

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Apparatus Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

5:00 PM

Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT

Present: Commissioners Jason Hinners (Chairman), Robert McIntyre, Charles Epstein and David Colligan. Also attending were Fire Chief Jason Balletto, Executive Director Julius Neto, Mechanic Chris Logan, Water Dept. Maintainer Eric Roberts, Local IAFF President Lt. Brett Hallden. Commissioner Robert Donohue also attended. President Brow was absent.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM, by Chairman Hinners.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner McIntyre and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- IV. New Business
 - A. Discussion of Apparatus Replacement Needs for the Fire Department. One of the things Chief Balletto was tasked with when he came on board was to look at possibilities for replacing apparatus and then draft a priority list. The list is as follows:
 1. **Tack 4**. It is approaching 25 yrs. of service. It is currently out of service for a couple of days. Chris Logan did all the work on Tack 4 before it went to DOT for inspection. There are compartments in the rear that are rotted out completely. Valve work and standard service was also performed. Rear springs was the only thing that was not done. The pump was rebuilt approximately 4 or 5 years ago. The tank was on warrantee so it would cost nothing to fix. The seat behind the driver on Tack 4 had to be removed. They had to repurpose that seat for the Tack 4 Officers' seat. This does not violate any NFPA standards. One thing they are not able to do is add a seat. A cab is created with 6 seats.
 2. **Ambulances**. Ambulance **4A** is beat-up. 4A is the vehicle that was hit by a car, and the body was damaged. It hit a curb and has not been right since, it shakes. It has the most things wrong with it of the three ambulances.

4B has the highest mileage with 97,000 and has the new lower end on it. It is not necessarily the mileage that is a concern but rather the hours of use. Every 2,000 hours is equivalent to 100,000 miles on an ambulance.

The primary ambulance right now is **4C**. It has approximately 84,000 miles. Ambulance 4C is a 2015, and the other ambulances are 2010's.

The past administration for the Fire Department was interested in rechassisng an ambulance. The Chief priced out what a rechasis would cost which was \$221,000. That was without identifying any other damage or work to be done. The Chief thinks it would be more beneficial to replace the ambulance rather than rechassis. The Fire Department would be able to outfit the ambulance to meet their needs.

3. **Engine 2**. It is approaching 25 years of service. Engine 1 will be taken out of service on Wednesday because Norcom needs to look at the wiring issue with the radio, siren and lights.

The Chief has reached out to 5 different companies for apparatus; **Pierce, Seagrave, Sutton, E-1** and **Ferrara**.

1. **Ferrara** never got back to the Chief, but he would not recommend this company because if a Fire Department has one of their pieces and it is under warrantee, it has to be transported to New Jersey for all repairs.
2. The Chief contacted **Seagrave**, but they did not have anything to offer to Cromwell. The reason is because they have no pieces on the shelf and no demos coming in. The timetable is about 450 days from order.
3. The Chief reached out to **Pierce**. The Chief, Chris Logan and Assistant Chief Brade went around the State of CT looking at Pierce apparatus. They looked at Vernon's piece which is a brand new apparatus/rescue engine. They also looked at one in Moosup. Vernon's apparatus has a 1,000 gallon tank and is 214 ft. in body length. The difference between the Pierce pumps is the body length. On the 189 there are 3 compartments on the driver's side and 3 compartments on the officers' side and the coffin is on the top. The 214 has 4 compartments on the driver's side and 4 compartments on the officer's side and the coffin on the top. Vernon's piece was a 1,000 gallon tank compared to other pieces which are 750 gallon tanks.

The more water you put on the top of the apparatus, the more top heavy it is. Regarding the 1,000 gallon tank, the bed is very tall, but the apparatus did meet their needs.

The Chief distributed copies of modifications he drafted for the apparatus. The price of the 189 is \$698,000 compared to the 214 which is \$705,000. The price of the 189 is going up slightly. The price difference between the 189 and 214 is usually around \$15,000. The Chief pointed out the various features of the apparatus on the handouts. He was referencing the Pierce as a Squad 1. Copies of the handouts are attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. Every compartment can be retrofitted to their needs. Struts, hydraulics can be added without modifying the price.

