

Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 8, 2010
Town Hall 2:50pm

At 3:07pm, Chr. O'Reilly called the meeting to order.

Present: Chr. Jack O'Reilly, Selectmen Jan Stuart and Cosmas Iocovozzi, Administrative Assistant Beatrice Marconi, Road Agent Len Thomas, Emergency Management Co-Directors Chief Jon Tretter and Roy Greenleaf and Code Enforcement Officer Charlie Smart.

Chr. O'Reilly opened the de-briefing with an explanation of the purpose which was to discuss events during the wind storm to address any areas that needed improvement to ready the town for the next.

Selectman Stuart asked the Co-directors and Road Agent to rate themselves on the handling of the storm's events Feb 25th.

Len Thomas was at home but did not hear cell phone on the first floor. His land line was working. Our Fire Truck went to his residence at approx 1:00am however it couldn't be signaled due to the lack of power at his house. He contacted Rockingham and Selectman Iocovozzi. It was too dangerous to be out cutting trees as there were many hot power lines and trees still falling down.

Selectman Stuart stated that the Police Dept called the Fire Dept for barriers to close roads but was told they (the Fire Dept) could not get passage. Len stated that due to wires, a pick up could pass, but not a fire truck. Selectman Stuart said that her big concern is that no one could be reached. Chief Greenleaf stated his staff was out in the storm. Roy stated that he was called in at 23:37 and it took him about a half hour to reach the station. Selectman Stuart apologized and acknowledged his arrival but said that earlier attempts to speak to him were made however to no avail.

Selectman Stuart felt the directors and road agent (and highway staff) should have known Newington was experiencing a state of emergency. She felt the directors should be ready and available. The shelter coverage and food situation were not pre planned and ready. Chr. O'Reilly noted that really none of us could have imagined the intensity of the storm.

Chief Tretter stated he was told he was called at midnight but because of the absence of power coupled with the cell phones being out of kilter that is why he was not at the station throughout the night. He did, however get on site before 7:00am.

There was discussion about alternate communications ie: ham radios and what it would take to activate that form.

Chief Tretter agreed that response was slow but once the crews got going, it was well organized. Selectman Stuart said that the Code Enforcement Officer made it in in the heat of the storm. Charlie pointed out that when he came in the winds were 45 m/p/h and when the chiefs were called, it was 90.

Selectman Iocovozzi noted he was at the Fire Department at which point they were planning their course of action. There should be multiple places to store barriers and he agreed that the shelter should have been better organized.

Page 2

We do have a food locker which is presently at the Police Garage, empty. Chief Tretter will look at the recommended shelter food list and will see to it that it be stocked and ready.

Selectman Iocovozzi felt that the Fire Department was adequately staffed when he was there but added the shelter was more important than basements at that time.

Chief Greenleaf mentioned that with the roof blowing off one of the bldgs at Sprague, we were very lucky no one was hurt. In fact we were lucky no one was hurt in many areas.

Selectman Stuart felt that the Police & Fire Departments should better coordinate their efforts next time.

Chief Tretter noted that Selectman Stuart was concerned about response.

The Food Locker situation will be addressed by EM and manning the shelter as well. The School will also be a shelter, perhaps Town Hall will then be secondary.

Chief Greenleaf was in charge the night of the storm. Upon Chief Tretter arriving on scene, the responsibilities were assessed based on the need and situation of the town. The Action Board had all ready been activated which was beneficial for tracking purposes.

Selectman Stuart stated that calls began at her house around 9:00pm. Chief Tretter hoped for details on the calls.

With wires, trees and poles downed, passage was impossible in some places, especially in South Newington.

Chief Tretter noted that Newington is very unique as most communities do not provide a shelter for their people, rather, the Red Cross comes in. He added that the shelter issues will be addressed by EM.

There is a booklet that contains shelter rules. He will become familiar with that and pass it on.

EM will inventory the barricades around town and report back.

To end, if Emergency Management Directors cannot be reached, then the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen can declare the shelter open. The Chair will then notify the other Selectmen and will maintain what they can until the Directors are on site.

At 4:08 the meeting adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant