

# Cromwell Fire District

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Telephone 860-635-4420

FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **Fire and Water Divisions**

**Tuesday, April 17, 2018**

**7:00 PM**

**Coles Road Firehouse**

**105 Coles Road**

**Cromwell, CT**

The Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District held their monthly Board of Commissioners' Meeting on Tuesday, April 17, 2018, at 7:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and act upon Fire and Water Division business.

Commissioners Craig Murphy (President), Johnathon Hamlin, Charles Epstein, Julius Neto, Lee Brow, David Colligan, Roger Rukowicz, Jason Hinners and Robert Donohue attended. Also attending were Operations Director S. William Jarzavek, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia and Assistant Fire Chief EMS Robert McIntyre.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, by President Murphy. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Murphy.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted with the following additions: under New Business, Item C. 1. Middlesex Hospital Paramedic Services, Commissioner Neto would like to act on that item at an earlier opportunity in the meeting when the representative from Middlesex Hospital arrives so that the person does not need to sit through the entire Board meeting; Commissioner Hamlin added item E. 2. Under Reports of the Standing Committees; the item is Posting of Part-Time Dispatchers.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments to report.

### **APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2018**

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of March 20, 2018, as submitted.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or appeals to report.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for March had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The President stated that the Executive Director is hospitalized at the moment. He will be out for a period of time. Commissioner Neto has some personal time during the work day and has offered to come into the office for a couple of hours a day as Acting Director. Therefore, the President gave the floor to Commissioner Neto to discuss the Executive Director's report. Commissioner Neto stated that the document was self-explanatory and he would not be able to answer any clarifying questions because it was not his document. If there are questions that cannot be answered, he will research them and get back to the Board. Commissioner Colligan pointed out that the Fire Department is still in the running for their grant. Commissioner Epstein asked that Commissioner Neto highlight the report for those members of the audience that did not have time to read it ahead of time. Commissioner Neto reviewed the report. Regarding contract negotiations for local 4662, the first meeting of the negotiating committee will be Monday, April 23, 2018.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's Report for March as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio reported that it is getting close to the end of the fiscal year. There are a few accounts that are running over, i.e., repairs and professional services. Everything else is on track. Mr. Alibrio had some more follow up information on ambulance billing from the billing company. He had a report which was not in his possession at the meeting. However, he said he would send it out to the Commissioners. Commissioner Donohue had a question regarding lift gate replacement on Utility 1. There is a balance in that account of \$3,400. The funds had been budgeted and the budget showed nothing spent. However, Commissioner Donohue had observed a newer looking lift gate on Utility 1. Mr. Alibrio stated he would look into it. Commissioner Donohue also had a question regarding the account for Coles Road Masonry Repairs. It is still in the budget, but Commissioner Donohue stated the Safety/Building Committee had discussed that item, and there was work to be done on it. Commissioner Donohue wanted to make sure there was still \$5,000 in the account so that work can be completed. Commissioner Donohue also asked about the Coles Road Roof Replacement account and the funds that were taken from that account to pay for the radio repairs. Mr. Alibrio verified that there were funds that were taken out to pay for radio repairs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for March as submitted.

- C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Chief added that another meeting was held with the organizers of the golf tournament (TPC). This year certain things will be done differently than last year. The process is now moving ahead more efficiently than in the past. Although the Chief does have experience with this type of

planning, because this is one of the largest sporting events in the state, the Chief brought in the State of CT, Region 3, Incident Command Management team to assist in developing an operations plan. He noted that Cromwell's operation plan is quite good and was put together by Deputy Chief Salonia. The Chief noted it is difficult to plan because he is not the Emergency Management Director for the Town. There is no well-defined emergency management process in the event a serious situation outstrips all the resources in the Town and creates an immediate emergency. The Chief added that Commissioner Epstein attended the meeting with the Chief as an observer. The dates of the Tournament are June 18 through June 24. The Department is already beginning to prepare for that operationally. The Cromwell Fire Department will be an intracale part of the transportation system in accordance with the St. Francis Hospital plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Chief's Report for March as submitted.

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District office. Mr. Jarzavek added that the individual selected for the Maintainer II position was approved by the Personnel Committee at their March 22 meeting, and they will be making a recommendation at this meeting to the full Board of Commissioners. If approved, the person will start on Monday, April 23, 2018. The meter readings and radio conversions are progressing. There were two water service leaks that were repaired. The Water Department also assisted Cromwell Hills maintenance staff with two water main breaks they had in March. Mr. Jarzavek will be setting a date with Guy Russo from Prime Engineering for a kick off meeting for the design of the VFD's for Wells 3 & 4 to begin that project. Commissioner Rukowicz asked about the completion date for the Willowbrook project. The project should be completed by the end of July or beginning of August.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Operations Report for March as submitted.

- E. Middlesex Hospital Paramedic Services. At this time Mr. Jim Santacroce had arrived to address the Board regarding the Service Agreement between Middlesex Hospital and the Cromwell Fire District for Paramedic Services. There were concerns from the Board regarding the fees for the services. Mr. Santacroce began by saying this is the third year that the Hospital has had an agreement with the District. Three years ago was when the State of CT changed the way they do business regarding taxing the not-for-profit hospitals. The first year this was done Middlesex faced a \$28 million expense that they were not prepared for. At that point the Hospital began to examine all their service lines, and looked at different ways to save money. Middlesex had already been involved in a lean project which produced a total savings of \$25 million. They also examined positions and identified those that were not necessary to refill. Those positions started at the executive level and worked their way down. The paramedic service is viewed as a community benefit to the hospital, but has been considered as not making money out of all the other services at approximately \$1 million per year. They have been providing paramedic service to Middlesex County for approximately 30 years. The Hospital is committed to the paramedic service, but it is not sustainable to be losing \$1 million per year for this program. The Hospital decided to approach the Towns to come up with an agreement to help split the costs, with Mr. Santacroce being the administrator of the agreement, over a period of 5 years at a per capita charge to get to a 50/50 split in approximately 5 years. This had the Towns paying a total at that time of approximately \$682,000, and the Hospital paying the rest at the 5 year mark.

At this point the Hospital approached the District and presented their facts, figures and statistics. All the facts were reviewed as well as the rationale. After the first year, all the Towns were on board. Part of the process was developing a Paramedic Advisory Committee to give the Towns regular updates and a voice to advise of any issues. The Committee also distributed and reviewed reports and statistics with the Towns which included a breakdown of their budget. The meetings have been very successful with Cromwell having representation at each quarterly meeting. CEO's have been present at each quarterly meeting as well as involvement from the Council of Governments.

At the end of the first year, the Hospital had a decent year, and were able to tighten their belts. They had more discharges that year. The rate was kept at \$1 per capita rather than it being increased to \$2 as stated in the contract. An amendment was drafted to not increase the per capita rate to \$2. This year has been the same circumstance. The Hospital has had many opportunities to cut different programs and service lines without layoffs. The hospital is again running in the red. In the fall the administration was approached, and they advised to keep the per capita rate at \$1. The amendment that was distributed was the current one that was published and sent to Mr. Dagostino. The rate would be the \$1 rate for this fiscal year and up until July of next year. It would be re-evaluated in the fall.

Commissioner Neto asked if all Towns are participating in the program financially as well as just being participants. Mr. Santacroce responded that all Towns are participating that have been approached. Middlesex Hospital holds the primary service area agreement like Cromwell holds for the first responder and basic ambulance. Middlesex holds the primary service area agreement for the State of CT for all of Middlesex County and the Town of Old Lyme. Within that all towns are participating with the exception of Middletown, Middlefield and the Town of Portland because they have Hunter's Ambulance. Middlesex has a separate agreement with Hunter's which is based on their volume. The Hospital has re-designed a bundle billing agreement that they have with Hunter's. Their agreement had been renegotiated since those towns do not have their own ambulance service. Their agreements have the same per capita rate as the other towns. The total amount collected is approximately \$136,683 from all Towns involved. Mr. Santacroce reiterated that at all committee meetings the budget is reviewed line by line. Capital expenses are discussed and what there is approval for. All financial information is printed out and distributed to all CEO's and those that attend the Committee meetings. It was noted that the designee for Cromwell is the Executive Director. Mr. Santacroce added that he is available at any time should there be any questions or concerns to be addressed.

#### REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations Committee. There was no meeting.
- B. Executive Committee. Meetings were held on March 28, 2018, and April 10, 2018. Notes were distributed and reviewed for the March 28, 2018, meeting. Commissioner Neto reviewed the notes. He reported there was a continued discussion of the budget. The next meeting has been scheduled for Friday, April 27, 2018, at 5:30 PM, at 1 West Street.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Committee notes for March 28, 2018, as submitted.

- C. Fire Operations Committee. Commissioner Hamlin reported that a meeting was held on March 20, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Hamlin reviewed the minutes. He reported that there was a lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of putting a tower up on Prospect Hill Road. Most of the meeting was the ongoing issues with the radios. Commissioner Colligan continues to work with the Communications Subcommittee to resolve the outstanding radio issues.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee Meeting minutes of March 20, 2018, at submitted.

1. Communications Subcommittee. Commissioner Colligan reported for the Communications Subcommittee. A meeting was held last evening with Norcom. They were brought up to date on Norcom's activities. Reprogramming will be started once the new antennas are installed on the Tower. One of the antennas is at 20%, the other is at 30% capacity. This will also make everything legal frequencies. All the licenses have been obtained for the frequencies. A date will be scheduled for the reprogramming for the whole department. This is being organized between Angel Alvarado, Chief Terenzio and the Dispatch Supervisor Justin Lonergan. Norcom shared a blueprint of the new system with the subcommittee. The engineering was reviewed. Questions were answered regarding finances. Decisions need to be made regarding what financial direction the subcommittee will take. The total cost of the radio project is \$2.9 million. There has been discussion regarding the lease options and the bonding options. It would be advisable to have the Board influence which course of action should be taken by the Executive Committee in finalizing the budget.

Commissioner Colligan also explained that Chief Terenzio has contacted the Federal Government regarding the grant application. Cromwell has not been eliminated from the process. They may still be a candidate for funding. Chief Terenzio reported that he received notification last week that there was an issue with the grant application, and it was rejected. He learned today that the application did make it through the electronic vetting process. He contacted the HELP desk in Washington and was told to sign on to the Webinar tomorrow at 1:00 PM. There will be an explanation of how the process works, and he will receive an explanation of what happened. Commissioner Epstein has also offered to work with legislators to assist Cromwell in the grant application process. The Chief advised that this is not the end of the road for the grant. The grant amount is based on the population of Cromwell which means the Town is eligible for \$1 million.

Commissioner Colligan added that packets will be received from Norcom on April 23 which will include a breakdown of the finances of the radio project. A meeting is scheduled for May 3 to explain the system. Copies will be available for the subcommittee members and Commissioners. A Power Point presentation will be held for the public to explain the necessity of this system. Commissioner Neto discussed the leasing option versus the bonding option. The variance between the two is approximately \$370,000. Commissioner Hamlin added that consideration regarding funding needs to be given to the fact that the Fire Chief has produced an apparatus replacement document with some priorities given to the Fire Department needs. The Executive Committee will need some direction from the Board on developing a budget that is realistic and manageable. The Executive Committee can present a budget with leasing options and a budget with bonding options. The annual lease amount would be approximately

\$370,000 per year. Lease payments would be even throughout the life of the lease. Bond payments would slightly decrease over the life of the bond.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to request the Executive Committee to draft a budget that includes lease options as well as bonding options for the radio project.

There was discussion regarding apparatus replacement. Chief Terenzio is recommending a lease option for one piece of apparatus. Commissioner Neto discussed the concerns regarding the tax implications on budget decisions. President Murphy suggested the Fire Operations Committee have a meeting to discuss the apparatus replacement needs. It was noted that the Chief has introduced \$70,000 for a lease purchase on a rescue pumper. There was a discussion regarding the District applying for the Galveston/Houston Area Council project. There would be savings attached to that. Mr. Alibrio stated that there is nothing in next year's budget designated for apparatus. There had been some funds that were removed to fund the radio project.

- D. Pension Committee. There was no meeting.
- E. Personnel Committee. A meeting was held on March 22, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. It was noted that at the meeting a recommendation by the Committee will be made to the full Board of Commissioners to hire Mr. Eric Roberts to the position of Maintainer II in the Water Division. Mr. Jarzavek and Mr. Palmieri had interviewed three candidates, and Mr. Roberts was the most qualified and met all the requirements of the position. Mr. Jarzavek added that upon approval of the full Board of Commissioners, Mr. Roberts would be available to begin employment on Monday, April 23, 2018. There was also a request to the Personnel Committee by the Dispatch Supervisor to post in house for one week four positions for part-time Dispatchers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept Personnel Committee meeting minutes of March 22, 2018, as submitted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to hire Mr. Eric Roberts to the position of Maintainer II in the Water Division.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to authorize the Dispatch Supervisor to post in house for one week and then post externally four positions for part-time Dispatchers.

- F. Water Operations Committee. Commissioner Rukowicz reported that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at 5:30 PM, at 1 West Street.

#### BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Ms. Slade was in attendance. She reported that the Lions Club is starting a chapter in Cromwell. She had no other information about it, just that she was notified by the Mayor that a chapter would be started in Cromwell. Ms. Slade stated that she submitted an anti-harassment, anti-discrimination policy proposal to the Council. It will be signed off by all Town employees. She felt it was imperative to have a document in place to outline what that policy is. The Council is committed to setting the standard on issues such as this. The majority of the Council was in agreement with the policy. The Human Resource Director will be working on the details. The Town has completed its work on next year's budget. She reported a 1.84% increase from last year. Commissioner Neto stated that the bottom line is that it is less than a 1% increase year over year for both the Board of Education and General Government. There will be a Lyme Disease Awareness program. She was helping the organizers obtain a place to have it. It will be held on May 24, 2018, at Town Hall. The program will be focusing on prevention of Lyme Disease. A Council meeting was to be held last week. However, there was no quorum. The meeting has been rescheduled for tomorrow night.

B. Reports of the Special Committees

1. Public Safety Tower Committee. A meeting was held on February 23, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed for review. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Rukowicz attended the meeting. He reported that the Committee spent approximately \$11,508. \$3,200 was spent on the Tower for physical inspection, welding, rust and preventative maintenance. Approximately \$380 was spent on monthly utilities. \$2,492 was spent to maintain the air conditioning system during the winter. 30 new remotes will be purchased similar to a garage door opener for \$865.50 and \$550 each for two new and updated cameras for security and installation. T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint and Verizon are the primary tenants that are leasing. They are all looking to update their systems. They are all going to 5 gigs. He understands that will cause competition for the carriers, which will be cheaper for the District. There are other tenants interested in using the Tower. Before that can be done, the Committee needs to make sure the structure is secure. The next quarterly meeting for the Tower Committee is Friday, June 1, 2018, at 10 AM. The time of the meeting has been scheduled for the morning to accommodate the Police Department.

President Murphy had a question directed to the Town Liaison regarding Marcus Communications and whether or not the Town has a relationship with them. This would be important to know because Marcus has equipment at the Tower. If Marcus has ties to the Town, the District does not want to disturb any of their equipment at the Tower. Mr. Jarzavek recalled that the equipment was installed in 2004 because of the contract with the golf tournament. At that time the Town went on it, the Board of Education, Public Works and the Police Department. The Water Department Director's old truck was also hooked into that system. He added that Attorney Deneen had been researching Tower documents and could not find any executed documents between the District and Marcus Communications. There was an MOU from 2004 that was signed by Bruce Marcus but no one from the District had signed it. Commissioner Louis Spada was Chairman of the Board of Commissioners at the time. Commissioner Neto stated that this issue needs to be discussed at the next Public Safety Tower Committee meeting, and Attorney Deneen should be at the meeting to discuss what was learned. The Town Liaison was asked to research this topic and let the President know what is learned about Marcus' role with the

Town at the Tower. Ms. Slade stated she would discuss this with the Town Manager and Police Chief.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Public Safety Tower Committee minutes of February 23, 2018, as submitted.

2. Safety/Building Committee. Commissioner Hanners reported that a meeting was held on Thursday, April 12, 2018. Minutes were not yet available for review. The Committee discussed the list that had been drafted from the last meeting in terms of issues to be addressed at each building. There is a lot of progress being made on the items. Some items are coming to light now because they were weather dependent. They began discussions about a five year plan for the buildings. Commissioner Neto stated that today started the purchase order process to get Schindler to review the issues with the handicap elevator.
3. Bylaws Committee. Commissioner Epstein stated that the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 1, 2018, after the Water Operations Committee meeting. A note was sent to Commissioners to forward any issues they would like to have on the agenda to Nancy Deegan who would notify the Chairman to add to the agenda for the meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to reschedule the September Board of Commissioners' Meeting from Tuesday, September 18, 2018 to Tuesday, September 25, 2018 in observance of Yom Kippur.
- B. Budgetary Adjustments. Commissioner Epstein read the resolution. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to be it resolved that the Board of Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District consider and act upon a resolution to approve budgetary adjustments to the Water Capital Fund budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, as reflected in the worksheet provided by Premier Accounting at the Board of Commissioners' Meeting of April 17, 2018, to re-allocate excess funds from Hydrants to Meters for the purchase of meters in the Water Division. Specifically \$17,500 from Water Capital – Hydrants (35929-5722) to Water Capital – Meters (35904-5720).
- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the amendment to the Middlesex Hospital agreement with the Cromwell Fire District to provide Paramedic Services at a rate of \$1.00 per capita indicating that the \$1 rate increase be waived by Middlesex Hospital for only the renewal terms of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 and July 1, 2018- June 30, 2019.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jim Bellamo, 46 Franklin Road, addressed the Board. He had reviewed the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes and complimented the Fire Chief on his apparatus replacement plan. Mr. Bellamo apologized and stated that no less than four times it was stated in the plan that there was no plan for equipment replacement in the past. As a former Fire Department Officer, Mr.

Bellamo stated that there were plans in the past which he has kept on file that he was willing to forward to the Chief. He was under the impression that there was an underlying factor in the Fire Chief's report that there was no plan. Mr. Bellamo stated that there has always been a plan. He was involved in six or seven major purchases as a Fire Department officer. If the plan never made it from the Executive Director to the Fire Chief, Mr. Bellamo apologized for that. There has always been a plan and pricing to go along with the plan. The Chief did acknowledge the plan from nine years ago regarding the ambulance replacement. One of the Chief's goals was to enforce the plan that was developed nine years ago. Mr. Bellamo added that the Board used to put money aside to replace equipment. He stated that the present Commission has chosen not to set money aside for that purpose. He stated they have not for many years. There was an equipment reserve fund. There was \$100,000 that was set aside every budget. The Chief thanked him for his insight, and added that like any plan, this is a living document. Mr. Bellamo felt that the Chief is way behind in replacing equipment. Mr. Bellamo's recollection was that the fund stopped being funded 8 – 10 years ago. Money was being moved around at that time. The Commissioners asked Mr. Alibrio to provide a report on what the current bonding is for. Mr. Alibrio will do his best, but there were some bonds that were refinanced that went back in time so he is not sure if he can get it broken down completely.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session planned for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM.

ATTEST:

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Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
4-30-18