

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

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

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, April 19, 2022, 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), Jason Hinners, Robert Donohue, Robert McIntyre, Mertie Terry, Chip Darius and Charles Epstein attended. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade, Accountant Michael Alibrio, Firefighters Lt. William McKnight, Lt. Barry Wolmetz and Firefighter Michael DePaolo. Commissioners David Colligan and Roger Rukowicz were absent.

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 Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

SWEARING IN OF FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL DEPAOLO

Firefighter Michael DePaolo was being sworn in at this meeting. His grandfather was going to pin him, but was sick and unable to attend. Lt. McKnight filled in and did the pinning. Mr. DePaolo's grandfather was on Zoom for the ceremony. President Brow read the oath and had Firefighter DePaolo repeat after him.

PRESENTATION/UPDATE FROM CHUCK ADELSBURGER, APEX (ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS) – EMERGENCY INTERCONNECTION PROJECT AND DIVERSION PERMITS

The Executive Director introduced Mr. Adelsburger to the group. Mr. Adelsburger's firm is managing the emergency interconnection project and diversion permits. Mr. Adelsburger provided an agenda/outline on his presentation tonight as well as various maps to illustrate the areas in Town he was referring to. All documents are attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District office.

Mr. Adelsburger began by discussing and explaining the Emergency Interconnection Project. A Risk and Resilience Assessment was completed earlier this year which was part of the beginning stages of the project. The Risk and Resilience Assessment showed the need for a backup water supply. Cromwell's only water source is the Gardiner Well field at the CT river.

Cromwell is limited by the pumping capacity at the well fields. The most recent water supply plan recommended that the District have an emergency interconnection project to build an emergency interconnection to achieve maximum day demand in case something should happen to the Gardiner Well field. That is the project Environmental Partners is currently working on. They also hope to get some drinking water SRF money for it because the District was approved for a low interest loan to help offset the cost. The next phase of the project will be the final design and bidding phases.

Mr. Adelsburger referred to the maps he distributed that show the emergency interconnections that were considered. It showed the MDC connection to the north on Rte. 3 which had been used in the past to connect hydrants with hoses. The District had built a water main all the way to the Rocky Hill line. They would like to establish a hard connection there with an interconnection station so the flow from MDC can be metered should there be an emergency. They anticipate they can get 1.5 million gallons per day or even up to 2 million.

They also looked at Pascal Hill Road with Berlin. They learned that East Berlin Water Control does not have the volume of water that is necessary to provide Cromwell with any water. Cromwell had looked at it as a potential alternative, but there would need to be water main improvements. Since Berlin doesn't have the water, it was not a viable source. They looked at 5 different emergency interconnections and are recommending 3 that will perform close to the maximum day demands.

The first recommended interconnection was the MDC/Pasco Hill Road interconnection, but after closer review they did not recommend it.

The Kirby Rd. division is where Middle St. and Main St. are in Berlin. At that interconnection Berlin and Middletown were already looking at an emergency interconnection and had set up a site for it. Environmental Partners is recommending a 3-way interconnection. Cromwell would be able to serve Middletown as well as Berlin with that interconnection. They would drill under the Matabassett River at Kirby Rd. That interconnection would benefit the District by providing 1 million gallons a day under an emergency situation from Middletown. Cromwell could also serve both of the surrounding systems with water should they need it. Berlin is looking to increase their wholesale water that they have purchased from Cromwell. Middletown has also requested a potential supply. This is a win/win for all 3 systems.

They also looked at the Coles Road interconnection with Middletown. They originally recommended this site along with Kirby Road and MDC. In preparing the preliminary engineering report, they learned from DOT that the bridge will not accommodate a 12 inch water main crossing.

The third interconnection is Rte. 3 in Middletown. It was not originally chosen because a little bit more water main is needed. Mr. Adelsburger referred to the aerial maps he provided. They were interested in the Shunpike Rd., interconnection. It would not be that beneficial to the District because they would have to pump the water from Middletown into Cromwell. The Coles Road site is higher so that they could flow by gravity into the system. Chuck listed the chosen alternatives on his agenda with the project costs. The next step would be the funding of the bonds on the bid phase which will happen in this budget cycle at the District meeting. He asked if there were questions.

Commissioner Epstein asked how long a project like this would take. Chuck is looking at spring construction next year. It would take at least a year to a year and a half to complete. They are still in the preliminary design phase. They will assign a contract time when they do the final design phase. They will know better about the supply chain issues at that time.

Mr. Adelsburger spoke a little about the Diversion permitting they are doing building the interconnection. Every year the District serves Berlin, permits have to be updated. Sales of excess water are permitted with DPH. Environmental Partners has the draft form. There is also the reauthorization of the Diversion Permit that has to be reinstated. Those permits have already been drafted and will be forwarded to the District soon. A meeting was held with Berlin Water Control, and Berlin would like to continue purchasing water from the District. Environmental Partners will take care of all the permitting for moving forward. Environmental Partners drafted letters for the District and the Berlin Water Control to send to DEEP. Once accepted, a temporary authorization will be issued with a full authorization forwarded within a couple of months.

Environmental Partners received approval for the Diversion Permit for the Gardiner Well field. Mr. Adelsburger will be pushing back on that with Mr. Palmieri. They would like to maintain the 10.51 million gallons per day in case it is ever needed. He was willing to answer any questions or come back to another meeting to provide updates.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MARCH 15, 2022

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of March 15, 2022, as submitted.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or written appeals to report.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Neto did not have anything to add to his report. He was available to answer any

questions. The President asked about the website upgrade. Mr. Neto noted that it is taking longer than expected. The IT Manager moving out of state became a challenge. The vendor is working on it, and the District is paying as they go. There were a couple of attempts to breach the internal IT management systems. The attempt was serious, but not successful. Because the District has done everything to invest in cyber security, there was no concern. The District needs to remain prudent and cautious.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's report as presented.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio pointed out that the District is approximately \$60,000 ahead of budget on property tax collection through March 31. Anything after that now would add to that number. On Page 3, Mr. Alibrio noted that the EMS calls had a very big spike. That is a catch up from last month. The President asked about the new billing company. Mr. Alibrio has been having a great experience thus far with Shared Response. This is the first month where the District is receiving month end reports. Shared Response walked Mr. Alibrio through the first one to make sure he had a clear understanding of them. They are taking over the accounts outstanding from Quick Meds effective May 31. There will be a slight overlap of accounts until then. They will start receiving detailed information on calls for analysis, such as how many are billed, how many are non-billable, how many are lift assists. They are committed in collecting every penny that is owed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for March as submitted.

- C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Chief had no changes to his report. He reported that the Department has been extremely busy. They have been getting more involved with the school system and the community. There are a couple of events coming up. Cromwell is hosting a nationwide Fire Marshal training class to be held at Coles Road Weds., Thurs. and Friday of this week. Cromwell is sending all of its certified Fire Marshal officers to the class. There will be Fire Marshals attending from all over the state and New England. They will be burning cars in the back and doing full fire investigations.

The Chief worked with Alan Dominy on 2 car seat grants and one with Safe Kids to receive state of the art car seats. The Chief has been working with youth services and social services for families in need of a car seat. He is looking to send personnel to a car seat technician class. There will be a car seat installation class in September 24 at Coles Road. The Chief had promised the District that he was going to get involved with the community and give back. The car seat initiative is an example of that.

The President acknowledged the Fire Marshal's Report submitted under the Chief's Report. The President thought that the Fire Marshal's Report should be added to the agenda as a special line item, but a permanent change to the Board agenda would have to go through the Bylaws Committee for consideration and/or approval. The Executive Director noted that until a change is made, the Fire Chief should be able to report for the Fire Marshal. Mr. Neto reported that the FMO is busy as well. They are starting to see some results from the fee structure that was put in place by the ordinance. They are now starting to see revenue coming

in. Within 1 ½ weeks they have received close to \$2,000. The Chief agreed that Harold and Colin are doing a great job, and it shows through their monthly report.

The FMO contacted multiple departments in Town to vet their Youth Fire Service program. There will be a big meeting with Town officials, the Town Manager, Executive Director and the State to get a viable vetting of the program. The program will also be vetted by the District's attorneys. They hope to have the program up and running by June or July.

The Fire Marshal and Inspector Whalen are going to create a class for Cromwell firefighters. It will be designed for them with their expectations about the class curriculum. The FMO is going to become very busy within the next 6 months due more construction in Town and increased occupancy of the Landon. The President asked the Chief to reach out to Christie Carpino who is Cromwell's state representative. She is a huge supporter and is very interested in Fire District operations.

