

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

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

6:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse

105 Coles Road

Cromwell, CT

Also Via Conference Call

1-203-666-2275, ID 616 641 879#

The Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District held their monthly Board of Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 6:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT which was also available via conference call (Teams), to discuss and act upon Fire and Water Division business.

Per Executive Order 7B, Governor Lamont has ordered and directed that in-person open meeting requirements be suspended. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners' Meeting will be held via conference call. Members of the public may send questions or comments to meetings@cromwellfd.com on any agenda items.

Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Justin Hinnners, Roger Rukowicz, Robert McIntyre, Charles Epstein and David Colligan attended. Commissioner Terry arrived at 6:14 PM. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Acting Fire Chief Jason Brade, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Dispatch Supervisor Justin Lonergan and Firefighter Union President Brett Hallden. Commissioners Allan Spotts and Robert Donohue were absent.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 PM, by President Brow. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Brow.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Brow had an item to add to the Agenda under New Business, adding Item G. Non-Payment Request for Equipment Failure.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Executive Director noted that he did not receive any public comments to bring forth to this meeting.

Lt. Hallden, President of the Firefighters Union, commented that Acting Chief Brade gave a presentation at the Fire Operations Committee meeting which addressed the issue of having a 7th person for a 2nd ambulance. Lt. Hallden had a couple of comments on that topic. The research in determining the need for those calls was difficult to obtain. Lt. Hallden did similar research. When he ran the reports he used the NIFRS coding 311, 320, 321, 322, 341 and 554. He noted that there were still EMS calls that were coded as other 300 calls and even some that were coded as 800's and 900's. It is almost impossible the way the Department does things now to come up with a 100% accurate determination of the need. He added that the biggest thing the Board needs to be aware of is that this is not just a second ambulance, it is another set of hands. He reminded everyone that they have not had a catastrophic fire loss at all in the last year and a half. There have been fires, but the fires they have had with only 6 people, they have been fortunate enough that the ambulance has not been out. They have been fortunate to have those 6 people working on that incident right away. They were fortunate on a couple of them to have a 7th person. They were able to stop these fires in well-occupied buildings, a hotel with a wood frame, industrial buildings, condominiums and single family homes. The position is much more than covering that second ambulance call. Considering the billable balance vs. the revenue taken in, it is much more than that. It is the safety of the employees and the safety of the taxpayers by having that extra set of hands. It is a property and life safety issue. He knows the Board has a responsibility to the taxpayers, but they also have the same responsibility to those same taxpayers to perform the service that the firefighters are there to do. It is what we need to do, we just have to figure out how to do it.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MARCH 16, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes of March 16, 2021, as submitted.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

Commissioner Epstein had two communications to report. The first was a thank you note from Mrs. Pat Scully thanking the Board for their donation to the Vista Program in the memory of Kent Scully.

The second communication was a special thank you card and donation from Mrs. Alice Kelly who was always very appreciative and supportive of the Fire and EMS Services for the assistance they always gave her son Jim.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. He asked if there were any questions. No one had any questions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's Report for March as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio had no additional comments other than noting he has been concentrating on next fiscal year's budget. Commissioner Epstein asked what the percentage is for the average collection rate vs. the billing rate. He was not looking for an exact figure, but approximate. Mr. Alibrio noted that there is a page with the EMS billing facts on it. The President noted that the information was on page 10. 50% of what the District bills is immediately written off as not allowable for Medicare/Medicaid. That was really the only information Mike had on this. It was noted that of the 50%, the District is not necessarily collecting all of that.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for March as submitted.

