

# Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE  
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

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

**Tuesday, July 18, 2017**

**5:30 PM**

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

Present: Commissioners John Hamlin (Chairman), David Colligan and Charles Epstein. Also attending were Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Assistant Fire Chief DJ Zordan and Assistant Fire Chief EMS Robert McIntyre. Commissioners Jason Hanners, Robert Donohue and Roger Rukowicz were also in attendance. Commissioner Lee Brow was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Hamlin.
- 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. Approval of the Minutes of May 16, 2017. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Department Operations Committee Meeting minutes of May 16, 2017, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report. Commissioner Colligan stated that he was planning to have a Communications Meeting next week, but because there isn't anything that needs to be voted on, he decided to just give a status report on the Sub-committee's activities. He began by reporting that Norcom has come in and serviced all the vehicles and the boats, that includes the Command vehicles. He added that the Coast Guard has reported to the Fire Department that the Department's radios are bad on the Coast Guard channels. Lt. Roberts has been working on some issues with the radios. The suggestion was made to put a brand new mobile and antenna on the boat, and also purchase a couple of portables for people that are on both boats. They also suggested putting a mobile on the back of Utility 3. This would all be for marine operations, not fire operations. Lt. Roberts has been working with the Fire Chief, and is trying to work out a discount. The original cost of one is \$169. He can get them for \$100 each because he is the Purchasing Agenda for Underwater Construction in Essex. He is planning to go through West Marina, which will offer a large discount. Chris Logan will be asked to install them. If Norcom were to install them, it would cost the District additional funds. The cost will need to be discussed under New Business. Norcom will be providing the Fire Chief with a list of the issues that were found while servicing the vehicles and boats.

The next phase of this project is to service all the portables. He reported that the career staff did a complete inventory of all the radios. Commissioner Colligan reported that the

Department is missing 200 radios. They have accountability for 144 of them. They have been tagged. With the new scanner, the radios will be easier to track. However, to clarify there are still 200 unaccounted for (Portables). They are also trying to determine if these items are usable or old equipment. Further research is needed to determine their status. There is no documentation to explain what happened to the missing items. Deputy Chief Salonia has been trying to look into physical resources and people resources. There is some accountability with pagers and portables. There is no accountability with mobiles and bay stations yet until they are serviced and the ID numbers can be retrieved from the inside. He complimented the career staff for what they have done.

The next phase is to service all the portables. After that the bay stations will be done. Once all of this is completed, reprogramming can be started, and everything will be working correctly. The Fire Chief has drafted protocol on how the frequencies will be used. There will be a meeting of the four Chiefs as well as Captains and Lieutenants to discuss the protocol. Once the protocol has been finalized with the officers, training will be set up. There has been no new information on the grant application. It was noted that they will have to stick with VHF for now. There are not enough subscribers for the 800 system so the FCC will not give it to Cromwell.

Commissioner Colligan has been consulting with the engineers from Norcom who have advised that the low band will be phased out, but a cross band repeater will be available. It will be the correct, 5 channel repeater. Chief Terenzio reported that when PM's were being performed on both the red and black vehicles, it was learned that there are no repeaters in either vehicle. They also learned that two repeaters are not operational, and the repeaters that the Department does have are not geared for fire services which operate with multiple repeaters in close proximity. They would be better suited for Police Operations. The other issue is that the Department has multiple brands/manufacturers. Commissioner Colligan noted that a Commissioner was at an event recently where Hiterras were being used, and the personnel using them had nothing but complaints about them. In the past they had always used Kenwood. Also noted is that the process of correcting radio issues will be a long process. Commissioner Colligan asked Chief Terenzio to look into the cost of 150 portables to service. The logistics will be developed at that time. As far as funding, Chief Terenzio and Commissioner Colligan have stated they were told by their superior that they are OK as far as funding for now by using funding that was originally designated for a roof at the Coles Road Firehouse. Commissioner Colligan stated that no money will be spent unless they know exactly what the money is being spent on. Once all the radios are working, a voting system needs to be put in place in the North end of town at the Chemical feed area. One also needs to be put in the Nike site area. This should happen within a year.

Chief Terenzio stated that he is responsible for providing the safest, quickest operating system in place possible. It was also necessary to simplify the fix. He was also told regarding the vehicles, that it was the most convoluted thing they had ever seen. Norcom has offered a plan to stay on the analog until they can go to digital. In discussing the voting systems, they have used units that they can either lease or sell to Cromwell. Wherever the voting systems are put in is where the digital voting systems will exist. It will not cost the District any additional money, and is a short term fix so that eventually funding may be available in next year's budget to provide a permanent fix. We are the only ones in town that have a fiber optic system. Credit was given to Angel Alvarado for his efforts to provide that for the District. Angel has been asked to be a part of the Radio Committee. He has been doing a lot of research. Commissioner Colligan stated that Mr. Alvarado as well as the career staff needs to be commended for all the work they are doing. The career staff have been doing inventory, and so far they have completed the portables which is only one component of the radio systems. They are trying to use what we have and making it work without spending additional money. It was suggested by Angel to put three telephones in each vehicle where they can only call the numbers that are programmed.

- VI. Reports of Chief Officers. Chief Terenzio reported that they have received a letter of resignation from Career Firefighter Connor Johnson. He will be going to the Greenwich Fire Department. They are working on a process to replace him. There have been some PSAP issues. The Chief stated that the Department is not able to make their own decisions about emergency calls related to the Fire Department. The PSAP automatically fields the calls to the Police Department first. The Chief has emailed the Police Chief to discuss these types of occurrences where the Police Department is determining where the calls should go or who to send them to. According to State Statutes, NFPA and all others entities that govern the Fire Department, the calls should be forwarded to the Fire Department within 30 seconds. The Fire Department will make the decision whether or not to go and who to send. Commissioner Epstein clarified that if Cromwell hears the call, they can go without waiting to be contacted by the PD because Cromwell is the PSAP holder. The Chief has asked Fire Officers and dispatchers to document any times that this practice is being used. The Chief also reported that at the TPC there were a few situations that happened operationally. Deputy Chief Salonia has addressed them. Next year things will be a lot different. On the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday there were some response problems. The Chief and the staff did not have a good assessment to determine who would have been available. Because it was an unusual holiday being on a Tuesday, they thought there would be some difficulties but not to the level that was experienced. For the future they will be sure that the line officers have a better assessment of who is available. Overall responses are up. The Chief is asking the Fire Officers to get together before every monthly officers' Meeting for a staff meeting with the Chief. He has wanted to start having staff meetings, and now that he has everyone's schedules he will be developing a process for it. Rescue I Replacement is on hold until there is a better understanding of the Department's financial status with the radios. He has asked the officers at Court Street to start thinking about what equipment is on board of the Rescue that is important to operate with in the event of a major repair expense occurring with the current unit because Rescue 1 is 26 years old. There is a contingency plan in place. If that vehicle needs to be de-commissioned, Engine 4 will be used. It will be put in service as a squad/rescue. Commissioner Colligan suggested the Chief form a committee to draft a list of items they want to see on a new Rescue. Deputy Chief Salonia has already drafted a report which outlines what is needed. He has worked with the staff at Court Street. The Committee has agreed to allow Chief Terenzio to form an official committee to explore what would be needed on a new Rescue 1. Most of that information is available in Deputy Chief Salonia's report.
- VII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing and Hiring. Chief Terenzio reported on the resignation of Connor Johnson previously. He stated they are beginning the process to replace him now. A test will probably be given.
- VIII. Fire Department Response Capability. This was previously discussed at this meeting.
- IX. Old Business. There was no old business to report.
- X. New Business. A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to authorize the Fire Chief to go ahead and purchase two marine mobile radios with antennas and three portables with microphones at a cost not to exceed \$2,000 (\$200 for each portable with a microphone and \$400 for each mobile plus antenna) to come out of the Communications fund.
- XI. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Epstein had a couple of issues he wished to discuss and ask the Committee for help to move them forward. He discussed the fact that the Department has been trying to get more funding for training for another EMT or MRT class. Commissioner Epstein has seen the list of equipment requested for the class. He will be getting in touch with his contacts to try to get better pricing for some of the items. He feels they should be moving forward. Commissioner Colligan commented that Assistant Chief Zordan had some funding for training taken away. It was explained that at the time of the

request, the P.O. process was frozen. Assistant Chief Zordan reported that the District had said the funding was there, but when the P.O.'s were submitted, they were denied and were told they were frozen because it was the end of the fiscal year. Therefore, they believe \$8,000 was returned to the training budget. The equipment requested is what is needed for the Department to have their own EMS classes. It is going to save the Department money with a cost of \$1,000 per EMT. The new training budget took a cut of \$8,000. Assistant Chief Zordan is requesting to use the money they gave back. It was thought that the funds were encumbered. Chief Terenzio will be following up with the Executive Director.

Commissioner Epstein discussed what he has been learning since he became a Commissioner regarding smaller vs. larger ambulances doing the same job. He has learned that bigger vehicles are used not only as EMS vehicles but also as firefighting vehicles when career people are on duty. One of the things that would be helpful to have on the ambulances is air packs. He suggested that each of the three ambulances have at least two air packs. Chief Terenzio will check with the Deputy Chief to see if there are any airpacks available without spending any money. It was suggested to take the air packs out of the vehicles that are not used to put in the ambulances. The Committee agreed that air packs would be useful and there should be funds available in the budget to get what is needed.

- XII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Johnathon Hamlin, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
7-25-17