

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS **Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions**

Monday, February 4, 2019

5:00 PM

**1 West Street
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Executive Director Julius Neto (Chairman), Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Curt Anderson, EMS; Nicole LaTerra, Fire; and Commissioner Mertie Terry. Commissioner Robert Donohue was also in attendance.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM, by Chairman Neto.
- II. Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2019. A motion was made by Deputy Chief Salonia, seconded by Ms. LaTerra and unanimously approved to table the minutes of January 22, 2019, until the next meeting.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Continue Discussions for Non-Career Staffing Solutions/Possible Approval of Specific Suggestions Related to Solutions. The Chair asked Ms. LaTerra if she wished to elaborate on her presentation of her model from last week. She did meet with Mr. Anderson after the last meeting, and they were able to work on some issues to clarify some points in the presentation. She was comfortable allowing the plan to be shared as a draft, but still felt there were some things to be worked out before it could be considered a final draft. She agreed to have the document scanned and shared with the rest of the subcommittee members. Mr. Neto agreed to scan the document and forward to the rest of the subcommittee. It will be identified as a first draft.

Deputy Fire Chief Salonia gave a brief overview of his model. He mentioned that this model was something he had originally done for school, but he has incorporated some of the realistics of the Cromwell Fire Department and the Fire District. The beginning of the document covers the history of the organization and some of the issues the organization is encountering. It covers NFPA standards, the ISO, classification process and why for safety and community purposes the Department needs to be meeting standards. It then covers a staffing model.

He is not dead set on what the paper is stating such as recommending some of the career staff to a rotating 24 hour schedule. The Deputy Chief does not think that is realistic

because he feels they will be short staffed during the day. He also feels he does not want to breach the original intent of this group meeting. This model does recommend a similar program to the EMS duty crew for the fire side currently for the in-house shift coverage program, where an engine can be staffed with 4 personnel mirroring what is already on duty for evening and weekend EMS crew. That will allow a couple of options to get a piece of fire apparatus out whether it is an Engine or Tack 1. If a second or third ambulance could not be filled, the recommendation would be to have a component of the fire duty coverage cross-trained EMT's capable of driving an ambulance as well. It would eliminate the EMS turnover event to almost nothing.

Part of the model would be to have 6 for a duty crew. Four would be fire and two would be to focus on the ambulance and possibly be a cross-trained component to first respond to medical or staff a second ambulance. The program does not identify categories to classify personnel such as part-time, full-time, or volunteer. The program basically speaks to not a true part-time position, but rather using something similar to what is in place now to reimburse shift coverage for 6 hrs. and to focus on the volunteer component.

He left out personal concerns of jumping too far into a true part-time position somewhat. The main concern being having individuals from the volunteer side that cannot volunteer anymore. That could drastically effect the volunteer operation. He is concerned about going too far too quick. This approach could be recommended to try. If it fails, then move to the part-time component as the next step. Rolling out the level of part-time positions, the schedule would need to be covered, and the budgetary allotment would be exceeded. Bringing in part-time would mean a lot of overhead cost. It was clarified whether or not the Deputy Chief would consider a roll out approach. The Deputy Chief was on the fence as he had concerns about how this would affect the volunteer operation. Drawing from personnel internally, also financially it could exceed what could be done on a shift base program. There is enough in the budget to nominalize a pay per call system. It would be much smaller, but the Deputy Chief thought it could still exist. It was noted that a majority of the volunteers are EMS.

Commissioner Terry clarified that this model was something that could be tried on an interim basis, and they would try to make a decision after that. It was noted that there are still some applicants available that want to become members. Mr. Neto added that anyone about to come on board as a volunteer needs to understand that the process may change in terms of compensation. The Deputy Chief added it is uncertain how successful the model will be until it is tried, but if it fails, it will take away the true guarantee of things in terms of coverage. If there is a part-time component and someone does not show up for a shift, there would be a disciplinary process in place to address it. This was discussion that took place at the last meeting. The only component missing is the structure of how the volunteer model would be set up to guarantee coverage.

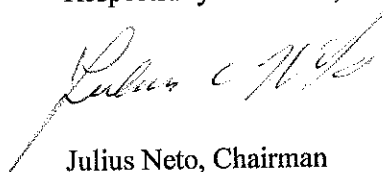
Mr. Neto asked the group to give this some thought as to what should be presented to the Personnel Committee. He thought that one model would be best. The Subcommittee agreed that one model should be presented but it should be tailored to the needs or objectives of the subcommittee. Deputy Chief Salonia referred to the Strategic Plan done by the Chief when he first arrived. He had asked if fire personnel would like to see a shift coverage component. Most of those individuals agreed with that. He wondered if a poll should be done again to see where members stand on that issue again. There was no answer, but nationwide there is a trend of a lack of volunteerism due to a lack of free time for individuals. There was a lengthy discussion about commitments, staffing and

scheduling at a part-time level vs. a volunteer level. Mr. Neto asked the group individually what their thoughts were regarding presenting to the Personnel Committee. It was thought to present at least one model, but no more than two models. A starting point was Ms. LaTerra's model because it is a preliminary step without making a major change that may or may not work. Ms. LaTerra also agreed that using one model might be best, but also have other options available to work into that model to tailor staffing needs. The subcommittee should also have financial information available should the part-time component be worked in. It was also suggested to present a plan but also make the membership aware that all aspects of different models were reviewed. The model presented should be the best solution with room for adjustments. Mr. Neto would like to have a plan to vote on at the next meeting.

Mr. Neto stated the goal for next week will be to digest all of the material that has been presented, come up with some decisions and be ready to vote next week. Mr. Neto explained that once a model is presented to the Personnel Committee, there may be questions from the Personnel Committee to answer. The subcommittee may need to work on addressing the questions or concerns and perhaps meet once or twice to finalize a model that addresses all issues.

- V. Public Comments. Ms. Jennifer Anderson asked if the discussion on part-time was meant to be volunteer part-time or part-time. Mr. Neto explained that a part-time person is considered a part-time employee that receives a work schedule and is paid an hourly wage and receives employee reviews. A volunteer part-time member, is a staff member that is given a 1099 for wages, a stipend, pension and/or fee for services keeping within the guidelines of FLSA. However, part-time has not been defined as yet in terms of skill set. Mr. Anderson asked who would determine the skill set. It was noted that the model could define who would determine that. Or by default it could be the Personnel Committee, the Commissioners or for the subcommittee to give the responsibility to some else such as Chief Terenzio.
- VI. Adjournment. A motion was made by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Deputy Chief Salonia and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Julius Neto, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-20-19