

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 Health & Safety/Building Committee

Thursday, January 6, 2022

5:30 PM

Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Robert Donohue (Chairman) and David Colligan. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Dispatch Union President Andrew Cooke, Communications Manager Justin Lonergan, Firefighter Alan Dominy and Commissioner Charles Epstein. Commissioners Chip Darius and Robert McIntyre were absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM, by Chairman Donohue.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments.
- IV. Old Business. There was no old business to discuss.
- V. New Business
 - A. COVID Update – Division Heads. Chief Balletto reported that there were 6 cases at the firehouse effecting 14 people that are self-monitoring. The last person comes off COVID protocol tomorrow. The Chief adopted the CDC 5-day protocol because the Fire Department is going into emergency mode as dictated by the CDC on Dec. 23, 2021. The protocol was issued by the Chief's office on Dec. 27, 2021. The Fire Department has been operating with these protocols to keep things moving forward. They have separated the Court Street Firehouse especially on the apparatus floor by putting 3 tables up and initiating the COVID mask policy. Anyone closer than 6 feet from someone else needs to have a mask on. They have tried to reduce the gathering in the kitchen area and separate people. 80 personnel have been administered and fit tested to the half mask respirators with filters. There were some issues with the filters for the HEPA machines. The Chief personally replaced every filter in every machine in the firehouse. Extra filters have been made available if needed.

Mr. Palmieri reported that the Water Division is down to 50% manpower. Two maintainers are out and two are in. One of them should be returning to work on Monday,

Jan 10. The other person just tested positive and should be back to work at the end of next week.

Mr. Lonergan reported that the Communication Center has two people that tested positive. One is out due to high exposure, but the exposure did not take place in the Communication Center. The exposure was all external. Staff levels are OK, there was some overtime incurred because of people being out. They have instituted the mask policy when moving around the communication area. They have also been keeping up with cleaning and disinfecting.

The Executive Director reported on West Street. Masks are being required as with the other facilities. There is one individual out, but not necessarily out due to COVID. It is either due to the flu or a cold. They continue to follow latest updates on COVID protocols. Court Street has been closed to the public, but West Street is still open to the public with limited access. There is also limited public access to Coles Road and the conference room there. The six-foot rule is in force right now, but the latest information may require masks.

There was discussion about disinfectants used for cleaning. Official disinfectants used during COVID need to list their ingredients. The public must be informed as to whether or not they are using an official, effective disinfectant approved by OSHA and the CDC. In order to determine its usefulness, it needs to be vetted through OSHA and engineering standards. It would be a possible liability if someone got hurt using a product not officially approved. Disinfectants made inhouse have been put on hold because of safety concerns.

The Chief added that the Court Street Firehouse was disinfected. They have some of the product leftover to clean surfaces. He has been looking into resources going forward. He looked into 3 different vendors in preparation for a surge. The 3 areas of concern would be Court St., West St. 2nd floor and the Water Garage if a deep clean was ordered.

- B. Discuss and Decide If Any New Operational Requirements Are Needed for COVID Surge. The Executive Director had put this on the agenda to review protocols. There have been significant updates, so it was important to make sure everyone is aware of them and determine if there is anything else that can be done to minimize the virus spreading to more of the staff.

Firefighter Dominy reported that the Firefighters Union has some concerns. When the virus first started and there was a surge, members were separated at different firehouses, and there was more distance and space between members in the firehouses. With the current surge this process was suggested again to keep members safe.

It was agreed to have a plan in place to be prepared. Things are different today compared to when the virus first started. The atmosphere has changed since the beginning of the virus, quarantine periods have lessened, there are more vaccinated and boosted people, etc.

The Executive Director added that at this point, we know what has to be done if the situation gets worse. It is not a real crisis right now, but there needs to be some discussion on what determines a crisis to implement drastic measures. He suggested getting the union memberships together with the Fire Chiefs and Communication

Manager to determine what those crisis points will be. If it is decided to break up into platoons again, there will also be a financial impact. He suggested a modified plan based on today's world. This will be an operational decision made by the Chief's office, the Communication Center and the union membership.

The Chief added that if ¼ of his staff is affected, he would consider that an outbreak where emergency decisions will need to be made. The Chief is responsible for COVID tracing. Test kits were given out by the Town, but there were only enough kits to test first responders. The Town's Health Director has committed to getting the Fire District 90 more test kits. The priority for distribution is first responders, Water Dept. and then administration.

- C. Updates from IAFF Local 4662 and AFSCME Local 1303-475. Alan Dominy reported that Local 4662 had no updates other than what was previously discussed. Andrew Cooke, President of Local 1303-475 did not have any updates at this time. It was agreed that this item should remain on the Health & Safety/Bldg. agenda as a regular item.

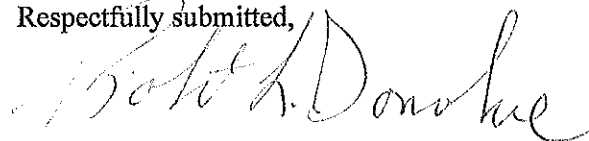
A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Alan Dominy and unanimously approved to accept the COVID updates as discussed.

- VI. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Colligan discussed the fact that over the last couple of months there have been medical emergencies at the Coles Road firehouse. A medical emergency could be just about anything. There were some items that were in place at Coles Road, but some of those items are now missing. Commissioner Colligan would like to be prepared for future emergencies by providing a medical bag, an AED, blankets and pillows. There is money in the trust fund which can be used for an AED. Commissioner Epstein will donate an oxygen caddie, green bag which he has at home that is not being used.

Commissioner Donohue stated that as Chair of this Committee he welcomes any feedback from people and is eager to learn how to Chair this Committee.

- VII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Donohue, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary