

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 12, 2023

5:30 PM

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

A Special Board of Commissioners' meeting was held on Thursday, October 12, 2023, at 5:30 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and act upon special Fire District business.

Commissioners Roger Rukowicz (President), Donald Smith, Charles Epstein, Robert McIntyre, Mertie Terry, Chip Darius, Donald Goranson and Steve Wygonowski attended. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Marshal Harold Holmes and President of the Firefighter Union Local 4662, Lt. Alan Dominy. Commissioner John Sokolowski was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by President Rukowicz.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner McIntyre and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. Lt. Alan Dominy, President of Local 4662 addressed the Board to let them know on behalf of Local 4662, it has been a pleasure working with the District, the Executive Director, President Rukowicz and Chief Brade to ratify a new Firefighter contract. The Union officers were pleased there was a positive outcome, and the members are in full support of what has been negotiated. Lt. Dominy thanked the Board for working cooperatively with them.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Discussion and Vote on the Negotiated Firefighters' Union Contract with Local 4662. The President noted that all Commissioners received a copy of this contract prior to this meeting for review. The Executive Director explained the process for the negotiations. It was different than the last contract negotiations. They stayed informal for 8 months. There were great discussions, and it was not an easy process. He is hopeful that the negotiating process used this time will remain going forward. The Executive Director strongly supports this contract. They have managed to have the contract address some of the current challenges in the Fire Department. Commissioner Goranson asked the Executive Director if the contract was competitive with other departments in the region.

From the benefit side, Mr. Neto feels they are a little better than average. Salary-wise, they are getting there. They are working to improve the salary side of things.

Commissioner Wygonowski asked if the contract items were budgeted. Mr. Neto explained that what the budget represents is the contract on year one. They plan to be more aggressive with years 2, 3, and 4. The goal is to be more competitive with salaries and stay within the guidelines of the budget. President Rukowicz has been involved in a few negotiations. He stated this one was the best one he has been involved with. Both parties worked together to achieve a common goal. He complimented all involved in the process.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Smith and unanimously approved to accept the Union contract for Local 4662.

- B. Discuss and Choose a Vendor to Perform the Work Replacing the Coles Rd. Roof. President Rukowicz noted that they did not receive the second bid in time for this meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner McIntyre, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to table this item and carry it over onto the Board meeting next week.

- C. Discuss and Possible Decision on Hiring David Bagioni and Wes Lubee for Part-Time Inspectors for the Fire Marshal's Office. The Fire Marshal explained that currently there is himself and Brian Mello working in the office. Mr. Mello works part-time as an Inspector 14 hrs. a week. He cannot work any more hours than that because he is a retired Southington firefighter. Any additional hours worked will cause issues with his pension. With the workload and growth in Cromwell, there is a lot of inspection work. Mr. Holmes is also doing 20 hrs. a week of the Administrative Assistant duties because that position was not filled. He was suggesting 2 part-time inspector positions so that there would be someone in the office every day of the week.

He did not get any responses to the job postings. However, he knew a couple of individuals that were interested prior to the posting. One person is a retired Middletown firefighter that retired in July (Wes Lubee). He spent the last 12 years as an Assistant Fire Marshal in Middletown. The other person is out of Berlin, CT (David Bagioni). He is an EMS Chief in their town as well as Certified Fire Marshal. He is fairly new, but he has been doing investigations over the last year. He completed the rest of the Fire Marshal course and was graduated in June. He is a paramedic and has a lot of fire certifications. Mr. Holmes conducted interviews with Ass't Chief Karl Neubecker. They agreed that both gentlemen would be a good fit. Lt. McKnight and Firefighter Wolmetz have been picking up some of the weekend shifts because they are certified.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Smith and unanimously approved to authorize the Fire Marshal to hire two part-time inspectors, Wes Lubee and David Bagioni.

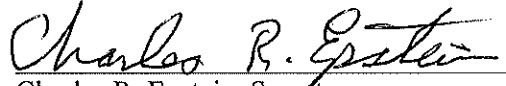
- V. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Terry was grateful that the Fire Department participated in the Rising Star program sponsored by the Cromwell Children's Coalition. The Firefighters' Union, Local 4662, took a half page ad out in the program booklet. The Fire Department tries to stay visible for its residents. For those people who don't get out much,

and saw the ad in the booklet, Commissioner Terry received a lot of positive comments. The Cromwell Children's Coalition and Commissioner Terry personally appreciates the support from the Fire Department's Union.

Commissioner Wygonowski asked about the Committees and their schedules. It was explained that if the changes to the Bylaws are passed, there will be fewer Committees. The committees that will remain are the Water Operations Committee, Tower Committee, Pension and Health & Safety/Bldg. Currently the District's attorney is reviewing the changes to the Bylaws. Once that has been completed, the Bylaws will come before a Town vote. The Recording Secretary explained the process of scheduling committee meetings. This year will not be as cumbersome because the Committees are being reduced.

- VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Darius, seconded by Commissioner Wygonowski and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 PM.

ATTEST:


Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Sec'ty