

**Town of New Fairfield  
Board of Selectmen  
4 Brush Hill Road  
New Fairfield, CT 06812**

**MINUTES**

**Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Communications Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, June 29, 2022  
7:30 PM  
Virtual meeting via Zoom**

**BOF Members present:**

Pat Del Monaco, First Selectman  
Lori Beninson, Selectman  
Khris Hall, Selectman

**Communications Advisory Committee Members present:**

Olga Melnikov, Finance Director  
Dr. Karen Fildes, IT Director  
Mark Beninson, BOF member  
Bruce Taylor, Fire Chief  
Nick Ieraci, Resident State Trooper Sergeant  
Paul Gouveia, Network Administrator  
John Morelli, NF Volunteer Fire Department member  
Mitch Williams, NF Volunteer Fire Department member  
Glenn Magyar, Communications Center Dispatcher

Paul Gouveia gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Call To Order** First Selectman Pat Del Monaco called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

**Discussion of Radio upgrades and Communications Center Operations and Equipment**

Pat Del Monaco gave a brief description of the recent challenges with the Communications Center which include antiquated equipment and the difficulty in staffing part-time employees. She noted that an advisory committee was compiled to research ways to remedy the situation. The members of this committee included residents that have expertise in dispatch and emergency response.

Pat Del Monaco spoke of possible options for the future of the dispatch center and reviewed the pros and cons of each of the options. They include:

- Option 1- Keep current level of staffing/structure and replace console but leave SOC at the school- approximate cost \$985,314.
- Option 2- Keep current level of staffing/structure and replace console but move SOC to the Communications Center- approximate cost \$985,314.
- Option 3- Move SOC to the Communications Center and hire additional staff- approximate cost \$1,043,352.
- Option 4- Merge with Newtown- approximate cost \$290,000.

Members of the Communications Advisory Committee spoke of their opinions and concerns regarding the different options.

Fire Chief Bruce Taylor noted that he did not want to give opinions regarding personnel but instead spoke of his concerns of merging with another town. He suggested that the Town should hire a consultant to review and give advice regarding the communications throughout the town.

Fire Department member John Morelli spoke of his concerns regarding merging with another Town and suggested that the Town hire a consultant to research the best options for New Fairfield.

Director of Technology Dr. Karen Fildes spoke of the dispatch console and it's life expectancy and what should be kept current. She spoke of how each of the options affects technology. She spoke of the need to get a commitment from the Town to finance the replacement costs of the equipment. She noted that all options would work for the needs of New Fairfield.

Fire Department member Mitch Williams spoke of his concerns about merging with another town. He spoke in favor of moving the SOC to the Communications Center (option 2).

Resident State Trooper Sergeant Nick Ieraci spoke of the pros and cons of all options.

Finance Director Olga Melnikov spoke of the challenge of staffing the Communications Center and reviewed the various options.

Mark Beninson spoke of the logistics of Communications Center and in favor of keeping the center in New Fairfield.

First Selectman Pat Del Monaco thanked the Advisory Committee for all their hard work and opinions for the Communications Center. She noted that the committee does not support merging with a neighboring town. She spoke of starting with option #3 and the flexibility with overtime shifts. She further spoke of the cost of the options.

Selectman Lori Beninson spoke of the importance of a reliable dispatch center. She noted that merging with Newtown would allow for more staffing options.

Selectman Khris Hall spoke of the importance of a reliable center and noted that merging with Newtown is the best option at this time. She further noted that if the decision is made to stay in New Fairfield, the staffing model must change and suggested doing significant research on how to fix staffing. Communications Center Dispatcher Glenn Magyar spoke of the scheduling for part-time employees.

### **Public Comment**



BOF Chairman Wes Marsh spoke of the budgetary impact of the various options and specifically the advantages of merging with Newtown.

Chris D'Esposito spoke of his concerns of merging with Newtown and the advantages of keeping the center in town.

Ryan Ptakowski spoke of his support for keeping the center in New Fairfield.

Dan McDermott spoke in support of keeping the center in New Fairfield.

Both Jane Landers and Cynthia Ross-Zweig encouraged everyone to listen to the professionals on the Communications Advisory Committee and keep the center in New Fairfield.

Paul Gouveia spoke of the price of the center and encouraged everyone to support the upgrades at budget time.

John Morelli spoke in support of keeping the center in New Fairfield and gave examples of potential communications gaps and dangerous situations that could happen if calls need to be transferred.

Chris D'Esposito spoke of the importance of knowing the area when taking calls.

**Adjournment**

Pat Del Monaco made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm. Khris Hall seconded the motion.

**Vote: 3-0-0 (Motion approved)**

Suzanne Kloos

Received by email on 10/30/2023 @ 3:06 p.m.  
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield