

RECEIVED BY EMAIL

Town of Vernon, Vernon, Connecticut
Risk Management Advisory Committee

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
12 SEP 17 AM 8:44

Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2012

Meeting called to order in Town Council Chambers by Chairman Males at
7:02 PM

Attendees: Committee Members: George Males, Bill Mc Manus, Carl Slusarczyk, Paul
Jonas, Ellen Kates
- Absent: Tony Zapolla
Board of Education Representative: William Nicholson
Town Representatives: John Ward, Town Administrator, Dawn Maselek,
Asst. Town Administrator, Chief William Call
Guests: - Christopher Wardrop, Producer, USI

Public Comment: There were no members of the public present to comment.

Discussion:

1. Motion made by Mr. Slusarczyk, second by Ms. Kates to accept the minutes of the Committee meeting of June 12, 2012. Vote – unanimous (Mr. Males abstained due to not present at June 12 meeting).
2. Discussion of Final Insurance Policies Adopted and Costs for July 1, 2012 Fiscal Year. Mr. Ward apologized for not referring the final decisions of the Town Administration on these policies to the Committee for review.

Mr. Wardrop provided a detailed review of the coverages for the 2012 Fiscal Year with comparisons to their counterpart coverages and costs for the 2011 Fiscal Year. Highlighted changes in carriers and coverage provisions from prior year. Final cost negotiated was approximately 20% higher than 2011, but less than the estimated 30% increase projected at the committee's June meeting. Final cost is approximately \$ 85,000 higher than Town's 2012 budget figure.

Discussion included request from Town Administrator for Committee to review the overall coverages and provide comments and recommendations for future changes.

3. Discussion of Chairman's Request to CIRMA to provide an updated Loss Report of the Town's Workmen's Compensation program through June 30. Ms. Maselek provided a copy of the Report CIRMA provided to Committee members. Unfortunately, with no time to pre-review the report, the Committee was limited in engaging in a meaningful discussion of its comments or implications other than noting that claim incidents and amounts appear to be climbing at an alarming rate. Committee expressed disappointment that CIRMA representative rejected our invitation to attend the meeting to discuss the report. Also expressed disappointment

that CIRMA does not provide an analysis of the trend of these results with recommendations for addressing the claim incidents. And that this report only included results through May 31 not June 30. Committee feels this is another indication of the deteriorating service being provided to the Town by CIRMA.

4. Town Safety Committee Meeting of July 2012. Ms Maselek provided a report of this first meeting of this new committee and commented on the meeting itself. Mentioned some of the new training classes some town employees will be attending on safety issues (First Aid, etc). Feels this was a positive first meeting of this committee and has hopes for its future. Mr. Wardrop attended this meeting and also feels it was a positive first step in this direction. Mr. Males mentioned that OSHA have some strong requirements that public entities conduct and document an annual assessment of town wide hazard risks and training conducted to address those risks. He also mentioned that the Connecticut OSHA agency might be a valuable asset to assist the town on these studies and assessments and other training needs as well. Chief Call mentioned steps taken by the Fire Department to equip all apparatus with safety reflectors to alert the public not to approach them at a fire scene. He also mentioned the value that the Fire Department has added by computerizing its training programs and classes in demonstrating efforts toward improved safety measures. Ms Maselek mentioned efforts by the Town to develop more effective Return to Work programs for employees out on Workmen's Comp accidents. She cited the need to uncover more useful tasks such employees could perform in this program. Committee members offered suggestions in this area.

5. Chairman's Letter to the Mayor (copy below) on Committee's perception of its treatment by the Administration in attempting to discharge its responsibilities. Mr. Males explained the background and history of events leading to this letter and the followup communications from the Town. The letter had invited the Mayor to attend the next Committee meeting, but this did not occur. Mr. Ward commented on behalf of the Town and apologized for the actions that led the Committee to this conclusion. He promised he would improve communications in the future and take a more proactive role in Committee deliberations. Toward that end, he offered to assume responsibility for preparing future committee agenda incorporating both towns needs and committee member input on appropriate meeting agendas. The Committee agreed to try this approach

Town of Vernon, Vernon, Connecticut, Risk Management Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2012

Page 3:

17th August 2012

Mayor George F. Apel
76 Tallwood Drive
Vernon, CT 06066

Re: Risk Management Advisory Committee

Dear Mayor Apel:

This letter is written to express the deep concerns of the Vernon Risk Management Committee about the continued viability of the Committee itself and its ability to discharge its duties to the Town. This Committee acts under the provisions of the Town Charter as an advisory committee to provide recommendations to the Mayor, Town Administrator, and through you, to the Town Council and people of Vernon on the various programs which it reviews. The Committee operates with 6 members who have many years service in the insurance and business world. We are fortunate to have such experienced and dedicated members who offer their time and service to the Town in this otherwise out of the spotlight area. Our Committee meets 6 to 7 times per year to review and initiate various programs as well as assisting on review of RFPs for service providers for various parts of the program.

Over the past several years, the Committee had worked hard to establish a town wide safety committee to comply with Connecticut General Statutes Sec 31-40v and have the activities of this committee directed by an appointed individual to act as the town's safety director. The committee would be comprised equally of management and labor. The activities of this committee would include working with the town's insurance carriers to establish safety and training programs, as well as reviewing incidents, improving work practices to limit or preclude accidents/incidents from occurring. As the town self insures \$425,000 to \$450,000 of each worker's compensation claim, these committee activities will ultimately improve upon the town's loss experience thus reducing the town's insurance costs. Toward this end, we have worked with our Workers' Compensation Third Party Administrator, CIRMA, to provide loss analysis and trend reports that exhibit loss experience by each department and employee work groups to facilitate the review and to assist in the establishment of emphasis programs: work practices, safety programs/rules and training programs.

Our Committee had its last meeting for the fiscal year on the 12th of June [a copy of the minutes are attached for your convenience] and we have been experiencing deterioration in the communication and assistance from the Town Administration in

Page 4:

Mayor George F. Apel
Re: Risk Management Advisory Committee

Page 2:

conducting our business. Some of the problems have been blamed on the loss of Peter Graczykowski as Assistant Town Administrator and the time it has taken to replace him. But the problem has gone past that point as to be perceived by the Committee as an 'excuse' and we are beyond the point of wanting to hear more excuses. We cite most recently, a fairly straight forward request delivered by the Committee last February directly to the CIRMA representatives in attendance at our meeting for two reports. When such reports were not provided as requested prior to our April Committee meeting, the Committee directed its Chairman to contact CIRMA directly to follow up on that request. Our Chairman did as directed and received confirmation from CIRMA that they had misplaced our request but would follow up shortly. In a follow up to the Town Administration on the status of this issue, our Chairman was informed that he was no longer allowed to communicate directly with any vendor but rather had to direct such requests through the Town Administrator's office. Our Chairman did so on four successive occasions starting in April, with the result of not even receiving the courtesy of a simple response. When the Committee did finally hear from the Administration on June 12th after its initial follow up, it was informed that CIRMA returned one of the two requested reports albeit a report of the wrong information that had incorrectly been communicated by the Administration. No mention has yet been made of the second report: the peer town analysis report. The point of the matter was totally missed, that being having the Committee having the opportunity to exercise its due diligence prior to the new term. So much for the benefits of Town controlled communications with outside vendors. All of these delays and miscommunications could have been avoided by a direct telephone call from our Chairman to our contacts at CIRMA. In the interim, without Committee input, we understand the Town has seen fit to unilaterally extend the service contract of this important vendor without qualification or comment.

The town's property and casualty program that has taken effect on the 1st of July will have premiums increasing by 20%. We understand this decision was made, again with little input from the Committee, based on the perception of a tightened insurance vendor market and the refusal or reluctance of three other potential providers to actively bid for our account. While we are not sure what action if any could have avoided this outcome, its results again reflect the results of bad town wide accident and loss results which the Committee feels could have been reduced by a more timely introduction and implementation of the town safety committee that our Committee has been promoting for the past several years.

If the recommendations and hard work of this dedicated Committee mean so little to the sitting Administration(s) of the Town of Vernon, the Committee members have to seriously ask what value its efforts are contributing toward this effort. If the goals are to

Town of Vernon, Vernon, Connecticut, Risk Management Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2012

Page 5:

Mayor George F. Apel
Re: Risk Management Advisory Committee

Page 3:

improve upon the safety and well being of our town workers, its loss experience, improving upon its accident prevention program and the overall town insurance program are not deemed to be an important and high priority of the Town Administration, why should this Committee continue to beat its collective head against the wall?

We respectfully want to bring these concerns and insights to your attention and hope they will result in your direct intervention with members of your staff to improve the working conditions on our Committee's needs and hopes. We would welcome meeting with you directly and/or invite you to our next committee meeting to be held on the 11th of September at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

We look forward to hearing from you soon on this important matter.

Sincerely,

George Louis Males
Chair

William McManus
Recording Secretary

GLM/WM: tj
Att: Draft, RMAC Minutes 6-11-12

CC: Paul Jonas-RMAC Member w/att.
Ellen Kates-RMAC Member w/att.
Carl Slusarczyk-RMAC Member w/att.
Tony Zapolla-RMAC Member w/att."

- End of Letter -

6. New agenda item: Status of Amerbelle factory closing. As announced in the press recently, the company (ies?) currently occupying these buildings announced their intention to cease or move those operations out of those buildings. The Town has expressed concerns for public safety issues related to the probable vacancy of this building. Mr. Ward requested Committee input in conjunction with his pending discussion with the Town Council. A viable dialogue pursued.
7. Next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2012 at 7:00 PM, Town Council Chambers.

Town of Vernon, Vernon, Connecticut, Risk Management Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2012

Page 6:

8. Adjournment: Motion made to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Jonas, Second by Mr. Slusarczyk. Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

William McManus, Recording Secretary