

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS **District Operations Committee Meeting**

Thursday, March 4, 2021

5:30 PM

**West Street Firehouse
1 West Street
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Jason Hinnners and Charles Epstein. Also attending was Executive Director Julius Neto and Commissioners Roger Rukowicz and David Colligan. The President of the Dispatchers' Union dialed into the call.

Per Executive Order No. 7B, Governor Lamont has ordered and directed that in-person open meeting requirements be suspended. Therefore, the District Operations Committee meeting will be held via conference call. Members of the public may send questions or comments to meetings@cromwellfd.com on any agenda items.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM, by President Brow.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. Commissioner Colligan had a comment regarding Item B. under New Business which was a discussion regarding a joint labor/management Health & Safety Committee. He wanted to remind everyone that the Board does have a Safety/Building Committee that meets and takes care of the whole District. Labor has been invited to be a part of that Committee. Commissioner Epstein commented on Item C. of new business. He is not looking to switch anything at this point, but if there are switches he had submitted his preferences.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Discussion and Possible Decision on the Process for Oral Testing for the Position of Fire Chief. President Brow reminded everyone that the Board had given its permission for the President, the Executive Director and the Chair of the Personnel Committee, Mertie Terry, to fast track this portion of the Fire Chief recruitment. Once this portion is done, they have a list that will be forwarded to the Personnel Committee for their opportunity to prepare questions for interviewing. Committed candidates are UConn Fire Chief William Perez and former Branford Chief Peter Benobe. They are waiting on interview dates from the District.

The District will be sending notices out and requesting interest and availability to be part of an interview panel. Requests were sent to New Canaan Fire Chief Jack Hennessey, Mansfield Fire Chief Fran Reola, and North Branford former Fire Chief Mark Amatrudo. John Oates, East Hartford Fire Chief and the two Assistant Chiefs Kevin Munsen and Steve Alsper. If they are not available, they have offered to give guidance in terms of questions. He does not think any more than four people are needed for the interview process. He had four dates he was looking at which are: April 9/alternate April 12, April 23/alternate April 26. He suggested all four dates be offered and see what is best for everyone. A final date will be based on everyone's availability.

Commissioner Epstein stated that he personally knows William Perez, Peter Benobe and John Oates. They are very good Chiefs, and know their stuff. Commissioner Epstein also knows Mr. Alsop. He stated Mr. Alsop is a very knowledgeable person. President Brow added that Kevin Munsen is a past East Hartford chief officer. Regarding Jack Hennessey and Fran Reola, Commissioner Colligan noted that they run a combination department and a volunteer department. The questions will be based on what Cromwell's needs are. Commissioner Colligan looked at the runs they do, and they are similar to the way Cromwell operates which was why Commissioner Colligan suggested them. Commissioner Epstein noted that he worked with Mr. Perez when Commissioner Epstein was in the ambulance business. The Committee agreed to send out letters with all four dates to see which dates work for the majority. President Brow hopes to get the letters out by the weekend.

- B. Discussion and Possible Decision on Forming a Joint Labor Management Health & Safety Committee. The President noted that the Board of Commissioners has a Safety/Building Committee. There has been an IAFF member slot on that committee list. But the only thing that is missing is a representative from the Dispatchers' Union. The President suggested renaming that committee to Health & Safety/Building Committee. There would need to be a small revision to the Bylaws to reflect this change. The President also suggested that everyone on the committee be able to vote. Currently just the four Commissioners on that Committee have the right to vote. There needs to be a delineation and separation for the building portion of the Committee. The buildings are the District's so anything that is a building-related item only will be voted on by the Commissioners and not the whole Committee.

Any issue that is both health and safety should have input and a vote by all the Committee members. He apologized to the Dispatch Union for not including them in the original assignments of the Committee. This also takes care of creating another Committee. Commissioner Epstein still thought that the Union issues should go through the Executive Director first and then be brought before the Commission. If it is a health and safety issue it can go before the Committee so they can discuss it. He could not locate the specific language that currently exists in the Bylaws, but he still felt that the Commissioners should be the only ones to vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hanners, seconded by President Brow and approved 2 to 1 to rename the Special Committee currently called the Safety/Building Committee to Health & Safety/Building Committee with all rights as far as building issues being reserved for the 4 voting Commissioners, and health & safety issues to be voted on by all members including an IAFF member or alternate and an AFSCME member or alternate. The Dispatch Supervisor and Dispatch Union President will decide and forward their member choices to the President. The IAFF has already submitted their

choices to the President. That would be Brett Hallden as first choice and Nick Schenartz as an alternate.

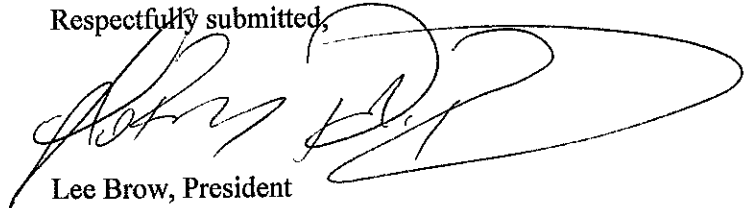
- C. Discussion and Possible Decision on Committee Assignments. The President reported that he had received emails from 2 Commissioners. One was from Commissioner Rukowicz who is happy with his committee assignments and would like to remain on the committees he has. The other was from Commissioner McIntyre. President Brow read his request in order of priority: 1) Fire Operations, 2) Executive Committee, 3) Safety/Building and 4) Bylaws. The President noted that Commissioner McIntyre is already on the Executive Committee and Bylaws Committee. Bylaws is a temporary committee and will be disbanded once the revised Bylaws have been approved. He does not see a need to ask the Commissioners on Bylaws to come off the Committee for a month or two. There is no need to make any changes there. Commissioner Epstein had requested Fire Operations, Personnel, Water Operations and Safety.

Upon review, there were no changes to make to Committee assignments. The only change was to rename the Safety/Building Committee to Health & Safety/Building Committee and assign a representative and alternate from the Dispatchers' Union to that Committee.

Commissioner Hinnners thanked everyone present for the flowers that were sent to Jolie Hinnners. She is doing well resting and recovering.

- V. 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 5:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Brow', is written over the typed name below.

Lee Brow, President

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-15-21