

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting

Thursday, October 27, 2022

6:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse  
105 Coles Road  
Cromwell, CT

A Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at 6:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to consider and act upon Special Fire District business.

Commissioners Roger Rukowicz, David Colligan, Robert McIntyre, Mertie Terry, Donald Smith, Chip Darius and Robert Donohue attended. Commissioner Epstein dialed into the meeting. Also attending was Executive Director Julius Neto and Fire Chief Jason Brade.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM, by President Rukowicz.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. New Business
  - A. Hire Vendor to Recruit for Two Assistant Fire Chief Positions. The Executive Director commented that at the previous Special Personnel Committee meeting, the Personnel Committee decided to make a change temporarily to assist the Fire Chief by engaging the Lieutenants to take on some of the Assistant Chief duties. Long term the District may be looking at up to 2 Assistant Fire Chiefs based on the present situation. The process of hiring an outside company is going to require getting 3 bids to get the process initiated.

Mr. Neto thinks that the vendor should be engaged to look for two Assistant Fire Chiefs and identify what those roles are. At that point in time, the District should be able to determine whether or not two Assistant Chiefs are needed. The Executive Director has the names of a couple of vendors. One was used for the Lieutenant's exam and the other was recommended by one of the Commissioners. He is looking for a third if there are any suggestions from the group. If anyone has any suggestions, he asked that they email suggestions to him. One company is RMA Associates which was used by Hartford County Chiefs. The other company is Mission CIT which was used for the Lieutenant's exam.

Chief Brade is a member of CT Fire Chiefs' Assoc. and Middlesex County Fire Chiefs. Commissioner Colligan recommended Chief Brade become a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs as a combination department. The membership would provide a lot of connections with local vendors for what Cromwell is looking for.

Commissioner Terry needed clarification. She asked if the District was going to hire a vendor to recruit for 2 Assistant Fire Chief positions. Commissioner Colligan noted that the vendor is to be used for testing. She asked if the District was going to look internally first. It was clarified that anyone can apply for the positions if they are qualified whether they be internal personnel or external. Because the item on the agenda used the word, "recruit," Commissioner Terry will not be supporting this item. Her reason was because the Special Personnel Committee meeting that was held before this meeting talked about supporting people that are already employed here. It was noted that the correct terminology for the discussion should have been, "testing" instead of "recruit." Commissioner Smith suggested the wording "search process" be used as part of the phrasing for this agenda item to reflect the correct objective of the Personnel Committee.

Commissioner Darius stated there is no reason why recruitment cannot include internal candidates. Commissioner Terry wants to give people that are employed here the first opportunity. She said that recruit means the District is looking at a larger pool of candidates.

President Rukowicz thought that an explanation of external and internal candidates was given at the last meeting. Positions can be posted internally. There is an issue with career firefighters. They are full-time employees. The Assistant Chief positions are 25 hrs. a week. A couple of weeks ago the direction the Executive Director was given was to delegate some of the Assistant Chief duties to the Lieutenants. If this is successful, maybe only one Assistant Chief position should be filled instead of two.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and approved 8 to 0 to allow the Executive Director and Fire Chief select an agency/vendor that will look at any candidate, internal or external, provide the testing to those individuals and come back to the Board of Commissioners with the top 5 candidates. Commissioner Epstein asked that the agency rank-order the candidates based on the testing. Commissioner Terry abstained.*

- B. Emergency Roof Replacement – 1 West Street. President Rukowicz discussed the issues that have been happening with the roof at West Street. They have been patching leaks for quite a while. Mr. Neto distributed copies of quotes received from R.A. Parady & Sons, Inc., Turner & Sons and DiGiorgi. The quote from R.A. Parady was \$49,715, Turner & Sons was \$48,900 and DiGiorgi was \$40,738. DiGiorgi was the lowest bid, but the group looked at what was being offered by Turner for \$48,000 that DiGiorgi could do for \$41,000.

Mr. Neto explained that there has been multiple leaks over the last year or so. The leaks keep moving and are not consistent. When the shingles were installed, they were not done according to the way described on the Turner & Sons specs. Some of the rows were not offset, and nails have been popping up allowing moisture to get in. The main cause of the leaking is the installation of the shingles. The shingles were not installed correctly.

All roofing companies will comply with the new mandates that are in place for roof construction.

Commissioner Colligan noted that Bill Jarzavek and the architect were the Clerk of the Works for the West Street firehouse. He also thought that the District should be able to receive monetary compensation for the faulty old shingles. Commissioner Colligan was on the West Street Committee. Recently there has been a recall on architectural shingles. He suggested researching the warrantee. He wanted to find the documentation for the West Street firehouse building.

The two things to figure out are where the funds will come from to fix the roof, and what the plan of action will be. The timeframe for the project depends on which vendor is chosen. It can be anywhere from 3-4 weeks to start or 4-6 weeks depending on the vendor.

There was much discussion on where the funding will come from. In the budget there was some money that was set aside for the apron which was close to \$20,000. That would mean trying to find another \$20,000 somewhere else. They could also take it out of the General Fund, but would have to schedule a Town meeting to vote on a referendum. If the Town meeting is decided, there needs to be adequate time to post a notice/call of the meeting. Ten business days are required to post a meeting notice to the public in the newspaper.

Commissioner Darius asked about the monies in the budget for the Assistant Chief positions. There was some money available because of Assistant Chief Brade being promoted to Chief. His Assistant Chief salary is in the budget because he is now collecting the Chief's salary, but there is also some of those funds that will be used for the Lieutenants taking on Ass't Chief duties.

Mr. Neto explained that the budget right now is stretched to the max. He has been charged with looking for the extra money for the \$2/hr. salary bump for the Lieutenants. He thought there would be some money available from the legal fees account as long as the District does not need to use any attorneys. They will need to strip money out of the Capital funds if they decide not to go to a Town meeting. The capital money from the Fund Balance would come from the Apron fund plus another \$30,000 would have to be found. The options are either to ask for permission through a Town meeting, requesting \$50,000 from the Fund Balance for an emergency roofing project at West St., or take \$50,000 out of Capital funds.

Commissioner McIntyre thought it would be best to have a Town Meeting. There are things that were in the budget that are just getting around to being funded. The Board shouldn't be trying to take money from those things. It is like kicking the can down the road again. If there is money in the fund, this is the type of thing it should be used for. There is money that the Town rec'd from the Federal Government, but it has not been used yet. The money was designated for a combined water/sewer infrastructure project. There was a lengthy discussion about what course of action to take.

Commissioner McIntyre wanted to know if another inspection of the roof should be done to determine how much other damage has been done besides the shingles. They thought that to be prepared for whatever other damage might be found on the roof project, the request should be closer to \$65,000. The Board is just asking for permission to move

money they already have. Its not costing anyone anything. There is no tax increase and no mil rate increase. Its coming out of funds the District already has. They are just asking for permission to move it.

Commissioner Donohue gave his professional opinion about the quotes received. His recommendation based on his comments was to go with Turner & Sons. Commissioner Darius pointed out that Turner & Sons are offering a fixed price on the plywood. Turner would also have a sooner start date.

Commissioner Darius thought there were 3 questions on the table. One was whether or not to go to referendum, another is the dollar amount to go to referendum and the third question is what vendor to use.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Darius, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to select Turner & Sons as the vendor for the roof repair project at the West Street firehouse.***

The President asked if everyone thought it would be better to request an additional \$15,000 to cover any other additional unforeseen expenses that may be revealed once demo of the roof has begun.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to schedule a Special District meeting for the public to vote on a referendum that would give the District permission to use \$65,000 from the unencumbered, undesignated Fund Balance for an emergency roof repair to the West Street firehouse. The funds are to cover the roof repair including the roofing materials and other additional items that might be damaged as a result such as insulation. Any money not used for that purpose will go back into the General fund.***

The next step will be to schedule a Town meeting. It will have to be at least 10 days out because newspaper notification needs to be posted at least 10 days before the meeting.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to give the Executive Director and the President permission to pick the date for the Town meeting and advertise in the newspaper. They will advise the Board of their actions.***

- V. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Colligan noted that he and Chief Brade were at the CT State Fire Chief's Association meeting that was held in Cromwell on Tuesday night, October 25, 2022. Chief Brade received a warm welcome by the group. He made a lot of contacts and networked. Although he has been attending those meetings for quite some time, it was nice to be recognized as the Chief and host the meeting.

The President asked the Executive Director to extend a thank you to Russ Johnson. He was the point person when the roofing vendors were visiting. Commissioner Donohue was also very helpful providing measurements. The President thanked everyone for their input for this meeting including the Executive Director.

- VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner McIntyre, seconded by Commissioner Darius and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 PM.

ATTEST:

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Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary

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