

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire Operations Committee

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

5:30 PM

105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners David Colligan (Chairman), Jason Hinnners and Lee Brow (President), Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade, Assistant Chief EMS Robert McIntyre and Executive Director Julius Neto. Also attending were Commissioners Charles Epstein and Roger Rukowicz; Dispatchers' Union President Andrew Cook, Dispatch Supervisor Justin Lonergan, Dispatcher Brian Petrucelli and Nicole LaTerra, Fire/EMS, were in the audience.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by Chairman Colligan.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by President Brow and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented.
- III. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2019. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners and seconded by Commissioner Colligan. President Brow abstained due to the fact he was not present at the meeting. The motion was approved to accept the meeting minutes of February 19, 2019, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report. Chairman Colligan reported that Cromwell has received its Federal Communications license. He reported that Cromwell owns its license and frequencies now. There will be a meeting with the Fire Chief, Commissioner Colligan and President Brow next Thursday, March 28, 2019, at 4:30 PM. The meeting will be with the salesman from Norcom to review the quote and service agreement for the Communications system. That same evening at 5:30 PM, there will be a Communications Subcommittee meeting. The meeting will be held at 1 West Street. If approved it will be forwarded to the full Board of Commissioners for approval to move forward with bonding. The goal is to have one Town meeting with two agenda items. One item is the bonding and the other is approval of the Fire District budget. It is hoped that the meeting will take place in May.

Justin Lonergan, Dispatch Supervisor, gave a brief update of what has been happening in the Communications Center. A copy of his bullet points are attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

- The majority of new pagers have been issued. Originally they were only going to issue half, but have decided to issue more of them through different departments and different divisions. There have been limited complaints, and perhaps some slight modifications may want to be made in the next round of programming.
- The Responder App was approved for the officers. It is the app that communicates directly with the responder program in the CAD system. It will soon be issued to the Fire personnel. The District is limited to 50 users, and would need to get approval for additional users. The additional cost would be \$12 - \$13 per additional user for the first year. Every year after that would be half that amount. The subscription to Alpine is already in the budget.
- The hydrant module has been launched. They are working to integrate the current data base into the CAD system and migrate all the data over to the system. Once that occurs information can be upgraded and updated in that system. The Water Department will be able to use it, and more will be able to be done with hydrant information in terms of flow data, age and connection types.
- The Court Street PA system installation is pending by Norcom. There have been visits by Norcom to look at the rack. There is also a rack rebuild that is going on. Some power supplies are being disposed of. Mr. Lonergan is going to centralize the power supply systems. They are all tying together. There are approximately 5 projects going on with Norcom. It includes the PA system and the rack rebuild. They are switching all their communication center equipment over to their in-house battery back-up system. This was not done when it was originally installed. This cannot be accomplished until the rack rebuild is done and the power supplies are in.
- Regarding radio repairs there is some current equipment that is either broken or in need of repair. Mr. Lonergan is working with Norcom under the service agreement to have them come out and repair anything that needs repair under the service agreement. Anything not under the service agreement will need to go through the proper approval process if it needs to be replaced. Inventory system with the CAD system includes pagers. Radios are currently being updated. There are things in the system that were not updated properly. The CAD personnel files are being updated with the assistance of the Deputy Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief and their personnel. Personnel files and certifications have not been entered into the system correctly, so they are going back and re-entering them into the system correctly.
- ID card system is being upgraded which ties directly into the personnel files. It is imperative that the personnel files match what individuals are currently certified with.
- Regarding staffing there are currently two new dispatchers in training.
- SOP's are a constant revisit and revising.
- Humidity in the Dispatch Center is currently being worked on by Russ Johnson and the vendors.
- Regarding CAD mapping, they are currently working to upgrade the CAD system mapping system to include all mutual aid partners and hydrant data. Mr. Lonergan has been working with the Assessor's office for Cromwell's mutual aid partners. They are all being very supportive and all information is being entered into the CAD system. All first responders will have that information at their fingertips in terms of mutual aid including hydrants and communications.
- Four dispatchers will be sent to Navigator next month.
- EFD and the staffing proposal will be proposed later at this meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by President Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Communications Report as submitted.

- VI. Firefighter/EMT Staffing, Hiring and Response Capability. Chief Terenzio stated it has been challenging this month. Out of eight career firefighters, one has left and gone to South Fire District in Middletown. One person was hired as a replacement for that person. He will be starting on Monday, March 25, 2019. He is an Academy recruit. It is the first time the Chief has used this process which has been referred to as self-players. Twelve people applied, six were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by the President of the Commission, the Fire Chief, the Executive Director and a career officer. Mr. Frank Marrotta was selected. Another challenge is that there is one career firefighter that had back surgery. He will be out of work for 8 – 10 weeks. It is hoped he will return to full duty after that time. Also this week Firefighter Hallden had a knee injury. There are people stepping up to try to maintain at least six people on the floor.

There have been a number of fires, some small. There was one at 531 Main St. that was a truck fire alongside the Dollar General store that is being constructed. It was an all wood frame that was an issue. There was also adequate response to a tanker fire on Rte. 91 in Rocky Hill. There was a serious situation at 2 Riverview. The homeowner had bypassed the safety's on his oil burner since December. On this occasion yesterday it did not fire off and spewed approximately 6 or 7 gallons of oil on the floor in the basement that ignited. There was adequate response. The situation was taken care of effectively. There was a chronic alarm at Woodland Heights for a gas detection system. Westfield Fire had to be called to do the investigation along with Assistant Chief Brade and David Barillaro. There were uncertified people doing the detective operation so Westfield had to be called. That issue will be addressed amongst the officers.

Assistant Chief EMS McIntyre reported that he attended the North Central Emergency Medical Services Council Meeting a couple of weeks ago. He reported that beginning April 1, EMS will be reporting Opioid responses to CT Poison Control. There will be training on who needs to report, when it needs to be reported, etc. Another issue discussed at that meeting is that CT will become a National Registry state which will mean a few changes but not as many as originally thought. The National Registry is going to re-register anyone that had been previously registered and gave up the registry just keeping their CT license. They will be able to re-register without having to take the exam. The only ones affected will be the ones that were EMT's before 1998, and never took the exam. The specifics have not been worked out yet.

Assistant Chief Brade reported that he has received a request from the Executive Director to update training and personnel records. Training and certification records were discussed by Mr. Lonergan previously in this meeting. There are certificates that date back to the 70's that have now been entered into the Red Alert system. They are in the process of making photo copies for the Executive Director.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to accept the Reports of the Chiefs as presented.

VII. Old Business

- A. Updates from Chiefs. This was discussed previously in this meeting.
- B. Update on Rescue 1 and Status of Replacement Committee. The Chief reported there were two parties interested in the Rescue Truck. Both were not going to use it for Fire

Department responses. It would be used for Emergency Response teams to disasters. One party was in Michigan and the other was in Pennsylvania. The party from Michigan made an offer of \$18,000. The offer was made in an email. The Chief has not heard back from that party and has tried to reach them twice. The party from Pennsylvania was going to make a trip here to view it. They made an offer of \$17,000. That person was not able to get out here before the other offer was to happen. Since that first offer did not happen, the party from Pennsylvania is still interested. Since then another party was interested, but the Chief has not heard back from either one of them.

Regarding a replacement committee, the Chief was going to have a committee formulated by the Deputy Chief. However, the Deputy Chief has tendered his resignation effective yesterday afternoon. They will need to regroup and put something together with the interim acting Deputy Chief. Former Deputy Chief Salonia was very involved with the apparatus and would have been a good asset on the committee. He may still be willing to serve on the committee, but thus far the Chief has not formed a committee.

The Chief has also reached out to FEMA, the AFG process, to determine if they will be releasing those awards. He is hopeful he will hear something tomorrow. He is preparing a Safer grant. It is completed, and needs to be submitted by Friday. Volunteer and career staff have been trained in the child safety car seat installation program. They are continuing to do installations even on weekends. They are getting positive press for the Fire Department for their efforts. The two career staff that completed the inspection program through the State of CT are finishing the final portion of that program in fire investigation. They are beginning to shadow the Fire Marshal during the day.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the update on Rescue 1 and the status of the Replacement Committee as reported.

VIII. New Business

A. Communication Center E.F.D. Proposal. Representatives from the Communication Center were present to give a presentation on Emergency Fire Dispatch. Once presented there will be a discussion on how to move forward in terms of working with it. Mr. Lonergan began by stating it is a multi-faceted presentation. They are trying to address a couple of issues. They will be discussing the EFD and its implementation. All of the dispatchers are currently certified to the level of EFD as well as QA personnel.

The actual implementation or launch of the EFD has been withheld for a few reasons. One is that there is a lot going on, and they need to get some determinate levels as to what the EFD system outputs as it relates to the Fire Department operations which dictates what they want to respond to. The Communications Center is waiting on that information and concerns which they will discuss tonight. The discussions will involve the status of the EMD program and QA program, the future staffing levels in the overall operation of the Communication Center and what the future would hold if the EFD is fully implemented.

The Dispatch Supervisor and the Union recognizes the challenges with the proposal. The presentation will demonstrate what the dispatchers do on a daily basis and what the future holds for the Communications Center and staffing levels. They want to

work together to address concerns and bring the Communications Center closer to the recommendations of the NFPA and the NAED. Those organizations do not set mandates, but have strong recommendations based on protocols and procedures.

Mr. Lonergan reviewed the objectives of the presentation. It will show how the Communications Center can decrease District liability, what the NFPA standards are and what NAEMD recommendations are. It will also increase the typability of the QA process, enable the Dispatchers to minimize the time from the time of the call to the time it is dispatched. A copy of the proposal and its objectives is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District office.

Mr. Petrucelli stated that the goal of the presentation is to inform everyone of what they do and who they are. He stated that the District sets the budgetary requirements and protection for the District. There are currently 12 certified dispatchers in the Communication Center. Three are full-time and 9 are part-time. Up until 2015 there were four full-time dispatchers. That was a change that was never fulfilled by the previous Executive Director.

They are a Class B Fire Dispatch center which means they do not receive 9-1-1 calls directly, they are rolled over. They explained their call volume which ranges in the amount of simultaneous calls and the frequency of them. They noted the current population in the Town of Cromwell as well. They have gotten away from identifying themselves as the Fire Dispatch Center and are now identified as the Cromwell Fire District Communications Center. They monitor 16 frequencies continuously. A lot of centers have between one and three. They communicate on eight primary channels to different agencies. They communicate with the Fire Department with a variety of fire apparatus at any given time.

They also monitor alarms, cameras and systems for all District property. They monitor police alarms for the Water District buildings. They monitor the security systems for the tower site. There are multiple cameras throughout the District. They have 9-1-1 systems that roll over from Cromwell. Systems have been updated substantially. They answer all emergency and non-emergency communications that come within the Center. All 9-1-1 calls are transferred from the Cromwell Police Department. They receive calls directly from all Alarm companies. That makes the Center a Class B Dispatch center.

They answer all routine calls for the Cromwell Fire Department, EMS, Fire Marshal and the Chief's office. They are the call center for the Water Department and any requests to get into the Tower or any issues from Sprint, AT&T or any vendors that are on the Tower. They deal with the service technicians that need access to the Tower. They are the regional dispatch center for Task Force 51. The Task Force is part of the mutual aid system.

Enhanced 9-1-1 in the State of CT recognizes where someone is located and who you are, and it is sent to a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP's). There are 105 in the State of CT. All cellular and land line phones are routed to them. In the past the State has tried to change this system by regionalization. Regionalization does not provide good services for local communities.

The first thing to do when a call is received is determining location. It could take up to 6 to 8 minutes from the time a call is received to disseminate a call with one dispatcher being tied up on that call. If the call had been originally sent from Cromwell PD it has already been tied up for 2 or 3 minutes.

The International Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch use the priority dispatch system. They are bound by protocols. It is a recognized standard. The same set of rigid protocols will be followed when taking a fire call. They must by law provide instructions to everyone that calls with a medical emergency. They must answer certain questions on their screen or the system will not dispatch services.

The set of protocols they must follow are multiple screens. They must before they move on to the next screen answer questions or the system will not allow them to dispatch services. It is mandated by State Statutes. They also need to decide if it is a fire or if they should use the medical emergency system. If it is a fire call, it is simpler. If it is not they are to follow the Emergency dispatch standards. He showed an example of a practice call. Processing a routine call in the town of Cromwell takes anywhere from 2 min. 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Some examples were given of various types of calls and the length of time it takes to process calls. Protocols that need to be followed and decision making that takes place with a dispatcher who is in the center alone.

He explained the two organizations that provide protocols and standards that need to be followed by members of the Fire Department and Communication Center. Those organizations are OSHA & NFPA.

He stated that Connecticut is an OSHA state. NFPA is a recognized standard. When any one is harmed, injured or dies, NFPA becomes law. NFPA is applied to new apparatus, buildings, fire gear. These standards will soon include a requirement of two dispatchers on duty and in the communication center at all times. He stated that liability should be the concern of the Executive Director and the Commissioners. His concerns lie within protecting the citizens of Cromwell. They want to provide a valuable service. They would like to provide a good center to draw other fire departments to the service to increase their funding through the State. The Dispatch Supervisor distributed a shorter version of this presentation. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Brian Petrucelli stated he is available to answer any questions. Commissioner Colligan would love to show the presentation to the other half of the Town. It also shows that in terms of saving money, some money may not be saved based on what the Communications Center is trying to do.

Mr. Lonergan explained the document he distributed. He began by stating the Dispatcher is considered the "First Responder." They are the first ones virtually on the scene to provide life-saving instructions whether it be a medical or fire call with the launch of EFD. He had information available for review of the EFD program. The program will allow flexibility to curtail responses to an appropriate level. It is a great program. They will be trying to launch this program to an appropriate and safe manner. The document also included NFPA information that supports two tele-communicators being on duty and in the communications center. It also presented statistics on how often simultaneous calls are received. Staffing numbers were discussed. In the past there were four full-time Dispatchers, but they were not staffed simultaneously. He added that the EFD and EMD process will take longer.

Currently staffing is done based on three shifts per week for EDQ personnel. There are probably 100 calls per month for each discipline EDQ. If EFD is added, they would need another day per week. They are proposing to have one Dispatcher. The addition of a fourth full-time dispatcher would shift the new part-time coverage to the new second dispatcher seat. All full-timers would cover all but one shift of their minimum which is one dispatcher around the clock. The second dispatcher position would fill in as the second dispatcher, and they can fill in for quality assurance. That is the recommendation. The intent is to qualify additional dispatchers for EDQ. The National Academy recommends that the Dispatch Supervisor does not do the QA process. They oversee it.

The Communications Supervisor is a certified tele-communicator in the disciplines. In the future the Union would be willing to sit down and have an MOU over utilizing and using the Supervisor as a second dispatcher. At the present time that is not an option. President Brow asked why this issue was not addressed initially. It was noted that it was not something that was on the table for discussion. It is noted that the District is in a different place now, everyone is on the same page, but at the time there were budget constraints and negotiations did not go well on certain issues and it shut down the lines of communication. There currently are good lines of communication between the Communications Center Supervisor, the Chief, the Executive Director, the Union and the Commission. Mr. Lonergan reviewed the benefits that were listed in the back of the document. They also understand the budgetary restrictions and that is why they prepared the presentation to provide an understanding and inform what happens in the Communication Center, what the future may hold and what the next steps should be to bring them into the future.

Chairman Colligan thanked the Communications staff for the presentation. It was well received. One of his thoughts is to form a subcommittee in order to figure out how to implement these programs. Chairman Colligan will meet with the Union president, the Executive Director and have a discussion with the rest of the Commissioners. There has already been a considerable amount of money spent on training and purchasing the system and implementing it within the CAD system. The system is not working because there aren't enough staff to make it work.

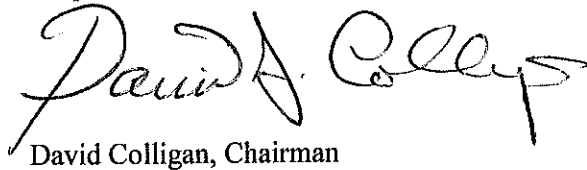
Mr. Neto explained that he has had some conversations with Communication center personnel to help understand all the issues involved. They have worked with the Executive Committee of the Union and the Dispatch Supervisor to provide some flexibility regarding various ways to approach it. It could be looked at as a "phased-in approach." The question is how to get there. They also discussed the MOU. They could do some of the legwork and then present it to the Fire Operations Committee and the Personnel Committee. It should be considered to implement some small phase of the program. The budgetary side of the equation is a 0 tax increase per the Commission. President Brow coordinated a meeting with the Dispatch staff and the Executive Director. Mr. Neto stated that part of the solution is an MOU, and an issue is the Dispatch Supervisor's limited hours. There should be a review of the financials. Mr. Neto suggested meeting on a monthly basis to improve operations. For a complete roll out of the program, it would be \$100,000. That is the largest financial impact.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the presentation and document presented by the Communication Center personnel.

IX. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Epstein stated that Priority Dispatch are the people that come up with the program, create the program and sell the program. The selection, training and certification of instructors comes from the Academy of Emergency Dispatch which is a separate sister agency that certifies emergency medical, fire and police dispatch. He has given the disclaimer that he has been involved with them for over 30 years. The second one with his full-time job with alignments, he has ended up as an AFSCME local union representative. He stated that the emergency dispatch and the emergency fire dispatch program is second to none nationally and over the world. He stated that it is ludicrous to have personnel dispatching an emergency medical or fire call by themselves. I can't be done. It is imperative that the District consider a second dispatcher to be on the cutting edge of the program. He supports the program. It is needed and is worth it. The District just needs to figure out how to pay for it.

X. Adjournment. A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David A. Colligan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

David Colligan, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
4-5-18