

Cromwell Fire District

1 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416
Telephone 860-635-4420

FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Personnel Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 24, 2019

5:30 PM

1 West Street
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Charles Epstein (Chairman), Jason Hinnners, John Hamlin and Mertie Terry. Also attending was Executive Director Julius Neto, President Lee Brow, Dispatcher Dick Loza.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Epstein.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. Old Business
 - A. Employee Payroll Issue 2016 – Discussion and Decision. The Executive Director summarized the issue as discussed at the last Personnel Committee meeting which involved employee Richard Loza, being shorted 8 hrs. pay on a holiday in February 2016. The employee was off on the holiday and entitled to straight time pay for his shift. He then worked a shift that day to cover for someone else who could not make it in. Mr. Neto researched the issue and the amount owed Mr. Loza. Mr. Neto confirmed that the District owes Mr. Loza 8 hours of straight time for that day in February. He was paid double time for the shift he covered on the holiday, but he was still entitled to his 8 hrs. of straight time due to the fact that it was his day off on a holiday. At the time there was misinterpretation and confusion around compensation for a holiday. The issue did not get a full hearing with the previous Executive Director. The employee, after several attempts to have the issue addressed, was told not to take it any further, and was told not to go to the Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to pay retired Dispatcher Dick Loza, 8 hours of straight time back pay, for the miscalculation of hours that were owed him back in February 2016.
 - B. Former Employee Sick Time Issue – Discussion & Decision. The Executive Director explained that this issue involved a former Water Division employee, Chris Elliott. The employee had given a two-week notice. He had vacation time that he wanted to use during his last two weeks. The timecards submitted for the last two weeks of his employment showed a use of vacation time for most of the two weeks, and sick time

being used for his last three days of employment. The District did not pay out the sick time. After this had occurred, the employee had a discussion with Mr. Jarzavek and Mr. Neto justifying his use of his sick time. His claim was that he used sick time to take care of his wife who was under medical care. He provided documentation to prove that she was under care at home. It was not specified that the employee needed to be at home with her. The question at the last meeting was whether or not the District has a past practice of using sick time to help a sick family member. It was confirmed that this is a past practice because the District does not have a short term disability policy. The employee provided a medical note indicating that the employee's wife was under medical care and needed to be monitored. There was a lengthy discussion regarding past practices and the situation as it was presented. It was clarified that the documentation provided by the employee, stated that his wife needed "constant monitoring."

The policy within the District is that sick time does not get cashed out for an employee that leaves the District prior to them being eligible for retirement. If an employee is retiring, they would get 25% of their sick time accrual. Mr. Neto stated that there is a lot of work to be done with the Employees' Handbook. Policies and procedures need to be re-evaluated and clearly defined. The Chairman asked that copies of the current handbook be made and distributed to Committee members at the next regular Personnel Committee meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and approved by two with one abstention to pay Chris Elliott three sick days based on medical information that was provided to the District by the employee indicating that the employee needed to be home for an extended period of time after his vacation time. This shall not constitute past practice. Commissioner Terry abstained.

- C. Settlement Agreement. The Executive Director distributed copies of a Settlement Agreement drafted by the District's Attorney between the District and a Water Division employee. It indicates that the former employee resigned in lieu of termination based on the situation that existed. The process for the agreement took a while but the District is confident it has thoroughly done its homework and has signed off on a complete settlement agreement. He further explained that the employee had some questionable behavior. It was mutually agreed upon that resignation vs. termination was the best route to take. The Committee took time to review the agreement. At the present time the Water Department was asked to give the Executive Director a description of their detailed needs for that position. The Executive Director has been working on the budget with managers, and at this point he is not in a position to replace someone in a position one for one. Any vacant position should get a thorough review of its functions, how often do they need to be performed and what is needed and/or required. He has asked Bill and Joe to make a case why the position needs to be filled. It was noted that the position originally was in the Fire Marshal's office. Once the Water Department communicates what is needed, Mr. Neto will be willing to discuss details of the position, i.e., full-time or part-time, etc.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Settlement Agreement as presented to the Personnel Committee.

V. New Business

A. Update & Overview on Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions. Mr. Neto is the Chair of this Subcommittee and although he was not in a position to make a formal presentation, he gave the Committee an update because this Subcommittee reports directly to the Personnel Committee. Work is being done to produce a model or solution that will take them to the next level. There are some differences of opinion as to how to build the model. There have been some good discussions, and lots of research has been done. The challenge for the Subcommittee is to have something to present to the Personnel Committee at their next regular meeting. There may be a need at some point if things become more defined, to have a meeting prior to the full presentation so that there can be some informal discussion and questions. This hopefully will give the group a rough draft of what the Subcommittee is presenting. The Subcommittee would not need to vote. The session will be more like a workshop to provide clarity and answer questions. He added that Mr. Curt Anderson has drafted a model that incorporates full-time career, part-time and volunteers. Mr. Neto is in the process of putting financial information together for that model. There is another opinion/model that has volunteers with career staff. Mr. Neto has suggested to the Subcommittee to come up with one combined model for the Personnel Committee to review. Commissioner Hamlin discussed the past practice of the EMS staff being a separate Division of the Fire Department and being called the Ambulance Division. He noted that someone should find out who the PSA is with. The Fire District would own the PSA by default. There was some discussion regarding the call process and the possible separation of Fire and EMS. Cost will be a big factor in any decisions that are made.

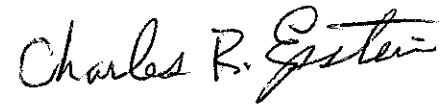
B. Discussion Dispatcher Meigel Out-of-Town Travel. Mr. Neto explained that Dispatcher Meigel is currently in training. The Dispatch Supervisor approached Mr. Neto to advise that Mr. Meigel is scheduled to attend training locally in CT in June. Mr. Lonergan explained that there is training ten minutes away from the house of a family member of Mr. Meigel's located in Long Island. They are suggesting that they can get this person trained earlier and at no cost for housing if the person is given permission to attend the training in Long Island. Mr. Neto added that the By-Laws stipulate that any out of town travel needs to be approved by the Personnel Committee. To save money the person would be driving 47 miles from Cromwell to Bridgeport and taking the ferry from Bridgeport for \$58. The total cost of the travel would be approximately \$250 which includes mileage reimbursement. It was noted that the trip is lower in cost if the person takes the ferry instead of driving the whole way. It is cheaper that total mileage and no ferry. The training itself will be the same cost at whichever location is chosen. The training is fire dispatch training.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to authorize the EMF training due to time constraints with getting a new dispatcher trained.

VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 PM.

CFD Personnel 1-24-19

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles R. Epstein". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Charles R. Epstein, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
1-30-19