- C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Chief added that the Fit Test is back on line. Testing is ongoing. The Department received its ISO report. They will remain as a Class III department. However, Cromwell is disputing some of the results. They are waiting for the ISO to get back to them. They received 10 applications for part-time scheduled positions. They interviewed 5, and hired 4. The hiring is not keeping up with the rate of people leaving to other jobs. They will be reposting for part-time firefighter positions. The Fire Department had a voluntary OSHA compliance consultation. OSHA found a couple of things, and the Department was asked to take care of them. They are working with the Executive Director modifying and updating some of their policies accordingly. OSHA will be coming back for a second round. The objective is to get the Fire Department into a good position with OSHA compliance. He had met with EMS and Fire Police. He plans on meeting with the fire officers in the near future. He is trying to get the volunteer and unscheduled side to get re-engaged. Harold Holmes in the FMO received a grant for \$500 for a camera for investigations in the FMO. There was a fire at 25 Pleasant St. It was successfully held at bay by the Fire Marshal until the fire staff could get there. It was a good save. It was a very old house. A public service announcement was done on the Ring Public Safety Service and Neighbors application in an effort to reach out to the community. Ambulance 4C had a very minor accident backing in at St. Francis. No major damage. Vehicle is in service.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Chief's and Fire Marshal's Report for March as submitted. Commissioner Colligan thanked Chief Brade and the FMO. They have done a lot in the last couple of months. He thanked Mr. Holmes for his work getting grants for the FMO.

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Palmieri had nothing to add to his report, but was available to answer any questions. There was a water service leak on Nooks Hill Road. They were able to stop it today, and transfer it over to the newer main on the other side. Right now they have temporary water off of a hydrant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Operations Report for March as submitted.

- E. Communication Center Report. Mr. Lonergan apologized that he did not submit his report this month because he was away on vacation. He distributed copies to everyone at this meeting. The report is pretty much the same as it has been. Nothing new was added. The radio project will be discussed under Commissioner Colligan's Communication report. Mr. Lonergan added that in the Communication Center he wanted to report that for the first time the QA program has received a 3-month status quo of Ace performance within the Communication Center. Mr. Lonergan explained it is the EMD, EFT review program. It is a pretty good accomplishment for the Communication Center staff. They have been doing fantastic with their Quality Assurance Program. Last week was Telecommunicator week. Mr. Lonergan was not around, but will be making that up this week and next week to provide some snacks and rewards to his crew.

Commissioner Epstein asked if there were any plans to become an Ace-certified center. Mr. Lonergan reported that it has been something that has always been on the table. He had a conversation today with the Quality Assurance Team Leader, Andy Cooke. They have an appetite to become an Ace center. Commissioner Hinnners asked about the enhanced camera system. Mr. Lonergan has been working over the past year with getting initial information on replacing the entire camera system within the District. The camera system now is a mismatch of different products, failing cameras or old cameras much like the radios were. Part of that project is the overall upgrade of security and safety for the Water Division, Fire Department and Communication Center. It is on hold for budgetary reasons. The Executive Director added that they challenged Mr. Lonergan to handle that very important security item encompassing the whole District. It is not within this year's budget because of budget challenges. It is going to be a requirement under Homeland Security because we are a utility. We may not have the level of security we think we have or the level of data that can be collected by these antiquated systems. It has been a band aid approach, and we will in turn need to do the research. That is where Justin is at with this project along with Mr. Alvarado, the Executive Director and others. This will be coming before the Board soon there is no grey area when it comes to a security system. Whenever the staff needs to retrieve data, it takes hours of review. And cameras have not been working. Lots of work needs to be done on the security system. Mr. Neto commented about the remarks Mr. Lonergan made about his staff regarding Quality Assurance. The achievements they are making in this area are very impressive. It is very effective in getting the data to the first responders. The responders have a better outcome because they are armed with good solid information. That whole team needs to be recognized and congratulated.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Communication Center Report as presented.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations. There was no meeting.
- B. Executive. Meetings were held on April 16, 2021, and April 19, 2021. Commissioner Rukowicz reported that last Friday, April 16, 2021, the Executive Committee had its first budget meeting. Normally meetings are not held on Fridays, but the Chairman felt it was necessary to get the budget process started. It was a 3 ½ hr. meeting. There was another meeting held yesterday, April 19, 2021. It was ten minutes short of 3 ½ hrs. For the first time, a third meeting was scheduled for next Wednesday, April 28, 2021. For the third meeting they asked Mr. Alibrio and the Executive Director to put three different scenarios of numbers together for tax increases and the Committee is also looking into bonding. He did

not have more specifics on the bonding yet. He is confident that next Wednesday they will complete the budget process. A final draft will be prepared and given to the Commissioners for review. They will then be able to set a date for a Town budget meeting. This has been a very difficult task for the Committee. They are trying to look at Fire Department and EMS needs, and how they are going to meet those needs yet be considerate of the taxpayers who have been through a lot with COVID and people being laid off. He thanked everyone for putting this budget together, specifically Jason Brade, Joe Palmieri, Justin Lonergan, their staff, the Executive Director and the District's financial people.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Committee report as presented.

- C. Fire Operations. The Fire Operations Committee had a meeting on March 16, 2021. The minutes were approved at the Fire Operations Committee meeting before this meeting. The minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chairman Colligan discussed changing the Fire Operations Committee meeting day and time from its current 3rd Tuesday of the month to the 3rd Monday of the month. The meeting time will be 5:30 PM, instead of 5:00 PM. Commissioner Colligan discussed this possible change with the Executive Director and Recording Secretary. With the current meeting schedule that is in place, having the Board of Commissioners' meeting right after the Fire Ops. Meeting, and having the Fire Ops. Meeting scheduled only one hour before the Board meeting has not been very effective in terms of conducting Fire Operations business in one hour. The Recording Secretary and Executive Director will follow up and confirm whether or not the Fire Operations meeting schedule can be changed. If so, the changes will go into effect for the month of May.

Commissioner Colligan also reported that Acting Chief Brade did an excellent job at the Fire Operations Committee meeting presenting a 7th Person Proposal. The Chief did not get to complete the presentation due to time constraints, but copies of the proposal will be distributed to all Commissioners for review. This will be discussed at the next Fire Operations Committee meeting. There is a pending issue which is that the 7th person plan which has been approved by the Board of Commissioners is due to expire this evening. This topic is on the agenda at this meeting under New Business and will be discussed during that time.

1. Communications Subcommittee. A meeting was held on April 1, 2021. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chairman Colligan reported that things are going very well with the new radio system. Things are being fine-tuned. They are waiting for the Nike site to get up and running. People will be noticing a big improvement. Mr. Lonergan has been working very hard with Norcom trying to get things addressed. Two pagers have been programmed that Commissioner Colligan is keeping with him that he is listening to 24 hrs. a day. As he is listening he leaves one radio on the fire ground frequency and one on the Command or Dispatch frequency. His pager is recording it from a different location. That way they can pinpoint if it is a voting site or wherever the problem is. This system has been working because they have identified a few little issues, and Norcom has come in to repair or make adjustments. Things are moving forward. They are looking at April 30 maybe that the flagpole may be up if the concrete is set.

Commissioner Hinners asked about the audio quality of the pagers. Voices come through but there is a change in pitch. The voices are not recognizable. Commissioner Colligan

responded that if someone were to listen to Middletown's system, it is the same as Cromwell meaning that the system is digital. Each issue that is identified is making the transmitting clearer. With analog, people got used to people's voices. With digital, the computer is making the voice. That is why people's voices sound different. Mr. Lonergan added that there are two or three different aspects to the pagers. One is the digital sound. If you have never listened to a digital system before it seems very foreign. Especially if someone is used to the conventional system. There was some packet loss within the backhaul infrastructure. He thinks that has been rectified but there are still some additional adjustments that can be made if we continue to have packet loss. Packet loss causes the voice to drop out occasionally. The pagers themselves are not as high quality as the Motorola infrastructure system. The speaker is smaller, a less quality brand, and the pager is a different manufacturer. There are audio settings that cannot be adjusted, but you can adjust on the radio. The audio consistency between a radio and a pager is going to be completely different because they are different systems. So the pagers do sound less quality than listening to an audio specific on a Motorola radio. Acting Chief Brade uses the same system at his State job and assured everyone that the voice sounds the same as it does on Cromwell's new system. It is just a different sound than what we are used to.

The Chief added that microphone placement is also a key factor. Commissioner Hinners asked about the volume when listening to Police and Fire communications. Police is much louder than Fire. Mr. Lonergan noted the reason for that is system based not user based. The Police system is tuned up to a higher level whereas Cromwell's system is tuned to the Motorola and Norcom specs. It is nothing that can be adjusted in a pager. The systems would have to be adjusted to correct this issue. It is a big deal to do the adjustments.

Commissioner Colligan reported that a drill was done last night. It was a good drill. The placement was reviewed. Commissioner Colligan was there to listen. There was a pager for each of the frequencies. When they saw someone not using the microphone correctly, they showed the correct way to use it. After corrections, the voice was very clear. Hopefully, the Nike site will be up and running within the next 30 days so that it can be added to the new radio and communication system. It all depends on the testing of the concrete. The target date for the pole is a week from Friday. When it arrives it will be installed as soon as possible because there is no storage there. The generator is already up there. The Water Department has fully commissioned the pump house there. The Executive Director will be checking with the Chairwoman of the Planning & Zoning Commission for the purchase of the appropriate flag for the pole.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes and report for March as submitted with the following correction on pg. 7 of the Communications Subcommittee meeting minutes of April 1: the last paragraph, second to the last sentence should remove the word "centrifugally" and add "intrinsically."

- D. Pension. A meeting was held on March 17, 2021. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chairman Colligan reported that the Committee had a meeting with the financial people involved with the pension fund. They will be getting back to the District with more information that was requested by the Committee. The Executive Director confirmed that the Committee had requested additional information. Another meeting will be scheduled when the financial staff

has complied with the requests by the Committee. When the next meeting is scheduled, the whole Board of Commissioners will be invited to attend so that all Board members can better understand the pension options.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Pension Committee meeting minutes of March 17, 2021, as submitted.

- E. Personnel. The regular Personnel Committee meeting scheduled for April 13, 2021, had been canceled. President Brow gave an update on some other Personnel issues. They are still in the interview process of the Fire Chief position's second round of interviews. They are being held on Monday by the Personnel Committee. The questions that were submitted are being put onto a scoring sheet similar to the one used by the subject matter experts. Once that is done, it will be distributed to the Personnel Committee members. They will have them for the day of the interviews. Resume packs will also go out this week. The President had an opportunity to review the two resumes of the two individuals that are being recommended to the Committee. The questions will be sent out the Friday before the interviews, holding in line what was done with the subject-matter experts so they will have continuity of security with the questions just in case. The Executive Director invited all the Commissioners through Teams to listen to the interviews if they wish even though they are not on the Personnel Committee. They will not be allowed to participate in the interviews, but will be allowed to listen. He suggested that if the Commissioners are listening in, they should remember to mute themselves in case they are moving around or the phone rings. With the President's permission, the Executive Director will send resumes to all Commissioners including Personnel so when they are listening to the Personnel process, they will have some idea as to the person's qualifications. Ultimately all the Commissioners will have to vote on a recommendation from the Personnel Committee. President Brow also noted that the Personnel Chairwoman and the President have been in discussions with the Executive Director regarding the negotiations for the part-time firefighter union members. Chairwoman Terry is fine with any day during the week to meet. The Executive Director will coordinate some meeting dates with the Chairwoman of Personnel, the President of the Board and the District's attorney who will also need to be involved in negotiations. The Executive Director will come up with at least 4 dates and then forward them to President Brow.
- F. Water Operations. There was no meeting. The next quarterly meeting is May 11, 2021.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. The Executive Director did not hear from Mrs. Donohue.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
1. Public Safety Tower Committee. The Executive Director reported that they are waiting for AT&T to make a decision regarding spending \$120,000 to reinforce the Tower. The District is asking AT&T to foot the whole bill because we started with 3 vendors with each one making a \$40,000 investment. The other two vendors were not interested.

AT&T is the only vendor remaining with an interest in the Tower. They claim that the \$120,000 is more than they originally thought. Since a week and one-half ago, T-Mobile is now expressing interest. The Executive Director understood that AT&T is willing to put up the whole \$120,000 as long as they own the additional capacity. The District would never give away all the capacity, it would be half the capacity. They are looking to gain roughly 18% or 19% additional capacity with this reinforcement. It would have been divided 3 ways at 6% each. That would be 6% for the District, 6% for AT&T and 6% for T-Mobile. If they own the \$120,000, they will own 12%. The District would then need to get their attorney involved. That would be another discussion where AT&T foots the bill, 6 months later T-Mobile wants to get involved, they in turn would have to provide some monies. They would be working with the District and not any of the other vendors for space. They do not want vendors to trade the District's capacity. They are hoping to schedule a meeting with AT&T in the very near future.

2. Health & Safety/Building Committee. A meeting was scheduled for April 8, 2021, and that meeting was cancelled. It was rescheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2021. There have been additional Committee members added to that Committee to include the Health & Safety Advisor and representation from the Firefighters' Union as well as the Dispatchers' Union. The objective is to re-energize that group.
3. Bylaws Committee. The President reported that the Bylaws have been completed and were voted into existence. They are now online and in full authority. The District Operations Committee will be scheduling a meeting to officially disband the Bylaws Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Colligan wanted to make it known that the new Fire Marshal, Ray Saracco, Acting Chief Brade and Harold Holmes have done an outstanding job bringing the FMO up to speed to the point that they have obtained some grants. They have established a link on line with the Town to keep residents updated. He thanked Acting Chief Brade for all the information he has been providing to the Board and the District to update everyone of Department and Fire Marshal activities. Chief Brade added that the new Fire Marshal has brought some new innovation and ideas with him. They have been working together to try to move the office forward in a positive direction. Mr. Holmes has been instrumental in that as well. Through his own fruition he put in for a small grant which was awarded and used to purchase a camera for the FMO for their operations. He also started a project on his own which analyzed all the Town statistics and data and hazard locations which was a whole community risk assessment. That link was already mailed out to the Commissioners. If you click on it, you can see the demographics and statistics and statistical information about the Town. From a Chief's standpoint it will give them ideas as to target areas and areas where they can change their services and improve their response to make their mission more effective. Everyone is working well together and the Chief stated it is nice to see everyone working together to make a better department.

Commissioner Terry apologized for being late. She thanked the Fire Department and Water Division for all the work they do to support the community. She asked if there was going to be a Memorial Day Parade this year. The Executive Director noted that the Town will have some type of Memorial Day activity. It is important that the youth in this Town be able to see the Fire Department members. The Fire Department needs to have a

presence in the community. The Acting Chief added that if the Town has some type of Memorial Day Parade, the Fire Department would want to be a part of that. They want to show their faces in the community. They have been behind the curtain of COVID for quite a while now. She asked the Chief to reach out to Rodney Bitgood who is also involved in doing something with the Children's Coalition. President Brow will be doing the reaching out to Mr. Bitgood. Commissioner Hinnens will be the liaison between Mr. Bitgood and the Children's Coalition.

Commissioner Epstein thanked the Commission for sending him to the PIO class he attended 2 weeks ago. It was a great eye opening experience. He hopes to be able to give back. The President discussed the possibility of running PIO classes here in conjunction with the Fire Academy along with Officer II and Officer III classes.

President Brow stated that some of things going on in this country right now are horrible. Law Enforcement continues to be under attack. Some of it is deserved and some of it is not. There are 100 firefighters that die every year. He has not seen anything acknowledging the sacrifices of firefighters including one that was classified as a line of duty death. We have nothing, but we are continuing to fly Blue Line flags on our poles. He thinks it is time, especially under today's social climate that the District put up something for fallen firefighters such as a thin red line flag. He thinks we should fly those at all of our stations. He does not see anything for the 100+ that are killed every year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to supply three thin red-lined flags. It was suggested to get a couple of extra ones based on wear and tear. Commissioner Colligan changed his motion to five thin red-lined flags, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved for President Brow to purchase five thin red-lined flags for the Cromwell Fire District fire stations with two for reserve.

Commissioner Terry asked that we publish something in the Cromwell Chronicle about our decision to fly the red-lined flags and why we are doing it. The Executive Director suggested waiting until the flags are purchased and when the District decides to raise the first one, we have pictures taken and we invite Jeff Mil from the Middletown Press and Mark from the Cromwell Chronicle. If they do not respond, the District will take the opportunity to submit something for publishing. They discussed investing in reflagging everything. There has been some wear and tear and theft on some of the flags. The President did not think this action needed to be in the form of a motion. It would seem that the purchase would fall under daily operating expenses. There is also a flag disposal box at Town Hall for used flags.

- B. Budgetary Adjustments – Water Enterprise Fund, General Fund and Equipment Reserve Fund. Three resolutions were presented for budgetary adjustments. The first was an adjustment to the Water Enterprise fund. President Brow read the first resolution. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to re-allocate available funds to cover the purchase of electric heaters & outdoor lights for Wells 2 & 3 transferring \$4,000 from Transmission & Distribution-Outside Services (05904-5319) to Power and Pumping – Maintenance of Structures & Improvements (05902-5434).

The Recording Secretary pointed out an error in the language of the resolution. The original language noted BlumShaprio as the vendor providing the financial information. However, the correct vendor should be noted as CLA who is the new financial management company that employs Mike Alibrio.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to amend the motion so that the amended resolution reads CLA and not BlumShapiro. An amended resolution will be prepared in the District office for the president to sign tomorrow.

The Executive Director read the second resolution. The second resolution was a budgetary adjustment to the General Fund. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to re-allocate funds for payments to vendor used during FMO staffing shortage transferring \$6,000 from Fire Marshal – Payroll (01121-5105) to Fire Marshal Operating Expenses (01121-5805).

The Executive Director read the third resolution. There was a correction to the language that the funds were from the General fund, not the water enterprise fund. A correction will be made. It should be from the General fund to the Equipment Reserve fund. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved with the amended language to re-allocate available funds to cover the purchase of Turnout Gear transferring \$1,535 from General Fund-EMS/Fire Operations-Non-Capital Equipment (01116-5680) to Equipment Reserve Fund – Turnout Gear (31784-5740).

- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. The Executive Director had no contracts or contractors to come before this meeting.
- D. Discussion and Possible Decisions on Rental Fees for Coles Road Conference Room. The Executive Director had put a copy of a sample Conference Room rental agreement in the meeting packets for Commissioners to review and consider. He requested input from the Board. He asked if this was something the Board members have considered. The District gets lots of requests to rent the Coles Road Conference room. This would offset some of the costs associated with the use of the conference room, especially with COVID protocols which requires additional housekeeping responsibilities. This idea had been suggested by the Chief's Office. Mr. Neto was introducing this idea and asked if the Board wanted to have time to think about it. He added there have been a lot of training sessions held here by a Vermont college associated with OSHA. Commissioner Epstein also used the conference room and gave a \$250 donation for the use of the room. He had a 2 day session held here. Commissioner Hinners thought that if a member were going to be using the room or allowing someone to use the room, that member should take ownership of the rental and be responsible for the users. They should be present for the event in case there are issues. The President thinks it is a good idea and went around the room to get input from the rest of the group. Commissioner Rukowicz is in favor of it and thinks the rate is reasonable at \$25 and \$250. This has been discussed for several years. Commissioner Epstein would like to consider not charging non-profits, but charging for-profits. It was suggested to charge the member rate of \$25 to cover the added cost of additional disinfecting as a COVID protocol.

Commissioner McIntyre was in favor of it as long as there are similar rules like the ones in place at the burn building. This is to make sure the District's liability is not increased. The President thought they should be able to come up with a draft of rules with input from the Executive Director and the Board. They could consult with their attorney as well. Mr. Neto pointed out that there will be a legal component on page 2 because responsibility, liability and insurance will be on the renter, not the District. The applicant will also be vetted through Lisa and the Chief's office. The Acting Chief suggested that there be guidelines for his office to follow on who will be able to use the room and to also give them some latitude with its use. Also there may be some past practices that the District would need to grandfather into this agreement.

Commissioner Terry agreed that the District needs to be careful about the liability. Once we accept money, we need to know what our responsibility is, what insurance coverage will be. There will need to be an insurance rider because people from the public will be using the room. We will need to know who will pay for the rider. There are a lot of little things to consider.

Commissioner Colligan noted that the volunteer association is probably going to be moving forward. Because of COVID they have not. Melissa Roming has been trying to contact people, and they were told they could have Coles Road to have their meetings and their dinner meetings. They will be doing activities representing the Fire Department. He wants to make sure they do not have to be charged for every time they want to use the room. He thinks that fire training should not be charged for this room either. The President noted that Cromwell hosts seats for those types of events.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to table this issue until next month.

The Chief brought up a request he received from Mr. Sokolowski to use Court St. bay for a car wash for the high school lacrosse team. He knows the facilities have not been used due to COVID restrictions. The Chief did not know what the policy currently is for these types of requests. The request was to have the car wash scheduled within the next couple of weeks. The Executive Director stated that the Executive Order from the Governor for opening up the State is not going to be coming until the 19th. If this event is prior to the 19th it would be tough to make a decision going against the Governor's protocols. Commissioner Colligan felt that a car wash at Court St. would disrupt fire operations. That is the central location of fire operations. A car wash at Coles Road would not be interfering with any other operations. If the Coles Road firehouse was used, they would only be able to wash cars outside. Using the bays would be expensive because of the recycling of the water that collects in the drains in the bays. There would also be issues with water drainage with car wash soap in it. It is not known if that is safe either. Chief Brade will be advising Mr. Sokolowski that it would not be feasible for the Lacrosse team to have a car wash at Court St.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to table this item until more information is received to make a decision.

- E. Update on 2021/2022 Budget As Well As Establishing Date for Full Board Discussion.
Commissioner Rukowicz had reported on the Executive Committee's budget meetings

earlier in the meeting. He asked the Executive Director when the budget would be able to be presented to the Board. The Executive Committee is having a third meeting next week. The budget should be available to the other Commissioners the week after that meeting. After the Commissioners' review and accept it, it will be presented to the Town for a vote.

The Governor did not extend the authority for this coming budget season to allow this body like they did last time to forego the Town Meeting to accept the budget. After the Board approves it, there needs to be a process created on how the District is going to advertise and whatever the process is to have a Town Meeting. There will be a presentation of the budget at that time, and the Town residents and tax payers can vote yes or no on it. If it is no, then the budget numbers have to be re-evaluated and another Town Meeting scheduled. The President added that if the Executive Committee comes to a decision next week at their meeting, a Special Board of Commissioners meeting can be scheduled the following week for approval by the Board.

- F. Approval of Coverage for Second Ambulance for Remainder of FY 2020/2021. The President thanked the Chief for the presentation he gave at the Fire Operations Committee meeting and for the hard copy of the presentation that all Commissioners will be receiving. There is still some information that the Board would like in terms of numbers and impact on the budget, and where things are going to go. He respectfully requested a motion to continue the 7th person coverage as is through the May Board of Commissioners' meeting. The Commissioners will have that information they requested at the May meeting to either continue the plan to the end of the fiscal year or not continue the plan because they cannot afford it. This will give the Commissioners time to get all the information needed to make an informed decision.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to continue the seventh person until the May Board of Commissioners' meeting. The Executive Director asked for clarity of what information is needed for the Commissioners to make their decision. The Executive Director, Fire Chief and Accountant were interested in getting the exact data they are looking for. Some issues mentioned were the potential revenue numbers that the Chief had, and a request for billable dollars or percentages. The President wanted to know if we have money somewhere to support this for the rest of the fiscal year, and do we have it in the next budget to support it. Mr. Neto responded that the District does not have any funds for the rest of the year to support this. They will be operating in a deficit like they have been for the last few weeks. In working with the Executive Committee, the Executive Director did identify 12 hrs./day, 5 days a week as a reasonable plan expenditure and it was included in the budget. It was a discussion point. In the preliminary phase I discussions of the budget there is money for that plan for next year. Commissioner Epstein asked if the Chief had put in for a rate increase for EMS rates with the State. The Chief responded that in his packet from the presentation, that information is included as an allowable billing rate which is the current rate. Commissioner Hinnars complimented Chief Brade on the thoroughness of his report. He felt it was very well put together.

- G. Non-payment Request for Equipment Failure. The Chief's Office received a request from a town resident. The request was dated Jan. 6, 2021. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The letter was from the wife of a possible stroke victim. They had called for an ambulance, and the stretcher would not come off the ambulance at the time. The patient had to climb into the ambulance from the side of

the ambulance. It also took a half hour at the hospital to get him out of the ambulance. The stretcher was still not operating. She does not feel she should have to pay the ambulance bill. Her brother is a member of the Fire Police and witnessed the incident. The Chief looked into the situation, and did research into the run report. The EMT's assigned to the incident did document an issue with the stretcher. The stretcher would not release even with the manual release. They assisted the patient into the ambulance. When they got to the hospital one of the technicians got a hospital bed and brought it out to the ambulance. They assisted the individual onto the stretcher and then wheeled them into the hospital. It was a malfunctioning of equipment on the apparatus. The bill was \$781 plus an additional \$19 per mile which was a total of \$914. Insurance did make some payments with a total remaining due of \$341.43. The Chief reached out to the family and found out that the individual is out of work.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to waive the balance of \$341.43 for this ambulance call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no business for an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 PM.

ATTEST:

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
5-13-21

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

DRAFT