

Cromwell Fire District

1 West Street
Cromwell, CT 06416
Telephone 860-635-4420

FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

7:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse

105 Coles Road

Cromwell, CT

The Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District held their monthly Board of Commissioners' Meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 7:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and act upon Fire and Water Division business.

Commissioners Craig Murphy (President), Johnathon Hamlin, Charles Epstein, Roger Rukowicz, Julius Neto, Lee Brow, David Colligan, Jason Hinnners and Robert Donohue attended. Also attending were Executive Director Michael Dagostino, Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Operations Director S. William Jarzavek and Michael Alibrio from Premier Accounting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, by President Murphy. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Murphy.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted with the following additions under New Business, Item D. Appointment of the Negotiating Committee for the Firefighter Contract. Also noted under New Business, Item C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors, Item 1. Contract for Middlesex Hospital.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments to report.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2018

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the Board of Commissioners' Meeting of February 20, 2018, as submitted.

Commissioner Donohue asked for a follow up on the Financial Report, Page 15, from last month. Commissioner Donohue was referring to the Water Utilities Report. Mr. Alibrio explained that the drastic increase discussed was due to propane for the Water Garage.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MARCH 8, 2018

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of March 8, 2018, as submitted. This meeting was to ratify the Dispatcher's Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME Local 1303. The vote was postponed.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
MARCH 15, 2018

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Special Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of March 15, 2018, as submitted. This meeting was to ratify the Dispatcher's Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME Local 1303.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or written appeals to report.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

- A. Executive Director. The Executive Director's Report for February had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Executive Director highlighted his report for those members of the public that did not have an opportunity to review it ahead of time. The contract with AFSCME Local 1303 for the Dispatching Unit was completed and ratified. The District is now under a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Dispatchers. It was noted that there was a lot of good work done by both sides of the Negotiating Committee. The analysis report from Norcom was received regarding the radio system. It indicated the work that needs to be done, and the price was higher than originally thought. The scope of work was reviewed and changed, and the District is now waiting for a new quote. A short term plan is also being reviewed for the Public Safety Tower. The District is working with AE Com who is the engineering consultant for the District. The Tower Manager has been doing a lot of hard work with Attorney Deneen on the requests being received by vendors. The Water Division has filled their vacancy for a Maintainer II. The position was posted internally. Three applicants had applied for the position. A recommendation will be made to the Personnel Committee this week. The budget process has begun. The draft budget was submitted on February 28. The Executive Committee will be rescheduled to review the proposed budget. It was scheduled for tomorrow, but has been postponed because of the weather. Local 4662's contract with the Firefighters and the District is due to expire on June 30. It is time to start negotiating a new contract. A Negotiating Committee needs to be established, and meeting dates scheduled to begin negotiating the new contract.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director's Report for February as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for February had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio reviewed some of the line items that are starting to get close or over budget. The Department heads are reviewing those in their monthly report. Mr. Alibrio followed up on Commissioner Colligan's request regarding the ambulance billing. Mr. Alibrio spoke with Quick Med Claims over the last few days regarding putting together some reports on ambulance billings and collections. The numbers submitted today for calendar year 2016, were that 99% of revenue the District was entitled to was collected. For calendar year 2017, 92% of revenue was collected so far. Some 2017 billings are still being collected. As far as percentages collected of items that are sent to collections, it is approximately 10%. Their goal is to send the difficult billings to collection agencies. They do their best to work with most of the billings before they go to collections. The District pays more on what the collection agency collects. Quick Med Claims is working on more specific numbers to send to the District.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Rukowicz and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for February as submitted.

- C. Fire Department Chief. The Chief's Report for February had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The Chief gave an update on the Fire Marshal operations improvement. The Chief has been trying to improve communications amongst the staff in the office, and trying to reduce some of the confusion. The two Fire Marshals and the Chief attended an Enforcement Seminar in New Haven last Thursday, March 15. As a result he will be developing some policies and procedures regarding code enforcement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Chief's Report for February as submitted.

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for February had been previously submitted and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Dagostino added that the Water Division sustained some damage to the Dividend Brook Well house and pump house during the last storm. Branches came down from a pine tree next to the building and came through the roof. Mr. Dagostino has been in touch with the insurance agent, and they are processing a claim. There is currently a tarp covering the roof. Commissioner Colligan added a thank you to the Water Department for working through a snow storm on a water main that was broken on private property. They worked with a contractor to get the water back as soon as possible. This was to take care of the residents at Cromwell Hills. Mr. Jarzavek will pass the Board's appreciation on to the Water Division staff.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Operations Report for February as submitted.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations Committee. There was no meeting.

