South Arkansas Fire Protection District

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 9, 2024
Time: 0900 hours
Location: 124 E Street, Salida, CO 81201

Board Members Present

- Harold Starbuck
- Fred Jackson
- Jeff Graf
- Rich Edgington

Board Members Absent and Excused

- Art Hutchinson (excused)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Harold Starbuck at 0907 hours.

2. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to accept the agenda as presented:
  - Motion by: Fred Jackson
  - Second by: Rich Edgington
  - Vote: Passed unanimously

3. Approval of November Board Meeting Minutes

- Motion to accept the November Board Meeting Minutes.
  - Motion by: Rich Edgington
  - Second by: Fred Jackson
  - Vote: Passed unanimously

4. Open Session

- Sheldon Morgan and Mike Sugaski thanked the board for sending a team of eight individuals from Firecamp to address mitigation concerns around their properties on Methodist Mountain.

5. Reports

Financial Report

Laurie Todesco, from South Arkansas Fire Protection District, provided a financial update for the board concerning the $3.4 million currently outstanding.

- Laurie informed the board that the state is processing funds more slowly, causing delays in receiving allocated resources. She assured the board that the state would process the invoices and pay allocated funds as soon as possible.
- Motion to accept the monthly financials:
  - Motion: Jeff Graf.
  - Second: Rich Edgington.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Aaron Jonke discussed several critical issues:

- Operations: Chief Jonke provided an update on operations that will be implemented moving forward, including First Due, a software function intended to improve department capabilities and metrics. He also discussed consolidating department rules and procedures to streamline expectations.

- Community Evaluation: Chief Jonke noted an increase in heating fires involving chimneys, wood stoves, furnaces, and space heaters during colder months, and said the community should be aware of the risks.
- Staffing/Personnel: The Chief addressed the recent hiring of seven reserve personnel to help backfill current positions, as well as the hiring of one full-time firefighter. Written testing for the full-time firefighter position starts on December 20.
- Fleet Condition: Brush 112 incurred a $2,600 repair to address its activated limp mode. Repairs are scheduled.
- President of the Board Harold Starbuck asked about the availability of a Type III. Chief Jonke confirmed Type III apparatus were still available, currently priced from $563,000 to $730,000.
- Grants:
  - FRWRM: Securing this grant is a high priority. It would support wildfire mitigation in and around the community and facilitate the promotion of a qualified crew member to Wildland Chief. Official confirmation is not expected until March 2025.
  - DFPC: A grant directed toward firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE), with emphasis on replacing fire shelters, opens at the beginning of the year.
  - Radio replacement: A grant through the Office of Emergency Operations to upgrade the District's older radios.
  - AFG: SAFPD is applying for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant to improve training operations and replace a tower that is 30 years old.
- Slip-on grants: Chief Jonke is looking into grants to build the District's own Type 6 brush trucks.
- Legislative Update: Chief Jonke is monitoring property tax legislation that may significantly affect special district fire departments across the state. Governor Polis has acknowledged the challenges and plans to address the issue by March 2025.
- New Fire House Report: Construction is nearly complete, with work focused on pouring concrete. Inclement weather could affect the timeline. The District expects to move into the new fire house on January 2, 2025.
- Other Updates:
  - The NCCC team is scheduled to move into the 124 E Street station on January 8, 2025.
  - Chief Jonke contacted BLM to offer board support with mitigation efforts but had not received a response. He will report any updates.
  - The department will increase the exclusion fee for an individual to leave the District to $1,000 effective January 1, 2025.

Assistant Fire Chief Report

Chief Rohrich reported that the board will need to remove the retired fire chief from financial accounts.

Wildland Coordinator Report

Captain Bainbridge reported on the District's current wildland team and equipment deployments, as well as maintenance and repairs needed:

- Team Deployment: No staff is currently deployed, although fire season is expected to pick up soon, with a potential assessment assignment directed toward Oklahoma and Texas.
- Equipment Deployment: The Type 6 has returned to the station.

6. Unfinished Business

- SAFPD Christmas Party: Sunday, December 15 at 5:30 p.m.

7. New Business

- Resolution No. 2024-06 - Resolution to Appropriate Sums of Money.
  - Motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-06.
  - Motion by: Fred Jackson.
  - Second: Rich Edgington.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.
- Resolution No. 2024-07 - Funding of a Wildland Chief of Operations.
  - Motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-07.
  - Motion by: Fred Jackson.
  - Second: Rich Edgington.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

- Resolution No. 2024-08 - Appointing Chief Jonke Designated Elections Officer.
  - Motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-08.
  - Motion by: Rich Edgington.
  - Second: Jeff Graf.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.
- Resolution No. 2024-09 - Resolution to Set Mill Levies.
  - Motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-09.
  - Motion by: Jeff Graf.
  - Second: Fred Jackson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

8. Public Hearing

- Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-10, the IGA between the South Arkansas Fire Protection District and the City of Salida.
  - Motion by: Fred Jackson.
  - Second: Jeff Graf.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.
- Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-11, adopting the 2025 budget.
  - Motion by: Rich Edgington.
  - Second: Fred Jackson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 0954.

- Motion to adjourn: Rich Edgington.
- Second: Fred Jackson.
- Vote: Passed unanimously.

Jeff Graf
Secretary Treasurer

