

# Cromwell Fire District

1 West Street  
Cromwell, CT 06416  
Telephone 860-635-4420

FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Special Personnel Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, June 6, 2019**  
**5:30 PM**  
**1 West Street**  
**Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Charles Epstein (Chairman), Mertie Terry and Jason Hinners. Commissioner Johnathon Hamlin was absent. Others in attendance were Executive Director Julius Neto, Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Roger Rukowicz and Robert Donohue, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Firefighter Peter Boin and Dispatch Supervisor Justin Lonergan.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 PM, by Chairman Epstein.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to accept the agenda with the change in order of New Business items moving Item G. to Item A.
- III. Public Comment. Peter Boin introduced himself. He is a probationary firefighter. He attended this meeting so that people would know who he is and for clarification purposes during the meeting, Mr. Boin was available to answer any questions.
- IV. Old Business. There was no old business to be discussed.
- V. New Business
  - A. Review of the Probationary Status of Career Firefighter Boin. The Chairman received some information from Chief Terenzio today. However, there are some items that he had not seen and wanted some more time to review. He also asked Chief Terenzio to provide copies for the rest of the Committee members to review. Chief Terenzio distributed copies to the Committee members of Appraisal Forms completed on Firefighter Boin. Included was documentation on Mr. Boin's progress in the Cromwell Fire Department. The Chairman asked for copies of the report from the incident of March 20. The Chief stated that the information was included in the information just distributed by the Chief. The Chairman asked if the Lieutenant would be able to make himself available for discussions with the Committee. Chief Terenzio responded that he could make the Lieutenant available for any future discussions the Committee has. Chairman Epstein suggested to the Committee that they review the information they have received, and postpone any action to be taken until next week. He suggested the Committee meet again next Thursday after they have had a chance to read through the material and prepare any questions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to table this item until next Thursday, June 13, 2019, at the next Special Personnel Committee meeting.

- B. Discussion and Possible Decision on Water Division Restructuring. The Executive Director distributed copies of a document entitled, Water Division Staffing Plan 2019. It listed the recommendations of the Executive Director for the Water Division. Mr. Neto stated that the document mainly involved salary. He noted that he has had a discussion with the Chairman of the Water Operations Committee, Commissioner Rukowicz. All items included in the document were discussed with Commissioner Rukowicz. Commissioner Rukowicz was present at this meeting and was asked if he had any comments. Commissioner Rukowicz noted that two or three weeks ago he met with the Executive Director to discuss the Water Division staffing since Mr. Jarzavek had retired. Mr. Palmieri's salary without overtime was \$75,608. His new title will be Water Operations Manager. He would be taking a cut in pay to take over as Water Operations Manager because it is a salaried position. They discussed the new structure, and tried to come up with a plan that was fair to everyone including Mr. Palmieri. His new role will have a salary of \$92,000. Also discussed was a full-time Water Division Maintainer at \$20.38 per hour. They also discussed a replacement for the Foreman position. Eric Roberts was discussed to be trained to be Foreman. Mr. Roberts has been taking over some of Mr. Palmieri's duties as Foreman. It was agreed to give him a step increase to compensate him for the extra duties he has taken on. His salary is approximately \$43,000 and will be increased to approximately \$46,000. Mr. Palmieri will be working with Mr. Roberts to train him. It is hoped that by the end of the year things will work out in terms of training for Mr. Roberts to become Foreman and for Mr. Palmieri managing his new role as Water Operations Manager. Mr. Neto explained that since Mr. Jarzavek left the responsibility of day-to-day operations and management of the operation has become Mr. Palmieri's responsibility. He has been identified as a Foreman up to this point. He is a hard-working individual and has been filling Mr. Jarzavek's role for many months. If Mr. Palmieri's upgrade is approved, it will show that all his hard work has been recognized. The Division is down a full time employee with the retirement of Mr. Jarzavek. Some of those resources will be used to facilitate some of the workload by bringing in an extra set of hands. The water staff is a small group, but they are continuously busy. The District wants to nurture that because we do have some great staff. The District is not asking for a promotion for Mr. Roberts right now. He needs to be trained and groomed. He does have the skill set and he has taken on a lot more responsibility that Joe has given him. Mr. Palmieri will continue to train him, and the District needs to recognize that. That is why that salary increase was proposed. They also noted that a part-time Administrative Assistant is needed as support staff to schedule work that needs to be done out in the field for the water staff. The other component is that the Water Division has lost ground over the last few years with water collections. They are anticipating that the person hired will work closely with Jane and be able to work with the water collections process. Mr. Neto added that all the positions discussed are budget neutral. They repurposed Mr. Jarzavek's salary to be fair and recognize the deficits that existed. Mr. Palmieri added that regarding Mr. Roberts, he still needs to get his Distribution System license and Treatment Plant license. A progressive plan is in place.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to move forward with the Water Division Staffing Plan for 2019 as presented which includes a title change and salary increase for Mr. Palmieri, a step

increase for Eric Roberts, approval for a part-time Administrative Assistant for 20 hours a week in the Water Division and approval for a full-time Water Division Maintainer. Mr. Palmieri's and Mr. Roberts' increases will be effective next pay period per Mr. Neto.

- C. Discussion and Possible Action on Non-CBA Employee Raises, FY 2019/2020. The Executive Director explained that the new fiscal year will begin in about 3 weeks. It is up to the Personnel Committee whether the non-CBA employees should receive a raise this year. Typically the District, with Personnel Committee approval, has granted a cost of living increase to non-CBA employees at the beginning of each fiscal year. This year the District has identified a 2% raise across the board for all employees. There has been consideration for that in the 2019/2020 budget. There is some latitude with the opportunity to go slightly higher than 2%. Mr. Neto added that in terms of insurance premiums, the goal is for all employees to have the same rates. That means that non-CBA employees have increases in their rates to match the rates of the CBA employees. Mr. Neto noted that if the Committee decides not to grant the raises, they need to consider that the CBA employees will also be paying for an increase in their insurance premiums. Mr. Neto's opinion is that the non-CBA employees deserve a raise. A minimum of 2% to offset their insurance rate increase. There was a discussion regarding how much of an impact the insurance increase will be depending on a person's annual salary. President Brow asked if the budget can afford 2.5%, and the answer is yes. The reason it can is because there are a couple of items on the benefit side that will be delayed in payment. The rates will affect 8 – 10 employees. There was discussion regarding how to make all employees "whole" with the insurance rate adjustment vs. cost of living increase. Mr. Lonergan added that this percentage is a cost of living adjustment, and is what employees should have to survive. On top of that they are also going to be paying an increased insurance cost. If the Committee is looking to offset the insurance increase, they should be looking at a 4% raise. A 2% increase is an average cost of living increase to survive based on national standards. Mr. Neto was asked if the budget can absorb a 3% increase. Mr. Neto did not want to give any definite answers until he has done a cost analysis. Also there some unknowns in the budget such as the new staffing model. Mr. Neto thought he would be able to answer more questions and give better answers next week once he has had a chance to analyze data.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to table this item until the Special Personnel Committee meeting next week.

- D. Discussion and Possible Action MOU's with the AFSCME Local 1303-474 Union Regarding Part-Time Availability and Quality Assurance Program. Chairman Epstein stated that effective last week, he became a member of AFSCME with his regular full-time employer so he had to reclude himself from any further union discussions under this item. He asked President Brow to take off the meeting at this point. There were two MOU's distributed for review. Mr. Lonergan reported that they were prepared by him and the Union, and presented by Mr. Lonergan.

The first MOU had to do with the fact that part-time dispatchers do not have a minimum requirement for them to keep their part-time status. The MOU says that within a one month period all part-time employees will be required to submit at least 32 hours of availability. This provides a standard for part-time employees that are not meeting the needs of management. This provides more flexibility for coverage for the team. The Committee was given a few moments to read and review the document.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to accept the MOU for minimum requirements for hours for part-time Dispatchers.

The second MOU had to do with the Supervisor or Manager of the Communication Center can only serve in the capacity of a dispatcher during an emergency situation. For the upstaffing model for the EFD proposal moving forward the union has been receptive to the fact that the Dispatch Supervisor is a qualified dispatcher. In times of higher call volume, Mr. Lonergan should be able to do the function of a dispatcher. The union says it should only be in times of emergency situations. However, "emergency situations" has not been defined. Also the proposal submitted a year ago regarding EMD/EFD Quality Assurance. An MOU was put in place at the time to address that. But now with the new staffing model, that MOU is almost void because the upstaffing deals with the hours. The Committee was given a few moments to read and review the document.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to accept the MOU giving the Dispatch Supervisor the ability to act in the capacity of a dispatcher during an emergency situation.

- E. Discussion and Possible Decision on the Recommendations from the Communication Center Supervisor for Hiring Two Part-Time Dispatchers. Mr. Lonergan distributed a document with his recommendations for the top three candidates that were interviewed for a part-time Dispatcher position. He explained that Dispatcher Ingervertson resigned from his part-time Dispatcher position a couple of months ago, and with the approval of the Executive Director, the part-time position was posted. During the time of the interview process, another part-time Dispatcher resigned his position. Rather than going through the interview process again since they were already in the middle of the process of hiring, Mr. Lonergan interviewed five people from a pool of 12 to 15 people. After the position was posted internally and the resumes on file, it is his recommendation to replace the two part-time positions with candidate one and two. At the same time it would be advantageous to in the event that either of the two candidates don't work out or there is an additional opening in the next 6 months, that candidate 3 be preapproved based on the conditions. They are not asking for three positions, but just saves time if something should happen with the two candidates. Mr. Lonergan has already informed the third candidate of the circumstances and that he will be on the waiting list.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to proceed with the plan as presented by Mr. Lonergan.

- F. Discussion and Possible Action on 2018/2019 Stipends. Mr. Neto explained that there are things changing July 1. The stipends are recognized in the fiscal year and paid out in December for the old model. The rules of engagement for the last fiscal year, if members of the Department met some criteria of response and was in good standing with the Department and receive a stipend of \$1,000 or a portion of it paid at the end of the year usually in the first or second week of December. The first question is does the committee wish to pay that out which Mr. Neto recommends they do. If they do, he recommends it be done prior to the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. It needs to be cleaned up and not carried to the next fiscal year. It also shows that the new model does not have a stipend.

A motion was made by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to pay out the stipends for 2018/2019 before the end of the current fiscal year.

- G. Discussion and Possible Action on Changing the District's HSA Bank from Avidia to Liberty Bank. The Executive Director explained the process of each employee that participates has the right or opportunity to put monies away tax free to offset medical expenses. The original local bank that the District was using sold the District to Avidia. From Day 1 there has been issues with customer service and issues with transition. He met with the Assistant Vice president of Liberty Bank with some of the office staff. Their program meets and exceeds their expectations and has no fees. Issues can be dealt with either in person at the bank, on the phone or on line. With Avidia, the process was dealing with customer service department and waiting to be contacted.

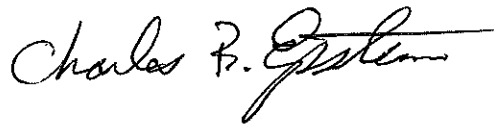
A motion was made by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved change the District's HSA accounts from Avidia to Liberty Bank.

- VI. Commissioners' Comments. The Probationary Status for Firefighter Boin was explained to President Brow since he had arrived after the item was discussed.

- VII. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.

- VIII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles R. Epstein, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
4-13-19