

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Fire and Water Divisions

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

7:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse

105 Coles Road

Cromwell, CT

The Commissioners of the Cromwell Fire District held their monthly Board of Commissioners' Meeting on Tuesday, December 18, 2018, at 7:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse, 105 Coles Road, Cromwell, CT to discuss and act upon Fire and Water Division business.

Commissioners Roger Rukowicz, Jason Hinnners, David Colligan, Robert Donohue, Mertie Terry, Johnathon Hamlin, Allan Spotts and Charles Epstein attended. Also attending were Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Acting Executive Director Julius Neto and Michael Alibrio from Blum Shapiro. Commissioner Lee Brow had an excused absence.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Vice President Rukowicz. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President Rukowicz.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Spotts, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as presented with the following two additions recommended by Mr. Neto. Under New Business, Item D. Approval of Personnel Committee's recommendation for the Water Department's Maintainer III position, and Approval of the Personnel Committee's recommendation for the Executive Director position. The other addition was to add Water Department Personnel Matter under Executive Session. The Chairman of the Personnel Committee would like the whole Board to be updated on the matter but because it is a Personnel matter, it should be under Executive Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Epstein thanked all the people that voted for him to return to the Board of Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES OF
NOVEMBER 20, 2018

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Spotts and unanimously approved to accept the Board of Commissioners' Meeting minutes of November 20, 2018, as submitted. Commissioner Colligan abstained.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS & WRITTEN APPEALS TO THE BOARD

There were no communications or appeals to report.

REPORTS OF THE STAFF

A. Acting Executive Director. The Acting Executive Director's report had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Neto gave a summary of his report. He noted that there was a Special Election held on December 3, 2018. Commissioner Charles Epstein was elected back on the Board. The election went well, and there were no reported issues. Mr. Neto thanked Janet Schmaltz for all her hard work and experience in coordinating the Special Election with Town Hall.

Mr. Neto reported that the District is still waiting for the final audit report. It is currently being drafted.

Extensive interviews were done in the Water Department for the Maintainer III position. The Personnel Committee met and their recommendation is on the agenda tonight for approval. There were over 50 applicants. The top 7 or 8 candidates were selected. Five candidates were given interviews.

President Brow and Mr. Neto met with Town Officials this month. Mr. Neto explained that a few months ago the Town reached out to the previous President of the Commission in the form of a letter requesting a meeting. He reported that the meeting was cordial and there is a desire to open communications between the District and the Town. The Mayor gave the Town Council an overview of the meeting with the same message that the meeting was cordial and there was a desire to open communications.

There was also a meeting with Mr. Neto, the Dispatch Supervisor and the Executive Board of AFSCME Local 1303/475. That is the Union representing Dispatchers. The purpose was to begin dialogue between management and the union at the earliest possible time that an issue occurs.

Mr. Neto discussed his project in the office which has been to look at vendors and how they respond to the District and staff of the District. He started by looking at the District's insurance broker which is Beacon, and they were bought out by Alara. He would like to improve communications. There are always employees of the District that need questions answered. He would like to improve the process between employee and vendor. This includes vendors that work with the Maintenance staff. He feels he can improve services and address some of the challenges. Commissioner Donohue asked about the pension representative. Mr. Neto has not been able to meet with the pension representative yet. The pension representative that left Wells Fargo did meet with Mr. Neto in his role with the Town as a member of the Board of Finance. Mr. Neto discussed working with that person and Wells Fargo for a meeting. This should happen in the near future.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Acting Executive Director's report for November as submitted.

- B. Financial Report. The Financial Report for November had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Alibrio reported that other than a few line items, everything is on target. The audit is just about ready to be wrapped up. The auditors have received all the information they need regarding pension plans. They are always the last item to be received. The draft of the final report is being prepared and will be ready for the next meeting. There are a few items that are over budget, and Mr. Alibrio will be meeting with Commissioner Donohue to review those items.

A motion was made by Commissioner Donohue, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Financial Report for November as submitted.

- C. Fire Department Chief. The staff did an outstanding job. The Chief's report for November had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Vice President Rukowicz asked the Chief to send out a big thank you to the Fire Department members from the Commission for their work with the three major accidents that were handled over the weekend by the Fire Department.

Chief Terenzio reported that the firefighters continue to attend the CT Fire Code Inspector class. There are eight classes left. Eventually the Department will have a program in place that has been co-developed by the Fire Chief and Fire Marshal to improve the efficiency of the Department's code inspection and process to ensure they are meeting their mandates. There is a lot of development coming into Town that is taking up a lot of the Fire Marshal's time. Having additional staff trained will help with the Fire Marshal's time and will be able to get the Fire Marshals into some of these buildings to do fire planning.

Truck 1 had an issue with its hydraulic rotation valve. The mechanic has looked into having the engine rebuilt at a \$3,000 - \$4,000 savings on its repair. The Chief continues to do research on the FLSA issue. He is getting a lot of information along with the Ad Hoc committee. Vice President Rukowicz asked about the status of the three grants the Department has applied for. The Chief reported that he should hear something around Christmas or after the first of the year. They had requested \$4,000 for the radios and \$600,000 for a fire truck. One of the career members assisted in submitting a micro-grant which is an amount less than \$25,000 for an automatic chest compression unit.

The Department did receive a donation of \$3,500 from the Jim McNally Memorial fund. Mr. McNally passed away from throat cancer a couple of years ago. His wife and friends started a memorial golf tournament, and they identified the Dana Farber Institute as one of the beneficiaries. This year they raised more money and exceeded their anticipated goal. They identified CFD as a sub-beneficiary. The Chief had to give them a funding goal. They identified the chest compression unit.

Commissioner Donohue added that he met with Greg Jenkins from Trane. They received a quote for the generator bearing at a cost of \$6,573. Commissioner Donohue asked what the next step should be. This item is the humidifier and chiller unit. Mr. Neto reported that the District has not acted on that yet. There is no time table on it, but they need to find the funding for it. Temporarily a humidifier was purchased at Walmart. Mr. Neto was going to

forward the issue to the Building/Safety Committee so that they can make a decision or bring it before the full Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the Chief's Report for November as submitted.

- D. Water Operations. The Operations Report for November had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Mr. Jarzavek was not present, so Mr. Neto read Mr. Jarzavek's report. It was noted that water usage has gone down due to how wet this fall has been.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the Water Operations Report for November as submitted.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. District Operations. There will be a meeting on Thursday, December 20, 2018, at 6:00 PM, at 1 West Street. It will be a brief meeting.
- B. Executive. There was no meeting, however, a meeting will be scheduled soon to begin the budget process.
- C. Fire Operations. A meeting was held on November 20, 2018. Minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Hamlin gave a brief summary because he chaired that meeting for Commissioner Colligan. Commissioner Hamlin reported that it was a regular Fire Operations meeting with no unusual items to report.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hinnners, seconded by Commissioner Hamlin and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee meeting minutes of November 20, 2018, as submitted.

1. Communications Subcommittee. Commissioner Colligan reported that at the beginning of the month he would like to schedule a full Board meeting to discuss the subcommittee's status and its future goals. It is still a work in progress, but the engineer will be brought in to the full Board meeting to provide information on a completion date.
- D. Pension. Commissioner Donohue who is the Chair of this Committee will be setting up a meeting schedule for the new year.
- E. Personnel. There was a Special meeting held on November 19, 2018. The minutes had been previously distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Meetings were also held on November 29, 2018 (regular mtg.) and December 13, 2018 (Special mtg.).

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to accept the Special Personnel Committee meeting of November 19, 2018, as submitted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Hinners and unanimously approved to accept the Personnel Committee Meeting minutes of November 29, 2018, as submitted.

Commissioner Colligan reported that the meeting of December 13, 2018, was held in Executive Session to conduct an interview and discuss a personnel issue in the Water Division. There were no meeting minutes to approve.

1. Subcommittee for Non-Career Staffing Solutions. A meeting was held last night. Minutes are not available. This item was tabled until next month.
- F. Water Operations. A Special Meeting was held on November 15, 2018. Minutes had been distributed and reviewed. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Commissioner Hinners gave a brief summary because he chaired the meeting for Commissioner Rukowicz who was unable to attend the meeting. Commissioners Hinners is Vice Chairman of this Committee. He reported that Mr. Guy Russo from Prime A/C attended that meeting and gave a presentation on the VFD project at Wells 3 & 4. It was noted that the cost of that project is approximately \$152,000. The funds were approved in last year's budget so that funding is allocated.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

There were no appointments to report.

CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A. Report of the Town Council Liaison. Ms. Samantha Slade was in attendance. She began by noting there was a Town Council meeting that was held last Wednesday. The Council approved the Cromwell Creative Arts District. A Committee will be formed with the objective being to revitalize Downtown with more arts projects. There will be more to come on that. The Council also approved a Community Events Committee. They will be working on a Town Events calendar. They approved to begin the process of building a new Public Works/Sewer facility. It will already be on Town property where the transfer station is located. It was noted that the buildings by the West Street firehouse are in poor condition. She noted that the Shop-Rite/Marshall's project is still going on. The facility on County Line Drive is finalizing its tenant. There will be a new 43,000 square ft. club house for the TPC. Once it is completed, the TPC will be giving tours. She added that at 76 Field Rd., it is called Arbor Meadows and is being built by a Carrier Corporation. They are looking to do 15 homes per year. They are currently under construction. There is also a 9,000 square foot Dollar General store on Main St. There are some new businesses in Town. One is Café Luna which should be opening this week. It is the same owner at Red Fox. Joe's Filling Station will open tomorrow night. She also added that the Mayor's report included a report on the meeting that was held between the Town and the Fire District. The meeting went well, and they discussed ways in which the Town and the District can collaborate.
- B. Reports of the Special Committees
1. Public Safety Tower Committee. A meeting was held last Friday, December 14, 2018. Minutes were not available as yet. Mr. Neto gave a brief verbal report. He discussed the property owned by the Town at the Nike site. They discussed the opportunity of partnering with the Town on that site and use the same formula by the District and the

Town for the Shunpike Tower to duplicate a Public Safety Tower on the Nike site. This would be a good site to have as the communication system is developed. It is a higher elevation that would be useful. It would also be able to invite vendors to use it which would be advantageous to the Town and the District. It would be a situation where the town will get better service from Police and Fire and hopefully obtain some revenue. It was agreed in concept to move forward. Mr. Neto asked the Board to provide some input to let him know if this is something they are interested in pursuing. Perhaps getting a project team to find funding sources. The objective is not to use taxpayer dollars to invest in this. Commissioner Rukowicz stated that the plan would be to have a Tower similar but not quite as tall as the Shunpike Tower. He noted that they are looking into it now so that they can get an idea of cost. A few estimates have been received. Tenants are getting lined up.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to authorize the Public Safety Tower Committee to move forward to work with the Town on an exploratory venture for the Nike Site. It was noted that the Tower Manager, Angel Alvarado, has begun gathering information.

2. Safety/Building Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10.
3. Bylaws Committee. There has not been a meeting. New Committee assignments will be made by the District Operations Committee later this week. Once a Chairman has been appointed for this Committee, a meeting will be scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Spotts thanked the Fire Department and their efforts on Wreaths Across America on Thursday that went from Cromwell to Randolph Rd., in Middletown. He added that on Saturday he and his family along with Al Waters were able to place a wreath on Tony Villaggio's grave also. Commissioner Terry asked for a report regarding the Toy Drive. There was an individual that missed the handout date. The Chief, his assistant and others were able to put together some leftover gift cards, etc. and gave that family \$200 in gift cards. The Chief reported that it was a success again this year. Vice President Rukowicz suggested that next year it be advertised in the Cromwell Chronicle and the Rare Reminder. Commissioner Colligan thanked the Commissioners that have been serving with him on the Personnel Committee. They have had a tough few months, and he specifically thanked Commissioner Terry for her expertise in Human Resources. She was very helpful in getting together interview questions and addressing confidential matters.
- B. Budgetary Adjustments. There were no adjustments to report.
- C. Approval of Contracts/Contractors. There were no contracts or contractors to be approved.
- D. Approval of Personnel Committee's Recommendation for Maintainer III Position in Water Department. Mr. Neto gave the Board an update in Mr. Jarzavek's absence. The candidate recommended for the position in the Water Department is Scott Clinton. Mr. Clinton has 13 yrs. Experience South Central Regional Water Authority. He had an impressive resume with many certificates of accomplishment. One of which is to be a participant of the Water distribution network that Cromwell provides. They would like to have the person on the payroll for the second day of the new year. He is currently employed at another location and will need to give a two-week notice. He had been laid off from the Water Authority after a major restructuring, but at the time he was on track to become a supervisor or foreman.

Commissioner Colligan stated that a Personnel Committee meeting was held the other night. At that meeting, the Committee voted to approve the recommendation of the Acting Executive Director and the Water Division staff to hire Mr. Clinton. They also had an alternate candidate should the first choice not accept the offer.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the Acting Executive Director, Operations Director and Personnel Committee to hire Mr. Scott Clinton as the Maintainer III in the Water Department.

- E. Approval of Personnel Committee's Recommendation for Executive Director Position. Commissioner Colligan, as Chair of the Personnel Committee, explained the recruitment process that was used to search for an Executive Director. A.R. Mozzotta had been used for the initial application process. They screened the applicants for the District and forwarded 5 applicants to the District for interviews. All 5 applications and resumes were reviewed by the Personnel Committee. They were reviewed according to the job description and scored. There were three that were chosen as the top three. Interviews were conducted. Candidate #2 had decided the job was not what they thought it was. Candidate #1 was also interviewed. The Personnel Committee determined that Candidate #1 was Acting Executive Director Julius Neto. He explained that this was the reason why he acknowledged Commissioner Terry. Commissioner Terry knew the right approach and the right questions to ask. The Committee also was in contact with the District's attorney which helped with the questions and the backgrounds. Commissioner Colligan, as Chairman of the Personnel Committee, took the opportunity to forward the Committee's recommendation to hire Mr. Julius Neto as the new Executive Director for the Cromwell Fire District. The President of the Board will meet with Mr. Neto to review salary, benefits and contract language.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Hinnens and unanimously approved to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to hire Mr. Julius Neto as the new Executive Director of the Cromwell Fire District.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Neto addressed the group. As Acting Executive Director for the last few months, he stated simply that this is an opportunity. There are challenges ahead, but they will be worked through. He appreciates the offer and knows that there is enough passion through the volunteers, career, non-career and community to make improvements. He knows it won't be easy but with the right focus these things will be accomplished. Main focuses will be people, safety, service, compliance and fiscal responsibility. He explained what he thinks his role should be as a leader and a manager.

Ms. Janet Schmaltz, an office employee of the District, commented that the culture in the office has changed for the better over the last few months since Mr. Neto has been filling in as Acting Executive Director.

Vice President Rukowicz commented that the Board is looking forward to working with Mr. Neto and working as a team to face the challenges of the District.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:08 PM and enter into Executive Session at 8:13 PM after a five minute recess to discuss a Water Division personnel matter.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Hinnners and unanimously approved to adjourn Executive Session at 9:10 PM. The session was information only and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hamlin, seconded by Commissioner Donohue and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM.

ATTEST:

Jason Hinnners, Secretary

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
1-8-19