

# 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, May 15, 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, May 15, 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, Robert Donohue, Jason Hinnners, Roger Rukowicz and David Colligan attended. Also attending were Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Assistant Fire Chief EMS Robert McIntyre 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 Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted with one addition under New Business, changing Item D. to Approval of CFD 2018/2019 Budget, and creating Item E. Set Date for Annual Budget Meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments at this time.

### **APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2018**

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of April 17, 2018, as submitted.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

Commissioner Epstein read a thank you note to the Cromwell Fire District from Cromwell Police Officer Mark Gery's family for the District's donation of \$50 to the Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter in Officer Gery's memory.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

A. Executive Director. Commissioner Neto serving as Acting Executive Director generated a report for the month of April. The report had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The collective bargaining agreement with AFSCME Local 1303 has been ratified. The process has begun to deduct union dues from payroll. The final report with pricing has been received from NORCOM on the radio system. Commissioner Colligan and Justin Lonergan had requested that some corrective action be done on the existing radios. Commissioner Neto has asked Mr. Lonergan to modify his schedule temporarily for an additional 5 hours a week temporarily for the next 4 weeks. The situation was to either use Mr. Lonergan or pay Norcom. Commissioner Neto made the decision that it would be less expensive to have our staff work on them then to outsource the work. The work will be to reprogram pagers and programing. Norcom has requested a list from the District of all the frequency numbers. Mr. Lonergan has been working on putting together that list. It was noted that Mr. Lonergan currently works 21 hours per week, and an additional 5 have been added for the radio project. Commissioner Colligan noted that Mr. Lonergan has realized the extra responsibilities assigned to him. If the volume of work does not subside, the Board will need to re-evaluate and identify other corrective actions. It was noted that Justin as well as others will need to make that assessment if needed. Commissioner Neto added he would not make that decision. Work continues with the Tower Manager and Attorney Deneen to get all vendors to document all of their hardware on the Tower as well as lease agreements. They have been given a deadline date with which they need to respond. The District needs to know what they have and what they are paying which includes Marcus Communications. The deadline date is the end of May so that information is received for the next Tower meeting on June 1. Commissioner Neto added that the Water Division is fully staffed, and things are working very well with the new staff person. The Water Division staff and Commissioner Neto met with Prime AE which is Guy Russo and Doug Cole to begin the design discussions for the VFD retrofit, tank inspection and tank rotation project. A good timeline has been established, and the District will be getting into the heavy work of the project. The first phase will be the VFD retrofits. The Executive Committee has met and has finalized a budget that will be presented to the Board at this meeting for approval. Negotiations for the new Contract with Local 4662 have begun. It will be ongoing. Commissioner Neto has requested basic information on insurance expenses for the Union. This information is needed to move the process forward.

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

B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for April had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Donohue followed up on the lift gate item in question from last month. Mr. Alibrio noted that the item has been inserted into the right spot on the budget worksheet. It had been on the wrong line previously. The amount set aside for the brickwork for the wall repair to Coles Road is for \$5,000. Mr. Alibrio confirmed that the line item is still there. This was discussed

at the Safety/Building Committee meeting because a price was given by the vendor. However, there were changes to the office after this meeting and no follow through was done regarding a PO, etc. Commissioner Neto will check in the office. Mr. Alibrio noted that the money has been allocated in the budget for the specific purpose of the brickwork. There is no reason not to move forward on this because there is a proposal, and the funding is there. President Murphy asked that the proposal be resubmitted because of the age of the proposal. Commissioner Colligan was to contact the vendor requesting a new proposal and forward to Commissioner Neto so that the process could be initiated. Mr. Alibrio added that it is getting to the end of the fiscal year. There are a couple of accounts that are running over such as repairs and maintenance and professional fees. It is getting down to the wire but overall the District is still on target for both Water and the General fund.

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

- C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's Report for April had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chief Terenzio reported that they are beginning to ramp up their preparations for the TPC. He has been having ongoing discussions with Deputy Chief Salonia about this. He has also enlisted the assistance of the State of Connecticut, Region 3, Incident Command system team. They have helped to draw up an emergency operations plan in the event that something happens that goes well beyond Cromwell's immediate resources. This will be shared with all of the counterparts. State Statute puts the senior fire official in charge of any emergency should anything happen. The TPC will be held June 18 through June 24. The Chief also brought an agreement to be signed for the final disposition of Rescue 1. Commissioner Neto added that Schindler Elevator repaired the handicap elevator at Court Street.

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

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for April had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Jarzavek was absent but Commissioner Neto was available to answer any questions.

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

#### REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations. There was no meeting.
- B. Executive Committee. There was a meeting on April 27, 2018. There were no meeting notes. Chairman Neto reported that the Committee worked with budget numbers.
- C. Fire Operations Committee. A meeting was held April 17, 2018. Minutes had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Hamlin added that there was a discussion on disposing of Rescue 1.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the Fire Operations Committee meeting of April 17, 2018, as submitted.

1. Communications Subcommittee. A meeting was held on April 16, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Another meeting was held last evening, May 14, 2018. Commissioner Colligan reported that Tony Ambrosino from Norcom was at the meeting. He explained and reviewed the entire proposal for the radio system. Each Commissioner received a copy of the proposal. Everyone's questions were answered. The meeting was two hours in length. The Commissioners now have an understanding of the system and should be prepared to answer any questions or concerns that may arise at the Budget meeting with the Town. President Murphy commented that this will be a large project. It will tax a lot of resources. Everyone should be mindful of this when going forward in terms of other projects. There needs to be a discussion of what is being assigned for both Angel Alvarado and Justin Lonergan, and perhaps a schedule developed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Communications Subcommittee meeting minutes of April 16, 2018 as submitted.

- D. Pension Committee. There was no meeting. Chairman Brow stated that a meeting will be scheduled in June or July to address the changes in pension for the Fire Chief and including Fire Captains and Lieutenants positions as well as other things that are missing.
- E. Personnel Committee. A meeting was held April 26, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chairman Hamlin reported that Justin Lonergan was at the meeting and explained hiring protocols for the dispatchers. This included probationary periods and training. They also had an Executive Session at that meeting. The discussion in Executive Session was regarding Dispatcher Brescia. She was relieved of duty but did not wish to resign. She was an "at will" employee and had no rights as a probationary employee. She had the right to discuss it with her union representative and to move forward with a grievance. The grievance was denied. Commissioner Epstein requested copies of the documents submitted at that meeting regarding Ms. Brescia. Commissioner Neto was going to check with Mr. Lonergan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee meeting minutes of April 26, 2018, as submitted.

- F. Water Operations Committee. A workshop was held on May 10. Chairman Rukowicz reported that they discussed two items. One was vehicle replacement. The discussion was with Mr. Jarzavek and Mr. Palmieri. They developed a five year plan for vehicles. It needs to be documented and will be available for the next meeting on August 7. The second item discussed was the vehicle maintenance chart. This has now gone electronic. There were a few glitches with the program that data entry of cost could be entered but not mileage. Right now there are only a few individuals that are authorized to get into the system. It should be fully operational by August 7. It was noted it is the Red Alert system, and the Fire Department will also be using the system for information on their vehicles. The system has been in existence since 2007, however, no one has been using it until now. Chris Logan will be authorized from this point forward to data enter both water and fire vehicle information.

The President is interested in having a monthly report for both the Fire and Water Departments. This report could then be submitted as part of the Chief's monthly report.

### BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

### CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Ms. Slade was not in attendance at this meeting. Commissioner Colligan reported that the Fire Department was on the news last night. Channel 3 had a news piece called, "20 Towns in 20 Days." Cromwell was included, and the Fire Department was featured in the story. The story had been coordinated by Commissioner Donohue.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
1. Public Safety Tower Committee. Commissioner Rukowicz announced that the next quarterly Tower Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 1, 2018, 10 AM, with the District and the Town. One issue to be discussed is documentation for Marcus Communication to be on the Tower. Currently there does not seem to be an agreement in place, just an equipment list. A deadline has been given for compliance with our request for documentation.
  2. Safety/Building Committee. Commissioner Hinnners reported that Committee business was discussed at the last Board meeting. The last Committee meeting was held on April 12, 2018. Minutes were still forthcoming because they were quite lengthy. The Committee is more than half way through the task list for each building.
  3. Bylaws Committee. Commissioner Epstein reported that a meeting was held on May 10, 2018. Minutes were not available at this time. Some changes had been submitted by some Commissioners and forwarded to all Commissioners. They were asked to review the changes. Another workshop was scheduled for May 23 to discuss the various changes.

### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Brow made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Colligan and asked for a show of hands in the affirmative that from this point forward, the Fire Chief would answer to the Operations Committee for all Operational aspects of the Fire Department including all financial items that the Chief is responsible to report to the Executive Director/Finance Manager. Point of order by Commissioner Neto was 1) Commissioners' Comments are usually comments, not motions; 2) Identifying different roles would have to go through the Personnel Committee as outlined in the Bylaws. Commissioner Neto added there will be some discussion regarding matters at hand through the President of the Board under Executive Session later in this meeting. The President added that these discussions involve responsibility changes and contractual changes/issues. If issues remain unresolved after Executive Session, issues make come before the Chairman of the Personnel Committee at a Special Personnel Committee meeting as an agenda item. The Bylaws dictate the process.

Commissioner Brow rescinded his motion, and Commissioner Colligan rescinded his second.

B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were no adjustments to report.

C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors

1. Standby Power, Inc. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto 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 the annual contract for Standby Power, Inc., P.O. Box 422, West Suffield, CT for a Preventive Maintenance Service Agreement effective July 1, 2018, and ending June 30, 2019; 4 calls per year for the Kohler Generator at Court Street and the Onan Generator at Coles Road at a cost of \$1,375 for each generator for a total not to exceed \$2,750.

D. Approval of CFD 2018/2019 Budget. Copies of the final draft of the CFD 2018/2019 Budget were distributed and reviewed. Commissioner Neto explained that this final draft was finalized and presented by the Executive Committee for approval at this meeting. He explained all the parts of the budget. Regarding the Fire Department budget under 2018 Budget Workshop General Fund, the total revenues are predicted to be \$3,943,786, but the expenses are predicted to be \$4,300,707. The discrepancy is the communications system. This budget has included the communication component, \$75,000 for the replacement of apparatus, an additional \$20,000 in training for communications as well as Fire Operations, career and non-career. Since there are not enough taxes and revenue coming in, the District needs to increase the mil rate. If the mil rate is increased by  $\frac{1}{4}$ , it would bring in an additional \$356,921 annually. The variance was examined, and the numbers needed to be modified somewhat. There could not be additional monies coming in that are not allocated. \$20,000 was added to an account to show where the funds would be spent. It went into Facilities and Maintenance. It is earmarked there. In summary the Executive Committee is recommending the budget proposed with a tax increase of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mil rate.

Commissioner Neto went on to explain the Water Division fund. It is self-sustaining. The water rates do not need to be increased. There are sufficient funds coming in to meet expenditures. Commissioner Neto explained that with the mil rate increase, an average home in Cromwell worth \$225,300, would have a tax increase of \$56 annually. President Murphy asked about the cost annually of the bonding. It was calculated roughly at \$356,000 per year over 10 years with a bond worth \$2.58 million. It was noted that there has not been a tax increase prior to this in two years. The budget has been a struggle to manage with no tax increase and no money in the apparatus fund. A graph of the mil rate history of the Town and the District was distributed for comparison. Commissioner Neto explained the necessity to take this step for the safety of the public and the firefighters. Research was also done of surrounding towns that have Fire Districts. Commissioner Neto explained that it is felt that a modest tax increase is necessary to support the mission of the Fire District. In the past the District has been diligent with its resources, but is willing to provide any information to support this budget.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to support the 2018/2019 Cromwell Fire District budget as presented.

- E. Set Date of Annual Budget Meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Warning of the Annual Budget Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 22, 2018, at 6:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road in the Town of Cromwell, CT to present the budget for the Cromwell Fire District and its related funds, including but not limited to the Water Division, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2018, as recommended to the Board of Commissioners by the Executive Committee of the Cromwell Fire District at a meeting held May 15, 2018. A copy of said budget as recommended by the Executive Committee is on file and available for public inspection at the Cromwell Fire District Office, One West Street in the Town of Cromwell, Connecticut after May 16, 2018. President Murphy read the Warning. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to adjourn the regular meeting and enter into Executive Session at 8:01 PM.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to adjourn Executive Session at 8:31 PM, with no action taken.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:32 PM.

ATTEST:

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Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
6-11-18