

Aspen Fire Protection District

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Board of Directors Regular Meeting July 11th, 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 5:05pm

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Emily Taylor, Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Charles Cunniffe
- Board of Directors Absent: Parker Lathrop
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Schubert, Amanda Perusse, Scott Arthur. Those joining via Zoom: Jan Legersky
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson, Paul Backes, CPA (via zoom), Matt Ciminelli (via zoom)

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Motion by Wabs to approve minutes from regular meeting held on June 13th, 2023.

Second: Charles Cunniffe

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: None

Financials

- Paul Backes walked through the 2022 Audit review provided in board packet.
 - Paul has one small error to fix on page D14; net pension liability for statewide death benefit (SWDB) and the volunteer pensions fund (VPF) which are run through FPPA. He will work with Jan Schubert in accounting to correct and update.
 - We will receive our preliminary 2024 budget at the end of August 2023 and the final budget in December 2023

MOTION: Motion by Wabs to accept the 2022 Audit in draft form.

Second: Charles Cunniffe

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

- Monthly Financial Review: Monthly financial reports were included in the board packet. No further discussion.

Board Comments & Action Items:

- Board Comments:
 - John – 4th of July participation was great.
 - Charles – Agreed, town was a little quieter than usual, but overall, very safe.
- Action items: Fire Place Housing Income/Rental Rates Scenarios, included in board packet.
 - Several options were offered and discussed. This is a time sensitive issue as leases are coming due soon.
 - Recommendation from the Aspen Fire Housing Advisory Committee was to leave the 2022-2023 monthly rental rates in place.

- Discussion on rental rate options based on the projected 2024 budget deficit presented by the Romero Group.
 - Option #1 – increase rental rates by \$180/bedroom to cover extra expenses
 - Option #2 – increase rental rates by \$70/bedroom to cover extra expenses, district to pay the difference.
- Discussion: goal is for the housing to cover itself in perpetuity, be self-sufficient and break-even. It should not be a drain on taxpayers.
- Decision to update all leases to state that Fire Place tenants’ applications to APCA must reflect the same number of persons per household as they currently have in Fire Place (i.e. if you are renting two bedrooms in FP, then you should apply to APCA as a 2-person household).

MOTION: Motion by John Ward to approve Aspen Fire Place Housing Rental Rates option #2, where the district will pick up some of the \$68,707 expenses related to snow removal, irrigation and landscaping at \$41,854. They will raise the per bedroom rates by \$70 per room to account for the remaining balance of \$26,880. All tenants will have to qualify at the same household income and unit type through APCA as they do with Fire Place, but will no longer be required to apply for every lottery they are eligible for. There will be a \$50 penalty for not qualifying annually with APCA.

Wabs 2nd

Discussion: Make sure all Fire Place tenants understand this decision made by the board and why it was made in this way.

Vote: All approved.

- Amendment to 2023 Staff Member Handbook reflecting changes to the benefit eligibility date for new volunteer firefighters. No discussion.

MOTION: Motion by Charles Cunniffe to approve the amendment to the 2023 Staff Member Handbook reflecting changes to the benefit eligibility date for new firefighters.

Second: Wabs

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Staff Report:

- Fire Marshal and Prevention: Fire Marshal - Jan Legersky - monthly report is in board packet. No further discussion.
 - Volume of plan reviews seems to be a little higher than normal. Quite a few tents to review, so that is being put onto Ben’s plate.
- Operations Overview: Deputy Chief Andersen, reviewed information in board packet.
 - NOTABLES:
 - Spring Creek Fire Photos in packet. Our crew is now back from helping with the fire in Parachute
 - Pano AI – working well and finding smoke/fires quickly. Photos in packet
 - We can move and use the camera to zero in on what we are looking at/for
 - MVA on highway 82 – photos in packet
 - We are averaging 7.5 volunteers responding to every major call, this is trending
 - EVENTS: “Elemental: Reimagining Wildfire” – movie showing at Wheeler was a huge success!
 - PROJECTS/COLLABORATIONS
 - Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) – this is a county wide effort and will be a really useful document. There is huge value in defined objectives as we broaden our wildfire mitigation capabilities.

- ASHER (Active Shooter Harmer Emergency Response) – upcoming in July and October
- Strategic Plan
 - Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover is coming soon, ran into some data issues, which has prolonged outcome. Once it has been completed, we will use the data to update and revise our Strategic Plan
 - Center for Public Safety Excellence – this is the organizational development model that we are following. First, we get our Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Cover, then we base our strategic plan off of that study to define our baseline performance and our benchmark performance and we use the strategic planning process to figure out how to close any gaps.
 - <https://www.cpse.org/>
 - First Arriving program is up and running on TV's around the station, including in the board room. Pages of the program will run through any current call that we have been dispatched to, current shift crew and upcoming shift crew. Apparatus updates on in/out of service etc., current weather, river flows etc., certifications upcoming for renewal, upcoming trainings and events and more.
- Training Update: Scott Arthur reviewed the training report and photos in the board packet.

Wildfire Community Action Fund: Ali Hammond out of town, Chief Balentine reviewed notes in packet.

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Housing Other
 - More discussions have been happening with John McBride about possible property for more housing. Charles Cunniffe volunteered to be a board representative alongside Chief Balentine at these upcoming discussions.
- Theater Aspen Collaboration– 9/11 play on 9/10/2023 and 9/11/2023.
 - Tickets sold out within 30 minutes!
 - Fire Department will help with being ushers etc.
 - Theater Aspen asked us to provide a charity to where they can donate half of the proceeds, it was decided that the charity will be Axes & Arms.
- July 4th event
 - Great participation from all fire members for station clean up, truck preparedness for the parade and the cookout. The WWII airplanes were also a big hit. No major injuries were reported.
- Mill levy – meeting on Tuesday with Pitkin County to discuss how this might affect us. More information forthcoming.
- Woody Creek Update – asked FCI for updated pricing so that we can plan further. Updates on this to come at next meeting.

Old Business: none

New Business: none

MOTION: Motion by Charles Cunniffe to adjourn at 7:17pm

Second: Wabs

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.