

Cromwell Fire District

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FIRE DISTRICT OFFICE
WATER DIVISION

FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Fire Department Operations Committee

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

5:30 PM

**Coles Road Firehouse
105 Coles Road
Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners Johnathon Hamlin, Lee Brow, David Colligan and Charles Epstein. Also attending was Fire Chief Michael Terenzio, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Salonia, Assistant Fire Chief EMS Robert McIntyre, Executive Director Michael Dagostino, and Commissioners Frank Seidl (President), Jason Hinnens and Roger Rukowicz.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:36 PM, by Chairman Hamlin.
- II. Approval of Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the agenda as submitted.
- III. Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2017. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to accept the Fire Operations Committee Meeting minutes of February 21, 2017, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report.
- V. Communications Report
 - A. Communications Subcommittee. Commissioner Colligan reported that there are some issues still needing to be addressed this week. The Board had approved a meeting that was held with the Fire Chief, Mr. Dagostino and Commissioner Colligan with NORCOM. The Fire Chief has already obtained a grant from IAFC for a State contract. The Chief has received a number of leads through the Federal Government and other resources to obtain funding. The State's radio personnel are helping to coach the Chief regarding who to contact and the proper channels. Commissioner Colligan had a connection at the Coast Guard Academy which is working out well. He also reported that the Department is out of pagers. Mr. Dagostino has a contact and is working on this issue. A minimum of 10 pagers are needed at this time. Pagers are needed for everyone so that they are not using Verizon, T-Mobile, etc. There should also be extra pagers available to use temporarily in case a pager is turned in for repair. There has been some discussion regarding standardizing pagers. There are a couple of channels. NORCOM will be listening on both channels to determine how to tone out, and EMS will go to their own channel to free up the line for other emergencies.

Mr. Dagostino reported that the Network Room/Radio Equipment room had a high heat alarm go off in the room. There was also a smell from wires burning, etc. The temperature inside the room was 97 degrees when it should have been 75. There is an

air conditioner in that room that is supposed to keep that area cool. There are a few thousand dollars worth of equipment in that room. The fan in the air conditioner was blowing but no cold air was coming out. The high heat alarm is attached to the associated security panel. Dave Jahn was able to go and log in to the computer to see who in the log turned off the alarm and when. The alarm was activated at 9:31 AM on March 15. It was silenced by either the dispatcher at the time or someone else. Mr. David Barillaro was the dispatcher on at the time but was dealing with a MVA with injuries and the alarm went off behind him. He did not know how to shut the alarm off. The Communications Manager silenced the alarm on March 15. It was reported that Angel Alvarado worked on the issue and determined that it was the APC or backup battery for the system that was overheating and creating the smell. The battery pack was acquired by the Communications Manager from the Cromwell Police Department. When the Police Department upgraded their battery pack, they gave the old one to the Communications Manager. Mr. Dagostino instructed Mr. Alvarado to pick up a stand-alone air conditioner, 14,000 BTU's, to get some cooling going on in the room. It is currently being vented out into the lobby of Court St. The room is now at 75 degrees. Cromwell Energy was called out to evaluate the air conditioner that failed. A quote to replace it is \$2,995. It needs to be replaced. The backup system is considered a surge protector. If that is no longer operational, it will cost between \$8,000 and \$12,000 to replace and install. Mr. Dagostino has been working with Mr. Alibrio to figure out the cost to the budget. It may exceed the Executive Director's spending authorization. The service call will be the only expense that the District will incur. The rest of the work is covered by warrantee. It was noted that only one unit is needed. There has never been a backup unit. It was suggested to discuss with Cromwell Energy whether or not a bigger unit is needed.

Commissioner Hinnens provided some feedback because he works with HVAC systems for a living. He suggested to first do a cross calculation on the room. It needs to be known what is being cooled. Most of them now are an inverter based, variable cooling load. It is good to know that we are not doing comfort cooling but rather processed cooling. That is why someone needs to do a cross calculation. He stated that the backup unit being used now should be sufficient for what it is used for and the amount of times it is needed. It is recommended that the air conditioner be replaced. Commissioner Hinnens suggested that Cromwell Energy come out again with an estimator, and the District explain to them exactly what is needed by explaining what it is being used for and explain the radio changes that could be made. It is important to make sure that the right piece of equipment is purchased, understanding that either 12,000 – 14,000 BTU's is probably what is required.

Mr. Dagostino reported that the same situation existed at the Tower over Easter weekend. Mr. Dagostino instructed Mr. Jarzavek to purchase a stand-alone air conditioner to cool down the room. He suspected that the alarm had not been working for some time. That temperature was regulated, and any funding needed to solve that issue will come from the Tower fund. A maintenance program should either be created or reviewed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to authorize the Executive Director to move forward with resolving the issues regarding air conditioning in the server/equipment rooms at Court St. and the Tower for up to the authorized amount for the Executive Director. Anything over that amount will need to be approved by the full Board of Commissioners.

- VI. Reports of Chief Officers. The Fire Chief had a report to come under the next agenda item of, "Apparatus Report." The Deputy Chief had a report to come under, "Old Business." Assistant Chief EMS McIntyre reported that the EMS Captains and Lieutenants in an effort to bring down turnover rates and increase participation, interviewed more than half of the EMS

staff. The officers had put together a survey for the membership. They found about six areas which were common issues of concern for the membership. They are being worked on. The goal is to keep communication going between the membership and the officers. A Paramedic Advisory Board meeting was held at Middlesex Hospital. An issue that was discussed at the meeting was the fee being charged. At the time of the meeting, the Fire District had not paid any of the charges (\$14,000). The fee for next year will remain at \$1 per capita. The Paramedic Advisory Board will be evaluating the fee on a year by year basis. Commissioner Colligan commented on the survey done by the EMS officers. He reported that it was put together very well. In fact, the committee was named "member of the month." He would like the Board to acknowledge the excellent job they did within the timeframe given. The presentation given was spot on. He explained that they identified some of the issues and are now working on cross training. There is a good team effort being performed.

VII. Apparatus Report. Chief Terenzio had some items to discuss. He began by speaking about the EMS report/survey prepared by the EMS officers and Ass't Chief McIntyre. The Chief explained that the report was a result of him expressing his desire to the EMS Committee to reduce the turnover rate. The survey was a result of the Chief's request. It is a good example of giving people the opportunity to do what they know how to do and working together. He will continue to discuss this report at the next meeting once all Fire Ops. Committee members have had a chance to read it.

The Chief discussed the upcoming need to replace Rescue 1 and Re-chassis 4B. A few years ago the Department entered into the process of doing type one box-style ambulances for re-chassis/remounting. The Chief feels the time has come to try to begin exercising that option. He distributed copies of a proposal to address the situation. The proposal explains the status of the current apparatus. He is not recommending spending money on a new piece of apparatus right away. However, the Rescue is getting tired. The purpose of the proposal is to start considering moving forward. Chief Terenzio and Deputy Chief Salonia, as a Steering Committee, started to investigate which ways to proceed with this huge financial obligation. They feel they have come up with a possible alternative that may be palatable without a huge cost factor. He has not had an opportunity to closely examine the numbers. The proposal addresses two issues: 1) re-chassis an ambulance, and 2) replacing Rescue 1 with a combination rescue/pumper. After much research it was agreed that this would be the way to proceed when considering the way the Department operates and the status of its resources. They are recommending a lease purchase. This would mean the option of some money down and monthly payments for a designated amount of time. They have contacted a vendor who does both re-chassis and the rescue/pumper concept. He did not have any figures available from the vendor yet. The Executive Director also had forwarded some information to the Chief on re-chassis. The Chief has not had a chance to review it as yet. Their recommendation is to seriously look at the replacement of Rescue 1. The Chief's approach is to provide a solution and be able to meet the financial obligation it would bring. He would like the Committee to begin thinking towards that end of things. He stated that when he first arrived in the Department the budget was already set. This year is probably the same situation. It may take the next budget cycle to begin to plan. He needs to have more conversations with the Executive Director to begin planning. Commissioner Colligan stated that in these times, the Chiefs' proposal is the way to proceed. Mr. Dagostino added that a one-time purchase comes out of a Capital outlet in the budget. A lease purchase would come out of the Operational budget. There may also be the possibility of floating a tax anticipation note. To float a bond anticipation note would not be possible. The District attempted to do that type of note with the water main project which was twice the amount of money needed for apparatus, and that was not enough to qualify for that type of note. The tax anticipation note is based on taxable income. A way to cover the lease purchase would be to increase the mil rate or cut back on expenditures. Mr. Dagostino would recommend cutting back on expenditures. He added there are options available to accomplish this in the short term. He explained the progressive tax system. Commissioner Epstein advised that there are two shows coming up in Connecticut that will have multiple manufacturers of fire

trucks and ambulance services. He stated it would be a good opportunity for the Executive Director, the Fire Chiefs and Commissioners to attend to get some information and ideas. Commissioner Epstein stated he feels that we need four vehicles in the Department because with the amount of calls being taken, three vehicles are usually always in use. One show is May 31 through June 2. The other show is scheduled for June 22. Commissioner Epstein stated that it is important to be cost effective for the taxpayers. The Chief would like to have more information available for the next Committee meeting so that a subcommittee can be formed. Commissioner Colligan asked that the Chiefs come up with a cost amount for maintain the vehicles to be replaced.

VIII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing and Hiring. Chief Terenzio stated that this issue was addressed in Chief McIntyre's report. He has some ideas about a flex shift from that report, but has not had time to discuss this with the Executive Director.

IX. Fire Department Response Capability

- A. Non-career Response Percentage Increase. Chief Terenzio discussed the fact that the career staff has mandatory training three times a year in accordance with the CBA. The career staff is responding to it. They are developing drills that are meaningful, however, the non-career participation is not as much as the Chief would like it. They will be requiring mandatory attendance on the non-career side for the mandatory training that the career side attends. It will be part of the stipend, but the Chief will be discussing that with the Personnel Committee.
- B. Secondary Ambulance Coverage. The Chief reported that they are discussing a flex shift that may have a minor financial impact. This is a result of Ass't Chief McIntyre's report. It would be to cover a secondary ambulance on an on-call basis.

X. Old Business. Deputy Chief Salonia distributed copies of a spreadsheet that outlines how much it costs to outfit a Firefighter. He credited Ass't Chief Zordan for putting the information together. A copy is attached to the minutes on file in the Fire District Office. It costs approximately \$4,478.00 per firefighter, \$2,363.00 per EMT and \$1,863.00 per EMR. The Department has been taking proactive measures to reduce those costs. One way is to provide training through their own members. Pagers at approximately \$300 each should be added into the cost.

XI. New Business. There was no new business to report.

XII. Commissioners' Comments. Commissioner Colligan reminded everyone that a flag ceremony is taking place this Saturday, April 22, 2017, at 11:00 AM, at the West Street Firehouse. Members and Commissioners are invited to attend with their Class A's. The flag represents unity between the Police and Fire Department. Three flags have been purchased (blue line flags) for each firehouse, and will be flown under the American flag to show the Fire Department's support to the Police Department. One of the flags will be presented to the Police Department at the ceremony. There will also be light refreshments. The event will be approximately 1 hour long, and will be covered by the local paper.

XIII. Adjournment. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Colligan and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Deegan
Recording Secretary
5-5-17

Johnathon Hamlin, Chairman