

VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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-MEETING NOTICE-

**Special Meeting
Valley Council of Governments
Tuesday, January 31, 2012
4:00 p.m.
at Derby City Hall
1 Elizabeth St., Derby**

AGENDA

Pledge of Allegiance

- 1. Public Session**
- 2. Discussion of VEMS Operations and Municipal Agreements**
- 3. Executive Session**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Tuesday, January 31, 2012
at Derby City Hall**

Persons Present:

Mayor James Della Volpe, Ansonia
Mayor Anthony Staffieri, Derby
1st Selectman W. Kurt Miller, Seymour
Mayor Mark Lauretti, Shelton (arrived at 4:15 p.m.)
David Elder, VCOG Staff
Robert Pettinella, VEMS Ex. Dir.
Jerry Schwab, VEMS Pres.
Noreen McGorty, VEMS V-P
Jared Heon, VEMS V-P
Scott Andrews, VEMS Bd. Member
Joe Burnett, VEMS Bd. Member
Dr. Greg Boris, VEMS Bd. Member
Joe Laucella, VEMS Bd. Member
Dave Lenart, VEMS Bd. Member
Shannon McDaniel, VEMS Secy.

Chairman Della Volpe called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

The Chairman asked three times if anyone wished to speak during the public session. No one spoke. The public session was closed.

The Chairman asked if there was going to be a spokesperson for VEMS. Jerry Schwab and Robert Pettinella will speak.

Mayor Staffieri then spoke. He said he was disturbed by the story that a new VEMS vehicle was used for a private trip to Virginia. This puts VEMS under close scrutiny. VEMS does a great job. However, common sense was not used in this instance. This should have been investigated, and not by an internal board. An outside board should have been brought in, such as having the Mayors have corporation counsel look into the matter and come out with a decision as to how it should have been done. Noreen McGorty, a VEMS board member, said the board members completing the review asked some tough questions and worked together to evaluate the accident. The review has prompted changes in some VEMS policies.

Chairman Della Volpe asked what the make-up is of the VEMS Executive Board. Mr. Schwab said each town gets a seat, each service gets a seat, two members from Griffin Hospital, one seat from Valley Chamber. They are all voting members.

The Chairman said that Mayor Staffieri asked about the incident that occurred. Has any factfinding been done? The answer was yes, they were made aware of the incident on Friday, 12/23. Since the next day was Christmas Eve, it was decided to meet on Monday, 12/26, and they tried to find out what happened while it was still fresh in everyone's minds.

First Selectman Miller asked how this process differed from the process used if the vehicle was involved in an accident in its normal daily use. The answer was typically, an employee or board

member is operating the vehicle and the police are called. The board, Executive Director and insurance carrier are notified.

Mr. Pettinella said that as a result of this incident, the new policy is that only VEMS employees will be using VEMS vehicles to carry out their mission.

First Selectman Miller asked how many miles were on this vehicle when it left the Valley. The answer was 1800. Mr. Miller then asked if the reason it was used in this manner was to put the extra 200 miles on it to get above 2000 miles. The response was yes. Mayor Staffieri asked if all the other vehicles were broken in the same way. The answer was not to Virginia, but yes, all vehicles were broken in to approximately 1800-2000 miles before being put into service. The policy is now that we will not take a vehicle on a long trip to break it in.

Mayor Staffieri also brought up who paid for the gas since it wasn't work related and the accident happened. Who is responsible for the damage? The response was the driver paid for the gas, not VEMS and the other driver's insurance paid for the damage to the VEMS vehicle since the other driver was at fault.

A brief discussion then took place regarding the VEMS by-laws, the number of board members and how the board operates. Mayor Staffieri requested a copy of the by-laws. Mr. Pettinella will send them to him. He also handed out copies of the municipal contracts to the Mayors.

First Selectman Miller noted that it appears the board of directors actually runs the operation, not the Executive Director. He felt it should be the other way around. The Executive Director should be making these decisions and the board should be overseeing to make sure things are done right. He thinks this is a concern.

Mayor Lauretti then said he had a concern about double billing when both paramedics and ambulance show up at a call. He wondered how to keep things like this from occurring. He also thinks there are unnecessary trips going on. He was informed that the ALS rate in Shelton, Ansonia and Derby are significantly less than the ALS rate in Seymour and Oxford. The reason is that they are dispatched less accurately in those communities. Northwest dispatch center serves Oxford and Seymour and they are much better quality calls.

Chairman Della Volpe asked if there were any other comments. There being none, the Chairman indicated that the VCOG Board will review what has been given to them and what has been said and will discuss this at their next VCOG meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman requested a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Kurt Miller; To adjourn the meeting; Second: Anthony Staffieri; Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Lauretti,
Secretary