

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, March 8, 2018

5:30 PM

**1 West Street
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Craig Murphy (President), Johnathon Hamlin, Julius Neto, Charles Epstein, Roger Rukowicz, Jason Hanners and Robert Donohue. Commissioners David Colligan and Lee Brow were absent.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by President Murphy.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ratification of Dispatchers Union Collective Bargaining Agreement. President Murphy began by stating this agreement has been the result of many hours of negotiations by the Negotiating Committee which consisted of President Murphy, Commissioner Neto, Attorney Weinstock, the Dispatchers and their attorney. It was one year and 9 months' worth of meetings. It was a lengthy process that now needs to be approved by the full Board of Commissioners. The President had sent all Board members a copy of the draft of the agreement. It was approved by the Dispatchers at the end of February. The President asked for advice from the other Commissioners regarding what has been done in the past with other bargaining units and the approval process by the Board. He did not know to what extent the Board could ask questions and review the contract because a negotiating team had already been in place. Commissioner Neto stated that the draft document was the culmination of a lot of discussions give and take. The Union had a perspective that was put on the table. The Board/Management had a different perspective on some issues, but a similar perspective on others. The process of the Negotiating Committee was to negotiate the details and work those issues through. It was not meant to get to a point where the responsibility of working through details becomes the Commissioners' responsibility. The members of the Commission that were on the Negotiating Committee bargained in good faith every word. There was a lot of work put into the agreement by both sides which is referred to as good faith bargaining. The end result being a document that both sides can live with. It is not ideal

for either Management's or Labor's perspective because there is no definition of "ideal" in this case. However, it is somewhere in the middle.

If there are concerns, they need to be identified and determined how significant they are. It is important that they are addressed so that Commissioners are comfortable voting on this agreement. If there are "yes" votes, the process can continue. If there are "no" votes, those issues need to be identified so that they can be worked out. The Commissioners have a right to vote the Agreement down if there is cause. The negotiating committee has a responsibility to support the document as it exists. If the Board wants to go through the document page by page, the resources needed to do that will be problematic.

Commissioner Epstein stated that he received the document two days ago. He has reviewed the first ten pages, and he has questions on Pages 1 through 10. He is not prepared to vote on the whole document. He does not know if it needs to be gone through Article by Article or if more time is needed to go through it. He did not know if other Commissioners agreed, but he needed more time to go through it. He did have some questions. He stated that he felt the document was not given to him in a significant amount of time with their schedules and weather situations. He did not agree or disagree with the document, but he did have questions. The President stated that he needed to understand the scope of the Commissioners' concerns.

Commissioner Hamlin stated that his comments were only related to gender usage throughout the document, which just seemed to relate to an oversight. Commissioner Donohue stated that he has read through the document and only had a few minor clerical issues. Commissioner Hinnners stated that he has read through the document. He agreed with Commissioner Donohue and also trusts the work of those on the Negotiating Committee. It was worked on by professional, intelligent people. Commissioner Rukowicz stated that he had been involved in many contract negotiations with his former employer, Pratt & Whitney. He was of the opinion that both sides did a very good job. He was very impressed with the language of the contract. As long as the Dispatchers and the Negotiating Committee are satisfied, he had no problem with it. There were a couple of minor things. No one meant to disagree with Commissioner Epstein, and they respect his opinion. It is hard to understand a document such as this if you have never worked with it before.

It was noted that the Dispatchers ratified the agreement on February 27, 2018. It could not be distributed to the Commissioners until it was ratified by the Dispatchers. If it was not ratified by the Dispatchers at that time, the document would have to be revised before it could be distributed. President Murphy stated the Board can do one of two things, it can be voted on tonight but that would not be fair to Commissioner Epstein or the vote could be postponed for perhaps a week. There was discussion regarding how to address the concerns of Commissioner Epstein.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin and seconded by Commissioner Neto to hear the concerns of Commissioner Epstein and then to vote on the agreement. President Murphy agreed to listen to the concerns and determine if any were topics to be renegotiated. It was suggested to vote on each section. Commissioner Hamlin withdrew the motion. It was agreed that all comments need to be submitted to the President within the next week. The President will consolidate and distribute the comments via email before next Thursday, March 15.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to table the discussion on the agreement to a week from today on March 15, 2018, at 5:30 PM so that Commissioner Epstein had an opportunity to read and process the document to its full extent.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Neto, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 PM.

ATTEST:

Charles R. Epstein, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
3-20-18