- B. Executive Committee. A meeting was held on March 6, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. It was reported by the Chairman that the budget process has begun. Tomorrow's meeting has been postponed due to weather. He is looking to reschedule something for next week based on the Commissioners' availability.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Committee meeting minutes for March 6, 2018, as submitted.

C. Fire Operations Committee

1. Communications Subcommittee. A meeting was held on February 13, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The information from the meeting was forwarded to the Fire Operations Committee. It was noted that Norcom came in with a price of \$3.2 million for radio improvements/upgrades. It has been negotiated to \$2.8 million. Norcom was supposed to give the Executive Director a quote. The Committee has already decided they are not going to proceed with that amount and are agreeing to the \$46,000 figure at the moment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Communications Subcommittee Meeting minutes of February 13, 2018, as submitted.

- D. Pension Committee. A meeting was held on February 21, 2018. Minutes had been distributed for review. Commissioner Brow explained that the Commissioners were given copies of the Synopsis of Plan Features which gives a breakdown of what is included in the plan. They also received a copy of the administrative reports and a copy of the consultants' presentation which featured a breakdown of what is there for funding and where the funds are invested. It was noted that the documents are lengthy, but Commissioner Brow reported that during the presentation the consultants stated if funding into the plan was stopped today, there are funds available for everyone that is currently in the plan. The plan is in good shape. Commissioner Brow added that another meeting needs to be scheduled to address the fact that the District now has a career Fire Chief who has his own pension plan. He suggested the Commissioners take the time before the next Board meeting to review the material. Any questions they may have can be addressed at the next Board of Commissioners' meeting. It was noted that the Committee agreed to do a review of the plan on a semi-annual basis. Commissioner Neto suggested that the pension information be distributed to the membership in a package format so that there is no longer any misinformation regarding the pension. Other Commissioners noted that Assistant Fire Chief Zordan had been assigned to explain the plan to the membership and address questions. There were some issues he could not address. He will be forwarding those issues to the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief is also developing an SOP to help members understand the pension plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Pension Committee Meeting minutes of February 21, 2018, as submitted.

- E. Personnel Committee. A meeting was held on February 15, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. This meeting was a discussion of Grievances 2018-1, 2018-2, 2018-3, 2018-4 with the Firefighters Union Local 4662. Chairman Hamlin added that the meeting went very well. There was a lot of discussion from both sides. A lot of issues were clarified. From that meeting Grievances 2018-1, 2018-2 and 2018-4 were withdrawn.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee meeting minutes of February 15, 2018, as submitted.

A meeting was also held on March 1, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. This meeting was a discussion of Grievance 2018-3. Chairman Hamlin reported that this meeting also went very well.

A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee meeting minutes of March 1, 2018, as submitted.

- F. Water Operations Committee. Chairman Rukowicz reported that the next quarterly meeting is May 1, 2018, at 5:30 PM, at 1 West Street before the Bylaws Committee meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. The Liaison was not at the meeting. No report was given.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
1. Public Safety Tower Committee. A meeting was held on February 23, 2018. Minutes were not available for this meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to table the Public Safety Tower Committee Meeting minutes of February 23, 2018, until the next Board meeting.

2. Safety/Building Committee. Chairman Hinnners reported that the next quarterly meeting is April 12, 2018, at 5:30 PM, at 1 West Street. There is a lot of progress being made on the bullet points noted from the last meeting. Commissioner Donohue asked about the status of the Americans with Disabilities Act elevator at West Street. There was some discussion about the issues with that elevator. Chairman Hinnners did not have any new solutions to report. It was suggested that the ADA Commission be consulted for a different type of compliance. Mr. Dagostino stated that the elevator is in compliance with what the code was at the time the building was

built. It is probably not in compliance with what the code is today. Commissioner Neto added that the ADA provided the Fire Department with some guidance related to compliance at Court St. since the second floor of that building was not ADA compliant. The compliance at Court St. was signage that was installed. The sign states that if someone is in need of handicap access to the bays, to call a person to make arrangements to guide the handicapped person through the bays or an alternative. This could be a temporary solution for West Street until the issue is resolved. The sign also indicates that the burden falls on the District to provide a solution. Mr. Dagostino stated he would have maintenance staff be the point person with Schindler Elevator. The President stated we would wait for the assessment from Schindler before finding any other solutions such as signage.

