

AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CUMBERLAND FIRE DISTRICT

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.

CUMBERLAND TOWN HALL, 45 BROAD STREET, CUMBERLAND, RI

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lemois, Commissioners Koutsogiane, Matta, Ouellette, Champagne, Scullin and Solicitor Kelley Morris

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Parent had work obligations.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Lemois would like to label Item C as 18 and Item D as 19 on the Agenda.

Chairman Lemois also welcomed Debra Auclair as Clerk for the District and Kelley Morris and Solicitor. He informed the Board that the three would meet to set up a schedule for proofreading and posting of minutes with the goal being having these documents available to the public by the Friday afternoon prior to the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 2/24/15. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE. PASSED 6-0.

Chairman Lemois stated that he made changes on page 2, section 7 and emailed the changes to Commissioners today.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 3/10/15. SECONDED BY KOUTSOGIANE. PASSED 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS There was no old business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Finance Department Merger Update. Tom Bruce gave an update on the District's management report. The cash flow report is for 7-month period of February to August of 2015. For each month a positive cash flow is being reported. The June 30th balance

of \$305,197 is an annual low cash available amount after all budgeted payments are made. The sources of data used to compile this report are adopted budget amounts from the 4 former districts, year-to-date revenue and expense data examined within monthly time frames, prior year performance revenue and expense data and actual month end bank account balances.

This format will be expanded in the future to include a period of 18 months, as well as additional detail, if needed, regarding revenue, operating expenses, including detail related to personnel costs. For the current year, it appears that we do not require the need and can avoid the costs of external TANS cash financing, especially with the extended resources of bank account availability of reserve accounts held. Although, this cash position and indication that TANS in 2015 will not be needed, cautiously needs to be confirmed in each of the upcoming month cash reports.

Mr. Bruce provided 3 reports to provide an effective set of financial “vital sign” analysis for the periodic reporting to the Committee and the General Public. He summarized the detailed account Budget to Actual Report as of 12/30/14 distributed on February 10th which provided data for each of the 4 former districts and a roll-up consolidation of the entire Town-wide District. Second, being the tax collections district wide performance from February to August, 2015. Going forward, he feels that their ability to monitor and manage financial activity will improve. These 3 recurring reports will provide a uniform basis of analysis over the long term so that activity can be compared between time periods, such as years or month-do-date of multiple years.

In regards to job specifications, there are initial drafts of job specifications for 6 Finance Department positions, including finance, tax and administrative positions that have been developed in a required ADA format. The specifications will receive further review, including legal approval, prior to being forwarded to the Personnel Committee.

There is an ongoing review and assistance process with the Department of Revenue and the Office of the Auditor General is possibly scheduled to resume with an April 3rd meeting. There is a memo attached with representatives at each department which requests their next meeting and described their effort to complete various tasks within the next several months.

In regards to the Audit Bid process, the Municipal Manager at the Auditor’s General’s office is expected to approve draft bid specifications this week. Subsequently, the District advertises the RFP and plans to conduct the RFP bid process throughout the month of April.

The Finance Department and the entire management team have adhered to deadlines formulated in their March 7th planning meeting. These deadlines are related to computer system consolidation, banking structure set-up, planning for staff needs and related hiring processes, collective bargaining, health insurance procurement, State retirement system set-up and tax roll preparation. The annual budget development process is a significant area regarding this overall planning approach.

Further actuarial analysis by FRS, the State's actuarial firm, may be needed if the retirement terms of any of our participating employees were to change as a result of the current collective bargaining process. They are prepared to work quickly, if needed, and have had a productive meeting with the Executive Director and Finance Director of ERSRI last week. The objective would be to request and receive a new valuation as soon as we know they definitely need it.

Other one-time development projects will be starting soon with the installation of a networked version of our accounting system and their development of new chart of accounts the FY starting July 1st. An RFP for banking services needs to be developed and issued for an April month-long bid process. Certain tasks and organization of records is already started for the preparation of our first annual separate financial audit processes of each of the former four districts. Lastly, the proposed tax procedures and policies will be provided to the Fire Committee for consideration to approve subsequent to recommendation from the Finance Committee as soon as possible.

Chairman Lemois recapped the work done by Mr. Bruce stating despite being under a tight schedule. He further stated that starting on 1/13/14, a review was done and Mr. Bruce provided a comprehensive plan which provided the District a roadmap. On 1/27/14, meeting was cancelled due to a snowstorm. On 2/10/14 a comprehensive report was issued with updates and distributed and reviewed the budget. Mr. Bruce was also in the hospital for 2 weeks. Mr. On 3/10/14 Mr. Bruce distributed and went over the tax collection rates, which was very detailed. He specified the cash flow and confirmed that the budget is in control. Stated that he has done an outstanding and detailed job.

Chairman Lemois let the Board know if they are welcome to meet with Mr. Bruce with any questions, just call or email himself or Mr. Bruce. Everything will be available for the Committee and public to see on www.cumberlandfire.org under Meeting packages and should be available by Friday afternoon/evening. He assured that future reports

will be mature and become more comprehensive as we move on. Chairman Lemois commended the great job that the finance staff has done to date.

Committee Koutsogiane stated that he appreciates the report prepared but questioned whether the documentation could be forwarded before the meeting. Mr. Bruce stated that he will do his best to adhere to Friday deadline.

Commissioner Koutsogiane also questioned whether or not there will be more detail on the cash flow and will it be available on the website such as expenditures and any more details on cash out. Mr. Bruce explained that the payroll system does include FICA, pension, salary, benefits and health insurance, which are the biggest expenses. He will try to separate the salary, overtime, pension and administrative expenses. Mr. Bruce will break down payroll in a detailed report and put on budget to actual report. He explained that come July 1st all four accounting systems will be merged into one. This year each of the Districts will have their own annual report. Commissioner Koutsogiane asked if the District reports could be forwarded to him for review. Mr. Bruce reiterated that once the systems are merged, it will be easier to produce monthly reports. Right now, with the 4 different systems, it is difficult to produce at this time. Many functions after June 30th will no longer be needed.

Commissioner Scullin questioned that some accounts are not listed on the report, more specifically the reserves. Mr. Bruce stated that a total of \$67,000 is not in the analysis as it is a contingency fund. He kept the reserves out of the analysis but will be reported on the audit and financial statements for all 4 Districts. Commissioner Champagne wanted to clarify that the reserve is restricted for the purchase of a fire engine or a specific reason.

Commissioner Ouellette wanted to commend Mr. Bruce and his staff for tremendous work that has been done in such a short time. She had a question on the retirement system being kept separate. Mr. Bruce responded that the State mandates it. He also stated that it was not to our benefit. If there are any changes in collective bargaining, then we will have to reevaluate. Commissioner Ouellette also had a question of pension of new hires. Mr. Bruce replied it was part of bargaining process. Mr. Bruce further commented that the staff has been remarkable, great work ethic and very resourceful.

- B. BR-2015-02B Stipends Kelley Morris spoke with the Ethics Commissions (EC) concerning the resolution FC-BR-2015-02 calling for stipends effect July 1, 2015. The Chairman had requested an opinion from the EC about that vote. Solicitor Morris called

the EC and reviewed the request and the opinion of the Commission, and compared other Districts in past. Ms. Morris reported though the EC understood the position of the Committee, and agrees that they should be paid a stipend. But the bottom line is on a technicality the Committee could not vote on their own stipends. The EC agreed with Ms. Morris that there will be a considerable amount of work to be done by this District in the first term. Therefore it is suggested that the Commissioners be paid a stipend of \$3,200 annually and this will take effect November 14, 2016.

Commissioner Scullin felt that \$3,200 is excessive and not in the best interest of taxpayers.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO APPROVE AMENDED DATE OF 11/14/16 FOR STIPEND OF \$3,200 ANNUALLY TO COMMISSIONERS. COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE SECONDED.

COMMISSIONER SCULLIN MOVED TO AMEND MOTION TO \$1,500 PER COMMISSIONER. NO SECOND. MOTION TO AMEND FAILED.

MOTION PASSED WITH 5-1 VOTE. SCULLIN VOTED NAY.

- C. R2015-18 Visions Tax Service Mr. Bruce gave a synopsis of what Vision Government Solutions entails. The 4 prior fire districts' databases must be merged in order to move forward as a consolidated fire district. It would not be cost effective to engage any other firm because of the extraordinary costs associated with initial implementation of new software. This would allow credit card payments, mortgage from escrow payments.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE CHAIRMAN LEMOIS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH VISION GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS, INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$10,000.00. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE. PASSED 6-0.

- D. R2015-19 Legal Files Several Attorneys for various fire districts have been handling legal cases. Solicitor Morris will coordinate the returning of these files to HQ. Solicitor Morris will be review each case to ensure the District's responsibilities have been satisfied.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE CHAIRMAN LEMOIS TO EXECUTE LETTERS REQUESTING THE TRANSFER OF FILES FROM ATTORNEYS HANDLING DISTRICT

MATTERS TO CUMBERLAND FIRE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS AT 3502 MENDON ROAD,
CUMBERLAND, RI. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE.

Commissioner Koutsogiane questioned what files were out there. Kelley Morris stated that they are aware of a few and if any other commissioners knew of others, they would like to know. Chairman Lemois listed some of files out there. They will search payable to see what others are out there. Commissioner Koutsogiane is in possession of a file. He did speak with the Chief earlier and was ready to turn over to him but was waiting for fire proof file cabinet. The Chief stated we will be receiving the cabinet tomorrow. Commissioner Koutsogiane will turn over file within 48 hours

MOTION PASSED 6-0.

PUBLIC INPUT

Arthur Cole of Sunny Drive had some public input as to whether there were exemptions for seniors or Veterans.

Chairman Lemois stated the Fire Committee was only aware of Cumberland Hill's exemptions. Chairman Lemois did say that they are reviewing and that Commissioner Champagne is very interested in this issue, bringing it up every weeks.

COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE MOVED TO ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION AT 8:07 P.M. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SCULLIN. PASSED 6-0.

Submitted by
Debra Auclair
Committee Clerk

NOTE: All reports covered or mentioned at this meeting are available upon request.