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Beacon Hose Co. No. 1



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July 6, 2021

The Honorable N. Warren "Pete" Hess, Mayor
Borough of Naugatuck
227 Church Street
Naugatuck, CT 06770

Dear Mayor Hess,

Several months ago, the leadership of Beacon Hose Company #1, along with representatives of other area EMS agencies met with Mr. Larry Santoro of Naugatuck Ambulance Inc. The reason for the meetings in both December of 2020 and again in January of 2021 were an attempt to assist Naugatuck Ambulance leadership in making improvements to their failing system. There was also an opportunity to provide fair warning to Naugatuck that the level of mutual aid into the Borough, by the represented services, was not sustainable in the long term.

During the meetings, Mr. Santoro indicated that he would make increases in vehicle staffing to alleviate the overload issues. While some additional staff have been added; it has clearly not been sufficient to manage the volume of service requests in the Borough. Mr. Santoro also indicated that lack of adequate finances have contributed to Naugatuck Ambulance staffing delinquencies. He attributed those same financial issues as the reason his current fleet of vehicles is in deplorable condition, which has contributed to frequent breakdowns.

All of the area EMS agencies with whom I have met regarding this matter hold our reciprocal mutual aid agreements in very high regard. We understand and value these relationships and respect their meaning. The Borough of Naugatuck has benefitted from the mutual aid system well past its intended design. The use of mutual aid should not take the place of adequate staffing of your service. Mutual aid is meant to augment services in the event of unanticipated system overload or unexpected vehicle failure, etc.

Last evening, representatives of Beacon Hose Company, Oxford Ambulance, Seymour Ambulance, Middlebury Fire Dept. and Bethany Fire Dept. met to discuss this ongoing issue. It was agreed that a letter to Borough leadership was in order. Many of us can no longer continue to send resources at this rate to the Borough with absolutely zero communication or assurance that Naugatuck EMS or the Borough have done anything meaningful to correct the situation.

Effective immediately, Beacon Hose Company #1 will no longer respond to Priority 2 (non-life threatening) mutual aid requests to Naugatuck. Seymour, Oxford and Middlebury have also decided to cease responding to Priority 2 calls in Naugatuck effective immediately.

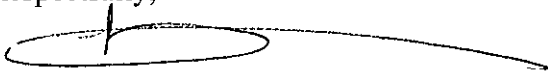
Bethany has agreed to continue answering Priority 2 calls in the Borough, but has serious concerns about their limited staffing and resource availability and the potential of leaving Bethany residents vulnerable. Naugatuck may need to find another service willing to accept these requests for service. This will undoubtedly result in extended on scene times for Naugatuck Police personnel and delays for the patient. All services agreed to continue answering Priority 1 (life threatening) requests at this point.

This situation is deeply troubling and frustrating. As EMS providers, we want to assure that everyone in need of pre-hospital emergency care have access to those services quickly and with a robust and capable service. This is not the case for Borough residents. Far too often, Borough citizens are waiting much longer than necessary for help to arrive from an out-of-town ambulance. Despite our good faith efforts to articulate our concerns and our offer help, virtually nothing has been done to correct the situation for over six months.

Mr. Mayor, I implore you to please take action and work with Naugatuck Ambulance to correct this extremely serious public health and safety situation.

I remain available to you should you have any questions or require clarification.

Respectfully,



Brian DeGeorge, Fire Chief
Beacon Hose Company #1, Inc.

cc:

Kyle Kelley, Chief, Seymour Ambulance Association
Madaline Taggart, Chief, Oxford Ambulance Association
Richard Cogill, Chief, Bethany Fire Department
James Grohs, Deputy Chief, Middlebury Fire Department
Colin McAllister, Deputy Chief, Naugatuck Police Department
Paul Russell, Chief, Naugatuck Fire Department
Kitty Hickox, Region 5 Representative, CT DPH/OEMS
Dr. Peter Jacoby, Naugatuck EMS Medical Director, Saint Mary's Hospital
Dr. Carlos Holden, BHC Medical Director, Waterbury Hospital
Gerard Smith, First Selectman, Beacon Falls
Larry Santoro, President, Naugatuck Ambulance Inc.