

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Board of Selectmen
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Emergency Communication Task Force

Special Meeting Minutes

Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

October 21, 2020

6:30 PM

First Selectwoman Wiecenski called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM with the following in attendance; Tiffany Menchaca from Code Red, Lt. Robert Palmer, Phil Stevens, Christina Mailhos, & Mike Makuch. Sarah Worthen arrived at 6:46P.M.

Members absent – Alex Moore, Vincent Pagano & Stuart Cobb.

Mr. Makuch motioned to approve the minutes of August 16, 2020 as written.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

Vote: 4 Yes, (Wiecenski, Palmer, Stevens, Makuch) 1 Abstain Mailhos 0 No.

A. Presentation of Code Red– Tiffany Menchaca facilitated a slideshow presentation on the ONSOLVE/ CODE RED application.

B. Review current quotes from Code Red/Ever bridge –

First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted that 2 quotes have been received. For Code Red, the application would be \$2,000 annually for a 3 year license. There are alternative pricing plans which include unlimited emergency plus which is \$2,500 annually. The third option, limitless access which includes emergency and community messaging. The Ever Bridge quote was significantly higher. First Selectwoman Wiecenski discussed our current process of sending emergency communications going through TN dispatch which utilizes Ever Bridge. They are well versed in the application and post all of our emergency events currently. The concerns are, how user friendly the system is if the user does not utilize the system often. The presentation shown by Ms. Menchaca has quite a few steps.

Mr. Makuch responded to the concern, He agreed that the system should have the ability to be utilized quickly when a situation is intense and when stress is high. The suggestion is to have cheat sheets with instructions laminated for ease during an intense stressful time. Utilizing pre-canned messages and locations for the ease of facilitating quick messages giving the ability to speed through the process.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski commented that she was able to see a demonstration through TN and they are well versed. First Selectwoman Wiecenski noted as we move through this process a decision needs to be made on how we intend to utilize a resident notification system. The options are to utilize the system for community based administrative communications and emergency or strictly for emergency notification. If we utilize a system only for emergency, we may not have an individual who is as well versed as TN currently is in moving through the system with ease. This is not a hindrance just a comment to be mindful of as we move through this process. The Town of Mansfield currently uses Code Red and they strictly use it for emergencies. It was noted that Code Red has a feature that when alerts are issued the phone # is specific to the Town of Willington. If

residents add the number into their contact lists when alerts are issued residents will know that the alert is being issued by the Town of Willington.

Mr. Makuch commented that he currently uses Ever Bridge and wanted to mention concerns if the function of the communications include administrative messages, will residents ignore the alert when a true emergency presents. Policies can be established to state at one specified time per day administrative messages will go out to assist in the differentiating an administrative alert vs a true emergency alert.

Superintendent Steven's posed a question to Mike Makuch. In the alerts is there an ability to send an attachment document to read. Mr. Makuch responded by saying no, the alert system should redirect the resident to another location for an administrative message such as a website for additional information or documents. This also reduces data usage and traffic of data. Superintendent Steven's noted the current system being utilized has a slow response time in sending data.

Lt. Palmer wanted to guide the discussion in the development of having a plan in place without an extensive vetting process in the event of an emergency. The suggestion was made to have several preapproved canned messages for future use without the required vetting and approval process. It was noted that if information is put out by the State Police then the information is available to use as appropriate. The plan development would be prior to information being released by the State Police to communicate to residents of an emergency event.

C. Discussion on questions / info for residents

Mr. Makuch discussed 4 questions for the public

- What types of events do you expect to receive emergency communications for?
- What types of events do you expect to receive administrative communications for?
- What method of communication would you be looking to receive? Example text, e-mail or phone call
- What would your back up communication method be?

Mr. Makuch noted circumstantially from previous events certain communications were not available when a resident does not have internet or power. Over all the most reliable and effective means of communications seems to be facebook.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski added that Twitter appears to be popular by younger residents however the Town of Willington does not use Twitter at this time. It was noted that in the Code Red demonstration there was an option to push communications to social media platforms simultaneously.

Ms. Worthen added she would like to add to the question survey. To ask residents how willing they would be to self-subscribing to a communication system.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski commented that for Covid approximately 2,300 notifications were distributed, for the tropical storm in August approximately 4,500 notifications were distributed. The notification subscriptions increased after the event that occurred in May.

Lt Palmer will work with the State Police barracks to navigate a generic statement from critical incident to notification from the State Police. He will craft 5 canned messages, life safety, shelter in place, contact law enforcement of any unusual conduct & a far less critical incident. Lt Palmer will come up with verbiage that will satisfy internally with in the State Police and that will meet all expectations to utilize as a template.

Mr. Makuch will craft the questions for the resident survey and distribute via e-mail to the group for a discussion at our next meeting.

Superintendent Steven's will set up a Google documents folder for the group to utilize as a document container.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski will follow up with Tiffany Menchaca from Code Red to inquire the length of the implementation and training once a contract is signed. It was agreed by the committee to have the next meeting on Wednesday November 18th 2020 at 6:30

D. Review surrounding town notification protocols.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski will forward this agenda item to the next meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM

Vote: 6 Yes (Wiecenski, Palmer, Stevens, Mailhos, Makuch, Worthen) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Sharpley