

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Fire Operations Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 15, 2019**

**5:30 PM**

**105 Coles Road  
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners' Johnathon Hamlin (Chairman), Allan Spotts and Robert Donohue. Also attending were Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade, Executive Director Julius Neto and Commissioners David Colligan, Roger Rukowicz, Charles Epstein and Lee Brow (President).

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM, by Chairman Hamlin.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as submitted.
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2019. The minutes were not available for review. A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to table the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes until next month.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report. Commissioner Colligan reported that there will be a meeting tomorrow evening with the consultant, Paul Zito, on the progress of the communication project. Those attending the meeting will be Commissioner Colligan, Tower Manager Angel Alvarado, Dispatch Supervisor Justin Lonergan, the Executive Director Julius Neto and Fire Chief Michael Terenzio at 5:00 PM, at 1 West Street. They will be discussing some information that Motorola is looking for. Motorola will be here in Cromwell at 1:30 PM, on October 30, 2019. This will be a whole afternoon meeting at West Street to go over the entire project. Commissioner Colligan stated that President Brow was also welcome to attend. The Executive Director explained the two grant awards that the District received and how those funds will be spent. The SAFER grant is partial funding for 4 full-time firefighters over four years. The AFG is the other grant. Mr. Neto, Chief Terenzio and Mike Alibrio will be the core team overseeing the grant process. They participated in a webinar that gave them information and direction on the process. There will be a FEMA website to be used by grant recipients. The funding that is spent needs to be spent on the category it was intended for. If there is any deviation from that category, permission must be requested and granted. If criteria are not met, the District would be liable for any discrepancy, and the money will have to be paid back to FEMA. The Fire Chief, Mr. Alibrio and Mr. Neto will be very thorough in

managing the process. The funding should be used for portables, mobiles and bay stations only. Commissioner Colligan has authorized the Fire Chief to order the portables since the District has the money. Motorola is what is being used by Middletown in order for Cromwell to communicate with Middletown, and Motorola equipment has special PL's. Commissioner Colligan wants to get the radios so that people can start to be trained on them before the system is up and running. The District will still be able to use digital and analog so Cromwell can work with its own system with the new radios. This is what the grant money will be used for. Mr. Neto stated that the money will not be appropriated until the FEMA "Gone Live" is set up. So if the radios are purchased right now, the District would have to use its own funds and then cash it in. If we decide to go that route, the District needs to advise FEMA that this is what they are doing. FEMA must be advised ahead of time.

- VI. Reports of Chief Officers. Chief Terenzio reported that the bay door at West Street was crashed into by an ambulance crew of unscheduled part-timers. The door was looked at today. It will be approximately two weeks for parts for the repair. The Assistant Chief and the Chief are looking into what caused the crash. There is a video of the incident, and the Chiefs will be speaking to the staff involved. An accident report of three sentences was completed. The Chief was not satisfied with the length of the report. Ass't Chief Brade has tried to contact those involved to obtain individual statements. One person is on vacation so the person was given some leeway until they return. The other person has not gotten back to the Ass't Chief. At the time of the incident, the on-duty officer did an investigation of the incident. It was just an initial investigation to document what had occurred. They are now reaching out for more details. President Brow asked about procedures in place. It was noted that there were SOP's in place at one time regarding reporting procedures. It was not the reporting level that it should have been. Chief Terenzio noted that he is moving very cautiously because of the staff involved due to previous challenges over the last year. He is making sure due process is followed. Accidents are either mechanical failure, human failure or a combination of both. At this point in time, it was determined that there was no mechanical failure. The incident was explained that the door was going up, and the spotter was not looking. The apparatus had minimal damage with just some scuff marks. The bay doors had more damage which was done to two panels. The Chief is less than gratified by the request for a statement. It is known that the Fire Department Bylaws have been suspended, but policies and procedures were not suspended. He asked if that included the policy written by Chief Pendl regarding a 30 day suspension from driving. Chief Terenzio stated that Policy has not changed from the last administration. President Brow asked Assistant Chief Brade to keep the Executive Director, the Chair of Fire Operations and President Brow in the loop regarding the investigation.

The Chief added that training is continuing. The Department needs to be ready for the OSHA mandate in the middle of November for blood borne. The on-duty staff is training a minimum of once a day, if not twice. They are putting a lot of training hours in. This weekend there is an honorarium for past Chief Swanson at the Norwich Archdiocese on October 18, 2019. The Department is looking to send one of their aerials to fly the flag. It was noted that if it is decided to bring Truck 1, people need to be reminded that it cannot be driven over 50 miles per hour or it will burn up the transfer case. The Chief will be following up with the mechanic, because he was not aware of this issue until recently. They are looking for someone to drive the apparatus to Norwich. Melissa Roming has the Honor Guard assembled.

Assistant Chief Brade announced that the "Trick or Trunk" event is being held on Saturday, October 19, 2019. The Fire Department will be participating with a bonfire. He reported

there has been a slight change in response. Regarding unscheduled and volunteer, nothing was changed regarding when they can respond, but they discussed where they will be going. Instead of having all 3 stations that people are responding to, the unscheduled and volunteer staff have been divided into 2 stations, Coles Road and West St. There are approximately 20 people that have been divided 10 and 10 based on geographic location. Each would be assigned to the appropriate station captain. They are trying to get them to the station they are closest to in order to fill the apparatus when the second tone goes off. Those are for Delta and Echo responses. They are trying to get the unscheduled and the volunteers back together again and are trying to rebuild the comradery on the localized level at the stations. They have started training again. They have each held a station meeting amongst themselves. They also held another meeting that was on a voluntary basis. The second Monday of the month was a training session. It had minimal attendance.

Next week will be a test to see where they are at. It will be a department-wide drill. Some OSHA mandates need to be met in terms of training. This will be re-evaluated after the next three months. The drill this month will be Forceable Entry and Search. It has been offered to the career staff as well. Everyone is working on the same topics for the course of the month. They are documenting in Red Alert all the trainings and drills they go through. The career staff is keeping track of the career staff and scheduled staff. They are training while on shift so there is no additional cost to the District with the exception of certain types of fire where they cannot drill and do the fire at the same time. The station captains are taking care of the documentation of the unscheduled and the volunteer staff. The last Monday of the month will be an EMS drill. That will only be for EMS-only people as well as the cross-trained volunteers. One voluntary drill was held. Drills will be held whether they are attended or not. The other will be a paid drill. They will be reassessing to see how it goes to see if they can meet their mandates in a short amount of time.

Mr. Neto asked for feedback from the Committee. There are individuals; one is a volunteer and one is an unscheduled part-timer. The scheduler needs to decide which person should cover the open shift. Who would be the priority, is it the volunteer or the unscheduled person. The concept was always to keep the volunteers active, but not penalize the unscheduled part-timers. However, a policy has never been drafted. There are two perspectives to the situation. One is a business perspective and the other is an operational perspective. The schedulers need some guidance or a policy. President Brow stated that when the staffing model was rolled out, it was agreed that everyone would have a home whether they were volunteer, scheduled part-time or unscheduled part-time. He suggested keeping track in an overtime book. When a person works a shift, a box gets checked next to their name. As the boxes fill up, the person with the least amount of boxes gets the shift when it is offered. It would not matter if they were unscheduled part-time or volunteer. Also needs to be noted is if it is fire or ambulance. They need to keep fair with EMS only. Until people are all cross-trained, it needs to be fair for EMS only staff. There was a lengthy discussion regarding scheduling. There was discussion regarding putting a seventh person on. Is there criteria that states a person can only do a set number of shifts. The Chief stated there are if they are getting paid. There is a part-time minimum for volunteers. President Brow stated he will drop off to the firehouse the documents he was discussing during this meeting if it helps the scheduling issues.

VII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing, Hiring and Response Capability. This had been discussed under the last agenda item.

VIII. Old Business. There was no old business to discuss.

IX. New Business

- A. Discussion of Fire Chief's Office Reorganization. Chief Terenzio and Assistant Chief Brade have had some discussions over the last few weeks, with one as recent as this afternoon. Nothing has been drafted yet. He stated that they have 4 chief officers for a department that does not really require it. He has been looking at other departments that are similarly sized, but differently staffed. The way Cromwell is now, it is the Chiefs' believe that there should be a Chief and 2 Assistant Chiefs. There is an EMS chief which was created when the Ambulance Division merged with the Fire Department. Currently, the EMS Chief has no one that he is in charge of because the EMS only lieutenants have left. They are moving to a cross-trained model. The EMS Chief responsibilities are being picked up by the on-duty officers that are cross-trained. President Brow noted that EMT expiration dates can be tracked by Lisa Pandolfini in Red Alert.

Assistant Chief Brade noted that since the departure of Deputy Chief Salonia, Ass't Chief Brade has taken over all things fire and Ass't Chief EMS McIntyre has taken over all things EMS. They are trying to do double/triple roles. Ass't Chief McIntyre was doing EMS and Ass't Chief Brade took over training. Things are not very organized right now. Ass't Chief Brade has been doing the Deputy Fire Marshal's job and be an assistant for the Chief on a part-time basis. He has been very stretched. The Chief feels if there are two Assistant Chiefs on a part-time basis, it will make up for one Assistant Chief position. With the 24 hr./7 day a week officer on duty, plus the unscheduled and volunteers, the span of control and the organizational chart, it will work. Chief Terenzio does not see the need for an EMS only chief. Rob Ferone has been a part-time EMS Captain, but he is only part-time. Commissioner Colligan suggested having one of the Lieutenants on the career staff to be the contact at the hospitals. Rob Ferone cannot handle additional responsibility.

Commissioner Colligan was asked what the chain of command was when he was Fire Chief. The Chain was the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. Those officers would meet with the EMS Captain once a month to be briefed on operations. Captains were used to help out in various capacities, i.e., training officers, to help the Chief with various duties. Chief Terenzio explained that with his officer model, one of the Assistant Chiefs can help out coordinating the training effort and disseminating and presenting the curriculum. Commissioner Epstein stated that some classes need to be taught by a certified EMS instructor. Other classes can be taught by people other than EMS instructors, but there needs to be an EMS instructor present at the class to oversee it. There was a discussion about qualifications for training and EMS instruction.

- B. Preliminary Discussion on Apparatus Needs for Future. The Executive Director stated that the Fire Department and Fire Operations Committee should begin discussions regarding future needs. There is a massive capital need, but there also needs to be a strategy regarding how they get to that point. There are different views and perspectives. He did not know if the discussions should begin with the Chief. The Fire Operations Committee should also be involved with the discussions.

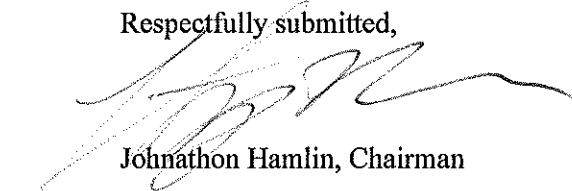
The Fire Chief stated that he has more apparatus then he knows what to do with. In order to determine how much equipment or apparatus is needed, some requirements are listed in the NFPA. The Chief feels we can meet the NFPA 1710 for one location in the center of Town. Does it need to be staffed or equipped at the level that Cromwell does? What

needs to be determined is how much is enough and how much is too much. The Commission needs to tell the Fire Department financially how much they want to support based on the number of people. The Chief is more than ready to answer these questions to provide a recommendation to the Fire Operations Committee. Also what needs to be considered is what the Fire Department wants to provide for services. There is some old apparatus, but what is needed is more technological advances given the most efficient service without the cost. Replacing two vehicles with one is something the Chief would strongly recommend. He did apply for a grant for a rescue pumper. He does not think it will be awarded this year. They can get a vehicle that is large enough to carry Rescue 1 or Class 1 heavy-duty rescue equipment and still have some firefighting capability on board. It would not be a fully compliant NFPA 1901, but large enough as an everyday piece that is more efficient for the Department. The Chief will be preparing a proposal which is what he is supposed to be doing. They will be looking at cost, feasibility and reasonable needs for the community. They will also need numbers. The Chief added that in terms of ambulances, a community the size of Cromwell should only have one ambulance. But there are secondary ambulance calls. Someone has recommended to determine the amount of service needs with the amount of people to provide that service and the frequency that it happens. That algorithm is a little more complicated in terms of development. There is a need for two ambulances. As far as a third, maybe on reserve as opposed to a spare, but there is a cost.

There was discussion regarding whether or not a third ambulance should be used or available as a backup. Some of the reasons for a third ambulance in Cromwell is that there are quite a few convalescent homes as well as a large elderly population. The Chief added that instead of 2 aerals, both should be sold and only one new one be purchased. Another truck should be sold to replace a rescue. The Chief suggested replacing 2 rescue pumpers with one rescue pumper. He added taking the 2 newest trucks and put them in two stations and sell another one. In other words selling 3 and buying 2. Commissioner Epstein speaking from EMS experience, stated there is enough volume in town to have two ambulances. The problem with not having a third is that if an ambulance goes down, a substitute cannot be rented. They are unique vehicles. Chairman Hamlin stated the purpose of this discussion is to come up with new ideas for a return on their investment. Commissioner Epstein also discussed the rates that are given by the State. A lot of times once Medicare or Medicaid takes their percentage, the amount Cromwell actually collects is much smaller.

- X. Commissioners' Comments. There were no Commissioners' comments to report.
- XI. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- XII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Johnathon Hamlin, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary, 10-29-19