



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 1, 2023
HYBRID MEETING**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke, Chair of the Health & Safety Committee, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with and Councilor Lenworth Walker present.

Staff Present: Peter Souza, Town Manager; Scott W. Colby, Jr., Assistant Town Manager; Andrew Power, Police Captain; Dan Savelli, WVA and Dan Moylan, WVA were also present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Eric Weiner, 130 Palisado Avenue, stated that he wanted to see action taken.

3. DISCUSSION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Town Manager Souza said that he appreciated the feedback of those who spoke out during the community listening session. He also thanked the EMS team that is here this evening.

Town Manager Souza stated the Windsor Volunteer Ambulance Association is a private not-for-profit entity that provides emergency medical response and transportation to the Windsor community. There are over 4,000 calls for emergency medical service (EMS) per year in the town. The ambulance association, along with the Police Department, responds to these calls. If the association does not have personnel available, an outside EMS agency is requested to respond.

Dispatchers have certain protocol that is completed for EMS responders such as the questions they are asking so that they can respond accordingly. A standard emergency medical call comprises of different elements once the call is received by the dispatcher. Upon receiving the call and gathering pertinent information a police officer is dispatched along with an EMS unit(s). Police Officers are certified as Emergency Medical Responder (EMR). EMRs can provide immediate lifesaving care to patients. EMRs have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide immediate lifesaving interventions while awaiting additional EMS resources to arrive. EMRs also can provide assistance to higher-level personnel at the scene of emergencies and during transport. Emergency Medical Responders are a vital part of the comprehensive EMS response. Under medical oversight, Emergency Medical Responders perform basic interventions with minimal equipment.

Under Connecticut law medical transports are required to be completed by a certified EMS organization and that any ambulance used shall meet the requirements for a basic level ambulance including requirements of medically necessary supplies and services.

Depending on the severity of the medical call WVA has two types of ambulances to respond.

ALS: Advanced Care for Critical Patients

The advanced life support ambulance has a paramedic on board, along with an Emergency Medical Technician. The ambulance is equipped with advanced airway support equipment, cardiac life support, cardiac monitors as well as various medications for a wide range of medical emergencies. The patients in an ALS ambulance require a higher level of medical monitoring and include those who need IV medications, advanced airway management, and those who require cardiac monitoring and/or electrical therapies

The paramedics who staff the advanced life support ambulances have a higher level of training than their EMT partners. Due to their advanced training, paramedics are allowed to start IVs, administer medications, and give injections to help stabilize the patient on the way to a nearby trauma center.

In FY 22 there were 1,750 ALS calls that required transports. For the first half of FY 23 there have been 735 ALS calls that required transports. The average response time for an ALS ambulance in FY 22 was 5 minutes 16 seconds compared to 5 minutes 52 seconds in FY 23. This is average.

BLS: Transport for Basic Patient Care

Staffed by EMTs, basic life support transport is for patients who have minor trauma injuries, psychiatric patients, and other non-emergency medical transportation.

The personnel of BLS ambulances are not allowed to do advanced procedures, which includes giving injections, administering medications, starting an IV, or any necessary medical process, including cardiac monitoring. Some exceptions do exist based on local protocols. Examples for Windsor EMS include administration of epinephrine for anaphylactic reactions and oral glucose (sugar) for diabetic patients with low blood sugar. No advanced procedures are permitted.

For the first half of FY 23 there have been 614 BLS calls that required transports. The average response time for a BLS ambulance in FY 22 was 6 minutes 44 seconds compared to 4 minutes 59 seconds in FY 23.

There are times when there are higher call volumes and simultaneous calls. These are generally unpredictable as well as is the location of the calls. While reviewing the attached 'geographic call location map' it can be seen that medical calls occur in every part of town, with more densely populated areas experiencing a greater share. When WVA is unavailable to respond to a call an outside EMS agency is contacted by emergency dispatch for assistance. Currently WVA has mutual aid arrangements with Suffield Volunteer Ambulance

Association, Inc. (SVAA) and East Windsor Ambulance Association, Inc. (EWAA), as well as with Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance (BVA), Windsor Locks Lions Ambulance, Granby Ambulance Association (GAA), Ambulance Service of Manchester (ASM), Aetna Ambulance Service, and American Medical Response, Inc. (AMR). In FY 22 out of the 4,612 total EMS calls, 666 calls representing 14% were passed over to these surrounding agencies. For the first half of FY 23 20% of the total calls have been passed over to these agencies. This could be simultaneous calls, a full transport commits an ambulance for up to 90 minutes.

WVA currently runs one ALS ambulance twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. A second ALS ambulance runs from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., seven days a week. Each ambulance is staffed by two personnel qualified for that level ambulance. There have been occasions in which due to staffing vacancies an ALS ambulance has needed to be staffed as a BLS ambulance. The goal is to make that 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. ALS. They attempted having a third ambulance however they have not been able to find qualified licensed staff.

Emergency Medical Services across the state have been challenged with recruitment and retention efforts in the past several years. Presently, WVA has 5 full-time EMTs and 5 full-time paramedics. They have 5 per diem EMTs and 8 per diem paramedics. Staffing per diems can be a challenge as they work fluctuating hours based on their primary job. They currently have one full-time EMT and one full-time paramedic position vacant but they should be filled following the completion of training within the next month. When training is completed this will help reduce reliance on forced overtime and extra shifts by per diem staff.

