

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, February 20, 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, February 20, 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, Julius Neto, Charles Epstein, Roger Rukowicz, David Colligan, Robert Donohue, Jason Hinnners and Lee Brow attended. Also attending were Operations Director S. William Jarzavek, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Executive Director Michael Dagostino and Michael Alibrio from Premier Accounting.

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 Neto and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted with the addition under New Business Item E. Recommendation of the Personnel Committee for the Deputy Fire Marshal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2018

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of January 16, 2018, as submitted.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or written appeals to report. It was noted that there was an issue tabled from last month. The Executive Director reported that the person who filed the appeal was part of the estate, and the estate paid the bill in question. Therefore, there was no action taken.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for January had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Executive Director gave a summary of his report for those members of the public that did not have an opportunity to review it before the meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's Report for January as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for January had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Donohue had a question on Page 15, under Utilities. His concern was regarding the remaining budget percentage for that account was 18%. The previous month was 58%, and the month prior was 75%. His concern was the decline in percentage from last month to this month. He asked if that was normal or was there something to be concerned about. Mr. Alibrio will look into that to see what if any the issues are. Commissioner Colligan asked about the collections with EMS. Mr. Alibrio responded that the status has remained the same. The percentage is not lower, but there is room for improvement. Commissioner Colligan was concerned that the revenue is not being received and that issue cannot move forward. Commissioner Epstein asked what the percentage of collections is, and how does it compare to previous years. Is there a trend that the Commission should be aware of. Mr. Alibrio will get that information for the Board. There is an issue with Medicare. Mr. Alibrio stated that there is not much that can be done for items that cannot be collected from Medicare or Medicaid. There is a limit of what can be collected. There is also an issue of timing as far as when payments are received from Medicare or Medicaid. By the time the District's collection vendor receives some of the files, it is already too old (120 days) to be able to receive any other monies on the account. The billing vendor gets a percentage of what they collect. So they have expressed frustration with the delay in the process. Mr. Dagostino explained that Cromwell's vendor, Quick Med Claims, has hired a collection agency to work for them. That person also works for other agencies, and Quick Med Claims has expressed frustration about getting the files in a timely manner. President Murphy wanted to know if a timeframe can be defined for the time it takes to receive collection information between Quick Med Claims and their vendor. Commissioner Colligan wanted to know how much the District is showing each year that is not being collected. Mr. Dagostino explained that it is somewhat of a revolving door when bills going out in May are not collected until August. Although the District is allowed to credit those collections to the correct fiscal year, unless it is collected after 60 days. It was determined that there is not a clear way to measure that. It was added that Premier Accounting is now writing off some of these items, whereas in the past there were carried over from fiscal year to fiscal year. Commissioner Rukowicz had a question on Page 5 of the Financial Report regarding Tax Collector services. The amount for tax collection services by the Town went up from FY 2016/2017 to FY 2017/2018. Mr. Dagostino explained that the Town is charging the District for a portion of the Tax Collector's salary, Tax Collector's office expenses, Tax Assessor's salary, Tax Assessor's office expenses and a portion of the re-evaluation. Commissioner Rukowicz asked if it would be in the District's best interest to have a part-time

position to take care of those services instead of paying the Town. President Murphy stated that this has been discussed, and more discussion is needed on that issue.

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

- C. Chief's Report. The Chief's Report for January had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Chief added a couple of items that were not included in the report. The Membership Committee for the Department is going to be making the rounds to different area stores to build up the recruitment drive. He has a rough draft of the apparatus replacement plan that he has submitted to the Executive Director this evening. It will be ready for the Board to review for next month. The Department is starting to plan for the Travelers' Tournament that is scheduled for June. He stated that St. Francis is looking to have the Chief sign their agreement. The Chief will not do that until he is briefed by the EMS Division on their plan for operations for the event. He added that Middletown had a two alarm fire that Cromwell participated in with two pieces of equipment and staff. They were still able to cover the Town of Cromwell adequately with a little assistance from Rocky Hill. Attack 4, Cromwell's rescue pumper proved to be a process to follow as they were able to cover two functions with one piece of equipment. Commissioner Rukowicz asked for comment about the new system in place for responding. The Commissioner believed the District is saving money on it, and it is a good system. Deputy Chief Salonia explained that they looked at some of the systems that they were currently using that were duplicating some efforts or not being utilized by some of the membership to support continuing with that function because of the cost that the program would supply to them. They are in the beginning stages of rolling it out to the membership, but with some more training being required. It will allow the Department to take advantage of real time access to see the members' operational availability or lack thereof. This will address holiday weekends, weekend and night times to operate more efficiently and stay on top of things. This will be another avenue to have real time access to people's schedules, and is another form of communication. It will benefit the Department's operations tremendously and will save the District ultimately \$5,000 or \$6,000 a year and eliminate some of the other programs. The Deputy Chief is of the opinion that this will work out well.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Chief's report for January as submitted.

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for January had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Jarzavek reported that the water pumped was about what is normal for the month of January. They are continuing to upgrade the system to the regular reads. They began last month to be more aggressive with some of the older meters that were getting stuck or readings were low. They have been getting out to the residents and changing those out. Mr. Elliott was rehired and began his employment last week. Mr. Jarzavek stated it is nice to have almost a full crew again. Commissioner Epstein asked if there was anyway there was a type of lock or something to be installed at some of the retail businesses so that water would not be lost if the Fire Department was not called out in a timely fashion. Mr. Jarzavek replied that the water lost in the most recent situation was through the sprinkler system so there really wasn't anything that could have been done.

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

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations. There was no meeting.
- B. Executive Committee. There was no meeting.
- C. Fire Operations Committee. There was no quorum. Minutes from December 19, 2017, had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. President Murphy noted the issue in the minutes regarding the notification to the Fire Department by the Police Department regarding calls that should involve notifying the Fire Department. He asked the Chief to put together data related to this issue so that they can have a discussion. The Chief stated he has already started to put together some information related to this matter. He will continue to monitor the situation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes of December 19, 2017, as submitted.

- 1. Communications Subcommittee. A meeting was held on February 13, 2018. Minutes were not available to discuss. However, Commissioner Colligan was asked if he could summarize what occurred. He stated that the Norcom contract was on the agenda for tonight for signature. There was also a maintenance agreement that was discussed. The contract for Norcom had to be signed for antennas, reprogramming and duplexers. The timeframe was eight weeks. That was two weeks ago. The grant has been submitted. The Chief explained it was the AFG grant and it was due to be submitted by February 2 for radios. The Chief had requested an amount of \$2.8 million which includes 57 portables, 15 mobiles, the FNE which is the voting sites that Commissioner Colligan had mentioned, 3 console positions in the communications center and a remote. This is what was recommended. Unfortunately, because of the population size of Cromwell, the Federal Government feels that Cromwell would only be entitled to \$1 million of the amount requested. So the Department has been looking into other funding options. It is not to say that they are going to spend up to that amount. They are looking at other ways to address this with other funding options. The Chief, Commissioner Colligan and the Executive Director also received an email today regarding leasing options to get the system up and running on the analog system. They will still need the same six sites for the P-25 System. The radios will be changed when it goes to the P-25, and they are also exploring other avenues to bring down the total amount of portables at a lower price with some used portables from another Fire Department that are only two years old. They are all Motorola's and are compatible. They can also be converted to a P-25 system. They will start off with analog, then go to the P-25 and still have analog combination on the same portables. Chief Terenzio added that some of the problems the Department has been experiencing regarding inability to communicate outside the Class 2 construction buildings, the big boxes, the steel and some of the topographical challenges will be addressed by the voting sites being discussed or the FNE (fixed network equipment). The grant would more than fund this effort. The P-25 system is the only thing to be able to tell the Federal Government that they will recognize or provide funding. On top of the FNE, the digital operation of radio equipment will enhance the FNE for overall improvement. Commissioner Colligan explained the six voting sites; four will be transmit and receive and two receive only. They identified the Pilgrim Manor area as one of the voting sites at the top of the hill. Also across the street where the open field is located. This will also increase the communications inside Pilgrim Manor and Covenant Village. They are making sure they are spending the funds wisely. Commissioner Colligan added that the antennas will not need to

be replaced. They will be able to be used for the P-25 system. Regarding State funding, Chief Terenzio stated that Senator Murphy's office has reached out to Cromwell to ask if they could be of any assistance.

- D. Pension Committee. The meeting scheduled for last week was canceled due to the weather. It has been rescheduled for tomorrow at 11:00 AM.
- E. Personnel Committee. A meeting was held on January 25, 2018. Minutes had been distributed for review. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. President Murphy noted that there was a discussion about the appointment of a Deputy Fire Marshal and the Utility Worker II position which the Recording Secretary noted the correct title of the position to be Maintainer II.
 - 1. Maintainer II. There was a discussion regarding the Maintainer II position in the Water Division. The Executive Director was requesting that the position be posted internally for five days. If there are no qualified applicants, the Executive Director would want to post it outside of the District. He believed there will be a fair amount of interest within the District for this position. This is a position the Water Department had at one time. It was vacated and not refilled. There has been some discussion regarding succession in the Water Department and there has been some consideration that it might be a good time to fill this position. The individual chosen could be a person to be groomed within the Department over the years. It is an entry level position in the Water Division. The salary matrix is a range from \$41,346.24 to \$50,240.42. It is a full-time position with benefits. A portion of this position can be funded for the remainder of this fiscal year with the budget that has already been approved. However, it would be an add-on for the next fiscal year's budget. The Personnel Committee had approved this position to be posted, and was forwarding the recommendation to the full Board of Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to fill the Maintainer II position in the Water Division and post it internally for five days. The position will be posted tomorrow.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee Meeting minutes of January 25, 2018, as submitted.

- F. Water Operations Committee. A meeting was held on February 6, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed for review. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Rukowicz gave some of the highlights of the report. He stated they discussed the Maintainer II position which was just approved by the full Board. Another item for discussion was obtaining Municipal plates for the Water Department and the rest of the District. That is a work in progress. Also discussed was a vendor, Prime A & C. They had received a bid to drain the water tanks per State requirement. The bid was \$39,900 from Camp Dresser. The other bid was \$29,600 from Prime A & C which will come before the Board tonight for approval. The District will be saving \$10,300. The company with the lower bid will provide the same services. They are a new company looking for business, and one of the individuals from the company is the former Water Director for the City of Middletown. The District requested Camp Dresser to refresh their bid since their quote was two years old. The refreshed bid was \$52,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Water Operations Committee meeting minutes of February 6, 2018, as submitted.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Councilwoman Slade reported that the meeting before the last one, the Library expansion funding was approved. The Town of Cromwell had received a \$1 million grant from the State for this project, and the Town will fund the remaining amount for the project. The project will include a meeting room, technology upgrades, etc. It was overwhelmingly approved. Tomorrow evening the Mayor and Town Manager are having an open forum at 7:00 PM at Town Hall. Anyone interested is invited to attend. Some members of Town Council will also be there. The public will be able to discuss concerns and ask questions. It will be held in Room 224. Councilwoman Slade will not be able to attend, but she will be having a separate tea hour at Rose's Tea Room on Saturday, March 3, 2018, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The tea hour had been planned prior to the open forum. She reported the Human Resource coordinator position has been filled. It is a part-time position. The person filling the position has extensive HR experience. She will be an asset to the Town. Also reported was the Director of Parks & Recreation stepped down unexpectedly for personal reasons. At that time the Town Manager went back to the pool of candidates that interviewed for the position since it had not been a long period of time that the position was filled. Mr. Scott Kieras was hired. She did not have the Town he was from, but he has at least 24 years of experience in Recreation Departments. She reported that Mark Gery, one of Cromwell's Police Officers passed away from cancer. He was originally from Branford. The service was going to be in the next day or so. Also the budget hearings will be starting next month. She stated they will start on March 5. After the hearings, the budget will be forwarded to the Board of Finance. All the dates and times can be found on the Town's website. She noted that any town meeting in Rooms 224 or 225 can be viewed on U-tube. The link is on the website. Commissioner Rukowicz asked about an agenda item at the last Town Council meeting regarding approving \$50,000 for an architect to design the Public Works garage. Ms. Slade reported that it was on the agenda, but then taken off the agenda because the Director had realized he had enough funding in his budget to pay for the architect. The services only cost \$2,000.

B. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. Public Safety Tower Committee. Commissioner Rukowicz reported the Committee was scheduled to meet on Friday, March 1, 2018, but has been rescheduled for Friday, February 23, 2018, at 10:00 AM, due to a conflict of schedules.
2. Safety/Building Committee. A meeting was held on January 11, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Hinnners reported that it was a fairly lengthy meeting where there was a review of all the issues found in all of the Fire District buildings over a two month period. He thanked Commissioners Donohue and Rukowicz who did most of the review process. All of the findings and repairs were assigned to various personnel and are in the report. That will be revisited at the Committee's next meeting on April 12. Commissioner Hinnners has received various reports on issues that are coming together and

repairs that have been made. President Murphy asked about the exhaust fumes that exist at the West Street firehouse. Mr. Dagostino reported that above the handicap elevator and the office in the bay, (the radio room) there is a mezzanine. That is where the HVAC mechanicals are. If there is a vehicle parked on the apron left standing and running, and the door is open, the fumes are pulled into the bay and into the HVAC system and gets distributed into the building. If the vehicle is running in the bay, there is an evacuation system that works and there is only a slight problem. Although the amount has not been measured. When the building was designed and engineered, it was not thought that it would be an active firehouse with personnel in it. The HVAC system was designed to keep things from freezing. Commissioner Hanners stated that the HVAC system needs to be investigated. SNE Building Systems is the vendor that actually programs the computer system. It is not clear if they work on the mechanicals. They only deal with the programming of the system. The building is not balanced, but SNE cannot change it. They do not test for leaks. They change filters, belts, motors. There was discussion regarding possible solutions. What needs to be determined is what service level the technician is that comes out. There needs to be a discussion with the vendor to answer questions regarding the system concerns. Commissioner Neto suggested that a company come in to do an assessment. Once a problem is identified the District has a responsibility to get to the cause of the problem, have testing done if required and come up with solutions. It is a health and safety issue. This issue has come up many times, but the root cause has not been determined. Commissioner Colligan suggested installing CO detectors to protect the second floor personnel. President Murphy also asked about the elevator at West St. The elevator only works in the down direction. It should work in both directions. It is the ADA compliant elevator. The challenge is that there are two vendors that need to be present if servicing is to be done. The ADA elevator is a Schindler product, however, Otis has the service contract. It was suggested to have a vendor to service both systems. The ADA elevator and the other elevator. A full inventory of the elevator system needs to be done. President Murphy commented that Mr. Dagostino has been tasked with many of the follow ups on items. He suggested that if any items can be handled by the District's maintenance person, it would be helpful.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Safety/Building Committee Meeting minutes of January 11, 2018, as submitted.

3. Bylaws Committee. Commissioner Epstein stated there was no meeting. A workshop was held on February 6, 2018. The next meeting will be May 1, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. There were no comments.
- B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were no adjustments to report.
- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors
 1. Norcom. There are two service agreements that were distributed. The Board was asked to disregard the one priced at \$10,518.24. The contract for discussion was for \$4,356.08. It is a service and preventative maintenance agreement for what the District has existing for the remainder of this fiscal year. The other contract will be for budgetary purposes for next year. It was noted that this preventative maintenance had not been performed for many years. There were many issues that were discovered when the initial maintenance check was done.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the preventative maintenance agreement for \$4,356.08 with Norcom.

2. Prime A & C. It was noted this is the vendor with a quote for engineering services to drain Wells 3 & 4 per the State. The quote was for \$29,600. It was noted that this does not need to go before the Town because there was a Capital budget of \$108,000 for BFD's already in the budget. Mr. Jarzavek answered questions regarding how the process works.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to authorize Mr. Jarzavek and the Executive Director to move forward with Prime A & C to perform the engineering services necessary to drain Wells 3 & 4 to meet State requirements.

- D. Disposal of Old Rescue Unit. Mr. Dagostino asked for direction from the Board regarding disposal of the old rescue unit. Typically the process for disposal of assets has been through sealed bids. The surplus sealed bid process insures the taxpayers are getting the most amount back for what they paid for. The Chief has identified a couple of brokers to try to sell it for the District. They estimate an amount of \$10,000 to \$15,000 without their fees. The Chief stated that the fee would be about 10%. If using the sealed bid process, it is not clear what the District will be offered for the unit or what the high bid would be. It would need to be advertised, make it available to be inspected, provide spec information for anyone that requests it. A minimum amount could be advertised to start the bidding process. The Fire Chief and Mr. Dagostino have seen the value of using a broker. The concern is how to choose a broker and how to assure the citizens that the District got the maximum amount of money. The District would not know if they would get the maximum amount of money because they wouldn't know if someone would come in with a sealed bid that was higher. The sealed bid removes those questions. Commissioner Colligan stated that broker was used before in the Fire Department. They did get the most money for using a broker. He recommended using a broker. There would be more control, and they would be able to get a good deal. There was a discussion regarding sealed bids versus a broker. The decision will be what is in the best interest of the Town. Also discussed was advertising in Fire magazines.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to advertise to solicit sealed bids for the Rescue Unit listing the specifications with a minimum allowable bid of \$15,000. The highest bid will prevail.

- E. Recommendation for Deputy Fire Marshal. The Executive Director reported that the Board had given its final approval to post internally the Deputy Fire Marshal position. There were applicants within the Fire District. One applicant, Jason Brade, applied for the position. His application and qualifications were brought before the Personnel Committee and received approval and recommendation to move forward to appoint him as the Deputy Fire Marshal. He has been appointed as the Deputy Fire Marshal. The process now is for the Personnel Committee to bring that recommendation to the full Board to ratify that decision. Mr. Brade is a known entity in the District. He has done extremely well. He has all the certifications to be a Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal or Fire Inspector. He has not shown any deficiencies or weaknesses in performing his job. It was a comfortable decision to make.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to appoint Jason Brade as Deputy Fire Marshal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Samantha Slade, 128 Nooks Hill Road, stated that March 10, 2018, is the Greater Hartford St. Patrick's Day parade. This year's Town Marshal is Rosemary Mattus and the Town Honoree is Rodney Bitgood. Step off is at 11:00 AM and will be televised by Fox 61. Ms. Slade is the Chairman.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to enter into Executive Session at 8:43 PM.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to adjourn Executive Session at 8:50 PM, with no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM.

ATTEST:

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-15-18