3. Bylaws Committee. Chairman Epstein stated the next meeting is May 1, 2018. He has received some input from the Executive Director and some of the Commissioners to work on some items. He wanted to have a workshop prior to the meeting, but he will be away for most of the month of April. If there is not enough time to review all input at the May 1 meeting, the Chairman will call for a workshop.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Rukowicz thanked Nancy Deegan for all the work put into preparing this month's meeting packets. There was a number of meeting minutes that were prepared for this meeting. Commissioner Neto agreed. The President and Board were very appreciative. Commissioner Epstein suggested that the Commissioners think about meeting once a month on an odd night to discuss pressing issues informally as a workshop rather than a meeting. Commissioner Colligan thanked the Water Department one more time.
- B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were no budgetary adjustments to report.
- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. Mr. Dagostino received a contract renewal from Middlesex Hospital for Paramedic Services at a per capita charge of \$1 per person. There is a population of 14,000 in the Town of Cromwell. The original agreement was to charge \$1 for the first year of the contract, \$2 for the second year. They are not increasing the fee for the second year (this year) of the agreement. It will remain at \$1. Commissioner Neto asked if other towns pay this fee. He has understood that less than half of all towns comply with this agreement. The Fire Chief will be researching this. If other towns are not complying, Commissioner Neto would like to know why. He asked what the Town of Cromwell is getting for their service. Commissioner Neto feels Cromwell should be getting better service for the money. Cromwell's paramedics respond much quicker and do not have to travel as far to get to a scene. Commissioner Epstein referred to this as Middlesex's Paramedic availability fee. They have the PSA for the paramedic service for the whole county. They run three paramedics most of the time. More at other times if they have them. They are stationed between Middlesex's other locations. They shift those cars as the call volume works. It is for the availability because they lose money for the cost of that. They do have some leverage over Cromwell because they are Cromwell's medical control. That is how Cromwell ended up with one radio. The District needs to guarantee that when they need a paramedic, they have one. Commissioner Epstein added that Cromwell Fire is a separate taxing district. Normally the bill would go to Town government. There was a discussion and questions regarding the whole process.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to table this contract approval until further information can be obtained from the Middlesex Paramedic program. Mr. Dagostino will try to arrange for Mr. Santacroce, EMS Manager for Middlesex Hospital, to attend the next Board of Commissioners' meeting to address the Board and answer questions.

- D. Appointment of Negotiating Committee. A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and approved 7 to 1 to designate the District Operations Committee to appoint a negotiating committee to work on contract negotiations for the collective bargaining agreement with Firefighters Union Local 4662 as in previous years. Commissioner Brow abstained. Commissioner Brow pointed out that it is in the Bylaws that the Personnel Committee is charged with setting wages, working conditions, benefits, etc. for all District employees. He suggested that since it is important to have a committee in place at this time, the Board move forward with allowing the District Operations Committee to appoint a negotiating committee, and when the Bylaws Committee meets, the procedures will be discussed and a clarification made as to the responsibilities of the Personnel Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicole LaTerra, 13 Hicksville Road, suggested that the EMS staff of Cromwell be made aware of any meetings on the EMS issue so that they will be allowed to also ask questions. Cromwell is involved with transport and does a good job beyond waiting for someone from Middlesex to arrive on scene.

Ms. LaTerra also mentioned that last month the District payroll for volunteers was delayed. Some individuals within the volunteer membership were interested to know what happened and why there was a delay. They also want to know if something is in place to avoid this type of issue in the future. It seemed to have affected the majority of the fire and EMS volunteers. The Fire Chief was not aware of this issue. There is a pay schedule that has been published, but in this instance it was not followed. The Fire Chief stated if it was reported to him, he would have forwarded the issue to the Executive Director. He was aware of the stipend payment delay, but not the recent volunteer payment. These payments were delayed by one week. Ms. LaTerra stated the reason given was that there is one person that does the payments, and that person was on vacation. Mr. Dagostino stated he would look into what happened. The President recommended that if there are concerns in the future regarding payroll schedules, the Fire Chief be notified. He will work with administration to correct the issue since the Board is not aware of day-to-day operations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Neto and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 PM.

ATTEST:

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
4-3-18

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary