

**MINUTES
TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING**

March 18, 2010

First Selectman David Campbell called the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 8:02 p.m. In attendance were Selectmen Bayne, Stevenson and Sullivan. Selectman Nielsen was absent. Also in attendance were Police Chief Duane Lovello, Public Works Director Robert Steeger, Emergency Management Director Marc McEwan, and Administrative Officer Karl Kilduff.

First Selectman Campbell started the meeting with a few comments. He apologized for the bad choice of leaving town during the storm. He thanked Selectman Bayne for serving as Acting First Selectman and noted that he was put in a difficult position having to balance his job and service to the Town. He did a great job communicating with the Board. First Selectman Campbell also extended his thanks to Selectwoman Stevenson for her efforts to keep up with the public. In addition, First Selectman Campbell wished to clarify a quotation regarding the response from CL&P that appeared in the local papers on his frustration with the utility's response. Since Tuesday of the week, he felt that CL&P made heroic efforts to bring resources into Darien to respond to the storm.

Finally, First Selectman Campbell made a public announcement that the transfer station would be open additional hours over the weekend to accommodate debris collection.

CL&P Spokesman Mitch Gross was acknowledged to report on progress toward restoring power. Mr. Gross described the number of tree removal and line crews dedicated to Darien. He estimated that 700 customers would be without power by midnight Thursday, which would be down to 100 by Friday, and then to 0 by Saturday. He noted that clean-up efforts would continue through the weekend.

Mr. Bayne asked about over-night work. Mr. Gross stated that there would be 14 lines crews and 6 tree crews working during Thursday night. He continued that during Friday 40 line crews, 20 tree crews and 6 service crews would be working. Mr. Bayne thanked CL&P for its efforts to respond to the storm and restore power.

Police Chief Lovello was recognized for a report. The Chief noted that the Police Department continues to work closely with the Public Works Department and the Emergency Management Director to make roads passable. Extra patrols were in place for Thursday to keep school bus routes safe. The Department was actively communicating to the public using Code Red and the Nixel network with updates. He noted that an after-action report would be completed by March 24 to review operations in order to improve future responses. He added that the department fielded a lot of phone calls from a frustrated public, but the Town experienced the wholesale destruction of the power grid and resources needed to be mobilized to respond.

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Mr. Bayne voiced his thanks to the entire Police Department for their efforts to keep the public safe.

Mr. Steeger briefed the Board on the efforts of the Public Works Department. He stated that the Department was first called out at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and were involved in continuous operations through Monday at 6:30 p.m. He added that some pump stations lost power but were operational with generators. All stations were back to full power at the time of the meeting. Most traffic signals were also out during the storm, but all were restored by Wednesday. He emphasized that there were few equipment breakdowns and no personnel injuries through the storm response. He also noted that there was good communication with CL&P.

Mr. Steeger did suggest that the cost to his department for the response would be approximately \$154,000 which was comprised of \$32,000 in overtime, \$34,000 in contractor expenses, \$80,000 for debris disposal and \$8,000 in other costs. He added that all roads were passable. Department staff would work overtime in the coming week with contractors, including the tree warden, to have all debris in the right-of-way cleaned up by the end of the upcoming week.

He wanted to specifically commend Highway Supervisor George Swift for his efforts and the long hours put in by the Public Works crews.

Mr. Bayne echoed Mr. Steeger's comments by also thanking Mr. Swift and the entire Public Works crew.

Emergency Management Director Marc McEwan was recognized for a report. Mr. McEwan started by describing the events as a reminder of events in 2007 with a forecast that did not truly predict the storm. His office coordinated with the Town's State partners during the storm and the immediate time after. He stated that the Fire and EMS radio system went down during the storm. He thanked the Police Chief and all the people in the dispatch center for fielding 911 calls and calling Fire and EMS responders.

Mr. Bayne thanked Mr. McEwan for his input and guidance during the storm. He added that Fire and EMS also deserved that Town's thanks for their efforts and presence on Saturday during the storm.

Mr. McEwan also reported on the damage assessment process put in motion by the Governor's Declaration of an Emergency. He added that any damage to homes should be reported to him by Monday, March 22 to be included in a report submitted to the State.

Ms. Sullivan noted that some people used the Town's shelter. She had heard that some senior citizens did not stay at the shelter because they did not think they could get into or out of the cots. Mr. McEwan stated that he was advised of a similar comment and would investigate other options to accommodate as many as possible. Mr. McEwan also thanked Norman Guimond from the Red Cross for his support in setting up the shelter.

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First Selectman Campbell took notice of and read aloud written reports submitted by Social Services Director Olive Hauser and Health Director David Knauf (attached).

Mr. Bayne stated that CL&P had advised him that if the public had no power by 6:00 a.m. on Friday, they need to call CL&P directly. If they had no power, it may be for an isolated reason. Chief Lovello provided the telephone number for the public to call. First Selectman Campbell stated that the Selectman's Office could also be contacted as a back-up.

Ms. Stevenson spoke about the response by the school system. She stated that she and Mr. Bayne were in regular contact with Superintendent Fital and Board of Education Chairman Westcott. The decision to close school was made on a day-to-day basis watching the status of power at schools. She added that Board of Education staff drove the bus routes with the bus company to make sure that routes were safe. She stated that there were no problem transporting students on Thursday.

Mr. Bayne wished to thank the Library for being open until 11:00 p.m. for people without power. He felt they went above and beyond to serve the public after the storm.

Ms. Sullivan asked First Selectman Campbell about the protocol which will be followed for communications during a crisis. First Selectman Campbell stated that it would be by e-mail. Ms. Sullivan suggested that a joint discussion or conference call might have been beneficial. Ms. Stevenson stated that she had not heard of Ms. Sullivan's suggestion before and would have liked a joint conference call. Mr. Campbell stated that this would be a topic for a future discussion. Mr. Bayne suggested a meeting with Department Heads to learn from the experience.

Selectwoman Stevenson moved, seconded by Selectman Bayne, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Karl F. Kilduff
Administrative Officer