Mr. Moylan stated that calls have been increasing which is why residents are seeing outside agencies more often. Mr. Moylan walked through staffing levels and the current full-time vacant positions in training. He discussed full-time and per-diem personnel and the challenge of per-diem staffing and their availability.

Town Manager Souza explained the structure of the volunteer fire department and how they had been EMRs at one point in time. The EMR license was not renewed because the volunteer numbers were dwindling and currently they do not have the capacity to take on this role. Communities that have full-time fire departments are continuously exploring on how to work towards this effort. Currently they do not have the finances to operate a third ambulance between the reimbursement model and staffing.

Mr. Savelli spoke to the challenge with EMS on a state and national level as a whole. There has been an entire system failure and they are trying to be creative. He said that recruiting and retention efforts have not been working. He added that many of those in the field left during the pandemic and following that along with issues on compensation and benefits. He also explained the strict regulations set forth by OEMS & DPH as it pertains to certifications required to operate within the ambulance. He also spoke to the reimbursement model for how WVA conducts its billing and that for those with Medicare they can only bill a small percentage and have to write off the remainder.

Town Manager Souza stated that the Town provides a \$70,000 grant as part of the budget process and that \$35,000 of that is for the regional medical dispatch. He also explained funding from ARF that had been provided as well. Town Manager Souza explained that in order to operate a third ambulance, seven days a week, for twelve hours a day would cost ±\$300,000. An additional challenge would also be the staffing component.

Town Manager Souza stated we will have enough data to provide information to the Town Council prior to the budget. Councilor Black-Burke stated she would comment on this item under committee report for the next Town Council meeting.

Town Manager Souza stated we will have information and data to make a request for funding at an upcoming Town Council meeting.

4. DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Town Manager Souza stated the police department responds to over 2,500 quality of life issues or calls in any given year. In addition to suspicious activity reports (classified as either, suspicious vehicle, suspicious person, or suspicious activity) and noise complaints (fireworks, loud music, truck noise, loud mufflers, etc), the police department responds to numerous other issues that are deemed quality of life. Some of these complaints include neighbor disputes, un-shoveled sidewalks, junk cars, illegal dumping, and traffic issues. In almost all cases, officers are dispatched to speak with the complainant in an effort to resolve the issue at hand. Responding officers are tasked with determining what the source of the complaint is, and whether the officer has the ability to take action to resolve the issue at hand. When it comes to suspicious activity and noise complaints, it is common that by the time the officer arrives in the areas, the issue causing the complaint is no longer present, making it difficult for the officer to take any action. When the officer is able to identify the source of the complaint, the officer's first goal is to speak with the person responsible for the issue and attempt to gain voluntary compliance. As an example, for a loud music complaint, the officer will speak with the person and ask them to turn the music down. In most cases, this usually resolves the issue without further action. In most cases officers are able to mediate or resolve the issue without further enforcement action.

Noise Complaints

For ongoing noise complaints or for complaints where voluntary compliance is not gained, the police department has sound meters available where officers can obtain sound levels to determine if there is a violation of the town's noise ordinance requirements. The town's Health Department and Planning and Zoning Department may be collaborated with for the more complex ongoing instances. The town's noise ordinance is based on state law and the town does not have the authority to be more restrictive. In FY23 through 2/20/2023, the police department responded to 230 noise complaints.

Suspicious Person / Activity

In regards to suspicious persons, vehicles, and/or activities, officers are able to conduct a limited investigation to determine if anything illegal is occurring. However, without

reasonable and articulable suspicion that a crime is or about to occur, officers have little to no ability to take action. In FY23 through 2/20/2023, the police department responded to over 632 suspicious activity complaints. Residents are encouraged to contact the police department via 911 to report suspicious activity.

Animal Compliant

Barking, roaming, and aggressive dogs are another quality of life call that the police department frequently responds to. Our animal control officer typically works Monday through Friday during the day shift. Officers respond to these calls for service when the animal control officer is not available. In FY23 through 2/20/2023, the police department responded to 261 animal complaints.

Junk Car Enforcement

In May of 2022, the Police Department hired two temporary part-time code enforcement officers to focus on junk car enforcement. The path to remove junk cars from private property requires several steps over a period of months. The department's focus has been to work with vehicle owners to remove vehicles without requiring the town to do so. To date, our code enforcement officers have successfully removed over 350 junk cars from properties throughout town. Many of these were initiated in the last quarter of FY22. In the FY 23 year to date, our code enforcement officers initiated 161 cases to remove unregistered/disabled vehicles.

Captain Power discussed the basic protocol of suspicious vehicles and persons and discussed how shift change is handled. Captain Power mentioned that calls may go as unfounded if they arrive and the issue has been remediated or the person or vehicle has left. He also stated that sometimes there will be a need to go back if the violation continues in which they have enforcement options.

Councilor Walker stated he is happy to hear them addressing the holding of calls. He also inquired about the procedure for commercial pop up parties. Captain Power walked through the steps for enforcement and actions that they have taken in the past. Along with being proactive by checking on social media.

Councilor Black-Burke thanked everyone for their comments. She had a question regarding the scheduling of dispatchers. Town Manager Souza replied they work eight hour shifts in pairs. If needed there are a handful of officers who are dispatch trained to assist. He also mentioned that are three individuals who are eligible for retirement.

5. STAFF REPORTS - None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) November 1, 2022



MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke to approve the unapproved minutes of the November 1, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 2-0-0

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Walker, seconded by Councilor Black-Burke, to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Motion Passed 2-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Scott Colby
Assistant Town Manager