

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** **Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions**

**Thursday, January 3, 2019**

**3:00 PM**

**1 West Street  
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Executive Director Julius Neto (Chairman), Commissioner Mertie Terry, Curt Anderson (EMS), Nicole LaTerra (EMS). Deputy Fire Chief Salonia had an excused absence. Commissioner Donohue and Jennifer Anderson were present as part of the public.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 3:04 PM, by Chairman Neto.
- II. Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2018 and December 27, 2018. Chairman Neto stated that the minutes from December 17, 2018, had been distributed and reviewed. There were some minor changes. They have been signed, and will be posted on the website. It was explained how the website will be simplified for easier access to information.

A motion was made by Ms. LaTerra, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to accept the meeting minutes of December 17, 2018, for the Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions, as submitted.

The minutes from the meeting of December 27, 2018, were distributed to the members for review. They were tabled from a vote so that members would have a chance to read and review them.

- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.

- IV. New Business

- A. Continue Discussions for Non-Career Staffing Solutions/Possible Approval of Specific Suggestions Related to Solutions. Curt Anderson noted that in the minutes from December 17, the first paragraph on page 3, the last two sentences state that current practices were not reviewed. Mr. Anderson reported that he was told that the practices were reviewed by the District's labor attorney and the administration of the District.

Mr. Neto gave some reporting information to Mr. Anderson that he requested regarding payroll and scheduling. He also distributed material Deputy Chief Salonia was able to get from the Farmington Fire Department. This Department has 9 career firefighters, 2 part-time firefighters, per diem and volunteers. It was noted that their volunteers are not considered part-time. A person cannot be both.

Mr. Neto stated they will also try to get some information from the Westfield Fire Department since they are Cromwell's neighboring town. He will also try to get some information from Rocky Hill.

Mr. Neto also distributed information that was calculations that would be presented on a spreadsheet and used as a working spreadsheet. He explained his calculations. He explained coverage as 24 hrs./day; 7 days/wk. The assumption was that under this scenario, 6 people are targeted which is the standard amount the Deputy Chief talked about. The basics would be 6 people per shift, 24 hrs./day. Then determining how many hours are needed, and how many hours are available by the full-time staff. Shifts were not specified, but 384 hrs. are covered by full timers. 624 hrs. need to be fill either by part-timers or volunteers. 16 people at 6 hours per shift will cover those hours.

Calculations were determined as minimum wage - \$10.10 x 624 hrs. Then using 13 as halfway between 10 and 16. \$16 being the starting wage for a probationary full-time career firefighter. That is the calculation with the figures Mr. Neto used. The spreadsheet was discussed and reviewed.

Currently for shift coverage there is a budget of \$148,000. The volunteer point system is \$118,000. Stipends are \$60,000. There is \$55,000 per year for the Pension. Total compensation for non-career today is \$381,000 budgeted.

It was noted that if there are 6 people for coverage the variance with minimum wages would go up 10%. If it is \$13 per hour, there would be a 34% increase (\$130,000). Ms. LaTerra noted that the model changes the structure of the organization. She was proposing changes for 6 PM to 6 AM, not taking anything away. This would not be the model she would project, but she likes it as an option. Mr. Neto asked her to describe her model to him, and he would put some numbers to it.

They are looking for proper coverage for 624 hrs. a week. There are different options as to how that can be done. Either with all full-time, some full and some part-time, some volunteers or on-call.

Mr. Neto repeated the objective of this subcommittee. There is a need to cover 108 hrs. of service a week. How can this be done in a fair, equitable way that meets the citizens' needs of the 9-1-1 responsibility that the District has including their staff needs. Career staff will be covering for 384 hours a week. The shifts and amount of hours per week are contractually based. The Committee needs to determine how the remaining 624 hours will be staffed. Ms. LaTerra's model was meant to cover 108 hrs a week. The subcommittee needs to determine how to cover and how to classify those that are covering.

In discussing Mr. Neto's model, Mr. Anderson feels it is a major step that is irreversible if implemented. He had suggestions that could be done and if they don't work out, can be changed. Mr. Anderson also suggested studying the root causes of why they are in the position they are in of not getting shift coverage. Why is the response rate down?

Ms. LaTerra thinks that her model meets the needs using volunteers to meet the needs for the 108 hrs. a week that is needed by keeping 6 people of their own for guaranteed

coverage. She will be working on a model that provides coverage for a second ambulance at \$30 hr. She feels her model will be much cheaper than the one proposed. There was much discussion regarding cross training and coverage. It was also noted that once models are presented and discussed, the financial impact needs to be part of the discussion. Mr. Anderson asked why we are using wages instead of total compensation in trying to figure out scheduling. It was suggested to have some of these questions answered by the labor attorney. Mr. Neto will invite the attorney to the next meeting.

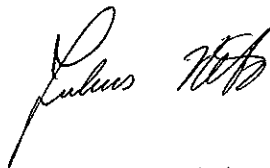
Mr. Neto explained DOL's role in determining a fair wage. The District will be responsible for defining what makes up our Department, i.e., full-time, volunteers, part-time, etc.

Also discussed again was fixing the recruitment/retention issues.

It was agreed to schedule the next meeting for Monday, January 14, 2019, at 6:00 PM. Mr. Neto added that going forward if there is information he needs to share with the group he will email it to the Subcommittee members.

- V. Public Comment. There was some discussion on orientation because there has not been any scheduled since August. This was part of a discussion on starting up recruitment and retention. There was also discussion regarding the Farmington FD model.
- VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. LaTerra, seconded by Mr. Anderson and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Julius Neto, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
1-16-19