

DRAFT

Litchfield Board of Fire Commissioners and EMS
Special Meeting Minutes
Litchfield Fire House, 250 West St., Litchfield, CT.
June 1, 2017 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chairman John Campbell, Heather Karpa (new LVA Member), Douglas Hatstat, Paul Parsons, Gary Shuhi, Jack Hodges

Also Present: Nichole DiOrio, Richard Duffy, Troy Curilla, Jonathan Cattey, Ryan Litwin, Michael Castelli, John McKenna

Call to Order: John Campbell, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion of EMS Coverage for the Town of Morris:

J. Campbell began the meeting by explaining his previous meetings with Paul Parsons Tom Weik Morris Selectmen, LVA, and Bantam in reference to taking over Morris's ambulance coverage for their citizens until September 2nd.

P, Parsons also explained the selectmen's perspective from the meeting with John, Nichole, Leo and Tom Weik. Leo stated his position to Tom that they should be discussing this with each other and that this agreement should be short term and wants Morris to eventually take it back. He feels Litchfield is already stressed handling its own responsibility so to take this on it will be difficult and can only be sustained temporarily. The biggest concern of the Leo is the cost to Litchfield and the insurance. Presently Litchfield's members when called into Morris are covered by Litchfield's insurance but should anything happen Litchfield's costs will go up. He is also concerned that our resources will become overly stressed. Presently the only help we are getting from from Morris is two paid Vintech people. He is willing to discuss to find a solution but by September 2nd an agreement needs to be worked out for coverage that is equal in responsibility and cost. We need to start working on it now to be ready for September.

J. Campbell then stated from the Fire Commission perspective we need to make a recommendation to the BOS if this is to go beyond September 2nd, mutual aid and our liability changes. The information may also need to be presented to the BOF, the Town Attorney for agreement, and then possibly a Town Meeting also be required before a signed agreement can be put in place. More information and discussions will need to be held before any recommendation from this Commission can be made.

Nicole was asked if Morris could get their services back and the answer was "not for a very long time" because of the way it was given up. Morris will have to prove to the State of Connecticut their capabilities and only then if the State agrees and approves we would then give up the PSA. Nicole stated that LVA is interested in keeping for now.

If this is to continue it would have to be without extra cost to Litchfield. Liability, worker comp, vehicle replacement/maintenance would all have to be worked out before this Commission can make any recommendation and this would be up to the BOS in both towns to determine.

P. Parsons explained that Leo's biggest concern is the insurance and he is speaking with Cirma, who we have as our insurance as does Morris, to see what can be worked out so if a worker's comp claim is submitted by a Litchfield volunteer while doing Morris' call our insurance won't go up. He is also working on the auto insurance, and liability insurance costs then it must be a written agreement.

Nicole stated nothing is in writing at this time, however Litchfield is covered every time they go to Morris by Morris' liability and worker's comp insurance. Tom Weik has already worked this out with the insurance company and Litchfield is covered by Morris' insurance every time we cover a Morris call

The background to this situation started in March with the original date of March 20th that Morris would give up its PSA. They then sent a letter to OEMS stating it would surrender its PSA May 1st. Because Morris did not have their EMS plan into the State by January 1st a contingency plan would not be acceptable to the State. Morris' PSA expired at 11:59:59 pm Monday night. Morris did not contact the state until 10:30 am Tuesday morning. Therefore, leaving Morris without coverage for 10.5 hours

Ralph (the head of OEMS) called me saying because of Morris gave up their PSA their Town was without coverage so Litchfield was being given a temporary PSA, under the mutual aid agreement to cover Morris starting at that time so by 12:30 pm that happened and we took over then. We knew at that time the insurance information was worked out by Morris BOS and that Litchfield would be covered by Morris. Morris also would use their contingency money to pay for Vintech to have two people sit in Litchfield to cover Morris so it would not impact anyone. This actually puts Litchfield in a better place because it has two fully stocked ambulances for their use

P. Parsons stated we will get written confirmation from the insurance company as to how this agreement is being covered.

Nicole also said other towns have been in this situation and the insurance companies already have established riders so Morris could obtain a rider, and liability insurance stays with the vehicle therefore stays with the town. Vintech holds its own workers comp insurance and the liability stays with the vehicle.

J. Campbell added Bantam is also working with us and will have their own meeting to work out their part in this,

T. Curilla reported Bantam has already agreed to cover through June 30th. At our next monthly meeting next week, we will decide if we will continue through September but entire company needs to approve this. Paul asked not to go beyond September 1st which is the current commitment. It was understood and agreed.

This Commission position is to not enter into any further agreements without knowing the impact to the town of Litchfield consulting with the Commission.

Nicole stated if this is to continue and needs a temporary PSA need to know ASAP so paperwork can get started. P. Parsons asked about how long does this take? Nicole stated no way to know but in an emergency situation, the State will act quickly and give a date. so I asked the State to give us extra time to work this out and they gave us September 2nd.

P. Parsons added then that the state knows something has to happen by that date and it is possible Morris could take this back. Nicole thought is possible but not likely. To get its PSA back they must prove to the state that everything was safe.

P. Parsons questioned the Morris ambulance sitting in Litchfield. Nicole explained once the PSA is given up that ambulance is out of service, per the State we needed Morris' name off of it so that is why the magnetic town names are on it. Morris gave us all of the medical supplies from it. It is no longer in Litchfield. In order for that ambulance to be in service Litchfield would have to apply for a third ambulance. The only reason we might want it would be for use as a back-up.

Nicole added the call volume for Morris was 40 calls last year, removing all mutual aid calls. There have been discussions with Bethlehem possibly taking over some calls at night and state is in agreement to this because of mutual aid. Talk of Thomaston coming up farther on Route 109 so if everyone took a section of Morris at night and broke it into 4 sections with the most active time was during the summer when the lake was active, it shouldn't be taxing anyone.

P. Parsons asked if Morris could be first responders and Nicole stated no because the State took everything away from them but Morris's members could join LVA or other depts. Tom asked if we would run an MRT class because he has interest from his Town's residents so they could help out with EMS, and then possibly bridge into an EMS class.

Per Nicole Tom found out from the State that if that entity could not resolve their issues the Town itself could start another fire company in that Town under a different entity.

J. Campbell stated he would be looking for an overview from all companies

J. Hodges stated his concerns about evening coverage for Northfield. if coverage is coming from Litchfield or Bantam it could be a long wait time. Nicole explained the way the protocol is written with LCD Thomaston is automatically called if the first ambulance is out.

P. Parsons stated that this group worked well together tonight and should continue to work out our issues and Leo and Morris's First Selectmen should work out theirs (insurance liability etc.)

J. Campbell welcomed Heather to the Commission.

Nicole asked if and when statements go to the newspapers the information is correct and verified because she is being harassed by some of Morris' ambulance people.

Adjournment: J. Hodges made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m. D. Hatstat seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Transcribed by L. Bauer

John Campbell, Chairman

Date: _____