

Aspen Fire Protection District

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Board of Directors Regular Meeting March 14th, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Aspen Fire Protection District met for their regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public in person and virtually via Zoom.

Meeting called to order by John at 5:04pm

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Parker Lathrop, Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Emily Taylor (via Zoom), Steve Wertheimer (via Zoom)
- Board of Directors Absent:
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Schubert, Jan Legersky, Amanda Perusse. Those joining via Zoom: Ben Smith, Scott Arthur, Nic Milton, Ken Josselyn.
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Motion by John to approve minutes from regular meeting held on February 14, 2023.
Wabs second.
Discussion: None
Vote: All approved.

Introduction by Rick Balentine:

New AFD employee, Amanda Perusse, Executive Administrative Assistant, started on March 13th. Welcome.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: Ryan Warren is new president; he will join the next board meeting and give a report.

Financials

- Monthly Financial Review: Included in the board packet.
 - There was discussion regarding line 10450 under General Fund pertaining to property tax receivables. These are numbers that come from accountant once per year. There is a credit for this under Liabilities Property Tax Receivables to offset.
 - Clarification under the line item for Pitkin County. This is the amount they have committed to toward Pano AI, along with rent for Dispatch.
 - Clarification on Overtime. There was a mistake. It was \$2,900 in overtime, not \$12,000.
 - Dispatch service and radio service. There was discussion of the increase to \$90,000. Parker was able to provide an explanation.
 - FPPA budget for 2023. Clarification that the \$150,000 budgeted was minimum with potential allocation at the end of year and wait for the actuarial to come out.
 - Fire Place Housing: Paying management company fee, however under accounting there are several things that look like they should be covering under management. Further expenses were reviewed.
- FPPA 2022 Report: It was not a great year. Administrative costs have gone up.

Board Comments & Action Items:

- Board Comments:
 - John Ward: Discussion of pursuing more property across from North 40 for housing and looking at partnering with other agencies to further housing. Rick will reach out to the owners of said property and report back to the board.
- No further action items.

Staff Report:

- Fire Marshal and Prevention:
 - Ben is working with operations, gathering and pre-planning for curbside assessments, wildfire assessments, photovoltaic information, identifying hydrants and dry hydrant locations. Also working with schools to get Emergency plans and Evacuation plans in place. This will require a point person at each school to work with and more safety inspections.
 - There are more plans coming in for roof solar shingles and solar banks on roofs, so Fire Marshal's office is working on roof attacks for solar situations.
 - Discussion on state directive to remove all pull stations in the schools that exist where they shouldn't. Jan will put this on her list and remind the schools to work on removal.
 - Discussion on electric vehicles (EV) and looking to purchase electric blankets to smother those cars/buses, \$3000 per blanket. Holy Cross is incentivizing electric and seems that everyone is going this direction.
- Operations Overview:
 - Incident at Aspen Schools. Law enforcement, Fire and EMS all deserve a huge round of applause. Great collaboration from up and down the valley. Impressed with how the schools managed their critical portions. Overall, everyone was outstanding. Discussion on critical stress debriefing. Mtn Rescue had a counselor and we had Aspen Hope Center available if needed, along with Triad.
 - Chiefs Luncheon hosted at Carbondale Fire
 - Interagency Collaboration with Aspen Ambulance, Basalt, Carbondale and Glenwood Spring. Discussed valley wide major incident response for Fire and EMS and worked on the Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ADHER) guidelines.
 - There was general buy in on a collaboration on potentially a Wildland Fields crew in the future. (Severity engines, functional team with all departments). They are all interested in looking into this.
- Wildfire: Prepping for the season
- Strategic plan. The Community Risk Assessment should be finished next month and then the strategic plan and capital improvement plan will be reviewed. There was further discussion on Engine usage. They may need to be put on a 15-year replacement instead of 20-year replacement. This will be reevaluated.
- Hosting a simulation on cyber-attack exercise in the state of Colorado on March 15th.

Training Update:

- Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur
 - Working with Ben and Officers on putting together SOG's specific to approach on photovoltaic roofs, will loop Fire Marshal in. More training on this in the future.
 - Discussion on EV blankets as a viable alternative to 40k gallons of water. Looking at parking structures and maybe on the trucks.
 - Almost all training classes will be taught by career or volunteer personnel going forward.
 - February fire training was on hotel and high-rise firefighting. Crews practiced with new hi-rise packs.
 - February medical training was on splinting.
 - March fire training will be on forcible entry.

- March medical training will focus on patient assessment.

Recruiting:

- The recruit class of 2023 is progressing well. They are now into hands-on revolutions in Carbondale, Rifle and Dotsero, and are starting to see some fire. One recruit has dropped out and another is working on task books and will go to the next academy. Three firefighters and two Lieutenants are currently going through the Fire Officer I process. Two Lieutenants were able to pass the practical on first go around.

Wildfire Community Action Fund:

- Grants:
 - Grant being submitted March 15th which will be in partnership with Pitkin County Open Space and Trails to do fuels treatment in Sky Mountain Park. The WCAF will put up \$10,000 and apply for a \$20,000 grant. Pitkin County Open Space and Trails will be putting up an additional \$20,000. This grant is described as very competitive.
 - Colorado State University Wildfire Mitigation Incentive for Local Government: This comes through Colorado State Forest Service, same as FRWRM grant was through, but more catered to what we are doing here. This is due early April, not limited to donations or tax revenue.
 - The board requested to move old grants off the list whether they are approved or denied, to clean up the list.
 - Gross funding for 2023 is \$107,000, largely in part from the GMQS that gave us \$100,000 in January.
 - Discussion: The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the county is going to expire soon. If a new one is not in place, we lose all FEMA, and possibly BLM and state grants. Ali has been emailing the Emergency Manager about being involved.
- Outreach and Education:
 - Highlighted the rapid detection conversation held last Thursday. There were 50 participants from all across the state with a panel of 5 speakers that talked about public, private, paid and not paid versions of rapid detection information. A video of the meeting is posted on Aspen Fire YouTube page.
- Projects:
 - Ajax Beetle Kill – Pitkin County, City of Aspen, ACES, AFD and Forestry partners are working on retreatment this year. We will contribute \$4,000 as part of the larger cost share.
 - 2025 Red Mountain Potential Burn - Funding gap is in weed treatment, and they are looking for about \$12,500 to go towards it from us. We can pull from our project fund, unless a grant comes up between now and then. We would like to make a commitment to this project. This is something needed before doing a burn.
- Fundraising:
 - BLM grant is ready, we don't need to reapply this year, we have an open contract. We submit for budget revision for approval or non-approval.

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Recognition of Certificate from Ready, Set, Go, received on March 14th.
- Great job on training on forceable entry, they had to use this the very next day and were able to save a life.
- North 40 Fire Place:
 - Still some ongoing items to fix. Holding \$100,000 until items are resolved.
 - Rick is working with Sebastian on funds that are owed back from the project. There is currently a \$60,000 discrepancy.

- There was discussion on excess funds from mill levy that was estimated to pay for COP going into General Fund. It was recommended to move this amount of \$240,950 into housing.

MOTION: Motion by John Ward to transfer the current under allocation of housing fund that's been going into the general fund into our housing fund of and all future overages to be held within the housing fund for future housing opportunities. Parker second.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Approved.

- French intern coming in April for two months. She will be working with Ali on the Chipper Program.
- Scott is talking to a non-profit from Ukraine to get equipment shipped.
- Panel AI Update – Have a private donor who will fund a site at Redstone. Meeting in Carbondale today about Elephant Site (north of Redstone). Pitkin County is onboard with it. It is a helicopter site and will have to helicopter into it.
- Castle Creek Bridge Letter. A letter was put together and signed by Aspen Fire, Aspen Police, Pitkin County Sheriff and Aspen Ambulance to support finding an alternative out of town in an emergency situation.

Old Business:

- Woody Creek Project update: No further update
- Upcoming Election: New board members will be sworn in at or prior to June meeting. UOCAVA ballots go out March 17th.

New Business:

- Staff Member Handbook is being reviewed by attorney and updated.

MOTION: Motion by Wabs to adjourn at 6:20. Parker second.

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

***** A full recording of this meeting can be requested by contacting the District Administrator at nikki.lapin@aspenfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**