

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DECEMBER 24, 2008
EMERGENCY MEETING
POLICE STATION
11:00 AM

Due to a severe ice storm on December 12, 2008, an emergency meeting was held by the Board of Selectmen at the Sterling Police Station.

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 AM.

Present were Selectmen Donlin Murray, Richard Sheppard, Paul Sushchuk, Deputy Fire Chief Tom Kokernak, Police Chief Gary Chamberland, DPW Supt Bill Tuttle, SMLD Director John Kilgo, and Town Administrator, Terri Ackerman.

Status reports were given by each department along with suggestions for improvement.

Chief Chamberland reported on lost communications due to generator problems, flooding and radio problems. He will work with the Fire Department to improve on those issues. He suggested additional manpower at the dispatch center to improve better communication with the dispatchers, appointing a town-wide central information officer, consider two, 12 hours shifts, recommends replacing cruiser with a 4 wheel drive, need more barricades and police and fire work on a plan to dedicate keeping their parking lots accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Deputy Chief Kokernak reported that the shelter is officially closed as of Sunday at 7:00 PM. Supplies are being returned to the Red Cross. The town received 50 cots and blankets through the Homeland Security grant. Deputy Kokernak reported that the new carbon monoxide law definitely saved lives; an average of 2 dangerous CO calls per day were made due to generators, the DEP approved burning of brush for December 22, 2008, first time in history and will be publicized in the Telegram and Gazette and the website. The town is awaiting the FEMA reimbursement. Chief Hurlbut will put together an after-action report with lessons learned. There was a month's work of call volume during the 1st four days of the storms. Deputy Kokernak informed the Board that there needs to be a better way of notifying people about the shelter, Reverse 911 is not reliable if telephones are down. Basements were flooded because of no power for the sump pumps. Deputy Kokernak conveyed Chief Hurlbut's praises for the dispatch center and everyone that worked hard during the storm.

Superintendent Bill Tuttle reported that the fuel provider, Dennis Burke, was fantastic; there were no problems and no need for a backup. The gasoline provider was not as good and he suggested accommodating emergency deliveries be part of future bids. Superintendent Tuttle suggested that one company be responsible for servicing municipal generators and that every worker be trained on running the generators.

Selectman Sushchuk stated that the town needs a way to keep brush trimmed. Chairman Murray informed him that Kevin Beaupre offered to clear brush anytime.

John Kilgo thanked the team and all the town workers, there was lots of communication and the community was great. He reported that the SMLD is developing an educational program for the homeowners: weather head, neutrals, etc., along with what the power company owns versus what the homeowners are responsible for. Chairman Murray agreed many homeowners do not understand the process. Mr. Kilgo informed them that as far as the light department knows everyone has power and the department is in the process of interviewing customers on the SMLD's service.

Selectman Sushchuk reported that he was proud of everyone and their efforts. Selectman Sushchuk made the motion to stand down from the state of emergency. 2nd by Selectman Sheppard. All in favor. Chairman Murray commented on the departments and how well they worked together, we can always improve as long as we work together as a team. Selectman Sushchuk asked that the list of suggestions be circulated to the whole team.

Chief Chamberland informed the team that the school department needs to be involved sooner. Selectman Sheppard agreed and suggested that the First Church be made the permanent shelter instead of the school as long as they had a generator.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

PAUL M. SUSHCHUK
CLERK