South Arkansas Fire Protection District

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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

Board Members Present

- Harold Starbuck
- Fred Jackson
- Art Hutchinson

Board Members Absent and Excused

- Jeff Graf
- Rich Edgington

Meeting Proceedings

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion: Fred Jackson moved to accept the agenda as presented.
  - Second: Art Hutchinson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion: Fred Jackson moved to approve the minutes from the previous board meeting as presented.
  - Second: Art Hutchinson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

Open Session

- Mike Sugaski, a member of the team for over 10 years, addressed the board and expressed his interest in serving on the board.
- Andy Majeski shared his recent wildfire deployment experience in California.

Reports

Financial Report

- Sarah Marques, from Walke & Associates, reviewed the budget and financial statements for the previous month, noting no significant variances.
- She will forward a copy of the annual audit to the Fire Chief.
- The Fire Chief and Sarah will collaborate on ensuring the 2025 budget line items are aligned with the City of Salida's annual fire department budget.
- Motion to accept the monthly financials:
  - Motion: Fred Jackson.
  - Second: Art Hutchinson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.

Attorney Report

The attorney is currently reviewing the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) and has requested an executive session with the board to discuss further details.

Fire Chief Report

Chief Aaron Jonke discussed several critical issues:

- Three team members are out due to joint injuries, accounting for 25% of the department. This poses staffing challenges, and the Chief is working on using interagency firefighters through the reserve program to mitigate the impact.
- The Fire Ops One-on-One class held for department heads was a success, with participants experiencing live fire simulations. The Chief plans to extend this opportunity to City Council members in 2025.
- Fleet Concerns: There were concerns regarding Engine 112's condition, which has been reported as poor. The Chief discussed plans to use Engine 111 for mitigation purposes and is exploring options for Type 6 and Type 3 apparatus procurement.
- Fire Camp Collaboration: Efforts are underway to build a partnership with Fire Camp, a wildland firefighter training school. This relationship will benefit the district by providing training opportunities and supporting wildland mitigation efforts.
- Legislative Update: Initiatives 50 and 108 have been pulled from the ballot, with House Bill 24B-1001 introduced to address tax issues affecting special districts. The Governor has pledged a more permanent fix by March 2025.
- Future Direction: Chief Jonke emphasized the need for strategic investments in personnel, including creating a full-time wildland coordinator position, providing healthcare for admin staff, and upgrading aging apparatus. He stressed the importance of consolidating fire services in the county's rapidly growing southern region.

Assistant Fire Chief Report

Chief Rohrich reported that after months of effort, the Department of Local Affairs has finally corrected all of the district's information. This process required significant work on her part.

Wildland Coordinator Report

Captain Bainbridge reported on the district's current wildland deployments:

- Several assets are deployed, mainly in California, where a crew swap was recently required. California authorities indicated they will continue using district resources for as long as possible.
- Colorado is entering a dry spell, and wildfire conditions in the state, including the local area, are expected to worsen in the coming months.
- There was an air tanker carbon monoxide issue in Colorado Springs, leading to the relocation of state assets to the Front Range.

Unfinished Business

- None.

New Business

- President Starbuck suggested that the board defer action on future matters until a special meeting, which he will schedule immediately. He expressed the importance of having the entire board present to discuss moving forward.

Good of the Order

- None.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn:
  - Motion: Fred Jackson.
  - Second: Art Hutchinson.
  - Vote: Passed unanimously.
- The meeting was adjourned; the time is not stated in the source PDF.

Respectfully submitted,
Art Hutchinson
Acting Secretary Treasurer