

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 **Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting**

Monday, February 8, 2021

5:30 PM

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

A Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting via conference call was held on Monday, February 8, 2021, at 5:30 PM, at the West Street Firehouse, 1 West Street, Cromwell, CT to consider and act upon Special Fire District business. Commissioners Lee Brow (President), Robert Donohue, Roger Rukowicz, Robert McIntyre, David Colligan, Charles Epstein and Allan Spotts attended. Also attending was the Executive Director Julius Neto.

Per Executive Order No. 7B, Governor Lamont has ordered and directed that in-person open meeting requirements be suspended. Therefore, the Special 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.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by President Brow. It was noted that because it is a special meeting, the agenda cannot be changed.
- II. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- III. New Business
 - A. Discussion and Possible Decision on the Continuation of the COVID Continuity Plan. The Executive Director discussed the Fire Operations Committee meeting from last week. After some discussion, the Committee voted to continue the COVID Continuity Plan for 4 additional weeks extending the end date to March 7 without any compensatory bonus and still alternating both firehouses. After this was voted upon by the Committee, it needed to be forwarded to the Board for their approval. He offered to answer any questions or concerns. Currently the District has a draft agreement on the continuity plan extension with the Firefighters' Union. This agreement has not been signed yet. Mr. Neto is waiting for the Union's response. He explained that there were two MOU's at the beginning of the Continuity Plan. One was regarding a special assignment that was given to one of the Dispatchers. That agreement has not been extended. That employee will now transition back to Dispatch. The Firefighter's Union is the party that brought this back to the Fire Operations Committee. Mr. Neto is not aware of any obstacles that would prevent the Union from signing it. It was modified to include the 4 week time period that it was extended and some wording regarding vacation time. The Union

President had no issues with it. They are waiting for the Union to bring it back to management. Commissioner Colligan added that the COVID work group had agreed to meet two weeks prior to the end date for an update on how things are going so they can prepare to move forward. The end of the 4 week extension is March 8. It was noted that the Update Meeting in 2 weeks is scheduled for Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 6:00 PM, at West Street.

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the recommendations of the Fire Operations Committee for the continuation of the COVID Continuity Plan until March 8, 2021.

- B. Clarification on Fire Marshal Salary. The Executive Director wanted to clarify some information on the Fire Marshal's salary. No action needs to be taken. He reported that the Board approved a salary of \$62,030 for the new Fire Marshal that was just hired. That was the middle grade of Step 3 for fiscal year 20/21. Mr. Neto stated that this allows for an amount of \$204.66 that has been added which is the July 1, 2021, 1% raise. He clarified that the District gave the new Fire Marshal \$204.66 which is the raise he will be getting in July 2021. The Fire Marshal is aware that on July 1 he will not be getting a raise because he has already received it. It was also noted that he is under a CBA and is receiving the contractual raise within the Salary Group for his job classification. Mr. Neto stated that a vote on this matter is not needed. These numbers were approved by the Board when the Fire Marshal was hired. The Executive Director just wanted to clarify the numbers and make sure the Commissioners had all the facts. It was also noted that there are no medical benefits attached to the position. Because Mr. Saracco had received an early retirement from the City of New Haven, he is receiving medical benefits with his retirement package.
- C. Next Steps for Fire Chief Hiring Process. President Brow stated that everyone should have received the most recent job posting and job description for the Fire Chief's position. The Board granted permission to the President of the Board, the Personnel Chair and the Executive Director to "fast track" the hiring process. That is still in effect, and he is hopeful they can continue with that. The only change being made to that when it is time for the interview process, everyone on the Personnel Committee will be involved and the owl will be set up so that Commissioners who are not on the Personnel Committee can watch remotely, but they will be muted. Questions will come from the Personnel Committee only. He did not think it would be fair for candidates to be questioned by 9 Commissioners. They will be getting 4 or 5 Chief Officers from around the State to participate in the interview process. The scoring process will be done by the people assigned and will be 95% of the total score. The additional 5% of scoring will come from the interview process. It will be up to the Personnel Committee at that point to recommend a candidate. Because it is a non-contractual position, there is nothing that says you have to hire number 1 first. If number 1 is the higher scorer but number 3 is a better fit, a recommendation can be made to hire number 3. At that point the full Board will have to accept the recommendation.
- D. Approval of Job Description and Job Posting for Fire Chief. The Executive Director suggested that the Board vote on the job posting and job description so everyone is on the same page. The Personnel Committee and the President have already approved them. Commissioner McIntyre had a couple of comments regarding the job description under Certificates and Licenses Required, the first two bullet points talk about years of service and experience in supervisory command capacity. He stated that neither one of those

requires a certification or a license. Those two items should appear under requirements. President Brow clarified that those items should have been considered conditions under the job description. He had noted that at the last meeting, and forgot to bring this up for correction. Commissioner McIntyre also had a comment on the last page where it was noted under Required, a cover letter and resume. He questioned whether it should be in the job description or the job posting. The Executive Director thought it should be included in both. Commissioner Colligan stated that the information for the Chief's position was supplied by Commissioner Epstein who was on the Personnel Committee when the previous Fire Chief was hired. The information is almost identical to what was done previously. There are a few changes that were made to reflect the current issues facing the Fire Department in today's world compared to 4 years ago. Commissioner McIntyre did not have a problem with the content, he was just pointing out the redundancy in some areas. President Brow also thought the information should be in both documents.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the posting and job description for the Fire Chief's position with corrections and move forward with the hiring process as approved previously.

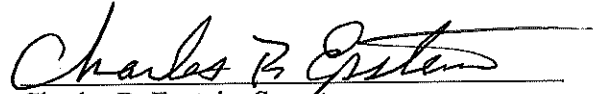
The Executive Director explained where the position will be posted. The District plans on using the Indeed website to do a large range search. Also CFA, CT List Serve and International Association of Fire Chiefs. These are the three main places where the position will be posted. The position will be advertised for two weeks and will be posted both internally and externally. Commissioner Colligan suggested that candidates submit resumes, etc. through email to the Executive Director if there is concern about timely postal deliveries. The Executive Director discussed the hiring process. The District will be using Indeed to filter out qualified candidates.

- IV. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Donohue commented that he is happy with the way things have been going. Regarding the meeting the other night, those decisions show that the Board cares about their people and hopes that people understand that were not in favor of the motions made. Commissioner Colligan stated that there have been bumps in the road with COVID protocols and procedures, but he reminded everyone that they just need to keep moving forward and do what needs to be done. Mr. Neto added that they had an informal conference with OSHA today. The District needs to send a check for \$300 to OSHA. This was the fine for the last anonymous complaint with the three or four bullet items that did not have any merit. Therefore, OSHA did not give any violations to the Fire Department or the District. Through their inspection, they identified 3 items. One was a step stool with a bent leg, the tags on all fire extinguishers had not been signed off and there was a power cord at Court St. to plug in a coffee maker which was not appropriate. Each one of these items could carry a \$1,000 fine. Because the District dealt with the three items immediately and aggressively. They had cut the ladder up, threw it away and took pictures while the inspector was here. When the inspector went back to his office, he had reduced the fine to \$600 from \$1,000, and today negotiated \$300 and the fine fee. They were pleased that the Department now has a Health & Safety Officer. They were also pleased that the District is committed to having a safe workplace. They have scheduled a consultation on March 23. Commissioner Colligan added that a second letter was sent to OSHA regarding COVID issues. The District was advised that OSHA is not involved with COVID related safety issues. The complaint was forwarded to the Town's Health Director for review.

Commissioner Colligan noted that the District is doing the right things regarding Health & Safety and COVID.

- V. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:03 PM.

ATTEST:


Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-1-21