The President asked for an update on the Red Lion property. The Executive Director reported that the property is going to be a combination of commercial property, high-end condos and apartments. The property owners purchased the land in between their property and Lowes and plan on using it for a dog park or some type of park. They will be demolishing everything except the parking garage in the back of the property. They will be building on top of the garage. Recently there was a meeting with all the people involved with this project including the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal. During that meeting there was discussion about water and who was going to be responsible for managing that. It was recommended at the meeting by the Chief and Fire Marshal that another meeting be scheduled to include the Water Operations Manager and the Executive Director to answer any questions. There has been great communication between all parties.

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

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Palmieri was not present due to hydrant work on Rte. 372.

A motion was made by Commissioner Darius, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Operations Report for March as presented.

- E. Communication Center Report. The Communication Center Report for March had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Lonergan was not present but the Executive Director was available to answer any questions. The State is still working on the reprogramming of the portables. The State is behind in processing all the requests they have gotten. The Chief thanked Lt. Wolmetz, Firefighter Dominy, Firefighter Kostrick, Capt. Roberts, Connor Anderson, and Firefighter Peck for coming in last night. They stayed for 6 ½ hours, and continued with the rest of their shift.

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

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations. There was no meeting.
- B. Executive. There was no meeting.
- C. Fire Operations. A meeting was held March 14, 2022. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes from March 14, 2022, as submitted.

- 1. Communications Committee. There was nothing new to report from the Communication Center Report discussed by the Executive Director. They need to check the status of the order on hydraulic equipment. Once received it can be put on the apparatus, and they will be able to take Tack 4 off-line to give it a break until the Fire/Rescue comes in. The Chief stated he would be forwarding pictures to the Apparatus Committee once they are received. They have tentatively scheduled the Apparatus Committee meeting for May 3, 2022, at 5:30 PM, for the virtual inspection.
- D. Pension. There was no meeting.
- E. Personnel. A meeting was held on April 12, 2022. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee meeting minutes of April 12, 2022, as submitted.

- F. Water Operations. There was no meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. There was no report.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
 - 1. Public Safety Tower Committee. A meeting was held March 4, 2022. Minutes had been tabled last month. The minutes were previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to accept the Public Safety Tower Committee meeting minutes of March 4, 2022, as submitted.

2. Health & Safety/Building Committee. A meeting was held on April 7, 2022. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Darius, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to accept the Health & Safety/Building Committee meeting minutes of April 7, 2022, as submitted.

3. Bylaws Committee. There was no meeting.
4. Publicity Committee. There was no meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Hinners discussed the Newsletter that was enclosed with the April water bills. Mr. Neto added that May 23, 2022, is the scheduled day for the budget presentation at 5:30 PM, and voting for the budget from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. As always, all FOI rules and regulations will be followed regarding meeting notification.

Present Brow comments on issues discussed at last month's meeting regarding accusations that the Board had held an illegal meeting because it was not posted. It was a special meeting, and according to FOI rules, should have an agenda posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. It was received by Town Hall, via email as well as all Commission members, and the website.

The Chief is looking for volunteers for the Memorial Day parade. The date is May 30, 2022.

Commissioner Hinners commented on a car fire situation that he heard over the radio over the weekend. The crews did a great job taking care of things and making sure it did not get out of hand. He wanted to recognize the crews for the great job they do.

A flyer was distributed for the Memorial Day car show. The date is May 27, and it is sponsored by the Cromwell Children's Coalition. Commissioners Hinners and Terry had more information for those that are interested. Admission is free.

Commissioner Darius asked for an update on the purchase of the AED's and Lucas machine. The Chief reported that they are on backorder. The cases are in the Chief's office. The Lucas machine came in 2 weeks ago. They have to take a class with Lucas and Stryker because it cannot be put into service until staff are properly certified on it so they can also do training on it. Once that has been accomplished the Department will be reaching out to the family that donated the funds for the Lucas machine. They will be invited to a Board meeting or Fire Department activity to publicly thank them for their generosity. It was suggested that the Publicity Committee publish an article in the next newsletter.

Commissioner Epstein noted that he and Commissioner Darius sit on a statewide committee that works on the health and wellness of EMS and firefighters. Saturday, May 14 at Midstate Medical in Meriden there will be a first responders' Health and Wellness Symposium, from 8:00 AM to 12 Noon.

- B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were no adjustments to report.

- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. There were no contracts or contractors to report.
- D. Update on Court Street/Coles Road Firehouses. Management is still waiting on the electrical quote and plans.
- E. Discussion and Possible Decision on Request from Whitetail Express Trust for Utilization of District Land for Deer Hunting for the Purpose of Supporting DEEP's CWD Study. The President noted that everyone received information on Chronic Waste & Disease and what it is. The President also sent out an email stating that if approved, the Trust must abide by all State regulations. There is no liability to the District. The President was available to answer any questions. Once the document is finalized, it can be reviewed by the District's attorney. After a final legal review, a MOA will be drafted between both parties.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and approved 6 to 1 to approve the request from Whitetail Express Trust for utilization of District Land for Deer Hunting for the Purpose of Supporting DEEP's CWD Study. Commissioner Terry was opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brian Grogan, 2 Gatesville La., Cromwell, was present to discuss his water account situation. He is disabled and lives in a 55 and older condominium community. In August he had submitted a letter requesting hardship status because he was having trouble paying his water bills and extreme legal bills. His request was rejected at the September Board meeting, he claimed the District told him it was because he watered too much. He stated that as a resident of Evergreen he is required to water his lawn 30 days or every day during the summer. At that same meeting, (Mr. Grogan reported it was the February 28 Board mtg.), the water board gave a directive to itself to create a monthly payment plan for Mr. Grogan so he could pay off the debt over a period of time and discuss this plan with Mr. Grogan. He claimed he never received the plan, never got a phone call, or any letters from the Water Division. The next communication he received was from Attorney Proulx about sending him to collections. He was instructed to pay his water bill of \$2,000 and attorney fees totaling \$2,900 by March 15 or they would proceed to foreclose on his house. He stated that the District had dropped the ball when they never came up with a payment plan for him. The President told Mr. Grogan that this was the right forum to present his concerns. He asked Mr. Grogan to provide him with contact information to follow up on this issue.

James Rude, Highridge Rd., had comments about the update to the Interconnection water system. In his opinion it highlights the need for a 5-year financial plan to be put together for the Cromwell Fire District that takes a look at all matters operational as well as capital. He continues to believe it is important to have some balance sheet information to go along with the periodic financial reports. Profit loss information is good, but it is important to have balance sheet information as well to learn the financial status of the Fire District. He continues to be interested in the meetings of the Bylaws Committee. The Bylaws Committee has not had a meeting in 6 months. He hopes that the information will be available shortly, and information about the pending meeting is made known as soon as they start discussions. At the last meeting Mr. Rude made some comments about the status of the pension plan, the importance of the funded status of the plan and the plans to move forward with terminating the plan now that it has been approved for termination. He asked the Commissioners to continue to look at that expeditiously. There was no conversation about pension this evening. The budget meeting is coming up on May 23 for the entire Town. He stated it sounded like the budget is being developed and there will be some other meetings possibly of the Executive Committee or possibly some other components of the Commission to

talk about the development of the budget. He hopes that the information regarding those meetings is made public early enough so that folks can make plans to be there. He also hopes that the development of this year's budget includes a complete look at the capital needs as well as the operating needs. Last year there was no discussion of the capital needs at the budget vote. Under the concept of transparency in making sure that everyone in Town knows what is going on, he believes that both capital and operating items should be discussed in full for the May 23 vote. It sounds like the vote is going to be longer than it has in the past, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. He hopes that there is a method for folks to ensure that only folks that are authorized to vote for the Fire District budget are the ones voting.

Firefighter/EMT Alan Dominy, VP Local 4662, wanted to make the Board aware they appreciate the Board entertaining the idea of utilizing the Coles Road and Court Street firehouses. They have a committee that has been meeting to review bullet points or pros and cons as well as graphing out how things can be set up at both stations so that fire operations and Board meetings can be coordinated. Moving forward they will be able to work alongside the Board to pitch ideas, give presentations. They want the Board to see what is important to them on the operational side. They would also like to see what is important to management.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to enter into Executive Session at 7:27 PM inviting the Fire Chief into the first portion of the session and the Executive Director into the whole session.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to adjourn Executive Session at 8:07 PM. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hinners, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM.

ATTEST:

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary