

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Fire Operations Committee Meeting

Monday, June 20, 2022

5:30 PM

Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners David Colligan (Chairman), Robert Donohue and Charles Epstein. Also attending were President LeRoy Brow, Executive Director Julius Neto, Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Fire Marshal Harold Holmes, Communication Manager Justin Lonergan, Firefighters Lt. William McKnight, Nicholas Schenartz and Corey Lafontaine. Commissioner Jason Hinners was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM, by Chairman Colligan.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented.
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 16, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes of May 16, 2022, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report. Mr. Lonergan reported that he spoke with Mr. Zito today to find out the status of the project with the State. Mr. Zito has been continuously asking with no response from the State. The Chairman asked if this was hindering the radio operations for the District. Mr. Lonergan replied internally no, but mutual aid-wise, yes. It is a bit of a challenge in Middletown if they turn on the interop patch. The District cannot just program Middletown or anyone else into their system without State approval because State frequencies are involved.

They could move forward with the reprogramming of the things that are not on the State's system, but that would take up the programming cost, and then the rest of the programming that would need to be done once State approval is done would be an additional cost. The Chairman was concerned about the time it is taking to get State approval. Mr. Lonergan explained they have copied the radios they currently have with the new system. They did not lose anything to go from the old radio system to the new system. Mr. Zito had been on vacation for a couple of weeks, but now that he is back, he will continue to pursue the State for approval for as long as it takes. Mr. Lonergan reminded everyone at the beginning of the

planning stages of the project the Committee was advised about the possible down time waiting for State approval.

Chairman Colligan asked if the generator system at Holy Apostles was all set to go. Mr. Lonergan reported they tested the generator and it works. The cable was short, and they were concerned about access during the wintertime. Mr. Palmieri is considering ways to access the generator during bad weather. They did approach Holy Apostles requesting some type of access to the generator through their property. Holy Apostles wanted to know how giving the District access to the generator would benefit them. Mr. Neto suggested that the District come up with some type of incentive for Holy Apostles to agree to give the District access to the generator during bad weather.

Commissioner Colligan suggested doing some type of drill at Holy Apostles to see how long it would take to set things up in an emergency. Mr. Lonergan stated the site will not shut down on its own unless the batteries run out. The Chairman wanted to know if there was any type of procedure in place should there be a power outage. If it does turn itself off, it is a receiver site and will function fine. Mr. Lonergan suggested finding out what the power consumption is.

Chairman Colligan would like to see this generator project finalized so procedures are in place before an emergency situation forces them to react without a plan. He asked that this item remain on the Fire Ops. agenda under Old Business.

Mr. Lonergan discussed the service contract with Motorola. The District is on a temporary contract right now. The new contract will go into effect July 1. The District is waiting for final paperwork from Motorola.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the Communication Report as presented.

VI. Reports of Chief Officers. Chief Balletto reported there were no changes to the report he submitted. May was a very busy month. The Department has been participating in many activities making their presence known around Town. Regarding training, the Department has started to complete all of its mandated training. 98% of the Department will be taking HazMat Ops. Annual Refresher. Next week will be 40% of the Department for Infection Control. All personnel have had their physicals done for the year. There were 17 turnovers of calls in the month of May. He has reviewed all the QA work that his office has done with EMS billing. Since March 1, 2022, to the present they have QA'd 700 reports.

The Chairman asked about the status of Truck 1. It is back in service and has finally been inspected. The Chief will be doing some updates on documentation and will be contacting Brighton to see if Truck 1 can be put up for sale. They took the radio off Truck 1 to put on Engine 1. There is a massive back order with the radio systems. There are no spares. Hoses are also back ordered until September/October because there are difficulties obtaining rubber. They want to put hose on the new piece because next week the Chief would like to see personnel pumping with the new apparatus so they can get comfortable with it when it is put into service.

1. Fire Marshal's Office. Mr. Holmes stated there were no changes to his report. He has included a new report on the last page. The report shows total permit fees for the month of May. \$2,175 was collected in the month of May. \$1,100 was for the TPC. Mr.

Holmes also mentioned that food trucks have been showing up at various activities around Town and the FMO has never inspected food trucks before. This is something new to consider for the FMO because they are basically restaurants on wheels.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal reports for May as submitted.

VII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing, Hiring and Response Capability. The Chief announced that Jarred Fongemie started today as a career firefighter based on the approval of the Personnel Committee. He will be sworn in tomorrow at the Board of Commissioners meeting. He was the next in line on the candidate list. He is an internal candidate that was hired in December. The Chief onboarded another part-time person, Timothy Sullivan. The Chief is also talking to Firefighter Engels brother who is interested in becoming a part-time firefighter. He already has his CPAT. He is working on his EMT certification. The Chief advised him that once he has completed his EMT certification he should reach out to the Chief again.

VIII. Old Business

A. Update on Utilization of Court Street and Coles Road Firehouses. Chief Balletto requested that the Committee make a recommendation on which firehouse to use to serve what purpose. The Chief will accommodate whatever decision is made. He is anxious to move forward. Presentations on the pros and cons of Court Street and Coles Road have been given by the Chief, the Executive Director and Local 4662. They were hoping to have a decision by July, and this seems like the best opportunity to act.

President Brow was in favor of moving the firefighters to Coles Road on a temporary basis to be more compliant with sleeping arrangements for the female firefighters. The President was not in favor of making the move permanent. He approves of this move only until Court St. can be retrofitted. He would also be in favor of moving the Chief and his assistant to either Coles Road or West St. to be ADA compliant.

The Chief has done some measuring at Court St. He also purchased 9 new beds for the firefighters to replace the ones that are falling apart. There is room at Court St. to put 6 beds into the Chief's office area where the officer rack is and add 3 female bunks. They would have to produce an RFP going forward to repair Court St. This will buy some time until then.

The Executive Director discussed a short-term solution by leaving the career firefighters at Court St. He suggested moving Lisa and the Chief either to Coles Road or West St. Then the second floor of Court St. can be rearranged to meet some standards. There will still be the restroom and shower issue, but the solution to the restroom issue with signage is working now. With these issues temporarily addressed, within the next year or two a plan can be developed for a Court St. long term renovation to meet required standards.

Generator, A/C and heating are all things that need improvement to meet the needs of a full-time firehouse at Coles Rd. It would be an investment that wouldn't be wasted, but those resources could also be used to renovate Court St. because that is the most operationally centralized environment. The ADA issue goes away once the Chief is removed from Court St. If a second bathroom was added to the second floor with showers that would eliminate any gender challenges. The Chief noted that there needs to

be a plan in place. He added that he has been discussing with the Executive Director some information he received that the Federal Government will be coming out with a new grant proposal that will be established for renovations, remodeling or construction of firehouses. The proposal is supposed to be published in September or October of 2022. This will give the Department an opportunity to come up with a plan. He has contact information for the engineer and architect that worked on Court St. He was hoping to reach out to them to get some ideas for renovations.

The Chief reported that the Legislature has passed the Cancer Bill. The Department does not have the exhaust system for every one of the apparatus that are at Coles Road to go out in the same direction. The Chief has concerns about that. He has discussed with the Executive Director to put in the NFRS reports special studies for any carcinogens. The Chief is looking to outfit lockers at Coles Road so if the crews go to a structure fire, they can secure secondary clothing at Coles Road. After the job they can report to Coles Road, take their showers, get dressed and go back to duty. They have been coming up with plans. There were also recommendations to pull the carpet up at Coles Road and put flooring down. The prices continue to rise. The generator here was not on the emergency system. The electricians that were consulted were hesitant to do any work because of the technology used. The process would not be simple, and it would be costly. One recommendation would be to put another generator next to the existing one.

The Chairman thought that the best recommendation would be to move the Chief and Lisa to Coles Road. Leave the firefighters at Court St. Commissioner Epstein wanted to know if any of the bunk rooms have to be extended or redesigned to meet standards. The Chief stated that they would not. The new standard is 60 sq. ft. per bed. They have already checked, and they meet the standards in the officers' bunk area, the firefighter area and the female area. This would be temporary until a permanent solution is found. The Department will not be in any violation as long as a plan is in place.

Mr. Neto brought up the property next to the Court St. Station (Scanell's, Gardiner's). The District would be interested in using it for parking rather than building. It would be worth getting the land donated.

The Chairman again stated that the best solution would be to move Lisa and the Chief out to Coles Road, set up the D-Con procedure for Coles Road and get plans in place for Court St. The hope is to apply for grant money to support the financial component.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to accept the plan to move Chief Balletto and Lisa Pandolfini to the Coles Road firehouse, to repurpose the second floor at Court St. as bunk rooms to accommodate the fire officers, firefighters and female firefighters and setting up D-Con procedures to be in place at Coles Road for any major structure fires where members will need to D-Con and shower. Lockers will be provided.

The Chairman would like to keep this on the agenda so that the Chief can provide updates every month.

IX. New Business

- A. Discussion on Accreditation Plan for Communication Center. The Executive Director explained that there had been some discussions at previous meetings about accrediting

the Communication Center. The Communication Manager did some preliminary work to find out what being accredited would entail. Step 1 would involve lots of time, resources, training and accountability to make that center accredited. They wanted to put this on the agenda as a discussion point, however, based on Justin's research and discussions, this will require some serious commitment from the District. The 2023 budget does not accommodate any of this. They are respectfully suggesting that this item be tabled. If the Commission still wants to go through the process of being accredited, it needs to be supported with schedules and software purchases separate from any staffing changes.

Mr. Lonergan added there is an application fee by the National Academy for the accreditation process. There is a six month process for review. The District would have to pay for someone to visit the Communication Center. The bigger hurdle is the administrative time commitment for staff for meetings. The application process to get accredited for two platforms which is EMD, EFD is approximately \$6,000 a year. There is a lot of time required for Justin and staff to go to meetings and required training. The upside to being accredited is that Cromwell always does a great job, and they have statistical data to support that with EMD, EFD. This is something to strive for as well as a greater rating for ISO. There are some mountains to climb for the Communication Center in terms of their budget. Putting any resources towards this project would be poorly timed.

Mr. Lonergan also reported that they meet Ace accreditation levels monthly. Mr. Lonergan will be giving a report at the Board of Commissioners' meeting tomorrow night that shows that performance level. To go through the accreditation process would be a great achievement, but Cromwell is already doing what that takes to meet accreditation levels even though they are not accredited. The President asked what it would do for the District to become accredited. It basically gives the District bragging rights.

The President would recommend supporting accreditation and moving forward. He suggested moving this item to the Executive Committee which may become the Budget & Audit Committee when the Bylaws are revised. He would like to see this included in the next budget cycle to see what will be needed for funding and how that impacts the process. Mr. Lonergan stated what he can do is start the process such as getting the committees together to start building a foundation for the accreditation process. He would like to have that platform ready so that when it is time to make the financial jump, they will be prepared. Commissioner Epstein explained his experiences with the accreditation process. He agreed that there will be a lot of time commitment by staff to attend meetings. It will take a few years to achieve accreditation status.

The Chairman agreed to table this item while still having the Communication Manager move forward on the preliminary stages of the process. The financial component will be reviewed at a later time. Mr. Lonergan was asked to establish a timeline for the process.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to go forward with the process of accrediting the Communication Center over the next 3 to 4 years.

The President suggested that the cost factor be determined so that the issue can be turned over to the Executive Committee so that it can be on their agenda when they start to work on budgets. The Quality Assurance program is what drives the Ace program. When QA standards are met, an application for Ace can be submitted. He believed the motion

should be to “continue to develop the Quality Assurance program in pursuit of Ace status and simultaneously evaluate the cost of full accreditation.”

Commissioner Epstein withdrew his motion, Commissioner Donohue withdrew his second.

A revised motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to go forward with the process of accrediting the Communication Center over the next 3 to 4 years, in the meantime gathering any information needed to make any permanent decisions based on need and cost.

- B. Discussion and Possible Approval on Opening Up Dialogue with the Town of Cromwell Regarding 1841 Fire Brigade Pumper. Chief Balletto noted that the Fire Department has a beautiful piece in storage at Coles Road. It is an 1841 Fire Brigade Pumper known as a “gig.” The Chief proposed starting some discussion with the Town of Cromwell to relocate the Gig to Town Hall to be put on display so people within the community can see it. A plaque can be displayed identifying it and including some background information. It would be a great opportunity to share some of the Fire Department history with the residents and visitors that go to Town Hall.

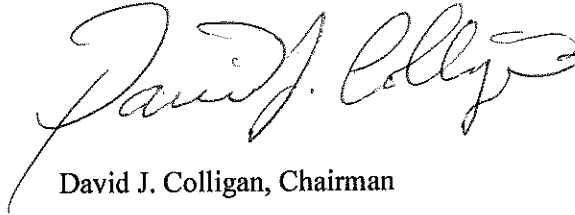
President Brow was in full agreement with the Chief. However, he did feel that if the Fire Department has a need to use it for a parade or to display at a show, they would like to have access to it. The District will not be giving this piece to the Town. It will not be given to anyone and will remain as a piece of property of the Cromwell Fire District. It will actually be considered a piece of art that the District is lending to the community. It was agreed that there needs to be a written agreement in place between the Town and the Fire District.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to authorize the Chief to move forward on discussions with the Town to display the 1841 Fire Brigade Pumper at Town Hall.

- X. Commissioners’ Comments. The Chairman asked Chief Balletto to give an update on the activities at the TPC. The Chief reported that right now there are six individuals that are assigned to the tournament. On Wednesday he will increase that to 8 people. Right now there is an engine there, a brush truck and an ambulance. Starting on Wednesday there will be two individuals on corporate row to protect the tents and providing fire suppression early on. The Command vehicle is at the Chemfeed building. With approval from the Executive Director and with gas prices so high, the RV/communications vehicle was going to be run on a generator for the entire event. A plug outlet was installed on the outside so they could give electric power to the RV. Fire Marshal Holmes has been going to the informational meetings that are being held every day at 6:45 AM. Chief Balletto, Fire Marshal Holmes and Assistant Fire Chief Brade inspected 43 tents there. Lt. McKnight and Harold Holmes inspected all the propane tanks. Mr. Holmes did inspections again today checking all fire extinguishers. The Chief is concerned about crowds on Saturday and Sunday. The weather is supposed to be hot and humid. Assistant Chief Brade will be there most of the weekend with a Duty Officer.

- XI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to adjourn at 6:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David J. Colligan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

David J. Colligan, Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary