Cromwell Fire District

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Cromwell, CT 06416
Telephone 860-635-4420

FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Fire and Water Divisions
Tuesday, October 15, 2019
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, October 15, 2019, 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 Lee Brow (President), Roger Rukowicz, Mertie Terry, Allan Spotts, Johnathon Hamlin, David Colligan, Charles Epstein and Robert Donohue attended. Also attending was Executive Director Julius Neto, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Michael Alibrio from BlumShapiro, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio and Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade. Commissioner Jason Hinners had an excused absence.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM, by President Brow. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Brow.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as submitted.

SWEARING IN CEREMONY

President Brow invited Fire Chief Michael Terenzio and Executive Director Julius Neto to the front of the room for the swearing in of the career Lieutenants. Two of the three officers were present. They are: Lt. William McKnight and Lt. Brett Hallden. Lt. Barry Wolmetz was away and could not be present for the ceremony.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Rosette Sankner, 20 Crest Drive, had comments for the Board and Fire Department. She had comments that were not of public concern but rather of appreciation. She grew up in Cromwell when there was one firehouse. She went to school at the Nathaniel White Middle School. She does remember smoke detectors and changing out batteries of the detectors. She remembers fire drills as hiding under their desks. One of the most frightening experiences she had was living on Catherine Street, when St. John's Church burned down. She never forgot that fire, and to this day

is an advocate for fire prevention. She relayed a story about asking her 3 yr. old grandson if he wanted to visit the fire station. He wasn't too happy about the idea, but one day he saw a fire truck with the extended ladder. They had to turn around and go back to see the truck. They got to walk around and see the fire station. He was also given a hat. That hat became very special to him. Fire Prevention week was last week. Her grandson attends Northwest Children's Center where he wore his hat during Fire Prevention week. Ms. Sankner felt bad because the other children did not have hats. She called Commissioner Rukowicz, who was able to give each child a hat and a badge. The children sent a note to Ms. Sankner, but she felt the note belonged to the Fire Department and Board of Commissioners. She read the note. The children were very happy.

Ms. Shankner asked her grandson what he wanted to do to thank the firefighters. He decided on doughnuts. She dropped off some doughnuts to the Court St. firehouse today. Her grandson also wanted to have doughnuts for the meeting tonight. She asked him if there was anything else he would like to do. She presented the District with a $200 donation from the children. She let the Board and the Fire Department know that they are important, and all their jobs are important. She let them know they are appreciated including Commissioners, Directors, Firefighters, EMS and all the support staff. She was sure the Town's people would be there if they could, that was why she was there. She does not go out at night, but she felt this was important. She stated that anything the District/Fire Department can do to reach out to the young people and show them how to prevent fires would be very helpful. She suggested showing them the trucks and hats. She acknowledged all members and let them know they are appreciated. She had heard many wonderful stories about the Executive Director around Town. She was glad she had the opportunity to meet him. She thanked him for all he does. His service is exemplary.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to put the $200 donation into the Fire Department's scholarship fund.

APPROVAL OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of September 17, 2019, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1, 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of October 1, 2019, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1, 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Special District Meeting minutes of October 1, 2019, as submitted.

ELECTION RESULTS OCTOBER 7, 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Election notes as submitted. The results were as follows: Lee Brow 99 votes, Charles Epstein 89 votes, Jason Hinners 89 votes and Robert McIntyre 62 votes. An organizational meeting followed where officers were elected amongst themselves. The officers remain the same as the previous year. Commissioner Lee Brow was re-elected President, Commissioner Roger Rukowicz was re-elected Vice President, Commissioner Jason Hinners was re-elected Secretary and Commissioner David Colligan was re-elected Treasurer.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

A thank you note to the Board from the Recording Secretary was read thanking them for the flowers and card sent to her family for the passing of her mother-in-law.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for September had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Neto discussed the highlights of his report. He stated that Joe Palmieri and his staff have done a great job dealing with the VFD's. The Chief and Mr. Neto had their informal conference with CONN OSHA. It is the last leg of the process that they had started. All items were addressed that were identified as issues. A walk-about was done and anything found at that time was addressed. The Fire Chief and Executive Director were able to negotiate another 50% off the fees. It was a total of $425 for six or seven items. Mr. Neto also attended a training session that gave him more insight about the process and how to implement things. Training meetings are held every month at DOL, and depending on the criteria of the agenda, if it is pertinent, he will be asking the Chief or Joe or a designee to attend. He discussed his session there and the staff he met. He noted that the budget for safety and training for next year will be increasing. Commissioner Terry added that anyone attending any of the training should have it documented in their personnel file. Each person that attends training becomes more valuable to the District.

   Mr. Neto also reported that he, Mike Alibrio and Chief Terenzio sat in on a webinar about the grants. They got a better understanding of the process and a focus. They will be sharing information so they are backing and supporting each other. The CBA for the firefighters has been finalized by the union. Mr. Neto has heard they approved it. Once the Executive Director receives it, he will present it to the Personnel Committee for approval. Mr. Neto included in his report an email he received from the Dispatcher Union President, Andrew Cooke. It was a success story reported because of the Board of Commissioners' decision to add an additional dispatcher position for portions of the day in the Communications Center. A copy of the email is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Neto is very proud of them.

   A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's report for September as submitted.

B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for September had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio reported that everything is looking good so far. Mr. Alibrio reported that he and the Executive Director met with a representative of Citizens Bank. The bank will be handling the

bond proceeds. The interest rate was increased, so the District will be receiving a little more money back. For the record, Mr. Neto added that there are some rules and regulations from the State of CT that prevents the District from investing in anything. The District is within the guidelines of the State of CT, Dept. of Banking and the Bond Counsel.

Commissioner Donohue asked about a meeting that was held with Mr. Alibrio and Boyd Clark about transferring funds from the Activity fund into a Certificate of Deposit. That did not happen. Mr. Alibrio confirmed that this was regarding the volunteer activity fund. The funds are still in the account. Commissioner Donohue will follow up on the status of this account. Under the old By-Laws the Treasurer of the Volunteer Fire Department was responsible for running the activity fund. The present Treasurer has been having some medical challenges. Mr. Neto and Mr. Alibrio have attempted to meet with him, and they did meet once or twice, but Mr. Neto reported they are working to retrieve all the banking information from Mr. Clark since has not been able to perform his duties as Treasurer. None of the funds such as the Fire Dept. Trust, the Hardship Benefit Fund or the Scholarship Fund had money taken out. If anything was done it would have been out of the Volunteer Activity Fund, and Mr. Alibrio does not think anything has happened in terms of any money being transferred. They have made multiple calls to Mr. Clark's residence with no success. Mr. Neto is planning to stop by Mr. Clark's home to attempt to get the checkbook as well as any other information he may have. Mr. Neto added that a Committee has been formed to develop new By-Laws for the volunteers. Commissioners Colligan and Epstein are on that Committee as well as others. He feels that group should take over for short term decisions that may be required. Mr. Neto discussed this with Bernice Jalbert to see if she would be willing to be an Acting Treasurer in the interim once they have obtained all the banking information from Boyd Clark. They meet on a weekly basis, so at least there will be someone filling in if there are issues to be addressed. It was also learned that the Fire Chief would have access to the Activity Fund account if the Treasurer was not available.

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

C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's Report for September 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 have scheduled interviews to replace the career firefighter position vacated by Jeremy Hiriak. They are scheduled for October 29, 2019. He added that with the acceptance of the SAFER Grant, there needs to be some discussion on how to move forward with the four positions. Senator Blumenthal visited last week to congratulate the Department for getting the four additional firefighters and the $268,000 for the radios as a result of the grants. The Chief along with the Executive Director and the President of the Board had a discussion with the Senator about the diversity between the Federal law and the State law for employees and volunteers. The Senator did not realize any of the discrepancies that existed. He also mentioned he would be checking with his friends in FEMA regarding Cromwell's other grant that is in limbo right now for fire apparatus.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Chief's report for September as submitted.

D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for September had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. He distributed copies of pictures of the new motor starters at the Chemfeed building. Once everything is up and running, he will be scheduling a tour. As of today, the VFD drive and filter for Well #4

was installed this morning. It will be hooked up, wired and in service within the next couple of days. At that point they will know if everything is running smoothly. Mr. Palmieri reported that everything else is working excellent. The VFD's went in to have the ability to run off of pressure. Wells 1 & 2 soft starters replaced the old motor starters. There were some difficulties with interference. They ran the fiber optic cable. Everything is up and running nicely. They noticed last week they were having some chlorine residual issues that were caused by the VFD's. The pumps that pump the dosage of chlorine had a short in the circuit board. They had to purchase some parts to replace the faulty parts on the circuit board. He added that the air conditioning is in and working. Cromwell Energy did a great job installing it. Mr. Palmieri thanked Mr. Neto and Commissioner Epstein for coming out to the water leak they had on Missionary Road. It started out as one leak, but when it was turned on, the valve blew apart. That caused Covenant Village to be shut down. It was unexpected, but they had it back up and running within 2 – 2 ½ hours. They were in touch with the local and State Health Departments. It all happened after regular business hours. It could have been an 8 – 10 hr. job if they had to replace the whole valve. Commissioner Epstein stated that he was glad he had gone to see what the Water Department does. He has a new appreciation for the work they do.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Water Operations Report for September as submitted.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

A. District Operations. There was no meeting.

B. Executive Committee. There was no meeting.

C. Fire Operations Committee. A meeting was held on September 17, 2019. Minutes were not available for review.

   1. Communications Subcommittee. Commissioner Colligan noted that there will be a meeting tomorrow evening with Chief Terenzio, Commissioner Colligan, the Executive Director, the Clerk of the Works, the Tower Manager and the Communications Supervisor to review questions that will be raised by Motorola at the meeting. A meeting is scheduled for October 30 with the Motorola engineers to review the entire project.

D. Pension Committee. There was no meeting.

E. Personnel Committee. A meeting was held on September 26, 2019. Minutes were not available for review. A report was deferred until next month. The Personnel Chairman did not have anything to add. Mr. Neto added that there is a regular meeting scheduled for next week.

F. Water Operations Committee. A meeting was held on October 2, 2019. Minutes were not available for review. He will defer a report until next month.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Ms. Jennifer Donohue reported that it was a short meeting. The Financial Report for the Town was reviewed. There looks to be an expected surplus. There will be more details once the audit is done. The catch basins have been completed. Half of the Town is done every year. She also reported that 49 River Road has been completed. The property has been all cleaned up. The fines have ceased for now. The Town will determine what the next steps will be.

B. Reports of the Special Committees

1. Public Safety Tower Committee. There was no report.

2. Safety/Building Committee. Commissioner Donohue reported that it will be rescheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Commissioners' Comments. President Brow requested a letter be written from the Board to Mrs. Sankner thanking her and her family for the generous donation of $200 that was given to the Board this evening. Commissioner Terry asked if the Department was doing anything for Trick or Trunk. It was noted that the Fire Department was doing a bonfire. Commissioner Terry suggested inviting the junior group of firefighters in for some public relations. She suggested next month or shortly thereafter. The President asked the Fire Chief to coordinate it.

A motion was made by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to authorize the Executive Director to draft a letter to Mrs. Sankner and her family.

B. Budgetary Adjustments. There was a budgetary adjustment to the General Fund. A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to be it resolved, that the Board of Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District approve an amendment to the General Fund budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, as presented, to re-allocate funds for the purchase of additional uniforms; $6,000 from the Office of the Fire Chief--Recruitment and Morale (01110-5355) to EMS/Fire Operations—Uniforms (01116-5670). A copy of the worksheet is attached.

C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. President Brow requested approval for Joseph's Auto Body to be an approved vendor/contractor for body work if it is needed in the future on any of the fleet vehicles but not full fire apparatus. Currently the District uses Brothers, but he would like to have Joseph's approved as well so that there are two vendors they can choose from within the Town of Cromwell. The Executive Director was asked to draft a letter to the owner of Joseph's Auto Body.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to authorize Joseph's Auto Body to be a second approved vendor in the Town of Cromwell for auto body work for fleet vehicles.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session scheduled for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

ATTEST: _____

Lee Brow, (President), Acting Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
11-4-19