

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 **Public Safety Tower Committee Meeting**

Friday, June 2, 2023

10:00 AM

**1 West Street
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Charles Epstein (Co-Chair), Donald Smith and Roger Rukowicz (President), Police Chief Denise Lamontagne (Co-Chair), Police Captain Fred Sifodaskalakis, member Emeritus Donald Swanson, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Fire Chief Jason Brade, Executive Director Julius Neto, Communication Manager Justin Lonergan and Tower Manager Angel Alvarado via conference call.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM, by Co-Chair Commissioner Charles Epstein.
- II. Approval of Agenda. Before approving the agenda, the Executive Director requested to add the FY' 24 Public Safety Communications Tower Fund recommended budget as Item D. under New Business.

A motion was made by Chief Lamontagne, seconded by Executive Director Neto and unanimously approved to accept the Agenda as presented with the addition of Item D. under New Business.

- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. Old Business. There was no old business to report.
- V. New Business

- A. Generator Replacement Status. Mr. Alvarado reported that the last quote for this project was done at the end of 2020. Since then there have been a lot of projects that have been started. There were upgrades as well as reinforcement of the structure done. This meant that moving forward with the generator replacement got tabled even though there was approval of funding to move forward.

Angel worked with Attorney Dineen to get more support from the providers. He felt that T-Mobile needed to be a larger contributor to that project. Attorney Dineen worked out what their investment would look like in terms of capital investment. Angel is looking at Huntington Power to upgrade the existing quote.

Mr. Neto explained that T-Mobile never participated with the generator all these years. They put in a request for a smaller generator for their own system. The Tower Committee did not approve that request. Instead they need to contribute a percentage of the cost of the new generator. The other providers, AT&T and Verizon provided some funding for the present generator.

Along with the generator they will also be taking the time to upgrade the switches and wiring. At the time that the District took over the shack that AT&T built, there was a little bit of crossover with power usage. The District identified it, and Mr. Alvarado had Huntington come out and assess the situation. They wanted to separate each circuit so there was an automatic transfer switch for each provider and clean up all the electrical issues. This is part of the generator upgrade project.

T-Mobile at the time had never moved forward with contributing to this. Because they had no backup power, they asked the District if they could get their own generator. They were told that there is room for them to join the Fire District on this project. Mr. Neto added that the strategy long or short term has always been to try to get the vendors to contribute to as much of the infrastructure as possible using some of their own resources.

It was noted that the vendors have contributed between \$30,000 and \$50,000 depending on what was contributed for their initial capital investment that was used to get the site up and running. Mr. Lonergan met with someone from Huntington Power a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Alvarado did not hear anything back from them, and he spoke to Mike yesterday who is still working on the quote. The last one was around \$110,000 and he believes the refresh will be around the same amount.

- B. Update and Status of Verizon & AT&T Upgrades. Mr. Alvarado explained that post reinforcement the upgrades were done successfully about 6 – 8 months ago. The structure of the Tower was reinforced, and they gained an additional 18% - 20% in capacity. They leveraged that with other providers to recruit more interest.

Initially AT&T was the capital investor to move forward with the reinforcement project. Subsequently all the other providers were looking to jump into this. The District went with Verizon. They put in their capital investment to cover and offset the costs that AT&T accrued. This means that both AT&T and Verizon have been upgrading. They are at the point now where T-Mobile needs to work with the investment on the generator as well as the capital expenses for the upgrade on their equipment.

Mr. Lonergan reported that Sprint has removed themselves completely from the Tower. That action will provide additional load capacity for the tower. He added that there are a lot of old radio antennas and a couple of microwave dishes on the ground at the Tower site. He would like to get these items removed from the site. He believed they are old Fire Department items. Cromwell owns the equipment that is on the front of the structure which was from the upgrade of the digital equipment. The long antennas behind the structure behind the first cabinet are from the previous upgrade that happened 8 – 10 years ago. It was agreed to get rid of the equipment at the transfer station.

- C. Update on the Tower Camera System Upgrades. Mr. Lonergan explained that for the last couple of years he has been working on identifying, upgrading and /or replacing the camera system for security. The Tower site with the water tank is at the top of the list for upgrading. They are very close to selecting a vendor. They do not have the full funding

for the project so they are going to be isolating sites that are more of a priority than others. The Tower site with the water tank is one of the first areas they will be looking at to replace camera systems.

The District has talked to the Police Department about pulling things together and working together on the operating system. The most likely vendor will be Utility Communications. They will be working with the Commissioners to make sure it is an option they would like to explore. The Tower site will get a significant upgrade in camera systems. It will also be alert based. Any activity will be alerting Dispatch. The wells and Chemfeed will be the next site to be done. They are waiting for a final price for the monthly increases. The financial support will be split between Fire and Water. All systems will be merged into one security system.

- D. FY' 24 Public Safety Communications Tower Fund Recommended Budget. Copies of the recommended budget were distributed to the Committee members for review. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. The generator replacement funding will come from T-Mobile, and whatever is not covered will have to come out of the Tower fund. They built up the fund through the other providers to be used for reinforcement of the structure. They have that reserve for reinforcement or annual improvement projects. With the contribution of T-Mobile it offsets the cost by \$30,000. The Committee agreed to contribute \$5,000 to the fund from both the Fire District and Police Department.

A motion was made by Chief Lamontagne, seconded by Mr. Palmieri and unanimously approved to put \$10,000 (\$5,000 from CFD and \$5,000 from PD) into the Contribution - Tower Improvement Fund.

A motion was made by Chief Lamontagne, seconded by Executive Director Neto and unanimously approved to accept the amended Tower Fund recommended budget.

- VI. Commissioners' Comments. President Rukowicz on behalf of the Fire District thanked Chief Lamontagne for her work on the Tower committee. Her cooperation is very much appreciated. He noted that it will be sad to see her retire at the end of the month. He has known her for a long time, and she has done a fantastic job. He thanked her for a job well done. Capt. Fred will be taking over July 1. He wished him the best of luck and promised the same cooperation from the Fire District to Capt. Fred as was given to Chief Lamontagne.
- VII. Adjournment. There being no further business a motion was made by Chief Lamontagne, seconded by Chief Brade and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles R. Epstein, Co-Chair

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary