

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** **Public Safety Tower Committee Meeting**

**Friday, March 4, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**West Street Firehouse**

**1 West Street**

**Cromwell, CT**

Present: Police Chief Denise Lamontagne (Co-Chair), Donald Swanson (Emeritus), Executive Director Julius Neto, Police Captain Fred Sifodaskalakis, Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Town Manager Anthony Salvatore, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Commissioner Chip Darius, Angel Alvarado (conference call). Commissioner Roger Rukowicz (Co-Chair) was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM, by Co-Chair Chief Lamontagne.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Mr. Swanson, seconded by Mr. Salvatore and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. Old Business. Mr. Alvarado reported that at the last meeting there was an approval to move forward with the reinforcements of the structure. Also allowing AT&T and any of the vendors to be included and financially supporting the project.
- V. New Business
  - A. Update from Tower Manager on Reinforcement Project. Mr. Alvarado reported that the engineering has been completed. AT&T was the only vendor that invested in the project. The project cost was \$123,000. The District worked with Engineering to get AT&T approval for their equipment to be mounted on the Tower which was just completed last week. The steel for the reinforcement is accessible to Cromwell for the reinforcement to start this week. It will be fully completed in 2 to 4 weeks. It was scheduled to start last week, but there was a delay with AT&T because of the weather. CSB is starting on Monday. Mr. Neto noted that the permit was pulled this week for the Town, and the District was charged \$3,400. Based on a revision in ordinances in 2017, the District is no longer excluded from those fees. The Town Manager thought the District should have contacted someone at Town Hall to clarify the charges.

Mr. Alvarado reported that the project is underway. There is a little surplus so the remainder of the funding can go into the "kitty fund" that they have for the generator. Originally it was discussed that the providers would be paying for the reinforcement project, and the District would be able to use the funds from the providers to replace the existing generator on the property.

Mr. Neto explained that about 6 to 9 months ago, the generator was discussed. It is approximately 18 years old. The District has been investing some money into it to keep it going. There are more additional repairs and maintenance on it. There are funds available based on what the vendors have provided for upkeep and maintenance. A new generator will cost roughly \$109,000. It is a 75 KW with a 225 alternator to accommodate the 5 ATS they will be providing for the tenant locations.

T-Mobile is not hooked up to the generator. They wanted to do their own project with a small generator. The Tower Committee did not allow them to do that. They will force them to reimburse or participate on this upgrade or new generator. If they want to be on generator power, The District is going to force them to participate because we did not allow them to have their own generator power. He suggested at the next quarterly meeting they update all the quotes, and see if it is time to make a decision to move forward on that.

The Co-Chair stated that in the minutes from two years ago, March 2020, the Committee had approved to go ahead with replacing the generator. At that time it was stated that the generator was 19 years old. Mr. Alvarado stated that was true, and there was some money in reserve, but they were waiting for the reinforcement project to be completed and if there were any issues, they could use that money. The providers supplied their portion. From last year's contributions the reinforcement fund went from \$118,000 to \$145,000 to cover the generator. The Co-Chair stated that two years ago the cost was \$90,000. There was approximately \$22,000 in the fund at the time.

A motion was made by Mr. Salvatore, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to have the Tower Committee replace the generator as soon as possible. It is unique at a cell site to have a generator as a backup. The rule should be that vendors should hook up to Cromwell's generator or go without power during an outage. They should not be allowed to bring in external power. Mr. Palmieri added that when the new generator is installed, the Water Department can have their SCADA system tap into it and send failure alarms.

Chief Lamontagne asked what the timeframe would be for installing the new generator. Mr. Alvarado thought they would need to get a refresh on the quote. The most recent quote is a couple of years old. He spoke with someone named Mike who was the point of contact for Kinsley or Generac to provide an up-to-date quote for the Committee. Mr. Alvarado thought that by the time the reinforcement project is completed, the District should be able to move forward with the generator in late spring, early summer depending on the budget. It could mean early next year.

- B. Discussion on Tower Manager Role. Mr. Neto explained to everyone that the District's Tower Manager is now residing in Land of Lakes, FL. He gave the short-term plan for Angel's position. Angel will be moving to part-time status remotely. He will be providing support for IT, infrastructure and email. The District can justify 20 hours a

week for him to be remote. They are not going to follow a past practice that was done with another employee working remotely.

Someone needs to physically be located near Cromwell to monitor the Tower. Angel can maintain some of the project oversight working with vendors remotely and delegating to some "boots on the ground" staff at the District such as the Communications Manager Justin Lonergan; the Water Operations Manager Joe Palmieri or the Executive Director. This will be the interim plan until things are sorted through. If it works it could become a long term solution.

Going forward Angel will not be up at the Tower on Tuesday mornings to verify the generator. Also people will not be allowed access to the Tower site unless they notify the District Office. Mr. Neto defined a short-term solution as 6 months. Mr. Salvatore wanted to know how the District is compensating from a Tower perspective now that there is a short term proposal. Mr. Neto stated there will not be any changes in compensation. It would be between the District and Angel, and no changes to the Tower budget.

***A motion was made by Mr. Salvatore, seconded by Capt. Sifodaskalakis and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation for the Tower Manager role and any compensation that is negotiated. The District will disseminate in a manner which they will determine. This will be revisited in 6 mos. The \$18,000 in the budget for the Tower and Communication Manager will remain the same.***


Under New Business the Town Manager wanted to say that now may be a good time to start considering the other site. With the completion of the Landin, the road is completely an emergency road, and provides a way to get access to Town property there if the Committee decides to move forward. He did not know if there was still interest in a second tower. Mr. Alvarado added that now would be a good time to get provider investment. Everyone is fighting for 5G capacity. Mr. Salvatore stated that Town Council had already given their approval on the site once. He will go back to the Council that is presently sitting to get approval should the Committee go forward with a second tower.

The Executive Director asked Angel if there was any data that supports the want and need for a second tower. There are load study requests that providers have made recently to increase capacity and replace equipment. However, when the reinforcement project was done, they gave vendors the option to make the initial investment so they had additional capacity to somewhat modify their equipment. No one participated except AT&T. That locks out T-Mobile, Sprint and Verizon. Recently Verizon came back to the table. They were ready to invest and wanted to get into this project. Something could be negotiated to add them into the existing structure. The other 2 providers will definitely need capacity and there will not be any for them. Mr. Neto asked if it would be advisable to set up a meeting with the providers to assess their needs. Mr. Alvarado thought that would be a good idea. Mr. Salvatore thought that if the Committee is interested, he would like to proceed the same way the Committee had done with the first tower where the District and the Town paid nothing. The providers covered the cost of everything. Mr. Salvatore will bring this before the next Council meeting.

VI. Commissioners' Comments. There were no Commissioners' comments.

- VII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Salvatore, seconded by Mr. Neto and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Chief Denise Lamontagne, Co-Chair  
Cromwell Police Department

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary