

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

6:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse

105 Coles Road

Cromwell, CT

The Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District held their monthly Board of Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, at 6:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and act upon Fire and Water Division business.

Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Charles Epstein, David Colligan, Allan Spotts, Robert Donohue and Robert McIntyre attended. Commissioners Mertie Terry, Roger Rukowicz and Jason Hinnars were absent. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Communications Manager Justin Lonergan, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri and Michael Alibrio was dialed in.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM, by President Brow. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Brow.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of May 18, 2021, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MAY 5, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of May 5, 2021, as submitted. This item had been tabled last month.

APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET/TOWN MEETING MINUTES OF
MAY 24, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Annual Budget/Town Meeting minutes of May 24, 2021, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MAY 24, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of May 24, 2021, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MAY 26, 2021

The minutes for this meeting were not available. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to table the minutes from the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting of May 26, 2021.

APPROVAL OF THE SECOND ANNUAL BUDGET/TOWN MEETING MINUTES OF
JUNE 7, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Second Annual Budget/Town Meeting minutes of June 7, 2021, as submitted.

APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
JUNE 9, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and approved 5 to 0 to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of June 9, 2021, as submitted. Commissioner Spotts abstained.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or appeals to report.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for May had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Neto offered to take any questions. He discussed a couple of highlights.

- The CHRO complaint hearing was scheduled for last week. They have been getting ready for the last 4 weeks. It is still going to be held, but there was a conflict of interest with the investigators so it was rescheduled for July. If they give the District more time to prepare, there will be more pressure on the District to attend with witnesses. That is ongoing.
- He added they are in the final stages of the Communication Project. The Nike site has had as much movement as possible. The developer needs to put the last support sleeve of concrete in it which will allow the District to put the flagpole up. The crews are working with many deadlines.
- Commissioner Donohue had a question from the report regarding evaluating new bond council for future borrowing needs. Mr. Neto explained that as part of his follow up with the Executive Committee, he is looking into bonding options as the Executive Committee has decided along with the approval by the Board, to move some serious funding for expensive projects out of the budget for possible borrowing or bonding. He is looking at timelines and costs to bond for large cost budget items. Those items include apparatus, rechases the ambulance or buy new, Assistant Chief's vehicle or Chief's new vehicle and Water Department vehicle. He plans on having this for discussion next month. The Executive Director would like to know what the Board's plans are, and what their intentions are going forward for bonding or borrowing.
- Commissioner Epstein asked about the swearing in of the new Fire Chief and new Fire Marshal. Mr. Neto stated that there are plans to have this done in the very near future. There was some discussion about scheduling a date in July. There was a tentative date of July 17, but the Executive Director wanted to discuss it with the Board first. There were eight other firefighters that have not been sworn in when they were hired. Chief Balletto noted that there is a back order on the Class A uniforms. They were trying to wait to have the ceremony until the uniforms arrived. Mr. Neto is thinking of asking Town Hall if they can use the gymnasium for the ceremony because there are possibly ten individuals being sworn in. If the ceremony takes place in July, it will be very hot, and there will be many family and friends that will be invited. He does not think the Coles Road station will accommodate all the family and friends that may attend. Mr. Neto would also like to have a press release issued.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner McIntyre and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Directors Report for May as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for May had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Executive Director noted that there is lots of red ink on the budget pages. He discussed projecting out the amount being spent for the last month of the fiscal year. In totaling everything they should be under budget at year end. Some line items are going to be extremely over budget, especially in payroll, but if everything is added and subtracted, they should be under budget. The Executive Director considered this a minor miracle because this year had things to deal with such as COVID, staffing challenges, deferring purchases and engaging services, and professional fees. They will be dealing with the transfers later.

Mr. Alibrio did not have anything to add to the report other than he noted they are running a little behind on tax collection. He thought that was to be expected, and did not think it was anything to worry about. He thinks it is still due to the tax deferment programs that were in place over the last year. President Brow asked if there was anything new to report on researching new companies for EMS billing. Mr. Neto stated that information will be

