

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CUMBERLAND FIRE DISTRICT**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**CUMBERLAND TOWN HALL, 45 BROAD STREET, CUMBERLAND, RI**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Lemois, Commissioners Koutsogiane, Matta, Ouellette, Champagne and Scullin

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Parent is on vacation.

**GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were no general announcements at this time.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Approval of minutes of February 24, 2015.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE.

Commissioner Koutsogiane stated there was no indication on previous agenda that there was going to be an appointment or even a consideration for the position of the Clerk. Secondly, he would like the comments of Brian Kelly to be indicated in the minutes.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO WITHDRAW HIS MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE. PASSED 6-0.

COMMISSIONER SCULLIN MOVE TO TABLE THE MOTION. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE. PASSED 6-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A. R-2015-23 Clerk's Position – Appointment of Debra Auclair

The Personnel Committee first met on 2/10/15 and again on 2/19/15 to discuss the appointment of three different positions, the first being the Clerk's position.

COMMISSIONER MATT A MOVED TO APPOINTMENT DEBRA AUCLAIR AS CLERK FOR THE CUMBERLAND FIRE DISTRICT. SECOND BY CHAMPAGNE.

Koutsogiane had questions as to whether there were other applicants and where the position was posted. He further stated that he was unaware that the position was available.

Commissioner Ouellette reviewed that all three positions have been discussed at previous meetings, including the presentation of the resolutions on the agenda and in the meeting package.

MOTION PASSED WITH A 5-1 VOTE. COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE ABSTAINED.

B. R-2015-08 - District Legal Representation – Appointment of Kelley Morris

The Personnel Committee met on 2/19/15 and reviewed resume and has decided to appoint Kelley Morris to be the District Legal Representative.

COMMISSIONER MATTA MOVED TO APPOINT KELLEY MORRIS AS DISTRICT LEGAL REPRESENTATION. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE.

Commissioner Koutsogiane has questions as to whether anyone else was contacted and feels that this would be a conflict of interest as she also works for the Town of Cumberland. He feels that the District needs independent representation.

Kelley Morris spoke on her behalf and stated that she spoke with the Ethics Commission and was assured that there would be no conflict of interest. She will also bring to the Board any information stating the above. Commissioner Champagne also stated that there is no conflict of interest between the Town and the District.

Commissioner Champagne stated for the record that he felt Ms. Morris' position is not a conflict of interest and fully supports her appointment.

Commissioner Scullin questioned the advertising process and who would determine her hours. Chairman Lemois stated that the District is not required to advertise publicly and that the District would be billed \$125/hour.

Chairman Lemois reminded Commissioner Scullin that he has been involved with the process from the very onset and has never voted against the process, nor has he been involved at the personnel committee. It was also stated that Ms. Morris would be manage just as Mr. Scullin managed the legal representation for the Valley Falls District. He also stated that he has budgeted \$12,000 for this expense.

MOTION PASSED 4-2 WITH COMMISSIONERS SCULLIN AND KOUTSOGIANE VOTING NAY.

C. R-2015-09- District Labor Legal Representation – Vote to Appoint Rodio & Ursillo

This item was withdrawn from the Agenda and reassigned to the Personnel Committee.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A. Tom Bruce's Report – Finance Updates 16:14 - 26:54

Tom Bruce gave updates on Finance and collections. He feels that there are no significant concerns. He feels that the office staff have accomplished of significant amount of work between the four districts and are being as aggressive as possible.

Mr. Bruce reported that last month he presented a combined budget with expenditures to date. It showed very little variances year to date and his staff are monitoring the major budget items that in the first seven months that are cause for concern. These items were overtime, health insurance and other large budget line items.

This month he presented a tax collection report. This report showed the net levy and amount collected to date by each of the four districts. This is for current year (2014) only; the report will grow into including prior year's tax collections.

In terms of these statistics along with last month's year to date budget report do not show any reason for concern.

Mr. Bruce pointed out the large amount of work done by Diane Karolyshyn and Beth Markey in the cleaning up of the data bases and producing delinquent letters for all four districts. In the receivables as a result of these letters, especially in the North Cumberland and Valley Falls districts were much higher than the other two districts with much lower outstanding taxes owed. With time the collection process will improve.

Mr. Bruce reported that next month he will have a cash flow report to present. He will do an 18 month rolling report. Starting around April or May the reports will include an estimate of year end expenditures.

Mr. Bruce reviewed the Visions software company and their role in our tax rolls. He also reported that with the merger of our four data bases could not be done until each of the four were clean up and as many delinquent accounts were settled as possible.

Mr. Bruce reviewed some potential issues with the proposed budget schedule as it coincides with the approval of certain areas by the State.

B. R2015-17 – In Support of S-0177 as Amended

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO REMOVE ITEM FROM TABLE. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MATTA.

This bill has been modified on pages 2 and 3. There is an explanation of the whole bill. The modifications will be sufficient and waiting for resolution support.

Commissioner Scullin does not agree with this and feels that it places the voters of Cumberland Fire District at a disadvantage. Commissioner Koutsogiane does not believe it involves this Board and that this is too political. Commissioner Ouellette also agrees and does not feel that this should be voted on at this time.

Chairman Lemois stated that this is not to single out the Cumberland Fire District but it is being scrutinized. All fire districts meet the criteria of a public body. Evidenced by the resent ruling against the Albion Fire District where in the decision, the Judge plain recognizes the Fire District as a public body.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AND MOTION DIED WITH A 3-3 VOTE. COMMISSIONERS SCULLIN, KOUTSOGIANE AND OUELLETTE VOTING NAY.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION TO ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MATTA. PASSED 5-1 WITH COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE ABSTAINING.

MOTION TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MATTA. PASSED 6-0

MOTION TO SEAL MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE.  
SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE. PASSED 6-0.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input at this time.

MOTION TO ADJOURN MOVED BY COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE. SECOND BY  
COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE AT 7:46 P.M. PASSED 6-0.

Submitted by  
Debra Auclair  
Committee Clerk