

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire Operations Committee

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

5:30 PM

105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Jason Hinners (Vice Chairman), Robert Donohue and Allan Spotts (arrived at 5:50 PM). Also attending were Fire Chief Michael Terenzio and Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade. Commissioner Johnathon Hamlin had an excused absence. Others attending were Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Roger Rukowicz, David Colligan and Charles Epstein. Executive Director Julius Neto, Robert McIntyre and Angel Alvarado were also in attendance.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by Vice Chairman Hinners.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2020. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes of January 21, 2020, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report. Commissioner Colligan reported there will be a meeting tomorrow night, February 19, 2020, with the Communications Subcommittee, the vendor and the Clerk of the Works. The meeting is intended to get everyone caught up to where the project should be at this point in time. The Executive Director reported that he went to Norcom with the Clerk of the Works to inspect some equipment that had come in. There were a few small items that needed to be sent back. That was done, and the new ones were received. It was related to cabinets, but nothing critical. It was just infrastructure items.

There is a meeting tomorrow night as Commissioner Colligan reported. Mr. Neto and Mr. Zito are planning a full day tomorrow visiting all the proposed voting sites. They will begin with **Holy Apostles**. Eversource will also be involved to examine the telephone polls that are being used to power up the equipment. Eversource needs to assure the District that the polls can hold up or make a decision to replace them on their dime. They will also be meeting with **Covenant Village**. There has been some activity. The engineers are providing us with drawings of each site. The engineer is a little concerned about the roof weight of Covenant Village because of the serious heavy duty HVAC equipment already there. A site survey may need to be done at Covenant Village. Cromwell may have to decide on a different way

to mount the antenna, which may be additional cost. A visual will also be done of the **Marriott**. Mr. Neto added that the District needs to figure out once the invoice is received, when the warrantee process begins. If it begins right away, the District may not want the invoice right away. The Chief knows the District is anxious to get those subscriber units in operation. It should probably be timed so that the invoices don't go over the warrantee time and be ready to put the subscriber units into operation. **Nike** is not moving fast enough. They will go to the site tomorrow to see if there is a temporary solution. Commissioner Hinners added that in the HVAC world, warrantees start on commission date, not purchase or install date. The Clerk of the Works will be vetting this for the District tomorrow.

- VI. Reports of Chief Officers. Chief Terenzio began by reporting on Ladder 3. It has another motor issue which is that it needs a new one. He has arranged for a meeting on Friday with the General Manager from Cumings, the Executive Director, himself and the District's head mechanic. The cost for this engine replacement can be anywhere from \$33,000 to \$43,000. The Chief has reached out to the Cumings corporate office to find out how to begin the complaint process if the meeting on Friday is not fruitful or to the District's satisfaction. This is the District's newest apparatus. If this piece goes under repair, the Fire Department could be without that apparatus for 5 to 15 weeks.

The Chief has been working on a couple of personnel issues involving complaints and locker room antics. The Chief is also working on a couple of grants. One is to acquire an apparatus and the other is training for the training facility. He has received quotes for the ambulance rechassis, and he plans to have those funds in the next budget cycle. The quotes were very reasonable. President Brow asked if there are other complaints or issues on that particular series of Cumings engines in the fire industry. Commissioner Colligan pointed out an article to the Chief that was published in the IAFC magazine. The article does discuss the particular series of the Cumings engines, and some of the issues that are occurring. Chief Terenzio reported that Chief Howley of South Fire District in Middletown is having an issue with a brand new one. The Glastonbury Fire Department is also having an issue with one. The Chief added that Commissioner Donohue has also been assisting the Fire Dept. with repairs.

He gave a brief summary of activities with the apparatus. Approximately 2 ½ to 3 months ago, Ladder 3 was brought in for a "check engine light." It was determined at that point that the apparatus needed a new head gasket. The top half of the motor was taken off and replaced, and the apparatus was returned to Cromwell. Chris Logan advised the Chief after that work was done that he/the crew heard an engine knock. They had not heard this prior to the apparatus going in for repair. The knock was heard after that work was done. They brought the apparatus back for repair. They took the bottom half of the motor off at a cost of \$17,000. Less than one week later the noise got worse. The apparatus was brought back to them. Cumings is now saying Ladder 3 needs a new motor. At that point there were many red flags jumping out at the Chief. A picture was taken that shows an identified missing chunk of metal. The mechanic will have documentation to present at the meeting on Friday. The head gasket work was \$9,000. Rob McIntyre reported that there were issues early on with Ladder 3. Vice Chairman Hinners confirmed that report. He also recalled there were issues with that apparatus early on. Commissioner Colligan added that he did point out the article in the IAFC magazine regarding the Cumings engine. There are Fire Departments throughout the country that is having issues with this particular engine. He also found out this is the only engine you can buy for a fire truck right now. Another type of engine cannot be used because of its Tier 4 status (emissions standards). In the past, Departments were able to spec out of Detroit, but our mechanic has stated they no longer do that anymore. Commissioner Colligan added that everyone is buying used equipment now because of that.

The Tier 4 status adds another \$7,000 to \$8,000 to the price of the motor. He added that there are only approximately 5,000 fire trucks that are sold per year.

VII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing, Hiring and Response Capability. Chief Terenzio reported that the new model continues to be effective. There seems to be an increase in calls. The personnel that were not participating that much have been stepping up a little more. The Chief is gratified to know that. The SAFER candidates have been interviewed. The scores have not been published. The results of the eligibility list have been combined with the previous eligibility list. The Chief received a quote on new gear from Quaker Safety. The average cost is approximately \$900 less per set than what has been paid. There are 3 brand new sets at West St., but the size on all 3 is medium. Representatives will be in to size up the 6 people that were also interviewed for part-time scheduled slots. Those six will put the part-time scheduled staff total at 32. That was the optimum number to be determined to keep the numbers down to where they need to be. The Chief stated it has been a constant struggle. He stated they are trying, but they need to come up with new strategies to keep the numbers down. The latest variance report has the Chief's budget for payroll over by 4%. They are also working on a couple of personnel issues. The Chief stated that regarding the 3 sets of gear that are at West St., he has reached out to a couple of organizations that take expired fire gear and redistribute them to third world countries. He has not been successful with anyone getting back to him. There are other gear in boxes located at West St. that is all expired gear. President Brow asked if the Chief had checked with HGAC. The Chief stated he had not, and it will be the next factor to check. President Brow asked the Chief if it would be possible to staff an ambulance on the weekends with volunteers only. The Chief was open to that suggestion. If people are available, he said they can flex that out, and all they would have to do is sign on to make themselves available. Assistant Chief Brade stated that they added a spot for when to work for volunteers to sign up as an extra to the six that are on duty. The Chiefs both stated that everyone should know about this, but it seems they don't because President Brow has been approached to find out about this. He suggested sending an email blast out. The Chief said they have a new email process that goes out to everyone which is why they should know. They will send it out again. President Brow reported that the drop dead hiring date is March 20 for the SAFER applicants. He would like to stagger the hire dates for administrative purposes and seniority ranking so everyone won't have the same seniority date.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved that the SAFER grant hiring process go forward and be staggered with one being hired, and a set date of 3 to 5 days to get them geared, acclimated, handbook and paperwork completed. Then bring the next one on board, etc. That will give pecking order for seniority and based off the list and the ranking.

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

IX. New Business

A. Discussion on Fire Department's Drone. Mr. Alvarado reported that the District has acquired a new resource. Commissioner Rukowicz acquired a drone as a donation from a resident to the Fire District. It is a GSI Phantom drone that can be used as a resource for the Fire Department giving a vantage point for the first responders to see a situation from a higher perspective. There are 3 types of drones that are in circulation. Hobbieist, commercial grade and COA. The drone the District has acquired is considered a hobbieist but can be used for commercial purposes. Mr. Alvarado has a hobbieist license. The

District would have to decide to do a Part 107 which would authorize a commercial license for a specific set of individuals or a COA which would cover the entire department, but the operators would have to be defined. A Part 107, COA, is a license obtained to fly anything over half a pound regulated by the FAA. A COA is the same thing with the exception of public safety, it allows the operator to override certain policies that the FAA has in place for the 107. With the 107, if there is a commercial license, every flight initiated would need to be called in. There are limitations such as being unable to fly over 2 miles, or going over a ceiling of 400 ft. The COA would allow the operator to do that with pre-licensed certifications for the Department that are tied to a specific responder that may be a pilot to that drone. The COA allows the District to get this preapproved by the FAA to fly it when needed instead of having to wait for someone to approve it. It was agreed that the COA is the best way to go for the District. The District needs to regulate a list of authorized users. Mr. Alvarado added that there are some FAA licensing schools in the area. The test can be taken at Bradley airport. It was recommended to get a COA for the District. They suggested a collective group to pass the Part 107. It concentrates on the regulations of the FAA. It also covers the legal rights of drone pilots the District might have. Mr. Neto added that there are Fire Departments within the State that are using drones effectively. He also noted that this will be managed as an apparatus, and will not be treated as a toy. Cromwell will need to research where they can operate. The District will also need to provide user training, licenses, or whatever is required. Model calibration also has to happen. There was a lengthy discussion regarding drones, their capabilities and licensing requirements. Mr. Alvarado has researched taking the exam at Brainard airport. The cost would be less than \$300 to \$600. Mr. Alvarado also got some numbers for the 107 or COA. It would be approximately \$167 per person. If someone takes the courses as well, it would average out to \$200 per person. The value of the unit is approximately \$1,200. It is advisable to have a smart device that can be accessed online.

Commissioner Colligan noted that he took the class six years ago because his previous employer used drones on job sites. He asked about GPS capabilities. Mr. Alvarado explained that the drone does have that capability. Originally drones were not equipped for that, but manufacturers were forced to have FAA regulations on all their software so it was included in the packet. Usually updates include new FAA laws that are programmed into the device. The most recent is flight suppression. The device Cromwell has is operated by batteries. Mr. Alvarado explained the design. He gives the drone a life span of 2 to 3 years from date of purchase. He added that it can fly for 27 minutes before new batteries, but with wind resistance it would be 23 to 24 minutes. A lot of the flight time is based on the design of the drone. Mr. Neto stated that we need to identify what the needs are for operation. He noted that there is a lot to learn on this matter. Whoever may be designated to operate it will need to work in conjunction with Angel. It will also be helpful to communicate with other departments that have them to determine what they have learned or some of the issues they have come across. To start the process it would cost approximately \$2,000 including the COA and setting up operators. There are also capital expenses such as batteries, a case, fly kit, docking the batteries and last minute charging. This would impact the 20/21 budget. Commissioner Spotts suggested partnering with the Town with this device. There are a lot of grey areas as it relates to public safety.

President Brow asked if the device would be serviceable after its lifespan of 2 to 3 years. Mr. Alvarado said it would be operational but also subject to any new FAA laws or regulations. President Brow asked if it could be used for dual purposes such as fire and

water under two separate licenses. Part 107 allows a person to be a “for profit” drone pilot, but the COA does not allow it. The license is specific to the unit.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to move forward with the COA licensing for the District drone and schedule a meeting between the Chief, the Executive Director and the President to make a short list of who the District is going to license and factor the cost to coincide with the next budget.

- B. Discussion of Honor Guard Conference. It was clarified that the agenda item should be “Discussion of Honor Guard Academy.” It is run once a year at the CT Fire Academy. It is usually held in May or June. President Brow attended last year as a member of the Honor Guard in the Town of East Hartford. Commissioner Brow would like to recommend sending Melissa Roming because she is in charge of the honor guard for the Fire Department/District. Through the association there is funding. If they would be sending one member to it, he would like the District to sponsor one member. The cost would be under \$500 for the entire week. The person would stay at the Academy, and meals would be provided. They learn drills, marching and proper etiquette at funerals, presenting honors and other ceremonies.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to authorize the District to send one member to be picked with input from Melissa Roming for the National Honor Guard Academy to be held at the CT Fire Academy this Spring.

- C. Discussion of FDIC Conference. This conference is the Fire Department’s Instructor Conference. President Brow noted it is more than just a conference, and it is for chief officers, Commissioners and Fire Department members. They offer a whole variety of different training opportunities. Most of the gear, equipment and apparatus manufacturers are there. Attendees are allowed to shop and examine all the products on display. He would like to request that the District send him for this year because Cromwell is looking at new apparatus, gear and tools with the addition of more staff. He respectfully requested the District pay for air fare, the conference cost, hotel and meals. He will pay for his own ground transportation. The dates for this conference are April 20 to 25. It is being held in Indianapolis, IN. It has been held there for the last 20 – 30 years. The cost of the conference is \$595 for early registration. It would be \$665 for the regular conference rate. Mr. Neto noted that \$1,500 would cover just about everything.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to send President Brow to the FDIC conference in Indianapolis and include the conference fee, airfare, hotel and meals. President Brow abstained.

