

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS **Special Personnel Committee Meeting**

Thursday, March 14, 2019

5:30 PM

**1 West Street
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Charles Epstein (Chairman), Jason Hinnners and Lee Brow (President). Commissioners Mertie Terry and John Hamlin had excused absences. Also attending were Commissioners Roger Rukowicz, David Colligan, and Robert Donohue. Also Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Curt Anderson, Nicole LaTerra and Michael Salonia.

- 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 Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Approval of Minutes of January 24, 2019. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to table the minutes of January 24, 2019.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Old Business. There was no old business to discuss.
- VI. New Business
 - A. Presentation of Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions. The Executive Director began by giving some background information. He thanked all the subcommittee members for their hard work. The presentation was put together, finalized and voted on by the Subcommittee to move forward about 4 weeks ago. The Subcommittee has been working for the last 11 or 12 weeks. He had shared with that group an interpretation of the Federal IRS tax codes. Anytime there is any implication of moving from one party to another party towards income for service or recognition of a service, the IRS identifies it as an employee/employer relationship. The Subcommittee did not have that information prior to putting the presentation together. For example, in East Hampton, the volunteers are eligible for a tax credit as compensation for service. The IRS will interpret that as an employee/employer relationship. That information was shared with Curt Anderson and Nicole LaTerra as they prepared their models.

Ms. LaTerra gave a Power Point presentation which was titled, "Volunteer Staffing Solution." A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District office. It is very similar to the plan already in place. This plan listed the goals, the compliance with FLSA and the impact on the budget. They felt it would be a good idea to implement this plan as a first step. There were examples of weekly schedules that were given for fire duty and EMS duty, cost figures and how that cost will impact the budget. Each slide was explained. Also discussed were Fire Police and Auxiliary and their roles. Stipends and pensions in this plan would remain the same. They discussed the guaranteed second ambulance coverage options. Recruitment and retention is still needed.

The last section of the plan was added and researched by Mr. Anderson. That section was a proposal for a volunteer member to transition to a per diem member at no extra cost to the District. All compensation would be the same as volunteer compensation. This proposal was explained by Curt Anderson. People will be known as per diem employees rather than a per diem contractor.

Mr. Neto stated that the IRS is going to consider the relationships mentioned as employee/employer no matter how they are defined. It is all about how much revenue the IRS can collect. Mr. Anderson pointed out that the proposal presented by the Subcommittee was not vetted by an attorney even though the Subcommittee had requested it. Mr. Neto noted that vetting can still happen, but it needs to be requested at a higher level. It will be up to the Commission to determine that.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and voted two in the affirmative and one nay to forward the presentation as submitted to the full Board of Commissioners for their consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to have the information presented passed on to the Personnel Committee members that were not present, and a meeting will be scheduled within the next ten days so that the absent Committee members have an opportunity to review the material and can come back to vote on whether or not to forward it to the full Board of Commissioners. Due to the time element involved, Mr. Neto suggested that a meeting be scheduled before the March Board meeting. That would be Monday, March 18, 2019. The item could then be added to the Board meeting agenda for March 19, which is the following day.

- B. Update on Claim Identified in the Correspondence to the Commission. Mr. Neto explained that at the last Commissioner's meeting, a claim was presented by an EMT and it was forwarded to the Personnel Committee for consideration or action. That claim is now in the process of being investigated by an independent investigator.
- C. Recommendation for Full-Time Career Firefighter Replacement. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the first two names on the Fire Department recruitment list for the filling of empty positions in the career fire service. Candidates approved will be vetted and on deck if and when position openings occur.

Commissioner Epstein wanted to discuss the process. There was a panel of four individuals that did the interviews. It was a tight process. Candidates were from a list of Fire Academy graduates. There were six candidates that were given questions to answer.

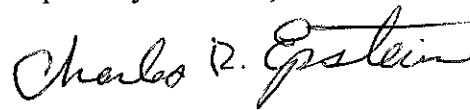
Each answer was rated by the panel. All the data was collected and reviewed, and each candidate was rated. First on the list of candidates was Francesco (Frank) Marrotta. He is presently a member of the FDNY EMT service. He lives in North Madison and grew up in that area. He is also a member of the North Madison volunteer Fire Department. He has an extensive background. He went to Fairfield prep school and Southern CT State University where he received his Bachelor's Degree. He scored very high at the Fire Academy where he paid his way. He is well matched for a position at Cromwell Fire. The panel strongly recommends that the Committee accept Mr. Marrotta's application for a position with the Cromwell Fire Department. There may be another vacancy within the next 6 months in the Fire Department. The panel would like permission to approve a second candidate. If another vacancy occurs, they do not want to go through the whole hiring process again. If the Department has a current list, the bureaucracy would be kept to a minimum, and the vacancy would be filled quickly.

Therefore, the District is looking for 2 names to be recommended for a position in the Fire Department. One was Mr. Marrotta. The other name being recommended to have on deck is John Franchetti. There was a one point difference between the two candidates.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the hiring panel to offer Mr. Francesco Marrotta the position of full-time, career firefighter with the Cromwell Fire Department, and to keep on file the application of Mr. John Franchetti for the next available position.

- VII. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Colligan stated that with the hiring process that has been implemented in the Fire Department, it has saved the District a lot of money in recruitment costs. There are a lot more people applying that are qualified and certified. It was suggested to have an item on one of the upcoming Fire Operations Committee agendas to discuss the expiration of the list of potential candidates for fire service. Commissioner Donohue commented that out of the six candidates interviewed, and the Department choosing the top two rated candidates, he wondered if the Department can keep the other four applicants on file. It was agreed that the list of applicants would be active for 6 months. President Brow thanked the members of the FLSA committee for all their hard work. They did a good job.
- VIII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles Epstein, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
8-22-19