectmen to four years brings the office in line with both the Board of Education and finance board and it would allow the selectmen more time to acclimate to the position.

"The first six months you spend learning the job," Steward said. "And then there's the six months you are running for re-election."

Steward, reiterating the recommendation of the commission, said the four-year term would make the office more appealing to people who would otherwise not run because of the insecurity of a two-year term.

8/19/2020

The Day - Waterford to vote on a new fire command - News from southeastern Connecticut

Finance board member J.W. "Bill" Sheehan proposed the idea of requiring that all town departments submit budgets to the selectmen before going to the finance board. He said the charter change will streamline the budget approval process and make the selectman accountable for all budgets.

"Currently the selectmen only control less than 50 percent of the budgets," Sheehan said.

Under the current system, departments such as Recreation and Parks, the Fire Commission, the Senior Citizens Commission, the Police Commission and the Utility Commission present budgets directly to the Board of Finance.

The commission recommended disbanding the Personnel Review Board because the Human Resources department and union contracts already oversee most of its functions.

Copies of the Charter Revision Commission's final report are available at Town Hall and at www.waterfordct.org.