

# 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**  
**Fire Department Operations Committee**  
**Tuesday, September 19, 2017**  
**5:30 PM**  
**Coles Road Firehouse**  
**105 Coles Road**  
**Cromwell, CT**

Present: Commissioners John Hamlin (Chairman), Lee Brow, Charles Epstein and David Colligan. Also Fire Chief Michael Terenzio and Assistant Chief EMS Robert McIntyre. Also attending the meeting were Commissioners Roger Rukowicz, Robert Donohue, Julius Neto and Executive Director Michael Dagostino.

- I. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 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 the Minutes of August 15, 2017. A motion was made by Commissioner Brow, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the Fire Department Operations Committee meeting of August 15, 2017, as submitted.
- IV. Public Comment. There were no public comments to report. Commissioner Epstein received a message from Commissioner Hinners to pass along that Commissioner Hinners is sorry he will be unable to attend any meetings on Tuesday nights for the next 3 months. He has been mandated by his employer to be in a class during that time.
- V. Communications Report. Commissioner Colligan reported that he has been working with the Fire Chief and the career staff on the ongoing communication issues. The most recent activity was that the Tower was swept. He reported that some of the antennas located there are not public safety antennas. Therefore, the Fire Department antennas are not public safety antennas. They are not the quality of a public safety antenna. They are more of a commercial grade antenna. There are a lot of antennas that are not connected or are duplicates. It was unknown who they belong to. A mapping of the Tower showed who they belong to. At the last Tower Meeting the Town Manager reported that some of the antennas are duplicates and were placed there as spares. Commissioner Colligan stated that he thought the back-up antennas were supposed to be connected to the co-axe so the only changes would be made at the bottom. The Commissioner added that he and the Fire Chief went to Norcom's Open House. He described it as a "Class Act." They were impressed by how thorough they were, the training capabilities they have, and their cleanliness. He stated that the District picked the right company thanks to the Fire Chief.

It was discovered that there are four coax lines that are 1 5/8 inches in diameter that are not connected to anything. Their weight should come off. If that weight came off, it would be beneficial to the structure. An AT & T modification was done. It used to be that modifications

were an antenna on the Tower with a coax going into the radio room down below. There is a delay in the delivery of the signal and a weakening of the signal through the expansion of the coax. However long the coax is, it equates to the delay in the signal. They were not able to manage the 4G LTE performance because of the length and expanse cable and the degradation of the signal from the antenna to the Radio Room. The move was to take the apparatus out of the radio room and put it next to the antenna on the tower. It adds to the load factor but also removes the cable. AT & T was supposed to remove the cables. Apparently those cables were not removed, and go all the way to the top. A meeting was held last week with Norcom, and they explained that if the cables were removed, there will be a lot more that can be done up there. Also, the correct size cable we are supposed to have is 7/8 inch diameter. This would also impact the weight on the Tower.

Commissioner Colligan wanted it noted in the minutes that thanks need to go to Angel Alvarado for all his help on this issue. He is also learning the communication issues which will be a big help for the District, especially as a back-up resource. This will also help with programming. He requested to have Angel attend the programming session that will be held regarding frequencies and new frequencies so that Angel can learn the system with everyone else. Norcom is willing to show Angel everything and invite him to their classes to learn it. They have training rooms at their location. Chief Terenzio explained their training process. Commissioner Colligan explained that they are going to have to replace some of the antennas on the top, and replace and retune the duplexers. They have also learned that they need new pagers. The new pagers have been authorized. There are new pagers that just came out that Norcom handles, and they can be programmed to be used on the Analog and P-25 systems. The District will be saving money, and the money saved can be used towards the 10% needed for the grant application. It is referred to as investing in the Capital. If the grant does not come through right away, the system can be leased while reapplying for the grant.

Norcom has been working hard with the Chief to show how inadequate the present system is, and there are safety concerns. They have also done site evaluations to show coverage of the system, and have identified areas needed where the District needs to enter into agreements with property owners for those areas. Mr. Dagostino reported that a structural analysis was done on the Tower with the new standards. The foundation passed, but the load test failed as expected. If no changes are made to the structure, enforced steel will need to be added to the structure at a cost of \$35,000 to \$40,000. Middletown would like to add a microwave to the Tower. Cromwell cannot accommodate them unless Middletown wishes to pay the cost of the improvements. The money being spent will not be wasted. Everything will be used. Mr. Dagostino will be forwarding all this information to the Tower Committee. Commissioner Colligan added that everyone is working together to get things resolved. Chief Terenzio stated that one of the issues is the portables to the system communications. The voting system will take care of that. The first phase of this project was the BM's. The next phase is the voting system sites. They will be getting the portables out to the systems. They are also working on BDA's. Antenna drops will be placed in existing larger buildings, (i.e. Kmart, Lowes) to boost their signals. New businesses will have a BDA inside the buildings. Mr. Dagostino added that every time Cromwell considers any changes to the load factor on the Tower, an engineer must do a load study at their expense. The cost is approximately \$3,600. He suggests that we find all of the equipment that needs to be replaced, have the Tower Committee agree to take the cables down, determine the cable size (1 5/8 or 7/8). Have a study done on all of that and make a decision about antennas, calculate the changes and have everything done all at once. If all the calculations are done and the test still fails with the new weight load on it, the District will have to spend the \$35,000 to \$40,000 for modifications to strengthen the structure. Those funds would need to come out of the Tower Fund.

A motion was made by Commissioner Epstein, seconded by Commissioner Brow and unanimously approved to accept the Communications Report as discussed.

VI. Reports of Chief Officers. Chief Terenzio reported that he now feels that Rescue 1 is a liability and would like to take it off the road as soon as possible. In light of the Commissioners' request to get the radios up and running, and understanding that a new vehicle purchase is not possible at this time, the Chief does understand and agrees. The Chief has come up with a solution that he has discussed with the Executive Director. He reported that they are going to reuse Engine 4. It has a good 5 or 6 years of use left. The Department plans on making it a tactical unit. It should be up and running within a week or two. The Chief plans to decommission the current Rescue 1 and put it up for auction or dispose of it in some way. Take the funds made from that and put them towards Engine 4. The career and non-career staff jointly with Chris Logan came up with a plan to identify where equipment will be placed. It was required to make compartments in order to make it a viable rescue unit. He explained some of the changes being made to the vehicle. The hoses were taken off and 500 ft. of them were kept to one side. Boxes are on order. The heart sleeves were taken off the boxes on the cabinetry. Reels have been mounted in the back of the compartment of the engine. The Hurst equipment will be placed in there. The generator that was in back will be replaced with a larger generator up on the top. Some spot lights or flood lights will be changed to LED's. The attack hose will be kept on it. The Chief feels these changes will work, and that this will be a stop gap for the Department. This solution will work until such time that it is decided how much the radio project will cost. He hopes to get the grant for the radios. At that point the Department would like to come together with a proposal for a replacement vehicle. It may be 6 to 8 months down the road. It is unclear at this time. Commissioners were invited to view the vehicle which was in one of the bays at the Coles Road Firehouse. The Fire Chief requested at this time that a committee be established to give the Department ample time to research a replacement vehicle. He has already established that the new vehicle will be a pumper/rescue unit as a tactical unit. He wants to get out of the rescue business and work towards tactical.

There was discussion about the committee and who its members should be. Commissioner Colligan suggested Commissioner Brow be Chair of this committee because he served as Chair of the last Truck Committee. Commissioner Brow was honored to be asked to serve in that capacity again. Houston-Galveston area Council. He explained the information he had on the program. The program is a cooperative purchasing program that assists local governments in reducing costs through government-to-government procurement services available nationwide. It would allow the District to circumvent the bid process. It should allow the District to obtain apparatus at a reduced cost. He was going to forward the information to the Executive Director. Commissioner Colligan suggested letting the Chief pick who he would like on the Fire side to be on the Committee. Commissioner Epstein offered his services regarding EMS information for the apparatus. Chairman Hamlin suggested having Chief Terenzio and Commissioner Brow Co-Chair this committee. The Chief has given this some thought, and would like Deputy Chief Salonia as well as two Lieutenants that will be operating the vehicle; Lt. Colligan and Lt. Zadrack as a bare minimum to start. President Murphy added that there are other vehicles in the fleet that will be coming up for replacement. He felt that there is more to this than just one vehicle. Chief Terenzio added that he has promised the Commission a strategic plan. Part of that plan is an apparatus replacement matrix. He suggested making the Truck Committee an Apparatus Replacement Committee. Commissioner Colligan suggested also having the Executive Director as part of the Committee. President Murphy suggested starting as the first order of business to establish the objective of the Committee. Commissioner Neto agreed with the President regarding the scope of the Committee and to also consider capital outlay and timeline and capital for operational expenses.

Chairman Hamlin announced that as of today, the Apparatus Committee has been created with Co-Chairs being Commissioner Lee Brow and Fire Chief Michael Terenzio. Subcommittees for specific vehicles from that Committee will be created as needed.

- VII. Firefighter/EMT Staffing and Hiring. Chief Terenzio stated that response capability is something that has been bothering him for a while. He has tasked some personnel with coming up with other ideas related to incentives. He has started to put something together and will prepare a report. Hopefully he will have something to present at the next Fire Operations Committee meeting.

Assistant Chief EMS McIntyre reported that the Division is going to need to order AED batteries. They are expensive, but they are going to be expiring at the end of the year. Commissioner Epstein and Ass't Chief EMS McIntyre attended an EMS Conference and ordered lift assist equipment that they saw there from E-2 Products. The order will be delivered soon. This equipment was a budgeted item, and they were able to outfit all three ambulances for less than \$1,400. They will also be adding lifting straps to the ambulances to assist in preventing back injuries. They also received equipment that are hard panels and soft panels accorded together and placed under the patient to pull out in either direction. It would replace a back board or a scoop stretcher.

- VIII. Fire Department Response Capability. This was discussed under the previous item.

- IX. Old Business. Mr. Dagostino reported that the exam for career Fire Fighters was performed on Sunday. The tests were professional tests that were purchased. They have been sent back to the company for correcting and scoring. They will be returned by next week. On Monday and Tuesday, October 2 and 3, Oral Boards will be given for anyone that passes the written exam.

There was a meeting with the Personnel Committee to discuss the need for filling more than just the one open Dispatch position. This would be expanding the bargaining unit. However, the staff in place is not covering enough shifts. There were three or four very talented applicants for the one Dispatch position. He suggested that the District hire all four candidates as part-time employees. The Personnel Committee felt that this was an urgent situation with too many open shifts. The District was struggling to get them covered. Letters were sent to all four candidates who are in the process of coming on board and getting trained. There is still the open position of Dispatch Supervisor. That position should be posted by next week. The Dispatchers are: Colin Whalen (former career firefighter, needed no training), Brian Petrocelli started training, Ryan Graham and Nancy Bresha have yet to come on board to start training.

Commissioner Epstein commented on awareness of the storms happening around the country and the importance of being prepared to help in an emergency situation. Mr. Dagostino added that he follows up with the Fire and Water Departments to make sure generators are able to run if needed, and all other emergency equipment is available and ready for use. The Fire District and the Town have an emergency plan (LEPC). It was noted that the Police Chief is the Emergency Management Director. She will be reminded that Commissioner Epstein is the EMS Representative for Emergency Management in the Town.

- X. New Business. There was no new business.
- XI. Commissioners' Comments. There were no comments to report.
- XII. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Colligan, seconded by Commissioner Epstein and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Johnathon Hamlin, Chairman

Nancy Deegan  
Recording Secretary  
09-27-17