The Chief obtained some information from the Houston/Galveston Consortium. The Chief said that adding on to pieces through the Houston/Galveston consortium could be more costly than adding on pieces on their own. With Houston/Galveston, the more things that are added on, the price goes up significantly. The Chief's recommendation is to come up with a "not to exceed" price.

Lt. Hallden thought that it would be better to decide as a group what they want to put on the truck first before making any recommendations on the equipment. It will help decide how much space is needed. The Chief was asked for his list of equipment he would like to see on the truck. The Chief noted that Cromwell does not have any of the equipment the Chief would like to see on a truck to make Cromwell Fire a legitimate rescue service. Most of the battery-operated tools need to be replaced. The hydraulic tools are very old. In order to purchase all the equipment from the Chief's list, the Chief would need to apply for a grant.

The Chief is working with Firematic to assure that the 214 off the shelf will be available for January. If not, the wait time will be a 1½ - 2 years, and the Department will be looking at a 3-compartment piece. The goal for the purchase is if Cromwell can make an offer in good faith by December, they would be promised delivery for September of next year. The two demos will fit Cromwell's needs.

The Chief distributed information about a demo from **Suffin**. The spec was priced at \$585,000. This was the piece that was at the firehouse in July. It is in production now and can be customized. When it is finished being built, it will not be delivered to the customer right away. The manufacturer will keep it for 90 days because it is a demo. It will be driven around the country putting on up to 10,000 miles. After that period, it will be brought back to the shop for reconditioning. It will be delivered to the customer after that period. This will be the standard process with demos.

The Vernon **Pierce** piece was \$850,000. It was purchased for \$710,000, but with bells & whistles the final price was \$850,000. The Moosup **Pierce** piece was \$625,000 but the final price was \$850,000 with a lot of bells & whistles. The Chief and Chris Logan have heard good and bad about Suffin. They also have a leasing program.

The Chief looked at a couple of **ambulances**. One was in Eastford and the other in Wallingford. Eastford AV came to the firehouse on Monday. Eastford is the Cadillac of all ambulances. The Department thought it was a good piece. The prices range from \$215,000 - \$250,000. Most are \$224,000 with everything that is needed. The only issue is the powerload. They do not come with powerloads. Manufacturers will not install a powerload into an ambulance that is more than 7 years old. The manufacturer will supply the equipment to install the powerload. Assistant Chief Brade priced one out at \$23,000. But in the next year or two that price will go up. It could be received by the end of next year. This company has a maintenance program. They will pick up the vehicle and drive it to the location to be fixed. They will drop it off when it is fixed.

Frazier was the next manufacturer for ambulances. The Chief went to Wallingford to look at one of their pieces. They are a good company with good prices. They are very basic, but the closest vendor is in Texas. They have a 12 foot and a 14 foot, a 450 and a 550. The 12 foot is very small and compact. The 14 foot looks like the ambulance Cromwell has in the bay.

The Chief had a price from Houston/Galveston which was \$220,000 and outfitted. The Chief noted that any of the vendors the Chief has chosen have repair sites in the State of CT. Mr. Logan explained how this piece works. Nothing is run off the truck itself.

Mr. Logan likes Lifeline, but the technology is overwhelming. When things break down, there is a lot of down time. AV is a lot of computers and electronics. Frazier is the bare minimum. It has the powerload component already built in. The price is \$235,000, for a 14 ft. The other is a 12 ft. at \$210,000 - \$212,000. Mr. Logan would prefer the 14 ft.

During this process the Chief would like to see a lot of input from Chris Logan, who will be repairing it, and the people that will be using its features like Lt. Hallden and one of the drivers that is a senior career firefighter and IAFF member.

The final company looked at was **E-1**, Greensboro, MA. On September 17, 2021, they will be doing an open house event to have people look at the types of apparatus they have. The Chief and Chris Logan plan on attending. The Chief received a price list from them. They have some things in stock. They project the same timeframe as Pierce.

The Chief noted that the Commissioners gave him a task to do. He provided a wide range of information about vendors and what they offer. The Pierce vendor is willing to come to a Board meeting and walk everyone through the specifications. Shipman's is willing to do the same thing. The Chief has always been partial to Pierce. Regarding an ambulance, the Chief feels whatever is going to get our patients and staff to the hospital the safest, is the product to go with.

Mr. Logan's opinion was to go with Pierce. President Brow would also like to go with Pierce. If the District were to start the process in December with Pierce, the order would be received in September. The three-door is a stocked item.

Chairman Hinnars acknowledged that a lot of information was received by the Committee from the Chief. He asked the Chief to provide the Committee with a wish list for equipment with need to have and want to have items. The Committee will review the information they received today.

Commissioner Colligan agreed with the majority to use Pierce and get the longer chassis with 4 doors. For the ambulance, the majority was looking to go with Frazier. Commissioner Epstein wanted to visit the truck that was in Wallingford and the ambulance in New Britain. Commissioner Hinnars asked the Chief to see what he could come up with in a 4 door. The 3 door would be the second choice.

The timeline for an ambulance with AV if ordered by November would be the end of next year. Ordering with Frazier, the 450 would be quicker than the 550. The 550 would be the end of next year. The apparatus and ambulance would fit the same timeline, which would be the end of 2022. They have not decided between gas or diesel. There was discussion about both. Lt. Hallden would like a Frazier with a Dodge Chassis. He also liked Pierce for an apparatus. He would like to see the Department replace 2 trucks with one because the department has a lot of fire trucks. The President confirmed that is the plan.

Commissioner Epstein asked Mr. Logan if an old ambulance could be repurposed to use within the Fire service or Water Division. Mr. Logan did not think they would be able to

repurpose anything for the Water Division. There would be a lot of work involved trying to repurpose something already old.

Eric Roberts liked the Pierce truck. He has driven them before. He thought simpler is better for the ambulance. Frazier was a simpler ambulance.

Chairman Hinnners reviewed the discussion points:

- The apparatus was focused on Pierce 3-door vs. the 4-door, with a Frazier ambulance.
- Chris Logan was tasked to come up with more information regarding gas vs. diesel and power strip vs. Cummings.
- The Chief was also tasked with coming up with his wish list for equipment. Things he wants to have vs. have to have.

Eric Roberts presented specs for a Water Division truck. Mr. Palmieri had gotten a price for an Auto Leak truck, F450 Cab, 14 foot work body. He distributed copies of the specs for the Committee members. They would like to have an air compressor on it, built in PTO, generator, mobile crane. Mr. Palmieri did a State bid through Gengras. Mr. Roberts will email the specs to the Committee members. He did not have copies for the meeting.

The other item for consideration for the Water Division is a mini-excavator for the Water Department. They had received a State bid on this. Mr. Roberts explained the list of equipment the Water Department is requesting for the excavator. Mr. Roberts added that the Water Department is also looking at another pick-up truck.

Mr. Neto stated that they are looking at approximately \$200,000 for water capital. They are looking at \$1.7 million for Fire. That would be a little below \$2 million to borrow. Mr. Neto was asked to provide rough numbers for next week. He will use the same model used for the communication project. He explained some of the borrowing process.

The Chief discussed staggering the purchase of trucks. He is focused on replacing Tack 4, but wants to take time to spec out a replacement for Engine 2. He does not want to purchase more than one piece of equipment in the same year.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 5:00 PM, at the Coles Road Firehouse. The Chief received permission from the Committee to invite career firefighter Alan Dominy to the next meeting who is one of the most senior members of the Fire Department and thought he would be an asset to the Committee.

- V. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Epstein stated that he would like to make arrangements to go and see the vehicles discussed at this meeting.
- VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Deegan, Recording Secretary

Jason Hinnners, Chairman

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