forthcoming in another report. Commissioner Epstein asked about PPE money being available to the District. He knew that in the past it was learned the District would not be receiving any of that money. Commissioner Epstein did not know if that had changed. Mr. Neto stated that they are currently in discussions about that. He added that the District did receive \$13,000 at the beginning of the pandemic to cover expenses for transporting patients during COVID. Those funds did not get identified and were put into the General Fund. There was a conference call with the Regional FEMA Director from Maine. They were going to identify to her where they think the \$13,000 was used. FEMA is narrowing the scope of their requests now. Anything done on a normal basis such as responding, staffing and overtime is not negotiable. The America Recovery Act has specific dollars that are identified for water infrastructure, sewer infrastructure and internet upgrades. The Town is still looking for a definition. They have already spoken to the Water Operations manager who has identified a partnering of Town and District services in the West St. Heights/Shelly St./West Street Terrace area. There are old water mains there, and that whole area will need new sewers. That will be the perfect opportunity while they are digging the sewers to lay the pipe from the cash from the American Recovery Act. That could use \$300,000 to \$400,000. He has discussed this already with the Town Manager. Commissioner Donohue asked about the transfer of funds for gear. There was a discussion regarding transfer of gear, and there is a budgetary adjustment to be voted on later in the meeting on this issue. Chief Balletto explained his 10 year plan for gear for the career staff and the part-time staff. The closest expiration date for gear is 2013. He has started to gradually transition gear.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for May as presented.

- C. Fire Chief's Report. The Chief's Report for May had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Chief Balletto had submitted his report. He was willing to answer any questions. He added that the report has not changed since it was initially submitted.

Assistant Fire Chief (Deputy Fire Marshal) Brade thanked the Commission for giving him the opportunity to serve the Fire Department as Chief for the last 7 months. It was an honor and a learning experience. He looks forward to serving under the new Chief and assisting him with his goals for the Fire Department. The President spoke for the entire Board expressing their gratitude to Assistant Chief Brade for his dedicated service.

Commissioner Colligan asked if there were any issues to come before the Board from the Fire Marshal's Report. Chief Balletto reported that Fire Marshal Saracco will be attending the Fire Operations Committee meeting tomorrow evening and will address any questions or concerns that may come up. Assistant Chief Brade added that they have been working with the Marshal's office in preparation for the Travelers' Tournament. It will be much different than the previous years, and will be operating with a reduced capacity of spectators.

The Executive Director spoke briefly about the Red Lion. He reported that it has been broken into recently and seriously vandalized. It is a growing concern every day that there is no solution to turn it over to be sold. It is a hazard to first responders and the public. He received an email today that they will be installing a gate for the entrance so that cars will not have access to that lot. There have been people in there for a while stealing and taking pipes out of there. It is an environment that is not safe. The Fire Marshal's Office is making this a priority to address. The environment is getting worse as the days go by. There is no fire protection at all there. There is no fire alarm or sprinkler system. The CAD system has been

updated to reflect the issues going on in that building and area. The Fire Marshal has been working to get the sprinkler system back on line. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Red Lion and its issues. Commissioner Donohue explained the Planning and Zoning perspective on the property. There are two mortgages on the property. One is for the land, and the other is for the building.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Department Chief's Report for May as presented.

D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for May had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Palmieri did not have anything to add to his report that was submitted.

- He mentioned that he would like to start advertising for the Maintainer III position next week. They had been holding off on recruiting for the position because of COVID. He wanted to advertise through the American Waterworks Assoc. It will go out to everybody in the Water field that is a member of the American Water Works Association.
- He also mentioned that his lien and collections program is working wonderfully. They have been receiving a lot of payments on delinquent bills that they have liened. Those customers have received two letters advising them that a lien may be placed on their property for non-payment of their water bills. People have been responding to that as well as the shut off notices. Mr. Palmieri reported that they have not had to shut anyone off. Donna Boccuzzi has been doing a great job organizing the program. They have been collecting a lot of money.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to allow the Water Operations Manager to advertise for the Maintainer III position, and it will be moved to the Personnel Committee.

E. Communication Center Report. The Communication Center Report for May had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Lonergan added that there are a couple of things that had been completed but will probably get reopened for the benefit of the new Chief.

- They are reviewing everything they do step by step as quickly as possible. There is a lot to go through such as policies and procedures, call back procedures.
- At the same time they are working with the radio system and console programming for the portables coming this fall.
- They are also working on MOU's with Mutual Aid jurisdictions.
- Two new things going on right now are the ProQA system which got upgraded. With the upgrade they introduced a lot of new suffixes and subtype call back. He has to go into the CAD system and cross reference those so that everything talks interchangeably. EFD has approximately 4,000 lines of code, and EMD has about 5,000 lines of code. He has to go over everything line by line so that everything matches up. It is a long process.
- There are some rewrites to the SOP's and changing some Task Force Assignments. He has to retrain the Dispatchers during the next few weeks on all the changes that will be happening in July.

Commissioner Colligan asked about Berlin going digital. Mr. Lonergan reported that Berlin is in the process of going to a P-25 VH system like Cromwell. Their radio frequencies are already in Cromwell's radios for that switchover.

Commissioner Colligan asked Mr. Lonergan about the MOU's for mutual aid. Mr. Lonergan reported that there has been some pushback from one town to the north of Cromwell. He has worked on MOU's from Meriden and Durham. He is waiting on Middlefield, Haddam and Killingworth. They were told to hold off on the City of Hartford because they may be going to the State system. They already had Berlin. Glastonbury is on Mr. Lonergan's list, but he has only been working on a couple of MOU's at a time. He is working on towns within a 10 mile radius.

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

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations Committee. There has been no meeting, but possibly scheduling one for this Thursday. If not, one will be scheduled next week.
- B. Executive Committee. Meetings were held on April 19, 2021 and April 28, 2021. Neither set of minutes were available for this meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to table the Executive Committee meeting minutes for April 19, 2021 and April 28, 2021.

- C. Fire Operations Committee. A meeting was held on May 17, 2021. The signed minutes had been distributed to the Board members at this meeting. Commissioner Colligan stated that the Executive Director has already reported on the Nike site. There was an incident up there where some air conditioners were unplugged. The Water Department crew that was there noticed the alarm going off. The temperature got up to 114 degrees in the unit. Acting Chief Brade went out there and checked all the other units. Now there is a protocol in place until the alarm system is up and running. They cannot hook up the alarm system or the monitoring system until the Nike site is up and running. Mr. Lonergan explained that it is a UEM (Unified Event Management) system that was purchased with the radio system. It monitors everything radio system such as network communications, cabinet open enclosures, hot and cold temperatures. It monitors pretty much everything system status wide. Because the Nike site is not there, all the alarms have already been programmed into the system. You cannot silence a whole subset of alarms for a long period of time. They would have to un-program all the alarms, bring UEM on line and then take UEM off line and reprogram all those things back on. There is no way they can filter any of that out. Unfortunately, right now the District is flying blind when it comes to what is happening at the sites. Everything has been documented in terms of the extreme temperatures in the cabinet, in case there is any damage to the equipment. Mr. Palmieri stated the Water Division can monitor the one at the Chemfeed station if they have the codes to the locks. They do not have the codes at this point. The Assistant Fire Chief just received those codes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner McIntyre and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes of May 17, 2021, as submitted.

- D. Pension Committee. There has been no meeting. A special meeting will be scheduled within the next 3 or 4 weeks depending on when the Executive Director receives the information requested from the pension company staff.
- E. Personnel Committee. A Special Meeting was held May 5, 2021. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. These minutes were tabled at the last Board meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Special Personnel Committee meeting minutes of May 5, 2021, as submitted.

- F. Water Operations Committee. There was no meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no Board appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Mrs. Donohue was not present but sent her regards.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
 - 1. Public Safety Tower Committee. The meeting scheduled for June 4, 2021, had been cancelled. The Executive Director reported they are waiting for AT&T to make some decisions. They are moving slowly. They are supposed to be providing the District with \$120,000 for the structure. The District will have the capacity so if Verizon or any other vendor wants to buy into it, the District will be the landlord. A final plan will be drafted by Attorney Dineen.
 - 2. Health & Safety/Building Committee. A meeting was held on April 22, 2021. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The minutes had been tabled at the last Board meeting. Commissioner Donohue added that Chip did a lot of updating at that meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and approved 5 to 0 to accept the Health & Safety/Building Committee meeting minutes of April 22, 2021, as submitted. Commissioner Colligan abstained.

- 3. Bylaws Committee. There was no meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Epstein wanted to echo how thankful all of the Board is to have had Chief Brade serving as Acting Fire Chief. He thanked the Chief for all the extra time and effort he put into leading the Fire Department. He went above and beyond especially during the pandemic managing staff and protocols. The District is lucky to have Assistant Chief Brade. Commissioner Epstein also wanted to point out that in the Chief's report this month there were no turnovers with the ambulance. He attributes that to having

the seventh person. It shows that the ambulance Division needs that level of staffing to not have any turnovers.

- B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were budget adjustments this month involving the General Fund and Equipment Reserve Fund. A copy of the resolution and worksheet are attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to transfer \$18,000 **from** the General Fund—Insurance & Benefits—Medical Insurance **to** Equipment Reserve Fund—Turnout Gear; and to transfer \$3,632.28 **from** the General Fund—Fire Marshal—Payroll **to** Equipment Reserve Fund—FMO vehicle & cap; and finally to transfer \$19,500 **from** the General Fund—Administrative Account—Professional fees **to** Equipment Reserve Fund—Facilities Maintenance Program.

- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. The President told the Department heads if they are getting bids from vendors for goods or services, they should be receiving bids that include information about the project and details of what is needed to work and complete the project along with the costs associated with those details so they can be fairly compared with other bids.
- D. Update Commission on Status of Bylaws Committee. It was noted that after researching, it was determined that the Bylaws Committee had not been dissolved after their most recent work on the Bylaws.
- E. Update Commission on First OSHA Consultation Visit. Chief Balletto and Assistant Chief Brade were in attendance to discuss the visit. The Chief reported that there were a couple of issues that were addressed from the training and safety aspect. There was an issue with the fresh gear solution they were using for their masks that was all expired. He worked with Mr. Darius to get 5, and he had one that was not expired. The Chief created a HazCon policy that went into effect along with the Infection Control policy and Respiratory Protection policy that he was able to submit to the CT OEMS, and they were approved for 12 hours of CT EMT recertification hours (CUR). They adjusted the respiratory protection program where the RPP is the Chief and Mr. Darius. If there were any changes in the policy, the Chief needed to be aware of it because he is responsible for it.

The Chief also reported they want to start using the Portacount machine. He is working with Mr. Alvarado to get an updated version of it. The Chief is also working on a grant for SCBA's. With that grant he will be applying for a Portacount machine. They are going to start fit testing, especially with the Fire Marshal's Office. They will be drafting a PPE SOP to include fit testing. The Chief will be working with Fire Marshal Saracco. They will be giving all the Fire Marshals half masks with cartridges so they can respond. The Chief is in the process of purchasing new meters for them also. They will have a full PPE policy where they are going to have to be clean shaven and get fit tested. That will begin on July 1. The Chief is working with the training issues that were identified with the policy. One of things they will be doing is coming out with a 100% matrix. They will be tracking all certifications on every single one of the firefighters including part-time, full-time and volunteers. It will be located in the Fire Department share folder online. It will be compliant with not only what is on the Excel sheet, but hard copies will also be available. If someone does not have a hard copy, it means they were not trained. They are also working on company officer training. Face to face training will begin in September. They have started to work on a whole training policy for next year that will be up to date. He has worked with OSHA in terms of training,

so he is trying to address these issues as soon as possible. He is working with Fire Marshal Saracco to come up with an inspection form for all of the firehouses. He wants every firefighter to go out twice a year to every firehouse and do a full inspection. They will sit down and prioritize all the issues and begin addressing them.

There were a couple of minor complaints that were identified with the electrical at Court St. He had Mr. Johnson look into the issues, and they were addressed. He is working on a Mission Statement right now and a "Message of the Chief" update that will be on the website.

- F. Discussion of a Quarterly Public Information Newsletter. This item was put on the Agenda for the next District Operations Committee meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to table this item as it will be discussed at the next District Operations Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Rude, 25 Highridge Road, Cromwell, had public comments for this meeting. He attended the Town meeting for the budget vote and had some take-aways from the meeting for the Commission to consider. There was some conversation on how to better educate the Cromwell public. He is of the opinion that they collectively as taxpayers need to know more. The Fire District needs to try to get information out better to the community. Given the nature of how the world works he would suggest that it is the obligation of the Fire District to educate the community because the community is never going to come and get educated. He would like to have the Commission think about how they can educate the public on things such as the age of the water system, the water tank and other things that are complicated that are going on in the Water Department. There is no way at a public hearing they are going to be able to cover any and all of the sophisticated issues going on in the Water Department. President Brow responded that this issue is on the agenda of the next District Operations Committee meeting being scheduled.

The next topic for discussion by Mr. Rude was communication. This is something that is also very complicated within the Town. There was conversation about how to communicate better. There were members of the public that did not know about the budget vote or town meeting until the day of the meeting. The District tries diligently to get information out via facebook, but not everyone is a facebook user. He wondered how they could collectively come up with a better communication vehicle. There are signs posted throughout Town, but not everyone sees the signs when they are driving by. He suggested putting an insert in the quarterly water bills as an effort to better communicate information to the public. The President responded that this also is on the agenda for the next District Operations Committee meeting.

Mr. Rude also discussed the location of the actual vote for the Town meeting. For those that believe very strongly in the Fire, EMS and entire fire responder function, there are quite a few folks that feel very intimidated coming to a firehouse and being surrounded by a bunch of people in their uniforms. The concept and concern of many people in Town is that the firemen are going to pack the firehouse for a vote. If none of the Fire personnel, other than the people on duty, wore their uniforms, no one would have any idea who a fireman was and who was not. He suggested thinking about ways to keep the meeting location neutral. He noticed after the vote there was some back slapping going on because the budget had gotten passed. That doesn't make a voter in Town feel good that might have a different opinion that maybe the budget should not have passed. President Brow noted that this too will be on the agenda for the District Operations Committee meeting.

Mr. Rude then discussed the comments made regarding ambulance personnel not wanting to ride in the ambulance, but rather the fire truck. President Brow addressed that comment by saying he thought that the remarks were personally offensive because he has been in public safety for almost 30 years, and in the department he works for if there were any firemen that made those remarks they would no longer be employed. The President also heard a comment that night that many Fire Chiefs around the State agreed and had said that the guys feel that is a punishment. There are people that perform those duties and make more money than their superior officers because they receive a stipend for that. They want to ride it because they get extra pay. The President has never heard anyone here say that they do not want to ride the ambulance. They know that EMS is 95% of what any Fire Department does. If they do not want to do EMS, they can find a job somewhere else.

The Executive Director noted that everyone has the right to free speech even if they are not accurate in their statements. If the individuals making those statements had gone to one of their superiors, there could have been a conversation to clarify that assessment. Mr. Rude asked if there were records to back up the facts. Commissioner Colligan noted that all those facts are in the Chief's monthly report to the Commission. Chief Balletto stated that there are always going to be misperceptions. He has been in the fire service for over 25 years. He invited anyone to come to the firehouses to see what his firefighters do. The firehouses are open to the public.

The last item Mr. Rude wanted to discuss was the concept of the 5 year plan. That would include what the revenue stream will look like based on the expense stream. Mr. Rude felt bad for the District that they had to ask for a rate increase and had to settle for a reduced rate increase. That also includes the mil rate. He is not convinced it is enough to sustain the District for the future. Health insurance is going up 20% - 25%, and the fringe benefit load on salaries and wages is 50%. How to get by with better functions and fewer people that costs less dollars. The District really needs to think about that. He is not optimistic for single digit increases next year. Mr. Rude thanked the Board for hearing him out this evening. He thanked the Board and its staff for all their thankless hardwork.

The Executive Director agreed with Mr. Rude on the cost of things. He agreed that the District needs to do a better job of timing the increases. There will be more discussion on the lessons learned during this budget process. President Brow noted that as a taxpayer and water customer, he did not like raising the rates on anything, but looking at the District's track record, they have not had many increases, and the budget presented did not have to be trimmed any further even though it was perceived that there were things that needed to be cut. Things were sacrificed in previous budgets that can no longer be overlooked.

Commissioner Epstein thanked Mr. Rude for coming out and being at this meeting. The Commission meets monthly, and it is posted at the firehouses, Town Hall and the District website. There is also a Fire Operations Committee that meets monthly. He stated that it is interesting to see how many people from the public actually come to the meetings. There is a lot of information that is available at the meetings. Commissioners that serve on the Board are not paid. They use their free time to attend meetings and manage the District. The Commissioners gave a brief explanation of District meetings and committees. Mr. Rude thought that it would be helpful for the public to have access to meeting packets before a Board meeting. The Executive Director responded to the concerns saying that the website is a good source of information that includes meeting minutes. The District is doing as much as they can to keep the public informed, but there is also room for improvement.

Commissioner Colligan thanked Mr. Rude for coming as well. The Board appreciates feedback from the public to help them do their job better. He invited Mr. Rude for a tour of the District's facilities so he understands what his tax dollars and water rates are paying for. He feels that the public only attends a meeting when they have concerns that are not addressed, otherwise the public has no interest. There needs to be a better way to communicate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no items to discuss under Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 PM.

ATTEST:

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
7-14-21