South Arkansas Fire Protection District

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 8/25/2025

Time: 0900 Hours

Location: 611 Oak Street, Salida, CO 81201

Board Members Present

« Harold Starbuck

- Rich Edgington
- Art Hutchinson
- Sheldon Morgan
- Phillip Gamache

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Harold Starbuck at 0902 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 July Board Meeting Minutes

- Motion to accept the July Board Meeting Minutes
  - **Motion By:** Art Hutchinson
  - **Second By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Vote:** Passed unanimously

4. Open Session: No public comments were received.

5. Reports

Sarah Marques of Walke and Associates reported that bank transfers from the Colorado Trust were initiated to cover various expenses, with the largest being the credit card statement. The first reimbursement of payroll taxes from the IRS was received in July, and the remaining amount is expected soon. Sarah also noted that the audit has been completed.

Laurie Todesco reported that all 2024 invoicing is complete and submitted to the state. She also shared that final 2024 financials have been received, including truck profit, with 2025 truck profit currently ahead.

Financial Report

- **Motion to accept the July financials:**
- **Motion:** Rich Edgington
- **Second:** Art Hutchinson
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Aaron Jonke discussed several critical issues:

- Operational Planning
  - **Policy and Procedure Update:** The Salida Fire Department's Standard Operating Procedures are under review to align with District standards and neighboring municipalities. The City Attorney is reviewing leave policies, and the Operations Manual review is nearly complete.
- SFD Staffing / Personnel
  - Firefighter/EMT position testing was conducted on August 21st, resulting in the selection of Tyler Oster from the SFD Reserve Program. Anticipated start date for new hire is September 17%
  - Lieutenant Testing will be held in the first week of October.
- **Finance © SAFPD Pay Policy:** Chief Jonke called for a review of the overhead pay and overtime policy, citing financial strain on the District. He stated overtime will be paid once state reimbursement is received.
  - **Grants:** Funds were received from Chaffee County Envision to support mitigation efforts.
  - **2026 Budget Prep:** Currently underway and will be sent to Sarah Marques for review.
  - **Mitigation Wages:** Chief Jonke proposed allocating funds to compensate and incentivize South Arkansas personnel for community mitigation work.
  - **Future Needs:** Initial planning has begun to address future needs using remaining funds from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) order, including potential radio replacements and apparatus considerations.
  - **2026 City of Salida Budget:** The 2026 budget for the City of Salida remains flat.

Chief Jonke recommended that board members engage with city officials to help encourage various apparatus additions.

- Equipment and Technology
  - Chief Jonke is exploring the purchase of two Starlink Mobile units to ensure reliable field connectivity. The DLA equipment order to outfit the Type 6 engines has been completed.
- Interagency Work
  - Efforts are underway to strengthen relationships with Colorado Firecamp and to establish mitigation work areas for crews from the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and the Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC).
- Legal / Community

© Community members have expressed interest in joining SAFPD. Chief Jonke reported that he is currently drafting processes for both inclusion and exclusion to guide community participation.

- Fire Restrictions
  - Unincorporated Chaffee County and South Arkansas Fire Protection District

entered a Stage | fire restriction on Friday, August 8".

- Legislation
  - A $800 million budget shortfall was reported during the special session. Chief Jonke anticipates that this may result in increased pressure on local governments.

Assistant Fire Chief Report

Chief Rohrich reported on a few administrative items:

- Insurance

    - Policy changes are expected in September - Chief Rohrich will update the board when necessary.
- Collegiate Peaks
    - Sarah Marques of Walke and Associates is initiating small transfers once a month to avoid inactivity charges.

Division Chief of Wildfire

Division Chief Bainbridge reported the following:

- Deployments
    - Engine 112 - Back in Salida
    - Engine 114 - Derby Fire in Colorado
    - Tender 11 - Southern California on severity role
    - Engine 311 - Northern California on severity role
- Operational Planning
    - **Mapping:** Updated Size-Up cards now include QR codes: one links to aerial maps showing gates, cisterns, hydrants, parcels, and roads; another provides DFPC information on resources available during the first 48 hours of an incident.
- Grants
    - Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) - announced in December, 2025 of acceptance or denial of application.
    - Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) - Working in partnership with Colorado Firecamp, which will apply for crews, while South Arkansas will apply for equipment.
- Community Initiatives
    - Working closely with community members by attending HOA meetings.

Division Chief Bainbridge plans to host community meetings with insurance providers to give residents an opportunity to ask questions about their insurance rates.

6. New Business

- **Motion:** Motion by the South Arkansas Fire Protections District Board of Directors to authorize the allocation of up to $25,000 from funding toward wages in support of wildfire mitigation efforts.
    - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
    - **Second:** Rich Edgington
    - **Vote:** Unanimous

7. Adjournment

¢ Motion to adjourn the meeting at 0954

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Rich Edgington
- **Second:** Art Hutchinson
- **Vote:** Passed Unanimously

Art Hutchinson, Secretary Treasurer

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