South Arkansas Fire Protection District

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 6/30/2025

Time: 0900 Hours

Location: 611 Oak Street, Salida, CO 81201

Board Members Present

- Harold Starbuck
- Rich Edgington
- Sheldon Morgan

Board Members Excused

- Art Hutchinson
- Phillip Gamache

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Harold Starbuck at 0900 hours.

2. Approval of the Agenda

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

3. Approval of May Board Meeting Minutes

- Motion to accept the May Board Meeting Minutes
- **Motion By:** Rich Edgington
- **Second By:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously

4. Open Session

Kent Maxwell from Colorado Firecamp, Alex Jensen from Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC), and Heidi Slaymaker from Colorado Mountain College (CMC) attended the meeting to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Colorado Firecamp and the South Arkansas Fire Protection District (SAFPD). Their discussion emphasized the community collaboration and leadership that would be fostered through the creation of the Division Chief of Wildfire position.

5. Reports

Sarah Marques of Walke and Associates reported that the second installment of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) payment between SAFPD and the City of Salida has been processed. She also updated the board on the progress of the 2025 financial audit, confirming her intention to complete the audit by the July board meeting.

Laurie Todesco of SAFPD reported deposits of over $88,000 (2024) and $110,000 (2025) in the past 30 days, with $139,000 pending. An additional $825,000 is under review, and $1.3 million is

expected. The current account balance is $313,000, set to rise with recent truck deployments in California.

Financial Report

- **Motion to accept the May financials:**
  - **Motion:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second:** Rich Edgington
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Aaron Jonke discussed several critical issues:

- Grants
  - **firecamp MOU:** Reviewed by legal counsel and board members. Chief Jonke noted anticipated positive community impacts from the SAFPD / Colorado Firecamp partnership.
  - **Chaffee County Common Grounds Grant:** Still under review. Chief Jonke will provide updates as needed.
- Apparatus
  - **Engine 111:** Fully outfitted and deployment ready.
  - **Engine 112:** Awaiting equipment from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).
  - **Engine 113:** Underwent tie rod replacements.
  - **Engine 114:** Scheduled for retirement but remains operational.
  - **Engine 111:** Currently out of service for overdue maintenance.
  - **Division Chief Position:** Chief Jonke coordinated with legal to amend the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). The updated agreement is scheduled for City Council review on Tuesday, July 1. No issues are anticipated.
- **Operational Planning:** Internal openings for one lieutenant position. Engineer promotions are expected this fall.
- Legislation Updates
  - **Executive Order on Wildfire:** Consolidates federal wildfire programs under the Departments of Interior and Agriculture; promotes mutual aid, predictive modeling, early detection, prescribed burns, and use of surplus DoD aircraft for firefighting.
  - **Concerns:** Lacks clear implementation details, timeline, and funding; the 90-day deadline is unrealistic and risks disruption during peak fire season;

climate change factors are not addressed.

  - Senate Bill 25-142 - Wildfire Resiliency Code Board Reform: Restructures the state wildfire code board and mandates adoption of state-level mitigation codes by local governments in high-risk areas within nine months.
  - **Concerns:** Limits local flexibility and home rule authority; smaller jurisdictions face administrative and financial challenges; stakeholders seek more local input and adaptability.
  - Senate Bill 24-194 - Emergency Services Funding for Special Districts:

Authorizes fire and ambulance districts to impose impact fees on new developments and propose voter-approved sales taxes. Chief Jonke recommends pursuing these options to support services amid community growth.

  - House Bill 25-1273 -- Single Stair Residential Building: Allows five-story, single-stair residential buildings with enhanced fire safety standards co- developed with fire marshals and firefighter unions.

- **Insurance:** Chief Jonke reported that SAFPD was previously misinformed by its former insurance provider, which failed to properly cover out-of-state firefighters under workers' compensation. This oversight affected 17 firefighters. Immediate

policy changes have been implemented to protect all personnel. Two states still require additional coordination to finalize coverage; firefighters from those states will not be deployed until proper coverage is in place.

Assistant Fire Chief Report

Chief Rohrich reported on a few administrative items:

- **Insurance:** Chief Rohrich shared that switching insurance providers should reduce liability coverage costs and add an umbrella policy at a lower overall price. The district's accident and sickness policy is also expected to be cheaper with the new provider.
    - **DOLA Filings:** Chief Rohrich reported that all board members have been accepted by the state.

Wild Land Coordinator

Captain Bainbridge reported the following:

- **Weather Report:** Fire danger remains high within the county, though no fire bans are currently in place. Increased burning activity by residents has led to a rise in smoke reports for the department. Nationally, the planning level is at Level 3 and continues to rise.
- **Deployments:** The Type 3 engine is currently deployed in California, while the Type 6 engine remains available for national assignments as needed. Crews are actively deployed in Alaska, North Carolina, Minnesota, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Utah.
- **Personnel:** Staff have been actively using their volunteer hours, assisting with the Open House and supporting the GARNA dinner held on Thursday, June 26th.

New Business:

A. Resolution No. 2025-08 Resolution of the Board of Directors of the South Arkansas Fire

Protection District approving an amendment to the intergovernmental agreement with the City of Salida to establish a Division Chief of Wildfire Position.

- **Resolution By:** Rich Edgington
- **Second:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Unanimous

B. Resolution No. 2025-09 Resolution of the Board of Directors of the South Arkansas Fire

Protection District authorizing the execution of a memorandum of understanding with Colorado Firecamp to support the Division Chief of Wildfire position.

- **Resolution By:** Rich Edgington
- **Second:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Unanimous

7. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn the meeting at 0940
- **Motion to Adjourn:** Rich Edgington
- **Second:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Passed Unanimously

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Submitted by: RidARine+6n (Jul 3,2025 08:11 MDT)

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Rich Edgington, Vice President