

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM**  
Financial Needs Roundtable  
Thursday, September 29, 2011  
Grange Hall  
6:30 pm  
Special Meeting

Members present:

Mark Walter, First Selectman  
Bruce Dutch, Board of Finance  
Paul Maxwell, Board of Finance  
Nancy Haslam, Board of Education  
Bryan Perry, Board of Education  
Brian Pear, Board of Education (arrived at 6:40 pm)  
Crary Brownell, Planning and Zoning Commission

Others:

Emmett Lyman, Selectman  
Craig Mansfield, Emergency Management Director  
Dean Anderson, East Haddam Ambulance Association Chief of Operations  
Steve Bellandese, Resident State Trooper  
Cindy Varricchio, Finance Administrator

**Call to Order**

Mark Walter called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Motion was made by Mark Walter to approve the Agenda. Crary Brownell seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of August 2, 2011**

**Motion was made by Mark Walter to approve the August 2, 2011 Special Meeting Minutes with one correction—under approval of minutes—motion should read seconded by Bruce Dutch, not Bryan Perry. Paul Maxwell seconded the motion. The motion carried with Bryan Perry abstaining.**

**General Discussion**

Mark Walter reported that the intent of this meeting was to review the Town's emergency services as a follow-up to Storm Irene and the needs of these departments. Mr. Walter stated that he would like to have general discussion tonight and then request that each of these areas report back to the Financial Needs Roundtable group at a meeting to be held on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm

Mr. Walter asked Chairman of the Board of Education Nancy Haslam about generators for the schools. Emergency Management Director Craig Mansfield stated that the water/sewers not on a generator at the new 4-8 Middle School, only the heating system is. Mr. Walter stated his concern of pipes freezing should a no power event occur in the winter. Mr. Mansfield stated that if there was a long-term emergency event we would need to utilize all of the schools, not just the high school. There was discussion regarding the review of the schools for future emergency needs.

Mr. Walter stated that our biggest challenge is to prioritize the Town's needs for emergency services and that we would need to phase implementation of those priorities. Mr. Walter cited—a location for a combined facility, the amount of space that would be necessary. Mr. Walter stated that he is open for suggestions.

There was discussion on several properties—Firehouse Co #2, Co #3, the Harris property on Mt. Parnassus. Mr. Mansfield stated that down by the Riverhouse (the current police location) is too congested. Mr. Mansfield suggested the Moodus area because it is the largest population with the highest call volume. Mr. Mansfield added that the Harris property is the geographical center of our Town. Dean Anderson, Chief of Operations for East Haddam Ambulance, concurred with being located in the geographical center of our Town. Mr. Anderson stated that regardless of their physical location they have response time obligations to meet. Mr. Mansfield inquired if the Ambulance Association had ever considered dividing their locations. Mr. Anderson responded that they had, but it doesn't seem feasible and it would be difficult to manage logistically. Mr. Anderson stated that the recent storm highlighted the benefits of Fire and Ambulance being located together. Resident Trooper Steve Bellandese stated his support for emergency operations being located in the center of town as well.

Mr. Mansfield stated that the biggest issue at this point is our communications system. We lost AT & T towers during the storm which had a 24 hour battery. The Verizon towers are newer with back-up generators. Mr. Mansfield stated that we could have lost the Verizon towers just as easily. Mr. Walter asked how a radio system would be "powered" in the event of a power outage. Mr. Mansfield responded that the system would be designed with a generator to be totally self-supported. Mr. Mansfield stated that a communication system would be very expensive because the system would have to cover 56 miles and we would need three or four radio sites adding that the radios are the least expensive part of the system. Mr. Mansfield referenced the new Old Saybrook radio system which costs approximately \$2.5 million and Durham at \$1 million with free labor. Mrs. Haslam inquired as to whether or not there are grants available for radios. Mr. Mansfield responded that those types of grants have dried up. Mr. Mansfield stated that we should look to do something with Haddam, so that we could work together to cover dead zones.

There was discussion with regard to hiring a consultant to survey and identify our needs for a communications system. Mr. Mansfield stated that the committee probably should be the same members of the road naming committee—which is made up of the heads of each emergency services area. Mr. Walter stated that the road project is going to be a big challenge. Mr. Mansfield stated that it was easier when there were home phones, rather than cell phones. There was discussion regarding house numbering for emergency services.

Paul Maxwell asked about what the next step would be with regard to a communications system. Mr. Mansfield responded that we would need to look to bring a firm with expertise in this area to put together a RFQ with specifications for a system.

There was an overall consensus that locating Ambulance, Fire and Police at the same facility would be advantageous.

There was discussion regarding moveable/portable generators for future emergency situations for flexibility.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

**Motion was made by Nancy Haslam to adjourn at 7:20 pm. Bryan Perry seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Varricchio