

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 3, 2024, 10:00 AM
West Street Firehouse
1 West Street
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Roger Rukowicz (President), Donald Smith and Charles Epstein. Also in attendance was Executive Director Julius Neto.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM, by President Rukowicz.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Smith and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. James Rude, 25 Highridge Road, commented that he continues to hear that the Commission would like to see more public attendance at meetings. Unfortunately when meetings are scheduled at the last minute and held at times such as 10:00 AM, it is not surprising there is limited public attendance. He received an email dated yesterday at 10:16 AM for today's 10:00 AM meeting. While he has seen notice on the bulletin board downstairs of today's meeting, he has not seen information about today's meeting on either the District's website or the District's Facebook page. He strongly encouraged better planning for and communication of District meetings which can only improve the transparency of District operations and attendance at such meetings.
- IV. New Business
 - A. New Committee Assignments for 2024 Based on the Amended Bylaws. The President noted that last year they had 12 committees. This year under the amended Bylaws, there are now 6 committees. Those 6 committees are Executive Committee, Water Operations Committee, Public Safety Tower Committee, Health & Safety Committee, Volunteer Pension Committee and Budget Oversight Committee formerly the Executive Committee. The new Executive Committee is in place of the District Operations Committee made up of the President, Vice President and Secretary of the Board of Commissioners. It is this Committee that decides the committee assignments. The present Executive Committee consists of President Roger Rukowicz, Vice President Don Smith and Secretary Charles Epstein. The President read the list he had drafted of the committee memberships. He welcomed any feedback from the other officers.

Water Operations Committee: Commissioners Robert McIntyre-Chair, Charles Epstein-Vice Chair, Mertie Terry and Steve Wygonowski. Water Operations Manager

Joe Palmieri will also be on the Committee. Commissioner Smith was interested in being on this Committee. The President stated that these assignments are subject to change. For now if Commissioners are interested in committees they are not members of, they are still welcome to attend meetings as part of the public.

Public Safety Tower Committee: Commissioner Charles Epstein is Co-Chair of this Committee with Cromwell Police Chief Fred Sifodaskalakis, Commissioner Don Smith is also a member, Town Manager Anthony Salvatore, former Commissioner and Fire Chief Donald Swanson is on the Committee as an emeritus member, the Executive Director, Water Operations Manager Joe Palmieri, Tower Manager Angel Alvarado, Fire Chief Jason Brade and Police Captain Steve Penn.

Health, Safety & Facilities Committee: Commissioners Chip Darius-Chair, John Sokolowski-Vice Chair, Rob McIntyre and Don Goranson. Other members are: Fire Chief Jason Brade, Assistant Chief Karl Neubecker, Water Operations Manager Joseph Palmieri, Fire Mechanic Chris Logan, District Maintainer Russ Johnson, Communications Manager Justin Lonergan, a member from Local 4662 Firefighter's Union and a member of the Dispatcher's Union Local 1303 AFSCME.

Volunteer Pension Committee: Commissioners John Sokolowski-Chair, Chip Darius-Vice Chair, Mertie Terry and Steve Wygonowski. Chief Jason Brade will also be a member.

Budget & Oversight Committee: Commissioners John Sokolowski-Chair, Don Smith Vice-Chair, Chip Darius and Don Goranson. They will be starting their work in March after the budget discussions with District managers.

The Executive Director discussed the membership on the committees. It was not clear if the President wanted to leave the Commissioner membership on some of the Committees at 4, meaning that during a vote, there could possibly be a tie. This would be the opportunity for the President and Executive Committee to add a fifth Commissioner to some committees that have 4 Commissioners.

Commissioner Epstein researched the language in the newly approved Bylaws which specify that both Special and Standing Committees shall have 4 Commissioners in their membership. The President would be an ex-officio member of all committees, but would be able to vote to break a tie. There was discussion about membership and voting on committees. It was suggested to consult with the District's attorney regarding appointing a fifth member to any committee. Water Ops., Volunteer Pension and Budget & Oversight may be the committees that would need a fifth Commissioner. There was discussion about the ex-officio members of the committees such as the President and Vice President. There was discussion about committee meeting schedules. It was noted that committee chairs are responsible for communicating their meeting needs to the President and District Office. If a meeting schedule needs to be established, the District office can assist with the posting of the meeting agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the changes to the Committee memberships as noted pending the outcome of the inquiry to the District's attorney regarding adding a fifth Commissioner position to Water Ops., Volunteer Pension and Budget Oversight. There may be a need to regroup depending on the attorney's opinion.

- V. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Rukowicz, President/Chairman

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary

