

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Regular Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2021

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair	Bob Baker, Fire Chief
	Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Assistant Chief
	William Shriver, Treasurer	Tobias Kirschke, Assistant Chief
	Hank Eng, Secretary	Kevin Milan, Assistant Chief
	Sue Roche	Jon Adams, Assistant Chief
	Cindy Hathaway	Dillon Miskimins, Chief Financial Officer (absent)
	Alison Rausch	Breann Aragon, Controller
		Kristin Eckmann, Chief Communications Officer
		Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff Members

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chair Albee called the Regular Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Albee led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

All members of the Board were present in person.

PRESENTATION

Wildfire Mitigation Program Overview – Community Risk Reduction Specialist Einar Jensen stated that the CRRS Team, with direction from their new supervisor Chief Communications Officer Eckmann, reviewed the top three to five risks facing the district: aging, falls, motor vehicle accidents and wildfires. The Team created A Multi-Faceted Approach to Wildfire Preparedness.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Program Objectives
- 287 Square Miles of Interface
- Creating a Fire-Adapted District
- Wildfire Causes in 2020 & Wildfire Damage 2016-2020
- The 6 E's of Community Risk Reduction
 - Education
 - Engineering
 - Economic Incentives
 - Enforcement
 - Emergency Response
 - Empowerment
- Home Wildfire Assessment 2016-2020
- Mitigation Projects
- CRR Challenges for 2021

At Director Anderson's request, CRRS Jensen reminded that the statistics presented are losses from wildfires & agreed with the suggestion of partnering with local water districts to educate citizens on drought conditions and mitigation & opened the invitation for citizens to contact the CRRS Team to answer questions and provide suggestions regarding mitigation. CRRS Jensen added that there is a list of criteria that the National Weather Service uses to determine Red Flag Days & he will do some checking to find out how many Red Flag Days we have on average.

At Director Eng's request, CRRS Jensen stated that once the mitigation plan is completed, it is up to the citizen or group who requested the plan to implement it. Adding that usually there is some energy behind the requests, especially when working with groups such as HOAs. At Director Shriver's request, CRRS Jensen reported that some do the work themselves, some hire a company or a "herd" to do the mitigation. There are various options. At Director Roche's request, CRRS Jensen reported that Team Member Colleen Potton has challenged herself to conduct drive-by mitigation follow-ups to see exactly what part of the plan has been implemented. At Chair Albee's request, CRRS Jensen reviewed the various avenues used to educate citizens about home wildfire risk assessments and out of the 45 completed, about 61% have made changes. The Team continues to work toward finding out what causes citizens/groups to take action or not, but they are finding that one-on-one interactions seem to work well & hope that each one that takes action causes a ripple effect.

At Director Eng's request, CRRS Jensen informed that a lot of the statistical work is done by BC Daley, Chief Turner and the GIS Staff. Chief Dell'Orfano interjected that there is a Strategic Services Group who clean the data, geocode it and analyze what fires are counted as being scientific data & believes the data presented is from the combined departments. At Director Roche's request, CRRS Jensen stated they could go back further to some of those legacy areas to dig up numbers if that is desired.

The board thanked CRRS Jensen for the presentation and the Team for the work they have been doing to motivate citizens and groups & there are probably some correlations that make an area, rather than just a home, safer.

Chair Albee expressed appreciation for the presentations that the Board has been receiving over the past few months and asked if there is some way the Board could receive copies to reference, either via email or have them posted as an attachment with the packet on the website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

CONSENT AGENDA

May 3, 2021 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Regular Board Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2021 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Special Board Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Hank Eng and seconded by Sue Roche to approve the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

SMFR Resolution No. 2021-06 Authorizing the Conveyance of Real Property – Chief Turner stated that this resolution authorizes conveyance of the Lima Street property and execution of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, the deed, and the closing documents. The Board authorized the conveyance by a motion on November 2, 2020, but this resolution confirms the authority of Jim Albee, Chief Baker and any other Board member to sign the documents. The title company will require this written resolution for the closing. In addition, the developer is working with the City of Centennial and SEMSWA on the Site Plan and Final Plat Applications. The Purchase and Sales Agreement must be finalized by February 9, 2022 and Staff recommends the board adopt the resolution.

Chief Turner added that the extension periods have dollars associated with them and since the buyer's request for a two-month extension was approved, two of the escrow payments are on top of the \$1.6 million purchase price.

A motion was made William Shriver and seconded by Sue Roche to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2021-06 Authorizing the Conveyance of Real Property as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Hearing: Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Inclusion of Real Property (Central Park at Highlands Ranch Apartments, LLC)

Chair Albee opened the public hearing at 6:46 p.m.

Chief Dell'Orfano reported that this inclusion petition includes two parcels near UC Health Hospital in Highlands Ranch that were not originally within the Highlands Ranch Metro District boundaries and therefore not currently within SMFR's district as part of unification. The Central Park at Highlands ranch Apartments, LLC properties are located northeast of the hospital between Park Central Drive and Plaza Drive and include apartment complexes currently under construction. The property owner has submitted a Petition for Inclusion and has agreed to pay for the costs associated with the inclusion. The anticipated revenue, based on a 2021 assessed value of \$3,991,480 for Lot 1B1, is approximately \$36,921 and \$484,940 for Lot 1C1 is approximately \$4,606. These parcels and surrounding area have received emergency services for several years, there are no concerns with SMFR's ability to continue serving, and Staff recommends approval of the order.

At Director Eng's request, Chief Dell'Orfano explained that sometimes for undeveloped land, it is not always obvious that the property is not in the district so this property fell under the radar. As it is developed, SMFR will be responsible for the plan review approval.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that Highlands Ranch does not show on the taxing list because they just included the properties into their metro district last Fall and won't start collecting taxes until 2022.

Director Anderson added that there is a new fast food Chinese restaurant being built just south of the hospital and Town Center Drive & Staff might want to check to see if they are in our district and being properly taxed.

There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed at 6:52 p.m.

A motion was made by Hank Eng and seconded by William Shriver to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Inclusion of Real Property (Central Park at Highlands Ranch Apartments, LLC) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Hearing: Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Inclusion of Real Property (Douglas County School District)

Chair Albee opened the public hearing at 6:52 p.m.

Chief Dell'Orfano reported that this is a parcel near Highway 85 that was not originally within the Littleton Fire Protection District boundaries and therefore not currently within SMFR's district as a part of unification. The Douglas County School District property is located at 8281 Carder Court and is currently used for storage. This property is tax exempt. The property owner has submitted a Petition for Inclusion. The facility has received emergency services for several years and there are no concerns with SMFR's ability to continue serving and Staff recommends approval of the order.

There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed at 6:55 p.m.

A motion was made by Sue Roche and seconded by Hank Eng to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Inclusion of Real Property (Douglas County School District) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Hearing: Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Chance and Ruth Doellefeld)

Chair Albee opened the public hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Chief Dell'Orfano reported that this parcel is one of 13 homes in the City of Aurora that may be requesting to exclude from the District. The general area, east of E470 and south of Smoky Hill Road, used to be in the Parker Fire Protection District boundaries and much of it has since been annexed into the City of Aurora. SMFR has been excluding parcels from our district over the past several years, as we discover parcels that were missed during annexation. The Chance and Ruth Doellefeld property is located at 24232 East Canyon Place and includes a single-family home. The property owner has submitted a Petition for Exclusion and the associated costs are being waived in accordance with policy. This property is capable of being served by the Aurora Fire Department, although SMFR will continue assisting through auto aid agreements, and Staff recommends approval of the order.

At Director Eng's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reported that there has not been any response from the remaining 4 property owners.

There were no public comments and Chair Albee closed the public hearing at 6:58 p.m.

A motion was made by Renee Anderson and seconded by Sue Roche to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Chance and Ruth Doellefeld) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

April 2021 Financial Statements – Controller Aragon reviewed the financial statements, highlighting:

1. Fund balance increased by \$11.4 million compared to prior month bringing fund balance to a total of \$93.8 million.
2. Through April, the District has collected \$73.7 million in property and specific ownership tax revenue, which reflects 62.22% collection vs. 61.06% at this time last year for property taxes, and 36.48% vs. 27.34% for specific ownership taxes. A total of \$464,988 of property taxes have been diverted to TIF in 2021.
3. As of April 30th, the District has expended \$41.3 million in the General Fund related to operations or 29.71% of the annual budget not including Capital Projects transfers.
4. Plan review fees are trending under budget due to decreased activity. Further details related to permit and plan review activity is included in the board packet.
5. Through April, the District has expended \$2.6 million or 40.28% of our total budgeted expenditures in the Capital Fund.
6. As of May 24th, \$1,247,027 has been expended on COVID-19 related resources.
7. During the course of our 2020 financial statement audit, our auditors requested that incurred but not reported (IBNR) claims be reported in the Self-Insured Medical Fund. These claims (totaling \$679k) existed at 12/31/20 but had not yet been reported or charged to the fund. Although this entry reduced the beginning fund balance in the current year, it had no effect on the ending fund balance in the Self-Insured Medical Fund since the claims were incurred and reported in 2021. We can expect a similar transaction to be recorded on 12/31/21.

At Director Shriver's request, Controller Aragon stated that we are trending above budget on Specific Ownership Taxes, about \$900,000 over budget.

At Chair Albee's request, Controller Aragon reported that Staff has started doing an internal general fund expenditures schedule, tracking performance on a more seasonal basis. One of the reasons for the approximately \$5 million variance are that in April is that we had budgeted for a number of employees to leave the organization, and that number was actually almost quadruple the budgeted number. Some of those positions will be replaced & are at a high level in the organization so that will reduce the variance. Controller Aragon added that the schedule also looks at other items and will include that in the packet to assist the Board in having a better understanding of the numbers and what the surplus means.

Controller Aragon, referencing the communication regarding the new Ethics Hotline Policy, stated it was a recommendation of the auditors as a best practice used by most local governments. The District uses Lighthouse Services to run the hotline and provide anonymous reports. Staff will involve the Audit Committee as needed.

A motion was made by William Shriver and seconded by Renee Anderson to accept the April 2021 Financial Statements as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

N/A

INFORMATION ITEMS

Fire Chief Performance Committee Update – Chief Kirschke stated this is something that the CHRO has historically completed & thought it would be a great opportunity for the Professional Development staff to take this over. Staff has contracted with a DU Intern Sophie Perekslis, who has her Master's Degree and is going for her Doctorate in Cognitive Output and the Psychology of Performance, and she has agreed to spearhead this effort and try to build a model for use uniformly at the executive level. Cognitive Performance Manager Nick Bartley, who the board met a few months ago, is already doing this for the Battalion Chiefs. Staff will be looking for a date for the Board Committee Members to meet with Sophie and get the process started.

The Board agreed with the process and the creation of a model.

Chief Kirschke informed that out of 150+ applicants, the final interviews for HR Director are Friday and gave a high-level background of the top two candidates who will be interviewed.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Kirschke provided a short background on the third party who has been providing input into the hiring process.

Correspondence items in the Board's packet are summarized below as well as other information items that were communicated:

- Director Anderson stated that the Colorado Rising Action is collecting signatures for a measure that would cut property tax rates statewide by 9 percent and that there is a bipartisan group of lawmakers who have written a counter-measure, Senate Bill 293, which would create a smaller temporary tax cut by creating more tax categories and, if passed, would block the ballot measure from taking full effect.
- Chief Baker reported that he, along with Chiefs Adams and Tasker, participated in the Douglas County SWAT Exercise that took place on June 2nd. During the exercise they were taken through one of the most common scenarios, serving a warrant, from planning and briefing through execution and SMFR's SWAT Medics participated in the exercise. It was compelling and greatly increased the probability for our continued support, with some caveats. Chief Baker added that if SMFR were to pull out of the program it would be devastating to the team. He and Chief Kirschke provided an overview of how the teams are coordinated for the response for planned and unplanned events & how staffing is covered. Director Anderson expressed appreciation for their participation as this program means a lot to them and the Sheriffs. Director Eng commended the people who volunteer for the team and work that they do.
- Chief Baker informed that the Staff and Citizen Academies graduated last week & a big thanks to CRRS Jensen and FF LaBorde for leading the academies and to Chief Communications Officer Eckman for supporting them.
- Chief Baker noted that the Alternative Staffing Committee has met several times to look at alternative shift schedules; the committee is making headway on some internal sleep studies and should have something to bring before the board soon.
- Chief Baker informed that a Labor/Management Retreat is scheduled for June 28th through 30th; shift schedule and a more robust retiree healthcare plan will be the major topics of discussion.
- Chiefs Baker and Adams, along with Chief Communications Officer Eckmann are about half-way through the first round of Chief Chats. The goal is to visit with every Staff and Line person within the year. Chiefs Curtis, Kirschke and Dell'Orfano have joined in on some of the chats. They seem to be very well-received. The primary subject of the Staff visits was the Korn Ferry Study, with questions about how and why it was implemented. Two common topics on Line are the shift schedule and how the Ethics Hotline came about.
- Chief Rhodes' Last Shift Ceremony last Wednesday was well-attended and was a very nice honoring of his service. He and his family are now in the process of selling their Colorado resident to take up one residence in Florida.

- As an example of leading from the front, the entire Executive Team participated in the MET Test on May 25th, prior to the Line starting their annual cycle, and all scored above a 10 and averaged 11.9 METs, just a bit under the standard score of 12 for Line Firefighters. The three test options were described.
- Chief Dell'Orfano informed that on Monday, June 14th the Virtual Accreditation Hearing will take place. At about 1:00 p.m., SMFR is expected to provide a couple short statements to the panel and allow the panel to ask questions. A link to the virtual hearing will be sent to the Board so they are able to attend.
- Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that a Sign Up Genius invitation was sent to the Board for the Upcoming SDA Annual Workshop which takes place on June 29th. Board attendance is encouraged, which will take place in both a live and virtual format.
- Chief Dell'Orfano also reminded that the Fire Muster will take place in Downtown Littleton on June 19th starting at 9:00 a.m.
- A copy of the Monthly Dispatch KPI and Ethics Hotline Policy were included in the Board packet.
- A thank you note was received from Canon to Fire Inspector Tim Thomas for being very nice, informative and leaving a positive impression during a routine office inspection.
- A thank you note was received from the Project Manager of GE Johnson Special Projects to everyone at SMFR and Greenwood Village Building Department that was part of the Shady Grove project at 8200 E. Bellevue Avenue, expressing appreciation for all of the help that both departments provided, including a quick turnaround on plan reviews, last minute inspections, and general problem solving.
- A thank you letter was received from a citizen thanking our crews for saving her brother's life when they responded to his residence when he fell twice, the second time requiring hospitalization.
- A thank you letter was received from the Arvada Fire Protection District for Chief Milan's participation as an assessor in their recent training chief assessment center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)

A motion was made by Jim Albee and seconded by Sue Roche to convene to Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. to Consult with Legal Counsel Pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(b), C.R.S., for the purpose of receiving advice from legal counsel on specific legal questions related to Thomas v. South Metro. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The regular meeting convened at 8:25 with no action taken.


NEXT MEETING

The next Special South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on June 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on July 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Albee at 8:25 pm.

Attested by: 

Date: July 12, 2021