

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Special District Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 5:30 PM

Coles Road Firehouse

105 Coles Road

Cromwell, CT

A Special District meeting was held on Thursday, at 5:30 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT, to discuss and vote on Interim Plan for Executive Director's open position, effective 2/1/2024.

Commissioners Roger Rukowicz (President), Donald Smith, Charles Epstein, Robert McIntyre, John Sokolowski, Chip Darius and Steve Wygonowski attended. Also attending was Executive Director Julius Neto. Commissioner Terry and Epstein were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30, motion was made by Commissioner Darius and second by Commissioner Sokolowski to accept the agenda posted.

Public Comment James Rude 25 Highridge Road

Good evening.

I would like to thank soon-to- retire Fire District Executive Director Neto for his years of service to the Town of Cromwell. The Town is a better place because of his efforts on behalf of the taxpayers. I wish him all the best for a long, healthy and well-earned retirement.

I am disappointed, however, that the next Fire District Executive Director has yet to be recruited, hired and at work. The Commission has known of this vacancy for a year, with the effort to find a replacement yet another example of inadequate planning, a lack of a sense of urgency, and a lack of decisive action by the Commission.

I have made many comments about the need to improve planning and transparency over the last several years, which involves better communication. I am disappointed with the lack of full disclosure in the January 2024 newsletter, which fails to mention the pending January 31st retirement date of the Executive Director and the current status of the replacement efforts.

And on the issue of transparency, it is always troubling when all of the discussion at a meeting is intended to be held in "executive session". I truly hope that the use of "executive session" is in full compliance with Connecticut Freedom of Information (FOI) laws for all of the items the Commission intends to discuss tonight.

Thank you.

Item III, Executive Session at 5:35 PM Executive Director Neto was invited in.

Out of Executive session at 6:45 PM, meeting resumed at 6:48 PM.

A motion was made by Commissioner Darius Propose to accept Mr. Neto's proposal #1, dated 1/12/2024, as follows: Effective 12:00:01 AM Feb. 1, 2024, Mr. Neto will no longer be

Executive Director, and will become Acting Administrator of the District, acting with the authority of the CEO, at the rate of \$112.97/hour, as an at-will hourly employee. Effective the same date and time Mr. Neto's health, vision, and dental coverage, and vacation time and personal time accrual, will discontinue. Life insurance and sick time will continue in force. Mr. Neto will serve no more than 40 hours per week for the month of February; no more than 30 hours a week for the month of March; no more than 20 hours per week for the month of April. The District will meet to consider the position of acting CEO prior to the end of February, and may choose to assign someone else as acting CEO when the Board deems appropriate. And seconded by Commissioner Sokolowski. All voted in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Darius NOT to accept Mr. Neto's proposal #2, dated 1/12/24. Seconded by Commissioner Smith. All voted in favor of the motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Darius to have another special Commission meeting on 1/24/2024 to discuss and decide on what tasks can be assigned to the District's Division heads, on an interim basis. Seconded by Commissioner Goranson. All voted in favor.

Adjournment at 5:56 PM. Motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commission Darius.

ATTEST:

Roger Rukowicz, President