South Arkansas Fire Protection District

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 5/19/2025

Time: 0900 Hours

Location: 611 Oak Street, Salida, CO 81201

Board Members Present

- Harold Starbuck
- Art Hutchinson
- Phillip Gamache
- Sheldon Morgan

Excused Board Members

- Rich Edgington

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Harold Starbuck at 0906 hours.

2. Oath of Office for Newly Elected Directors

President Harold Starbuck of the South Arkansas Fire Protection District (SAFPD) Board of Directors administered the Oath of Office to the newly elected board members:

- Phillip Gamache
- Sheldon Morgan

Each member affirmed their commitment to uphold the duties of their position in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, the Colorado Constitution, and state law. The board welcomed the new members, who officially assumed their roles immediately following the oath.

Election of Directors:

In accordance with the bylaws of the South Arkansas Fire Protection District, the Board proceeded with the annual election of officers for the positions of President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

- **President:**
  - Harold Starbuck was nominated for the position of President. There being no further nominations, Harold Starbuck was re-elected as President of the Board.
- **Vice President:**
  - Rich Edgington was nominated for the position of Vice President. There being no further nominations, Rich Edgington was re-elected as Vice President of the Board.
- **Secretary-Treasurer:**
  - Art Hutchinson was nominated for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. There being no further nominations, Art Hutchinson was elected as Secretary- Treasurer of the Board.

The newly elected officers will serve a term of 2 years.

Approval of the Agenda:

- Motion to accept the agenda as presented:

- **Motion by:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Second by:** Art Hutchinson
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Approval of April Board Meeting Minutes:

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

Open Session:

Kent Maxwell of Colorado Firecamp presented on the organization's partnership with South Arkansas Fire Protection District (SAFPD), Salida Fire, Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC), and the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). He emphasized the collaboration with SAFPD, proposing the allocation of grant funds to support a Division Fire Chief position to oversee SCC crews. Maxwell also highlighted community initiatives, including prescribed

burns and a wildfire mitigation certificate program for high school students, offered as a dual-credit course in partnership with Colorado Mountain College.

Reports

Financial Report

Sarah Marques of Walke and Associates reported receipt of the first City of Salida contract payment and the deposit for two new brush trucks. She noted the Colorado Trust account balance at $2.85 million and High-Country Bank at $300,000.

Laurie Todesco of SAFPD reported total Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) deposits of $3.5 million, with approximately $500,000 still pending. She noted that deployed trucks in Texas are generating an estimated $20,000 per week, with potential for higher earnings due to extended work hours.

- Motion to accept the monthly financials as presented:
- **Motion:** Art Hutchinson
- **Second:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Aaron Jonke discussed several critical issues:

- **Elections:** Two new board members were onboarded and received the Board Member Handbook on May 15. Chief Jonke confirmed that SFD administration will handle all required filings Chaffee and Fremont Counties, DOLA, and the Colorado SDA.
- **Grants:** Efforts are underway to strengthen partnerships with Colorado Firecamp and SCC to support funding for the Wildfire Division Chief position. Additional funding is being pursued through the Envision Chaffee County Common Ground Grant, which would also support equipment, maintenance, mitigation wages, and a one-time UTV purchase for remote access. A Letter of Intent was submitted on May 16. Chief Jonke also communicated that Firecamp is providing $2,000 in training credits for mitigation work hours.
- **Apparatus:** Two new brush trucks are scheduled for pickup in the first week of June, with logos, decals, and equipment installation underway. Chief Jonke reported the

implementation of a structured fleet maintenance program using First Due software and local fleet maintenance through the City of Salida. A

shared diesel analysis subscription was also purchased in coordination with Public Works and other departments.

- **Operational Program:** SOPs are under review and are being revised to align with the City of Salida's standards. The newly implemented Volunteer Program was well received by crew members. The Wildland Refresher took place on May 2, including both classroom and hands-on training.
- **District Unification:** Conversations with the City of Salida and County Stakeholders regarding a single fire district are ongoing and being received well.
- **DFPC:** Billing process for the state is advancing with payments being received regularly.
- **Legislation:**
- HB25-1009 "Vegetative Fuel Mitigation" became law on March 31%, 2025, which allows fire protection districts to create programs requiring the removal of hazardous vegetation on private property, with a structured notice and fine process. Chief Jonke will provide the Board with program recommendations.
- HB25-1273 "Single Staircase" allows for a single exit (staircase) in multifamily buildings up to five stories, potentially posing challenges for fire response. Chief Jonke will continue to monitor the bill and provide updates to the Board on its progress.
- SB25-077 "Modifications to the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)" was vetoed by the Governor during the April 17th legislative session. The bill aimed to revise public access provisions under CORA but was ultimately rejected due to concerns over transparency and implementation impacts.
- HB25-1182 "Risk Model Use in Property Insurance Policies" aims to enhance transparency in how property insurers assess wildfire risk and set premiums. Chief Jonke will continue to monitor this bill and update the Board of its progress.
- **SFD Open House:** Salida Fire Department Open House will be on Friday, May 23 from 11am to 2pm where SAFPD will be providing beverages.

Assistant Fire Chief Report

Chief Rohrich reported on a few administrative items:

- **Insurance:** SAFPD is in ongoing communication with insurance brokers regarding workers' compensation, with indications that potential cost reductions may have been missed. An update is expected at the June board meeting.
- **Grants:** The Firehouse Subs Grant was submitted in April; confirmation of receipt is pending. Reapplication may be necessary, as it is a quarterly grant cycle. SFD administration also plans to pursue the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) grant focused on mitigation efforts.

Wild Land Coordinator

Chief Aaron Jonke reported the following for Captain Chris Bainbridge:

- **Deployments:** Type Ill and Type VI engines are deployed in Texas on severity assignments through June, with minimal impact on equipment. Crew rotations occur every 21 days, with the next scheduled for May 20.
- **Fire Conditions:** Snowpack increased by 7% following the recent storm; however, drought conditions are expected to persist due to rising temperatures and ongoing drying trends.
- **Community Initiatives:** The Ranch Hand Mitigation Program operates as the weather permits. Recent rainfall enabled crews to conduct prescribed burns in targeted areas.

8. New Business

A. Resolution No. 2025-07 Resolution to establish and fund a Wildfire Division Chief

position through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Salida.

- **Motion:**
  - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second:** Phillip Gamache
  - **Vote:** Unanimous

B. Motion: By the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors to Remove Jeff

Graf and Fred Jackson from the SAFPD Bank Accounts and add Art Hutchinson and Rich Edgington.

- **Motion:**
  - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second:** Art Hutchinson
  - **Vote:** Unanimous

C. Motion: By the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors to Amend Rule

V-1 of the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors Policy Book.

Move to amend the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors Policy Book, Rule V-1, to read as follows:

Rule V-1: Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on the 4" Monday of every month at 611 Oak Street, Salida Colorado at 9:00 am, unless changed by the board to accommodate holidays or the needs of the District. The date, time, and place of regular meetings shall be reconsidered annually at the first meeting of the Board each calendar year.

¢ Motion:

- **Motion By:** Art Hutchinson
- **Second By:** Sheldon Morgan
- **Vote:** Unanimous

D. Motion: Motion by the South Arkansas Fire Protection District Board of Directors to

reschedule the June Board Meeting to June 30.

- **Motion:**
  - **Motion By:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second By:** Phil Gamache
  - **Vote:** Unanimous

9. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1031
  - **Motion to Adjourn:** Sheldon Morgan
  - **Second:** Phil Gamache
  - **Vote:** Passed Unanimously

Submitted by: : A

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Art Hutchinson, Secretary-Treasurer