

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, April 25, 2022

5:30 PM

Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Roger Rukowicz (Chairman), Mertie Terry, Robert Donohue and Robert McIntyre. Also attending were Executive Director Julius Neto, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Brade and Accountant Michael Alibrio. Commissioner Chip Darius was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:45 PM, by Chairman Rukowicz.
- II. Approval of the Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner McIntyre, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented.
- III. Public Comment. Commissioner Donohue had public comment because he is not a member of the Executive Committee. He is hoping that a Bylaws Committee meeting will be scheduled soon because he would like to propose language in the Bylaws that would allow the budget process to begin sooner than the end of April. He has heard around Town that the Board is not being fully transparent in its budget process because they wait until the last minute to prepare their budget. The Town sets all its budget meetings before the District is prepared. Commissioner Donohue would like to see the District have the same timeline as the Town in terms of the budget process.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Fire Department Budget FY 2022/2023. The Executive Director distributed 2 handouts. One was a worksheet/spreadsheets of the General Fund budget and the Water Division Enterprise Fund budget; the other was a budget highlight sheet one for the General Fund and one for the Water Enterprise Fund. Copies are attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office.

The first portion of the handout with bullet points was the General Fund proposed 22/23 budget highlights. It gave highlights of various line items that showed either reductions or increases. Some of those line items were Fire Department payroll, Fire Department operating expenses, Administration, IT, FMO, Communications, Signals & Alarms, Building and Grounds. The last page of the General Fund highlights noted that if Option

1 was voted on, there would be a zero mil increase. If Option 2 was chosen, there will be a .5 mil tax increase.

The worksheets/spreadsheets for the General Fund showed an Option 1 and Option 2. Revenue was listed first, and expenses followed. The revenue was discussed first. The Executive Director reminded everyone that the re-evaluations on property by the Town will occur next year. The grand list grew by approximately 3%. If expenses are greater than revenue, then a proposed tax increase would be in order or take from the General fund balance or Tower fund balance. The Committee reviewed the General Fund budget expenses line by line.

The first option as noted would be no tax increase. Items were identified in key areas on the Capital side where it was decided to put some things off for another year. They would need to go to alternative sources to achieve their initiatives such as the Tower Fund or Fund Balance. So Option 1 is a balanced budget with funds needed coming from the Tower fund or General fund balance.

Option 2 was the same process. They took the needs and left some capital based on Truck 1 still being in the fleet. If it remains in the fleet, the District would need to invest some money into it, and it would take some flexibility away from the Equipment Reserve fund. They also discussed reducing expenses by selling Truck 1. There was also some discussion about what the State will be doing regarding taxes. The Chief had researched the value of Truck 1, and reported he could get \$350,000, from Brighton, Alabama. They would take 10% from the price and the rest of the sale would be going to the District.

If Option 2 is chosen, there will be \$22,000 for an Assistant Chief of Training position. It was noted that 4 new career firefighters have come on board. There is also funding in this budget for the 2nd ambulance for 7 days a week for 12 hours. The Committee also agreed to keep \$7,500 in the budget for training.

The FMO was discussed. They are surviving with the limited resources they have. It is basically Harold Holmes as Fire Marshal and Colin Whalen as a part-time inspector. The Committee discussed whether or not to keep Truck 1. To operate this apparatus requires special training and handling. If it is decided to keep it, the Department will need to change the way it is operated and staffed. The difference between keeping Truck 1 with an appropriation to staff it and selling Truck 1 would be what the tax increase would be. The Chief reviewed the equipment reserve fund. He talked about creating seed money for apparatus and equipment replacement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rukowicz, seconded by Commissioner Terry and approved 2 to 1 to take \$7,500 from the Trust fund to put into Training. Commissioner McIntyre voted nay.

A motion was made by Commissioner Terry, seconded by Commissioner McIntyre and unanimously approved to vote for Option 1 of the General Fund budget 2022/2023 leaving that budget with a total figure of \$5,957,816.

- V. Adjournment. There being no further business a motion was made by Commissioner McIntyre, seconded by Commissioner Terry and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Rukowicz, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary

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