

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bylaws Committee Meeting

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

6:30 PM

Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Charles Epstein (Chairman), Mertie Terry, Jason Hinners and Robert Donohue. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto and President Lee Brow.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:42 PM, by Chairman Epstein.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. The Executive Director had received an email that he wanted to submit as public comments. It was distributed for the Committee members to read at their leisure. It was not submitted to be read for the record.

President Brow was present to help with the amendments to the Bylaws since he had been involved with the original process. He did not think the Bylaws needed to be reviewed line by line. Based on earlier discussions, the Committee knew what areas needed to be addressed. He distributed an information sheet to the Committee members to use as a guide for proposed changes. It is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. He suggested reviewing that information at this meeting, and reviewing the email comments at the next meeting.

- IV. New Business
 - A. Discussion and Review of Proposals for Bylaw Changes. President Brow started with reviewing the handout distributed for recommendations for changes. He began with Article V. Duties of Commissioners; Items G and H should be reviewed. Those items have not been in practice in the last 12 years. This will be taken under advisement.

Article XIII. Meetings of the Board and Commissioners; Item A., subsection c. Order of Business at regular monthly meetings of the Board; item xiii; the President is suggesting possible removal of the second Public Comment on the regular Board Meeting agenda. He does not think there needs to be two public comment items on any agenda. He thought maybe having public comments at the end of an agenda so that the public would have an opportunity to comment on anything that transpired during the meeting. The

Executive Director pointed out that any item that is on the agenda is a requirement. However, if something is not on the agenda of a regular meeting, it can be added under the "Approval of Agenda" item, such as an additional public comment.

Commissioner Epstein felt that both Public Comment items should stay on the agenda. Commissioner Hinnners agreed with Commissioner Epstein. Commissioner Terry agreed with the President that having public comment on the agenda twice is overkill. The President suggested adding the wording "as needed" next to the Public Comment item so that it can be determined at the time of the meeting if public comments are required.

The next was Article XIV, Committees of the Board, Item C District Operations Committee; the President is proposing renaming this committee to the new Executive Committee. Item E, subsection a. the President is proposing to rename the Executive Committee to the Budget & Audit Committee. It was noted that Item v. on the top of Page 11 will be deleted under that Item E.

Under Item E, Standing Committees, Item d. the Personnel Committee, Page 12, the President suggested the Personnel Committee be eliminated. The duties of the Personnel Committee can be re-assigned to other committees based on subject matter. Some of those responsibilities will go to the new Executive Committee, and the rest of those responsibilities will go to the full Board of Commissioners. Currently there are items that come before the Personnel Committee that still need to come before the full Board of Commissioners. Those items are reviewed twice, once by the Personnel Committee and then by the Board. The Board is ultimately responsible for those issues which should be presented to Board members. There are a few items that can be referred to the Executive Committee.

Under Personnel, subsections ii, iii, v, vi, viii and x would go to the newly named Executive Committee. Subsections i, iv, vii, ix and xi would come under the full Board of Commissioners.

Under the same Article XIV, Item G, Special Committees, subsection f. the Building Committee or District Fleet Committee was changed to Health & Safety/Building Committee. The President thought it can continue as a Special Committee, but it is something that needs to remain active. The President suggested adding it as a Standing Committee and change the formal name to Health/Safety and Facilities Committee. It would become a formal Standing Committee. It would become Item e. under Item E. as part of Article XIV.

The other Committee members had no other comments, editions or deletions. Chairman Epstein had a comment which was: if there are not enough Committee members to conduct Committee business at a meeting, and there is a Commissioner attending a Committee meeting that is not on that Committee, can he or she be seated by the Chairman of the Committee to work with the Committee on unfinished business such as an alternate on a committee.

Chairman Epstein thought this topic of committee alternates could be discussed again at another meeting. However, he did feel that everyone including management should be heard in terms of proposed recommendations or improvements to the Bylaws. He does not want to be doing this process again in another year or so. Changes to the Bylaws should be more permanent and not subject to changes consistently. There was a lengthy

discussion regarding the Bylaws, the efficiency of district administration and Commissioners to create a better management process and work environment. The Bylaws stipulate that all business from nine commissioners shall be brought before the President of the Board of Commissioners who shall work with the Executive Director so that not all 9 Commissioners are presenting 9 different perspectives on an issue. There was also some discussion about Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs and attendance at meetings. Committee membership is a responsibility as a District Commissioner.

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021, at 5:30 PM.

- V. Commissioners' Comments. There were no other Commissioners' comments.
- VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hinnens, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles R. Epstein, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary