

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING
Proposed Ordinance Establishing Fire Marshal Fees
Thursday, February 17, 2022
6:00 PM
Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

A Public Hearing with the electors and citizens of the Cromwell Fire District was held on Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 6:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and consider a proposed ordinance establishing Fire Marshal fees.

Commissioners Jason Hinnners (Vice President), Robert Donohue and Chip Darius were present. Also attending the hearing were Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Marshal Harold Holmes and Fire Chief Jason Balletto.

The hearing was called to order at 6:03 PM, by Vice President Jason Hinnners.

The Executive Director read the Public Hearing notice as posted by the District. A copy is attached to the notes on file in the Fire District Office.

Fire Marshal Harold Holmes gave a brief overview of the proposed ordinance and fees. Copies of the proposed ordinance and fee schedule were distributed for review. A copy is attached to the notes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Holmes explained that during the second cycle of changes to the fire codes approximately 6 years ago, the State authorized towns and municipalities to establish fees for permits to operate different businesses. The proposed fee list that was distributed at this hearing was tailored to Cromwell's needs for permits and inspections. There is a more comprehensive list included with the official Fire Codes.

Fire Marshals have an unfunded mandate because they are told by the State of CT to go out and do inspections with an inspection schedule of up to one year for some inspections, and up to four years for other different types of occupancies. These occupancies are required to have a permit by the new Fire Codes. Most of the inspections need to have a permit in order to operate within the Town.

Currently this is an unfunded mandate for the Fire District. The Cromwell Building Department collects \$20 on every \$1,000 for a building permit. The new building permit for Pilgrim Manor was \$354,000, and the Building Department does not have to revisit the site. The FMO has to go back annually to do inspections of the property.

The change in the fire code allows the FMO to do a fee structure. Blasting and fire work permits are set by the State. Mr. Holmes explained the process of reviewing plans and the timeline involved. He reviewed the fee schedule and noted if there is more than one permit requested at the same location, the FMO will charge only one fee which would be the higher inspection fee.

Plan reviews are all based on square footage. The Cromwell FMO cannot do plans electronically. They do not have that capability. A system will be set up so the FMO collects the fees. A letter will be sent out before each inspection. The recipient can either send in their check or pay at the time of the service. They will get a receipt from their check. There is software in the works that should be up and running in a few weeks to assist with documentation.

James Rude, Highridge Rd., asked for an approximate figure of how much would be collected in fees and whether or not it was budgeted in the current fiscal year. Mr. Neto responded that the District does anticipate some revenue. They will be targeting up to \$8,000 this year. Mr. Rude asked how the line items were determined. They researched towns that were similar to Cromwell to come up with a target amount. The process was started in October but was delayed due to staffing changes.

Chief Balletto stated this will be a great revenue opportunity for the District and the community with all the new construction and the responsibilities of the FMO. Also included with the fee schedule was bonfires as there has been some misunderstanding between the District and the Town as far as who is responsible. The Town does not regulate bonfires or ceremonial fires. Now the FMO can regulate and enforce that type of event.

There being no further comments or concerns, a motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Darius and approved to adjourn the public hearing at 6:20 PM.

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary