



PUBLIC SAFETY

Above: Santa arrives on a Coventry Fire Truck to the Annual Lighting event in December 2014. Photo by Coventry Parks & Recreation.

COVENTRY POLICE DEPARTMENT

1585 MAIN STREET



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Mark A. Palmer
Chief of Police



We are pleased to present this annual report that describes some of the highlights and accomplishments of the Coventry Police Department during the past fiscal year. This report also provides the Department and the community an opportunity to evaluate whether we have met the goals that were set out at the beginning of the year. Hopefully, this report will not only be informative, but also help the reader to gain an understanding of the variety of services that the Coventry Police Department provides throughout the year.

As submitted in our budget document last year, our goals for fiscal year 14/15 were;

ADMINISTRATION

- **Continue to comply with CALEA and POST accreditation standards. Achieve POST reaccreditation in March 2015.**

The department continues to maintain compliance with CALEA standards as we prepare for an on-site assessment in April 2016. The agency has requested a 'Gold Standard Assessment' which is reserved for agencies that have demonstrated a consistent compliance with CALEA standards over a prolonged period and have not have any past non-compliance issues or concerns.



The POST Council Accreditation section has decided to extend our State Accreditation to April 2016, when we will received our CALEA on-site. At that time, the period of our State award will in the future coincide with the CALEA accreditation period.

- **Continue to seek grant funding for costs associated with motor vehicle enforcement as well as equipment needs.**

The agency applied for and received grant funding for the Comprehensive DUI Enforcement grant. Click it or Ticket and Rural Road Speed Enforcement. In addition to funding for conducting enforcement efforts, the department received \$4000 to purchase a speed monitoring device that detects vehicles and their speeds. The unit can be set either with or without displaying a vehicle's speed.

- **Conduct a promotional test for the rank of sergeant. Promote one sergeant by October 2014. Promote a second sergeant during fiscal year 2015/2016.**



Michael Hicks is sworn in as a sergeant

The department prepared and distributed a request for bids for a sergeant promotional exam which including conducting a job task analysis, a written examination based upon local agency directives and law and an oral examination. The examination process began on October 4, 2014.

Based upon the exam results, Michael Hicks was promoted to sergeant on November 6, 2014. Due to an early retirement of a supervisor and the needs

of the department, a second sergeant, Ted Opdenbrouw was promoted on May 14, 2015.

- **Hire an officer to fill the opening created by a promotion to sergeant. This officer should begin POST Academy training in January 2015.**

The department conducted an entry-level testing process and selected a candidate to begin the POST academy on January 2, 2015. Unfortunately, the candidate was unable to fulfill the POST requirement and did not attend the session. The department selected a replacement candidate who began the POST academy on April 2, 2015.

- **Seek consensus from community groups in support of a school resource officer in fiscal year 15/16 budget.**

As the agency began its budget preparations, it became apparent that there was not sufficient support for a position as School Resource Officer. The department did submit a request for an additional entry-level position. This position was approved by virtue of the budget referendum with a start date of January 1, 2016.

OPERATIONS

- **Provide adequate patrol coverage throughout town 24 hours a day. Evaluate patrol schedules to implement all ten-hour shifts.**

Adequate patrol staffing was provided throughout the year. This required use of budgeted overtime funds to pay for holding officers over their shift or hiring overtime for an entire shift, sometimes ordering in officers. The agency stayed within its allotted budget for salary and overtime expenses. Due to unfilled patrol positions throughout the period, the agency did not yet transition to all 10 hours shifts. There remains two ten hour shifts. The new Collective Bargaining Agreement includes a new provision allowing the chief to eliminate the 12-hour shifts. This will be done when sufficient staffing is reached.

The statistical printout of the number and types of calls for service during the period is attached.

- **Respond to all calls for service and investigate reports of criminal and suspicious activity in an efficient manner.**

The agency responded to 7411 calls for service during the period. The number of burglaries decreased by approximately 30% and theft from a building decreased by approximately 60%. Motor vehicle stops by officers increased by 30%.

- **Assign a sergeant to supervise and investigate reports of criminal and suspicious activity in an efficient manner.**

We have not yet been able to assign a sergeant in this position due to aforementioned staffing issues. This goal will be reevaluated during next fiscal year.

- **Continue to participate with Metro Traffic Services to aggressively enforce DUI laws and hazardous moving violations. Conduct two sobriety checkpoints, two seatbelt checkpoints and four concentrated enforcement efforts focusing on hazardous moving violations.**

The department conducted two sobriety checkpoints with the assistance of officers from Metro Traffic Services. In addition, Coventry officers conducted twelve DUI roving patrol operations.

- **Increase enforcement of distracted driving violations by 10% over previous fiscal year.**

There was an increase of 5% of enforcement of distracted driving violations from last fiscal year. It is becoming more difficult to enforce texting while driving as offending drivers continue their attempts to secrete this behavior.



SUPPORT

- **Begin utilizing the new electronic PR-1 accident reporting format in January 2015.**

The agency began using the new electronic PR 1 on January 1, 2015. Two agency members were sent to training and instructed the rest of the members in filling out the new, comprehensive Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria guidelines. The agency worked with its (Computer Aided Dispatch) CAD vendor to ensure reports were being done properly. The new reports however are taking officers a significantly longer period of time to complete as they capture so much more data than the previous reports.

- **Coordinate with other law enforcement agencies in the regional service sharing agreement in motor vehicle and other enforcement efforts and seek grant funding to support operational goals.**

The department continues to participate with other agencies in the region on area enforcement efforts. Detective Spadjinske is a team leader in the regional accident investigation team. Another officer has been selected to attend advanced accident investigation training. We are seeking appropriate training courses for this member.

- **Work toward becoming a PREA certified lockup facility.**

We have begun gathering training material for officers regarding PREA standards and responsibilities that apply to field officers.



Other Agency Highlights

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Mr. Kevin Roberto joined the department to fill the Executive Assistant vacancy. Kevin comes with over 20 years of police experience as a UCONN police officer and was an Accreditation Manager for CALEA Accreditation.

Sergeant Anthony Ochtera took an early retirement with 19 years of service.

Officer Wayne Greener was hired in March of 2015 to replace the position vacated by Sgt. Ochtera. Wayne will be attending the POST Academy and will complete his training in mid-December.

Dispatcher Sue Wolfe retired on August 1, 2014. Sue had 29 years of service with the town and 26 as police dispatcher and records clerk.

Ann Bousquet was promoted to Dispatcher/Clerk as a result of a vacancy created by a retirement.



Ted Opdenbrouw is sworn in as a sergeant by Assist Clerk Brooke Manning

Ryan Brenker, formerly a part-time dispatcher, took on a full time position to replace Sue Wolfe.

Michael Hicks was promoted to the rank of sergeant on November 6, 2014. He is assigned to patrol duties in the position vacated by Sgt. Ochtera.

Ted Opdenbrouw was promoted to the rank of sergeant on May 14, 2015. This position was established as part of the re-organization that eliminated the two lieutenant positions.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Officer Gail McDonnell was awarded the department's Distinguished Service Award for developing a program to assist in finding people with autism in the event they go missing.

Sergeant McDonagh, Officer Flanagan, Officer Dexter and Officer Kuhns were issued Meritorious Commendation Certificates for their outstanding work in traffic enforcement.

Officers Mark Samsel and Kevin Vail were awarded a Meritorious Commendation Certificate for responding to a fire at the Bolton United Methodist Church and developing information which led to the arrest of the suspected arsonist.

Officers Thomas Kuhns and Kevin Vail were awarded Meritorious Commendation Certificates for their response to a situation where it was reported that a subject was contemplating suicide. The subject had threatened the officers with a knife and the officers were able to disarm him and bring him to the hospital for treatment without injury to themselves or the subject.

Officer Robert Dexter received a CPCA Scholarship award



OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

A new Collective Bargaining Agreement was ratified on May 27, 2015. This is a three-year agreement that will remain in effect until June 30, 2017.

The department purchased body cameras with funds from the Justice Assistance Grant. Each officer was issued their own body camera. The department developed a comprehensive policy on the use of the body cameras. Officer received instructions on

the policy and use of the cameras. A local server was installed to retain the video from the body cameras pursuant to law and policy.

The department applied received a grant for a Prescription Drop Box. The drop box is a service to the public in order to reduce the amount of prescriptions that are diverted into the illegal market. It also prevents prescription medications from being thrown into the trash and introduced into the environment. The drop box was installed in the lobby of police headquarters.

The department received grant funding to assist in purchasing bullet resistant vests for officers.

Members of the department began carrying NARCAN in their vehicles during patrol duties. NARCAN (or Naloxone) is an opioid antagonist that can be useful in saving lives by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose. The prescription medication as purchased by using Justice Assistance Grant funds.

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### **Vehicle Pursuits**

*Members of the department became involved in four (4) pursuits during the fiscal year.*

*The first pursuit involved (then) Officer Michael Hicks who was conducting speed enforcement on Main St. near Bradbury Lane. At approximately 9:45 PM, Officer Hicks clocked a vehicle heading south on Main St. at 73 MPH in a posted 30 MPH zone. Officer Hicks put on his lights and siren, pulled out into traffic and saw the vehicle increasing its speed that he estimated to be close to 100 MPH. The vehicle passed another vehicle near Snake Hill Rd. Officer Hicks broke off the pursuit for safety reasons as he felt the situation was too dangerous to continue.*

*Officer Gail McDonnell was parked at the CVFA parking lot and observed a vehicle pass by her. She believe she recognized the license plate as being a vehicle owned by a subject wanted for warrant out of PA. Officer McDonnell followed the vehicle for a short time (without activating her emergency equipment) and noted that the vehicle began to accelerate away from her. And illegally pass vehicles going in the same direction. Officer McDonnell lost sight of the vehicle. As she rounded the curve near Lisicke Beach, Officer McDonnell found the vehicle in question had wrecked and rolled onto its roof. She approached the vehicle as both subject who had been in the vehicle began to exit. Both subjects were detained and transported to Windham Hospital for minor injuries (treated and released). The driver was later placed under arrest, being the subject of warrant from PA.*

*Officer Mark Samsel observed a motorcycle traveling west on Cross St. travelling at approximately 55 MPH according to in-car radar. Officer Samsel later saw the motorcycle stopped at the intersection of Main St. and Lake St. The plate on the motorcycle was not visible. As Officer Samsel approached from the rear, the motorcycle took off heading south on Main St. Officer Samsel began to follow the vehicle but saw that the motorcycle was in the on-coming lane of traffic, illegally passing several vehicles. Officer Samsel immediately terminated the pursuit due to safety reasons. In a review of the in-car video, officers were unable to identify the motorcycle or operator.*

*Sgt. Michael Hicks was performing speed enforcement on Boston Tpk in the area of Brewster St. and clocked a vehicle going eastbound operating at 78 MPH in a 45 MPH zone. Sgt. Hicks pulled out, got behind the vehicle and turned on his emergency*

equipment. Sgt. Hicks observed that the vehicle increased its speed, illegally passing a number of vehicles going in the same direction. The vehicle increased its speed and Sgt. Hicks estimated that it went through the intersection of Route 44 and Main St. at approximately 100 MPH. Sgt. Hicks terminated the pursuit due to safety reasons. Officer Michelle Hicks was at No. River Rd. and Route 44. She saw this same vehicle pass another vehicle and that it had slower to 50 to 60 MPH. Officer Hicks pulled behind this vehicle, (without activating her vehicle emergency equipment) attempting to get the license plate number. The vehicle then began to increase its speed again near Richmond Rd. Sgt. Hicks ordered Off. Hicks to terminate following the vehicle. Troop C and UCONN PD were notified. No further contact with the vehicle.

All pursuits were reviewed and found to be in compliance with Connecticut law and department guidelines. Written policy and agency culture directs officers to use pursuit as a last resort and to not risk the safety of the officer or community for possible motor vehicle violations. This is clearly being followed as officers broke off three pursuits on their own volition. There was one incident in which there was a crash. Officer McDonnell did not initiate a pursuit but merely followed the vehicle. It then began to increase its speed, presumably once the operator saw the police vehicle behind it. Officer McDonnell did not chase the vehicle but only turned her emergency equipment on once she no longer saw the vehicle. During briefing, officers and supervisors regularly discuss and review pursuit scenarios they see in the local or national news. The culture of the agency is to avoid pursuits at all costs unless absolutely necessary and the crime

### **Use of Force**

There were six (6) incidents throughout the year where officers were required to use force as part of their duties.

Officer Russ Iger deployed his Taser unit on a subject that was acting irrationally and combative toward people in the neighborhood and the responding officers. Subject was brought to the hospital for treatment and was charged with a number of criminal charges.

Sgt. Michael Hicks pointed his patrol rifle at a subject who was acting in a threatening manner toward family members and was armed with a crossbow. The subject came out of his home holding the crossbow but eventually surrendered. Sgt. Hicks did not fire his weapon, there were no injuries. The subject was arrested for a number of criminal charges.

Officer Kevin Vail and Officer Robert Dexter deployed their Taser units while attempting to apprehend a suspect wanted after a violent road rage incident. The Taser units were not effective and the suspect ran into his house. The officers left the scene and applied for arrest warrants for the subject and he was later charged with a number of criminal violations. No injuries reported.

While searching a home for a subject after a domestic incident, Officer Kuhns pointed his handgun at a subject after locating him hiding in the basement of the home. After noticing the suspect was not armed, Officer Kuhns pointed the Taser at the subject who complied without the Taser being fired. The subject was arrested and charged with a number of criminal offenses. No injuries.

Sgt. Michael Hicks and Officer Michelle Hicks were requested by the CT State Police to respond to Mansfield to assist with taking a subject into custody for a substance abuse/medical evaluation committal. While escorting the female subject to the

*ambulance, the subject began to kick at the officers and resist their efforts in bringing her to the ambulance. They used control holds to restrain her until she was placed into the ambulance. No injuries.*

*Officer Kevin Vail used the laser device on his Taser unit after responding to a burglary and observing suspects running from the rear of the building into a wooded area. The subjects stopped and surrendered. Criminal charges filed, no injuries.*

*The CT Legislature passed public act 14-149 which impacted the agency's current Use of Force policy and reporting form. Some substantive changes were made to our reporting form to be consistent with the Public Act and POST Council guidelines.*

*Pursuant to agency policy an administrative review is conducted for each use of force or response to aggression incident. All incidents were found to be within agency policy and legal guidelines. An annual calendar year analysis is also conducted and distributed to the Town Manager and Town Council.*

### **Personnel Complaints**

*It is the policy of the Coventry Police Department to investigate all complaints of alleged employee misconduct and to equitably determine whether the allegations are valid or invalid and to take appropriate action. All allegations of departmental officer misconduct shall be properly investigated whether such complaints are received verbally, in writing, through a third party or anonymously.*

*The Coventry Police Department employs a structured disciplinary system to be followed in cases of alleged or suspected violations of department rules, orders, Town of Coventry personnel rules or any applicable state or federal statutes by members of the department. This procedure is meant to assure prompt and thorough investigation of complaints to clear the innocent, establish guilt of wrong doers and facilitate fair, suitable and consistent disciplinary action. The personnel complaint procedure is explained on the department website. Personnel complaint forms are available on the town website, the police department website, at police headquarters or at town hall.*

*There were six (6) personnel complaints involving members of the agency during this fiscal year. Two of the complaints were generated by citizen complaints and one was generated internally off an external incident.*

*On July 7, 2014, a complaint was received from an individual who believed that an officer conducted an illegal search of her horse barn which is part of a commercial venture. An officer received a report of a larceny of a horse saddle and the owner said that the saddle was located at the horse barn/riding stable. The officer met the complainant there and began looking in the tack storage area for the saddle which was being withheld from the owner. An employee of the stable had allowed Officer McDonnell to search the areas. When the owner of the stable found out, she complained that it was an illegal search. An internal investigation was conducted and it was determined that the complaint was not sustained.*

*On July 13, 2014, representatives of the Coventry Regional Farmer's Market complained that an officer handled a traffic congestion situation at the Farmer's Market inappropriately. After a lengthy investigation, the complaint was determined to be not sustained.*

*On August 22, 2014, an individual reported that they believed they were racially profiled when an officer stopped them coming from the front of a private, single family house where the officer knew the occupants of the house. After a thorough investigation, it was determined that the complaint was not sustained and the officer's actions were consistent with expectations of patrol duties.*

*On August 22, 2014, an individual contacted the department and reported that they believed that an officer was in communications with another individual using a department email address for non-official purposes. The employee was reprimanded for violating the department email usage policy*

*On November 24, 2014, a motorist complained that an officer stopped their vehicle during a traffic stop. The motorist believed the officer was targeting the vehicle because it displayed an NRA sticker on it. The matter was resolved by a patrol supervisor after explaining traffic stop criteria.*

*On May 28, 2015, a person reported that their child was stopped by a police officer and that during the stop, the vehicle their child was in was searched for contraband. The complaint was that during the search, the officer grabbed the person by the arm and led them away from the vehicle. There were numerous attempts to contact the person who had made the complaint and the person who had been in the vehicle but no response was received. Contact attempts included emails, phones calls and two registered letters. The complaint is considered not sustained.*

### Professional Policing – Community Commitment



Officer Gail McDonnell is awarded a Distinguished Service Award developing "Project Safe Return"



Officer Wayne Greener is sworn in by Town Clerk Lori Tollmann



**Coventry Police Department  
Incident Analysis**

7/1/2014...6/30/2015

| 1st  | Shift<br>2nd | 3rd  | Total |
|------|--------------|------|-------|
| 1128 | 3530         | 2761 | 7411  |

| UCR  | Nature                           | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | Total |
|------|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|      |                                  | 3   | 0   | 5   | 0     |
| 001  | Marine Patrol Activity           | 0   | 15  | 1   | 16    |
| 029  | Disabled Motor Vehicle           | 27  | 69  | 49  | 145   |
| 1040 | Tax Fraud                        | 2   | 11  | 1   | 14    |
| 11A  | Sex Forcible Rape                | 1   | 1   | 0   | 2     |
| 11D  | Sex Forcible Fondling            | 0   | 0   | 2   | 2     |
| 13A  | Assault Aggravated               | 0   | 0   | 2   | 2     |
| 13B  | Assault Simple                   | 4   | 7   | 11  | 22    |
| 13C  | Intimidation                     | 4   | 15  | 19  | 38    |
| 151  | Suicide                          | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| 152  | Suicide Threat/Attempt           | 6   | 5   | 9   | 20    |
| 220  | Burglary                         | 6   | 19  | 7   | 32    |
| 23C  | Larceny Shoplifting              | 0   | 3   | 0   | 3     |
| 23D  | Larceny Theft From Building      | 1   | 7   | 1   | 9     |
| 23F  | Larceny Theft From MV            | 6   | 7   | 1   | 14    |
| 23G  | Larceny Theft of MV Parts        | 0   | 2   | 1   | 3     |
| 23H  | Larceny All Other                | 2   | 29  | 11  | 42    |
| 240  | MV Theft                         | 1   | 2   | 4   | 7     |
| 250  | Counter/Forgery                  | 0   | 3   | 1   | 4     |
| 2604 | Fireworks/Gunshots               | 5   | 20  | 53  | 78    |
| 2608 | Abandoned MV                     | 1   | 5   | 3   | 9     |
| 2609 | Littering                        | 1   | 5   | 0   | 6     |
| 2619 | Building Check                   | 0   | 8   | 4   | 12    |
| 2625 | Notification                     | 0   | 3   | 3   | 6     |
| 2631 | Public Hazard                    | 15  | 43  | 59  | 117   |
| 26A  | Fraud False Pretenses            | 0   | 11  | 3   | 14    |
| 26B  | Fraud Credit Card/ATM            | 0   | 14  | 5   | 19    |
| 26C  | Fraud Impersonation              | 0   | 3   | 4   | 7     |
| 26E  | Fraud Wire                       | 0   | 4   | 0   | 4     |
| 290  | Vandalism                        | 3   | 14  | 8   | 25    |
| 2914 | Animal Complaint                 | 40  | 182 | 82  | 304   |
| 3009 | Susp Person/Activity/MV          | 93  | 194 | 271 | 558   |
| 326  | Illegal Parking                  | 0   | 7   | 2   | 9     |
| 332  | Harassment/Harassing Phone Calls | 5   | 20  | 25  | 50    |
| 334  | Untimely Death                   | 1   | 1   | 2   | 4     |
| 343  | MV Accident (Injuries)           | 3   | 14  | 15  | 32    |
| 344  | MV Accident Evading              | 5   | 13  | 8   | 26    |
| 346  | MV Accident (No Injuries)        | 29  | 74  | 85  | 188   |
| 349  | Subpoena Service                 | 0   | 2   | 0   | 2     |
| 351  | Alarm                            | 109 | 158 | 128 | 395   |
| 353  | Medical                          | 116 | 314 | 144 | 574   |
| 355  | MV Stop                          | 283 | 523 | 717 | 1523  |



# Coventry Police Department Incident Analysis

7/1/2014...6/30/2015

|      |                             |     |     |     |      |
|------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 35A  | Drug/Narcotic Violation     | 7   | 7   | 15  | 29   |
| 35B  | Drug Equipment Violation    | 0   | 0   | 2   | 2    |
| 36A  | Sex Incest                  | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1    |
| 36B  | Sex Statutory Rape          | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1    |
| 375  | Routine Assistance          | 31  | 231 | 163 | 425  |
| 377  | Open Door/Window            | 4   | 9   | 12  | 25   |
| 388  | Miscellaneous               | 33  | 80  | 43  | 156  |
| 390  | Police Information          | 2   | 22  | 6   | 30   |
| 396  | Escort                      | 2   | 15  | 15  | 32   |
| 398  | Missing Person              | 5   | 5   | 8   | 18   |
| 399  | Lost And Found              | 6   | 32  | 13  | 51   |
| 400  | Family Matter - Non Arrest  | 4   | 33  | 31  | 68   |
| 401  | Repossessed Vehicle         | 3   | 1   | 1   | 5    |
| 4811 | Finger Printing             | 11  | 368 | 5   | 384  |
| 4858 | Fire                        | 6   | 49  | 22  | 77   |
| 4867 | Background Investigation    | 0   | 5   | 1   | 6    |
| 4873 | Assist Other Agency         | 23  | 71  | 62  | 156  |
| 520  | Weapon Law Violations       | 1   | 1   | 2   | 4    |
| 82   | Runaway/Non NIBRS           | 1   | 3   | 10  | 14   |
| 861  | Disturbance (Non-Domestic)  | 5   | 22  | 22  | 49   |
| 863  | Town Ordinance Violation    | 1   | 3   | 0   | 4    |
| 866  | Noise Complaint             | 9   | 8   | 24  | 41   |
| 889  | Check Welfare               | 11  | 58  | 48  | 117  |
| 890  | MV Erratic Operation        | 12  | 77  | 88  | 177  |
| 891  | MV Lock Out                 | 3   | 26  | 26  | 55   |
| 90C  | Disorderly Conduct          | 3   | 1   | 2   | 6    |
| 90D  | DWI                         | 8   | 6   | 18  | 32   |
| 90F  | Family Offenses, Nonviolent | 0   | 0   | 4   | 4    |
| 90Z  | All Other Offenses          | 4   | 15  | 21  | 40   |
| 911  | 911 Hang Up Call            | 1   | 16  | 12  | 29   |
| H109 | Junk MV                     | 0   | 7   | 0   | 7    |
| Sup  | Supplemental                | 160 | 530 | 338 | 1028 |



## **FIRE MARSHAL/ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

*Noel Waite, Fire Marshal/Director EMHS*

**Fire Marshal**- Fortunately it was a quiet year in town for fires. Six fires required investigations with only 3 being large dollar losses. A total of 212 inspections were conducted including all school facilities and special request inspection. 103 meetings were attended including participating in a statewide hoarding task force. A town wide respiratory protection program for the fire departments and EMS staff was completed. Special thanks to Beth Mancini of the North Coventry Fire Department for assisting with this task. Fire extinguisher training was conducted for all school maintaining staff to ensure proper operation and safety.

**Emergency Management**- A new Emergency power generator was installed at the senior center. This will allow the facility to be used for a cooling and or heating center during a power outage. It will not be used for a shelter during extended outages or large scale storms. Work continues on the Regional Shelter agreement with the towns of Mansfield, Willington and Ashford.

Respectfully,

Noel Waite  
Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director

# NORTH COVENTRY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

I would like to start our annual report with extending an enormous thanks to Chief Ray Eldridge Jr., and Lieutenant Beth Mancini-Goldsneider for a journey that began in February 2014 with them putting in countless hours working on the Fire Plan Implementation Committee and ended with the passage of a new Town ordinance on June 19, 2015 creating a Town of Coventry Fire Department.

We continue to dual respond with Coventry Volunteer Fire Association to calls in our town, making sure no call goes unanswered. We currently average five (5) personnel responding per incident and with an 8.43 minute response time to 921 calls (listed below). This is below the national standard of 10 minutes and is one of the things we will be focusing on to reduce even further. We extended our active members to 26, taken in 3 probationary with a reduction in junior members from 6 to 3 due to them turning of age and moving out of town. We performed over 10,000 man hours in activities, training and calls. We have 9 members that increased their response level by taking State certified classes; Emergency Medical Responder, 2Q drivers, Aerial operator and Firefighter basic level one.

Calls: Fire 32, 8 involved buildings, 285 EMS (medical), 214 Rescue, 35 Hazardous conditions, 55 Service, 257 Good intent, 42 False alarms, 1 Special incident.

We are currently operating with front line responding apparatus that is 22 and 23 years old where we needed to invest over \$17,000.00 this fiscal year in maintenance to ensure that we can respond to our citizens in need. We were turned down at a Town referendum to replace one of the apparatus.

## WHAT MAKES A NORTH COVENTRY FIRST RESPONDER

**Looking at our members we have a long list of qualities that make a first responder. These include:** honesty, trustworthiness reliability, accountability, ability to perform the physical tasks, good people skills, ability to articulate, being able to work under stress, capability to adapt and overcome, being a team player, being conscious about public opinion, understanding and compassionate, level-headed, thick-skinned and self sacrificing.

With all of these traits, there lies an undetectable shall I say magical, inner voice that makes us a first responder. Each and every day of the year we come to the rescue of those in need with selfless courage, knowing that approximately 100 firefighters annually sacrifice their own lives to save others. We acknowledge that our duty is to serve our community and our citizens to the best of our ability, without the expectation of praise or reward.

We are an extraordinary breed that can go for hours, sometimes days on end with only a little bit of sleep. As volunteers we can quit at any time. No one is there looking over our shoulders telling us we can't, but when you get the fervor you cannot ignore that something is telling you "this is what you are here to do."

A group may enter our department for no reason at all... just looking for something to do. But of that group one or two will get their first taste of helping others and realize that this is in their heart, and they will do it until they are physically unable to.

After reading this, you may wonder, "Am I, an extraordinary breed that could be a volunteer in the fire service." If you want to experience that feeling, then please join our Fire Department!

Respectfully submitted,  
North Coventry Fire Department

# COVENTRY VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

The Coventry Volunteer Fire Association, Incorporated (CVFA) provides town-wide emergency medical/ambulance service and primary firefighting service in the South Coventry District. The CVFA assists with firefighting service in the North Coventry District, as well as providing firefighting and ambulance mutual aid to surrounding towns, including Mansfield, Columbia, Andover and Willimantic, as well as the other mutual aid communities in our county.

The CVFA responds to about 1,000 calls a year, of which about 80% are medical calls. While the CVFA provides ambulance transport and basic life support (BLS) care, we are assisted by local paramedic services for advanced life support (ALS) care; these services include Windham Hospital, Ambulance Service of Manchester (ASM), and American Medical Response (AMR) paramedics. Our most frequent destination hospitals include Windham Hospital, Manchester Hospital, Rockville Hospital, Hartford Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) and St. Francis Hospital. In 2014, the most common medical emergency in Coventry was a psychological emergency, followed by motor-vehicle-accident related injuries.

In addition to numerous medical calls, the CVFA responds with two fire engines to fire calls. In 2014, the most common fire-related call was a false alarm, either an accidental alarm activation or activation from a benign source, such as smoke from cooking. Reports of outside fires were the second most frequent call. 2014 also saw more actual structure fires than previous years, with at least four active house fires. Fortunately, over the past couple of decades, improvements in building construction and improved use of detectors have reduced the number of actual house fires.

Along with ambulance and firefighting response, the CVFA provides additional kinds of responses, including searches for missing people, often children, and emergency dive search and recovery operations, in conjunction with the county dive team. To these ends, the CVFA operates a Polaris all-wheel-drive off-road vehicle and a dive truck, which includes SCUBA equipment for trained and certified personnel. The CVFA also provides medical and fire standbys for town events, including Coventry Fest, Panthers football, road races and various other functions.

CVFA response includes trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and emergency medical responders (EMRs) for ambulance calls, and state certified Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Pump Operators, Training Officers, and Fire Officers for firefighting emergencies. Upkeep of these state certifications requires continuous training. Ambulance calls require a minimal crew of one EMT plus one EMR, whereas fire engine response includes certified firefighters plus a certified pump operator. All CVFA fire officers, who are responsible for CVFA medical and fire ground operations, are certified as EMTs and at least to the Connecticut Firefighter II level, with higher ranking officers required to be Fire Officer I certified, or higher.

In addition to an active core of about 25 responders, the CVFA has an established junior firefighter program, with 14-17 year-old high school students with good grades allowed to respond with an adult EMT crew on the ambulance on emergency calls. While guidelines for junior firefighters are strict and documented, these high school students learn some valuable life lessons, leadership skills, and self-reliance by providing emergency response.

To meet the needs of providing emergency response, the CVFA is always looking for new adult and junior members. To this end, the CVFA works with the town, as well as independently, to recruit new members, but the reality is that volunteerism in the area is declining, and the fire department needs help with staffing.

Emergency call response is not the only work that gets done by the CVFA. A considerable amount of the fire department’s job is administration. The CVFA Board of Directors is responsible for administration including budgeting, tracking expenses, maintenance of the firehouses, vehicles, and equipment, including the purchasing of supplies, such as medical oxygen. The CVFA is working diligently internally, with the town, and with the North Coventry Fire Department (NCFD), to streamline processes, reduce operational costs, unify operating guidelines, and better address the requirements, needs, and expectations of the Town.

The current Board of Directors President is Denny Dittrich, whom you will see at many town and county meetings related to the fire department. Running the day-to-day emergency operations of the fire service is Chief Ken Boutin, with assistance from fire service officers.

The CVFA encourages town residents to become more familiar with the emergency services we provide. While residents should always call 911 for emergencies, everyone is welcome and encouraged to stop by any of the firehouses at any time for a tour and to ask questions.

**Emergency Call Numbers**

| <u>Type of service</u> | <u>FY 12/13</u> | <u>FY 13/14</u> | <u>FY 14/15</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Medical Calls          | 843             | -               | 824             |
| Fire Related Calls     | 258             | 258             | 264             |