

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF STRATMOOR HILLS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors for the Stratmoor Hills Fire Protection District was held pursuant to notice at 3:04 p.m. on September 20, 2023

Board Members present: President Robert Colgrove, Vice-President James Pesicka, Secretary/Treasurer John Willcox via telephone, Director Cindy Dent, and Director Richard Dull. District Personnel present: Fire Chief Shawn Bittle and Administrative Chief Dottie Barrett. Audience members were Lt. Tara Bosch, D/E Louis Hall, Volunteer FF Jenniffer Jones, Volunteer Recruit Anthony Miller and Volunteer Recruit Tristian Purnia.

Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the Board meeting minutes for August 16, 2023. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Approval of Agenda

It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the agenda as published. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Public Comment

Unfinished Business

New and Miscellaneous Business

- Board President Robert Colgrove presented Lt. Tara Bosch with her Master Firefighter Helmet from the Board of Directors and Fire District.

Fire Chief Report –

- August Calls per District – Chief stated that the calls are increasing, and that staff should see even more calls for service coming into the fall and winter seasons.
- Status reports
 - Chiefs' notes –
 - Apparatus - (responsibility assigned to – D/E Patalano)
 - Chief Bittle showed updated photos of the New 410 Engine and informed the Board that he is hoping to have the Engine in time for the Recruit Graduation on October 14, 2023.
 - Engine 414 – Had to have two (2) valve rebuilt and one (1) valve replaced due to the truck not passing the annual pump test. High temperature lights came on due to the ongoing engine issues – staff changed the filter, and the engine is running good now.

- Training (responsibility assigned to – Chief Bittle)
 - The Fire Academy is finished, and graduation is set for Saturday, October 14th from 4:00 – 8:00 pm.
 - The Fire District held the monthly training on Saturday, September 16th and the topics covered were Master Streams, Making a Hydrant, Hose Management and Intro to Pumping.
- Inspections (responsibility assigned to – Mark Stanwood)
- Recruiting (responsibility assigned to – Chief Bittle)
 - There will be another round of recruitment testing on Saturday, September 30th – Chief is hoping to have at least 18 recruits for the next Fire Academy.
- Gear (responsibility assigned to – D/E Hall)
- EMS (responsibility assigned to D/E Bosch)
- Wildland (responsibility assigned to D/E Ortiz)

Administrative Chief Report

- Chief Barrett informed the Board that staff is beginning to prepare the 2024 budget and State law requires staff to submit the proposed budget to the Board no later than October 15th but it does not require that it be submitted at a meeting. Staff will deliver the proposed budget to each Board member by Friday, September 29, 2023. Chief Barrett will remind the Board that the Budget Workshop is set for Wednesday October 4, 2023, starting at 1:00 pm.
- Chief Barrett informed the Board that she applied for the El Pomar Wildland Grant for twenty-one (21) sets of Crewboss Trex Wildland gear in the amount of \$19,845.00. El Pomar's Board of Directors did meet mid-August and Chef Bittle called them on September 11, 2023, and was informed that we have been awarded the grant. Staff received the grant letter and check on Monday, September 18, 2023.

D-4 Training and Testing Policy Update

Chief Bittle informed the Board at the July Board meeting that he and Lt. Bosch have updated this policy and is now requesting the policy to be approved on the second and final reading. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the D-4 Training and Testing Policy Update on the second and final reading. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Driver / Engineer Job Description Update

Chief Bittle informed the Board at the August meeting that he has added that all Career employees need to be S212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw certification, this requirement needs to be added to the job description as well. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the Driver / Engineer Job Description Update on the second and final reading. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

2024 TruTech Contract

Chief Barrett informed the Board that Tim Gregg with TruTech IT Services recently informed her and Chief Bittle that he has had to add extra layers of security to their IT services. As a result, he is raising his prices for the Budget year of 2024 quite a bit, however, the Chief Officers feel it is in the best interest of the Fire District to continue with the IT Services to provide safe and protective service. Staff is seeking approval of the enclosed contract and for President Colgrove to sign the contract. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the TruTech IT Services contract in the amount of \$805.20 per month. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Volunteer Position Descriptions Update

Chief Bittle informed the Board that with the addition of the S212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw certification requirement that was added to the Driver/Engineer's Job Description, it now needs to be added to the Volunteer Position Descriptions. Instead of printing off all of the Position Descriptions, below is the list of Volunteer positions that the requirement will be added to:

- Volunteer Assistant Fire Chief
- Volunteer Captain
- Volunteer Lieutenant
- Volunteer Lieutenant in Training
- Volunteer Firefighter
- Volunteer Recruit

It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the six (6) Volunteer Position Descriptions update to include the S212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw certification requirement on the first reading. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

CE2 Career Employee Compensation Policy Update

Chief Bittle informed the Board that due to the inflation factors over the last few years, he feels a 3% COLA raise is not enough to help cover the employees' cost of living. He would like the policy to be changed to be more in line with the actual COLA budgeted number so the employees have a sufficient raise to combat inflation. Director Dent asked several questions that Chief Bittle and Chief Barrett were able to answer and allowed for further discussion. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the CE2 Career Employee Compensation Policy Update on the first reading. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Financial Reports

The August check register report where the taxes and employee retirement (Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT)) payments are highlighted was enclosed for the Directors' review. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the financial reports as presented for the District for the month of August 2023, subject to audit. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting. Copies of the

financial reports are attached to these minutes and made a part hereof.

VII. Executive Session

It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to enter into executive session at 3:45 pm. to discuss personnel matters pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4) (f), involving the performance evaluation of the Fire Chief.

It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to exit from executive session at 4:13 pm to discuss personnel matters pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4) (f), involving the performance evaluation of the Fire Chief.

Performance Evaluation of Chief Shawn Bittle

The Fire Chief's performance of his duties as District Fire Chief shall be evaluated in the month of September utilizing a form that is mutually approved by both parties. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to approve the delivery of the Performance Evaluation to Fire Chief Shawn Bittle by Board President, Robert Colgrove. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

A motion was made and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to give Chief Bittle a raise of five percent (5%) for the 2024 budget year.

Chief Bittle informed the Board that he is declining his raise and instead wants that money to be put into a new Budget line-item called Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) Training. The FDIC offers thousands of Fire & Rescue professionals from around the world, quality world-class instructors, classrooms, workshops, H.O.T. Evolutions and the most innovative products and services available to the industry displayed by over 800 exhibiting companies. The FDIC takes place in Indianapolis, IN at the end of April and Chief Bittle explained that he feels that the training a firefighter can receive by attending the conference is invaluable to a firefighter's career. He will send the Distinguished Leader and the FF of the year to the conference every year and the money will pay for airline flights, hotels, rental car, food etc. He requested a Board of Directors resolution to be done up so that future Fire Chief and firefighters know that the money will always be reserved for this training. It was moved and seconded (Pesicka/Dull) to accept Chief Bittle's raise declination and to use that money for the FDIC Training instead. The motion passed unanimously with all Directors voting.

Other Business

Chief Barrett passed out an SDA packet regarding the new Residential Rate Reduction bill that the Colorado State Legislation is proposing to the voters in November. Discussion regarding how it will impact the Fire District took place and more discussion will take place later.

Adjournment

It was noted that the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting would be held at 3:00 p.m. on October 18, 2023, at 2160 B Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm. (Pesicka/Dull)



Robert Colgrove, President



James Pesicka, Vice-President



John Willcox, Secretary / Treasurer



Cindy Dent, Board Director



Richard Dull, Board Director