



South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 14, 2024

Time: 0902

Location: South Arkansas Fire Protection District Office

Members Present

- Harold Starbuck
- Jeff Graf
- Rich Edgington
- Art Hutchinson

Members Absent & Excused

- Fred Jackson
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1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 0902 by Chair Harold Starbuck.

2. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion to accept the agenda as presented:**
 - **Motion by:** Jeff Graf
 - **Second by:** Rich Edgington
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

3. Approval of September Board Meeting Minutes

- **Motion to accept the September Board Meeting Minutes:**
 - **Motion by:** Jeff Graf
 - **Second by:** Rich Edgington
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

4. Open Session

No public comments were presented.

5. Reports

Financial Report

Sarah Marques from Walke & Associates presented the budget and financial statements for the previous month.

- Sarah noted that wildland income payments from the state were delayed, with Chief Aaron Jonke explaining that the state's system changes, and a high volume of billing requests had slowed processing in 2024.
- Sarah also presented an initial draft of the 2025 budget, noting that it is in its preliminary stages. She will work with Chief Jonke to refine and finalize the budget.
- Sarah reported an expected loss of \$30,000 in the 2025 mill levy revenue.
- **Motion to accept the monthly financials:**
 - **Motion by:** Jeff Graf
 - **Second by:** Art Hutchinson
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Aaron Jonke provided the following updates:

- **Staffing Concerns:** Three members are currently on long-term leave due to non-line-of-duty injuries, creating staffing challenges.
- **Driver/Operator Training:** Training and certification for Driver/Operator roles are scheduled for October.
- **Fleet Condition:** Concerns were reported from deployed firefighters regarding the condition of Brush 112. Chief Jonke recommended that the board consider replacing the unit and noted that apparatus prices have seen significant increases.
- **FRWRM Grant Application:** Chief Jonke outlined an application submitted for the FRWRM Grant, intended to support wildfire mitigation efforts in high-risk Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. The grant would fund equipment, mitigation work, and a new Wildfire Division Chief position, jointly funded by the grant and SAFPD. This position would oversee mitigation efforts, community engagement, and coordination per the Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The grant would promote collaboration with Colorado Firecamp and the City of Salida, aiming to adopt a "one community" approach to wildfire concerns.
- **New Fire Station:** Chief Jonke reported that the new firehouse is expected to open around the third week of December.

Wildland Coordinator's Report

Captain Bainbridge reported the following:

- **Weather and Fire Risk:** Precipitation has started in the mountains, but fuels such as grasses remain dry, and the fire danger is still high.
 - **Resource Deployment:** SAFPD personnel and assets are currently deployed across six states. In addition, SAFPD crews are involved in hurricane relief efforts.
 - **Operational Demand:** This season has seen high activity levels, with apparatus deployed throughout most of the year. The air tanker has returned to Colorado Springs and is now available for further deployments.
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Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

New Business

No new business was presented.

Executive Session

- **Motion to enter Executive Session** for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiation, developing negotiation strategies, and/or instructing negotiators under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(e), specifically concerning the intergovernmental agreement with the City of Salida.
 - **Motion by:** Rich Edgington
 - **Second by:** Art Hutchinson
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

The board entered and subsequently adjourned from Executive Session.

9. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn at 10:24.**
 - **Motion by:** Art Hutchinson
 - **Second by:** Rich Edgington
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Submitted by: _____

Jeff Graf Secretary Treasurer