- D. Discussion of PIO Conference. “PIO” has been defined as Public Information Officer. Commissioner Epstein announced that a class is coming up in March and one in November taught through the Fire Academy. Commissioner Epstein would be interested in going to the November class. However, he was not familiar with the conference. The issue was raised through President Brow, but the Executive Director believed that rather than a conference, it is really a series of classes. President Brow believes that the District should be sending the Chief and the Assistant Chiefs with their new job write ups. Public information is a part of the Fire Chiefs’ job description. He also would like to see some of the Commissioners attend.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to send the three chief officers of the Fire Department to the November PIO conference and also send up to 3 Commissioners. It will probably cost \$150 per person.

- X. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Epstein noted that he was also going to ask the Commission or Committee if they would consider sending him to the Navigator conference this year. He went 2 years ago and felt he was the catalyst that allowed two dispatchers to go last year. He would like to keep updated with the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch as a resource for the Fire Department. The cost is approximately \$3,800. It was noted that the Personnel Committee just approved 4 Dispatchers to attend the conference with the cost approved up to \$6,000. The cost for early registration would be \$3,500. It is possible there could be money available if Dispatch is granted the early registration fee. President Brow suggested waiting until we find out if Dispatch is given the special rate. That will determine if any money has been freed up, then it can be revisited. Commissioner Epstein explained his credentials that would qualify him to attend the conference.

A motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to negotiate to keep the fee that was approved for the Navigator Conference, but adding Commissioner Epstein.

Chief Terenzio respectfully requested adding to his report. He stated there was a discussion about the use of Ladder 3, the hoisting. The Chief has an issue and a new Director who has directed that Ladder 3 cannot be used for hoisting of anything because it has not been supplied with a certified manufacturers addition to the lifting height. To remain in conformance and avoid any liability issues, the Chief has put out a directive that Ladder 3 cannot be used for hoisting. It can only be used to provide elevated access for firefighter retrieval. President Brow asked if the Ladder had to be recertified. The Chief had discussed this with Chris Logan and will follow up tomorrow.

Also the Chief was asked by Commissioner Hamlin at the last meeting to come up with some numbers for a lease/purchase option for a new vehicle/apparatus. Using the Houston/Galveston consortium the rough estimates were identified for a rescue pumper. There is a vehicle available now, but by the time the Fire Department is ready to act on it, it may not be available. They have vehicles such as a rescue pumper for less than \$500,000. Cromwell was also qualified to put in for a \$6,000 vehicle/apparatus which would include equipment as well. The Chief looked at finance options such as putting down \$200,000 and financing \$400,000. A five year term could be about \$87,000 a year for 5 years, at 3% or 2.99%; 7 years would be \$64,000 at 3%. They come off the line regularly from Ferrara for \$498,303 without equipment. They would allow a minimal equipment package with minor additions to the base unit. That would bring the price to around \$550,000. The Chief suggested that if the Committee wishes to go in that direction, he would recommend forming a committee and he would also recommend an RFP since this is not a true specification. The committee would put some limitations on it in terms of what Cromwell wants. The Committee would develop an equipment list of needed equipment in addition to what can still be utilized that they currently have. The Chief spoke to two manufacturers that do this. He was told that Pierce is also a part of the HGAC. He believes Cromwell can get a vehicle to meet their service needs for approximately \$550,000 to \$600,000, and have it equipped as well as going through the HGAC, and do a lease/purchase if the numbers work out. The Chief stated he wanted to give a report on this as directed after the last Committee meeting.

President Brow stated that under the By-Laws, he requested a list of who the Chief would want on the Committee because the appointments to an Apparatus Committee are made through the District Operations Committee. If the Chief can get his list of committee members on the Fire side to President Brow, he will schedule a meeting of the District Operations Committee to make committee appointments.

Commissioner Colligan added that the Fire Department is replacing two trucks (rescue/pumper) with one so they will be saving the taxpayers some money.

XI. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.

XII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by President Brow, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Hinnners, Vice-Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-6-20