

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** **Fire Operations Committee Meeting**

**Monday, October 17, 2022**

**5:30 PM**

**Coles Road Firehouse  
105 Coles Road  
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Robert McIntyre (Chairman) and David Colligan, Interim Fire Chief Jason Brade, Fire Marshal Harold Holmes and Communications Manager Justin Lonergan. President Rukowicz and Executive Director Julius Neto also attended. Commissioners Robert Donohue and Charles Epstein were absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman McIntyre.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. Communications Report. Commissioner Colligan reported that he is going to finalize the issues with the State of CT. If it happens to be more of a wait time, Cromwell will go ahead with their reprogramming plans and worry about it the next time they go to reprogram. Cromwell has done everything possible to work with the State. Commissioner Colligan plans on scheduling a meeting of the Communications Committee within the next month. Interim Chief Brade stated that he and Mr. Lonergan have a meeting with the State on Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022, to get the process started. More information should be available after that meeting. The Chief will keep everyone updated.  
  
*A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Communications Report as presented.*
- V. Reports of Chief Officers. The Chief's Report had been submitted. Chief Brade was available to answer any questions. The Department has been very active in the community. They took part in the 911 tribute that was held last month. They have also been doing a lot of EMS coverage for the high school football and youth football games. They went to the Farmer's Market. They will be having a Fire Prevention Open House that includes car seat safety. They did a few "Touch a Truck" events. They participated in First Responder Day at Lowe's. They attended a grand opening for the new Battleground nutrition store. The Fire Marshal's Office has also been doing some events that were noted in his report. The Fire Department's presence in the community has been well-received.

Regarding staffing, the Department took on one volunteer. They are going through their physicals and checks. Hopefully they will be onboarded soon. Regarding apparatus, the company is saying that the Rescue might be a nice Christmas present. The Rescue should be received by the end of December. The new ambulance is looking to be ready around March 2023.

Commissioner Colligan was Chairman of the Fire Operations Committee when the specs were worked on for the rescue/pumper. He asked the Chief if he was able to get a meeting together to verify all the items that were spec'd out. The Chief stated they were going to set up a conference call tomorrow so he should have more information then. He is willing to set up a meeting with the Committee or whomever wants to be included in the meeting. Commissioner Colligan asked the Chief to contact him when he meets with the vendor so that they are all on the same page regarding the process.

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

A. Fire Marshal's Office Report. Fire Marshal Holmes submitted his report. He was available to answer any questions. He added a new page at the end of his report that was to keep track of grants and/or donations. They received a \$500 grant for fire investigation equipment from CT Fair Plan, and \$500 worth of smoke detectors were donated by Walmart. There were approximately 50 smoke detectors totaling the \$500. He gave 25 detectors to Court St. and kept 25 for his office along with a case of 9 volt and AA batteries.

Lt. McKnight spent most of today at Woodside Intermediate School doing fire prevention. They went class-to-class putting on presentations. Not all of the schools in Town can be covered during fire prevention week so some of the presentations will run into the following week. They will be going to the middle school and Edna C. Stevens soon.

Regarding plan reviews, there is one that is concerning. The Fire Marshal and Chief sent their comments to fix a few things on this project. The project is being called the Lord Cromwell project. Building heights are 66 ft. and 61 ft. Mr. Holmes had a problem with the plan for the parking stalls. Commissioner Colligan thought that a tower may be needed. They are taking out half of the parking garage. They are all going to be 5 story buildings. It will be similar to Blue Back Square where there will be parking underneath with 4 stories up above. Mr. Holmes is asking for weight limits on the parking garage. The footprint of the building will be on the other half of the parking garage. The Fire Marshal wants the engineer to advise what a safe weight limit will be. This will determine whether or not the Fire Department will be able to access the other side of the building that is facing the parking garage. The emergency access road width is not very good. The main entrance is 15 feet wide. Mr. Holmes advised them that it should be 20 feet minimum. These issues were a few things noted from the site plan. There will be a meeting with the Town on Wednesday or Thursday this week.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Marshal's report as presented.***

VI. Firefighter/EMT Staffing, Hiring and Response Capability. The Chief noted as he did earlier they are bringing on one volunteer into the Department. The volunteers are starting to come

out again and have started training. On the scheduled side of the staff, Lt. Hallden has taken over scheduling. This plan was previously arranged under Chief Balletto. Most of the holes in the schedule are being filled by the staff they currently have but just scheduling in a different way by letting people take assigned shifts and taking shifts they are able to rather than a rotation basis. They have assigned some of them and the remainder go in rotation. The part-time unscheduled staff have become scheduled staff. There is not a lot of time on the schedule for them. They are trying to fit them into the schedule because they need to be on the schedule in order to be trained. He is trying to figure out a way to get them on the schedule so they can get training. There was a suggestion to train them with the volunteer drills, but they would need to get paid. There are 3 categories of staff now; full-time, part-time and volunteer. He also has fire police people that are paid when called out. They are not necessarily part-time on the schedule. Trying to work out the weeds on how all of this came together. The Chairman asked if the Chief was confident that he had a handle on what is going on and how to work through it.

Regarding staffing, the Department is doing really well as far as getting the shifts filled. Saturday there was a small issue with staffing. There was a situation because someone got injured and others had booked off already. They almost ordered someone in, but the staff pulled together to help that person out. They have been staffed accordingly and getting the trucks out the door. He will need to discuss this with the Executive Director to figure out procedures for those situations.

*A motion was made by Commissioners Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Chief's report regarding staffing.*

- VII. Old Business. Chairman McIntyre circled back around to the Communications Report as Mr. Lonergan had arrived late to the meeting. Mr. Lonergan had submitted his monthly report for the Board meeting tomorrow night and discussed the report at this meeting. He added to his report that there is a scheduled meeting with the State of CT on Thursday to review the programming template. Radios are in process for the new ambulance.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the addendum to the Communications Report.*

VIII. New Business

- A. Discussion on Future Schedule of Committee Meetings. There had been some discussion with the previous Chairman of Fire Operations and the Executive Director about moving the Fire Operations Committee meeting scheduled for the third Monday of the month to the second Monday of the month. That way there would be more time in between the Fire Operations meeting and the Board of Commissioners' meeting. They did not want to continue to schedule those two meetings together, one on Monday night, the other on Tuesday night. The Chief and FMO reports will need to be prepared one week ahead of time from the previous schedule.

There was a discussion regarding the need for a monthly meeting if there is no old business to come forward or new business to be discussed. It was agreed to keep the Committee on a monthly schedule, but leave the option to cancel if there is no old or new business to come before the Committee. If a meeting is canceled, the FMO and Chief's Reports can be reviewed and voted on at the monthly Board meeting since those reports are also submitted to the Board of Commissioners for their monthly meeting.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to change the Fire Operations Committee meeting schedule from the third Monday of every month to the second Monday of every month, effective in January 2023.*

- B. Chair's Discussion on Vision of Committee. The new Chairman, Commissioner McIntyre, discussed some thoughts he had about the Committee. He started to discuss the length of meetings. He believes they should be as long as necessary but as short as possible. Regarding the division heads, he wanted them to know that the Commissioners that are on this Committee are their advocates to the full Commission. If the division heads need anything, they should not be afraid to bring it up in this forum. Once it has been discussed here, it can be forwarded to the full Board of Commissioners with the support of the Fire Operations Committee.

He noted that everyone in the room has known him a long time. He is not in this position to micromanage anyone. He would like to move a lot of the topics discussed into problem solving. He knows the Division heads very well, and wanted them to know the Committee is there to support them. He is not a micromanager and does not intend to steer the committee that way. The managers in place know their jobs. He is starting to get to know Mr. Holmes and is confident he is the right person for the job. He has made improvements to the FMO in the short time he has been in the position.

- IX. Commissioners' Comments. There were no comments to report.

- X. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert McIntyre, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary