

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
ROARING FORK FIRE RESCUE AUTHORITY
VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING**

September 15, 2020

Authority Board President Ed Van Walraven called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Board members present were Ed Van Walraven, Leroy Duroux, John Young, Bill Boineau (arrived at 8:45), Dave Heivly, and Irene Greiser (on Lifesize). Others present were Chief Scott Thompson, Deputy Chief Pete Bradshaw, Division Chief Richard Cornelius, Finance Director Jennifer Thompson, Human Resources Director Renee Thomas, IT Director Erik Johnson, Battalion Chief Jason Hutter, Lieutenant Daniel Palmer, Firefighters Chelsey Johnson and Paul Massey, Attorney Bob Cole and Administrative Assistant Susan Herwick.

Swearing In Ceremony:

Firefighter/Paramedic Todd Fetter, Firefighter Will Shoemith, and Firefighter Eric Goldberger were all sworn in as members of the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority.

Minutes of August 18, 2020 Meeting:

Director Duroux made a motion to accept the minutes as read, the motion was seconded by Director Greiser. All were in favor and the motion carried 5 – 0.

Public Comments:

None

Attorney's Report:

Attorney Bob Cole stated that the ladder truck was sixty days past its delivery date. There is a \$200.00 per day liquidated damages clause in the contract that we signed with them. The late fee that will be taken off the price of the truck is over \$8,000 already. We are carrying forward with this per our contract with Pierce. Deputy Chief Bradshaw asked how would enforce this contract? Attorney Cole stated that when they want their money, write a check for the total less the damages. This is really clear and straight forward in the contract that we signed with them. They may try to deliver before they get the bugs worked out just to get paid. Attorney Cole suggests that we do a very thorough acceptance inspection on the ladder truck.

Chief Thompson stated that they need to deliver the Ladder truck to Station 42. After it arrives, we have fifteen days in which to pay them. We are very unhappy with them and they will not be getting the bid for our next apparatus. Chief Thompson explained to the Board the issues we have had with Pierce on our last four trucks.

Attorney Cole stated that it was their contract that we signed after modifying it a little bit so that it would comply with Colorado law. If they are going to follow the provisions of the contract, it is their problem.

Chief Thompson stated that with the COVID pandemic, we don't want to do a large premiere for the new truck. Director John Young stated that we need to at least do a press release. The ladder truck was purchased funds received from the sale of some of our older equipment.

Chief's Report:

Chief Scott Thompson stated that a memo regarding the water well issue was included in the Board packet. It explains several different options that can be done to make this project work. There are four different options we can try to make this project work. Option Four is our best option per DOLA but it is going to make this a five-year project. Director Van Walraven and Chief Thompson are going to meet with Sopris Mountain Ranch today at noon. Lots of discussion ensued. Director Van Walraven explained option three (see tape). In five years, it is going to cost more to build than we can afford. Chief Thompson stated that the homeowners who promised to fund their portion of this project could be gone by then. Director Young doesn't think that their interest is going to be lessened by the homeowner turnover. They will have to put up more money and so will we. Let's move forward. Director Heivly asked how this all came to be. Chief Thompson explained that this project actually started back in 2007. He then filled Director Heivly in on the history of this project. Discussion. We have an agreement with them that they have to come up with their portion of the money when we go out to bid for a contractor. The augmentation plan is almost guaranteed to go through. It will just take up to one and one-half years in water court. Chief Thompson stated that nothing trumps water law. We need to find a water source before this project can move forward.

Deputy Chief of Administration Report:

None

Deputy Chief of Operations Report:

Deputy Chief Pete Bradshaw stated that

Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal Report:

Deputy Chief John Mele stated that the Town of Basalt passed the wildfire hardening codes for new construction on the first reading.

Division Chief of EMS:

Division Chief Richard Cornelius stated that Public Health agencies are working on messages to the public that if we can't get our social distancing, mask wearing and small group gathering under control, children will not be able to go back to school this fall. Test result turnaround time is around four days. Eagle and Pitkin Counties are now in the cautious level which means moderate risk of exposure to COVID-19. We need to maintain a social distance of no less than six feet, wear masks, and keep group gatherings small. There are now four levels throughout the State. There is a steady decrease in COVID cases throughout the State through July. The Federal Government's goal is to have 300 million doses of effective vaccine in January 2021. Herd immunity is no longer an option. The vaccine is our best option. These vaccines

will be prioritized to people who are essential workers and residents of long-term care facilities. Some people may need two doses of the vaccine given over two to four weeks. There is lower coverage with ethnic minorities. The CDC has stated that fall and winter of 2020 – 2021 will be one of the most difficult times we have ever seen in public health.

Division Chief of Training:

None

HR Report:

Human Resources Director Renee Thomas stated that we are working on Salary surveys. The Fire Inspector I and Fleet Supervisor/Mechanic positions have been advertised. We are trying to schedule interviews next week for the fleet mechanic. She has met with the Deputy and Division Chiefs regarding a fall volunteer and part-time recruitment.

Director Boineau asked whether we needed to increase staffing levels in the District in the coming year. Chief Thompson stated that we are adjusting staffing levels as needed. We want to add one person to be assigned where ever as needed. We want to be very careful and make sure the funding is available when we bring a new person on. We never want to lay anyone off once they've been hired. We will need part-time help next year during paramedic school. We have volunteers to supplement our career staff.

Finance Report:

Finance Director Jennifer Thompson stated that she will see property revenue numbers by the end of August. She is building budgets that run both high and low numbers. We are going to go with Public Health Sector insurance out of Denver. This group was modeled after the Western Slope Health Care Group and has been together for ten years. The Public Health Sector insurance group was explained to the Board. They are providing five different health care options for employees to choose from. We will present our preferred option to the Board at the September meeting. Once WSHCG is disbanded any residual claims will be paid out of the reserves and any money left over from that fund will be split equally between the Districts that had been members of WSHCG. Bids from private sector health insurance have also been requested for comparison. We will receive a 5% decrease in premium if we go with the Public Health Sector Insurance group. Director Van Walraven asked whether coverages were about the same. Jennifer stated that they are very similar to what we have now.

Jennifer is working on wildfire billing which is now all automated.

The staff will be meeting next week to start discussing budget needs. The preliminary budgets will be presented at the September 15, 2020 meeting. We are currently running at 50 – 51% of our operating budget. This includes the two positions that were budgeted for but have not been filled this year. Div. Chief Cornelius applied for a \$100,000 grant to help cover expenses created by COVID-19.

Director Van Walraven asked about the Medicare line item in the budget. Medicare is a mandatory deduction for all employees. The employees contribute 1.45% and the employer contributes 1.45% for a total of 2.9%.

Information Technology:

None

Board Comments:

The Board was asked their preference for Board meeting times. Discussion. RFFRA will start at 8:30 a.m. and other Board meetings will follow.

Director Heivly stated that our crews responded to an incident last week that went on all night long. The crew that responded went above and beyond the call of duty with helping the Police Department out with the person who was in crisis. Deputy Chief Bradshaw stated that the crew involved had been given letters of commendation.

Director Leroy Duroux asked when we might be able to hold live meetings again. Chief Thompson stated that we will listen to Division Chief Cornelius for his advice. The training rooms are certainly large enough for social distancing and wearing masks. The meeting in September will be at Station 42 at 8:30 a.m.

Staff Comments:

Deputy Chief Bradshaw stated that we are down 6 – 7% in call volume from May 1 – August 15, 2020. The east side of the District has had above 40% of false calls and on the west side we are at about 20% of false calls. A false call is when an alarm system activates for no apparent reason.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Chief Thompson stated that we just received our reassessment letter from ISO and we are going to remain an ISO Level 3 District. This is based upon staffing, training, and data received from Fire Prevention.

Volunteer Meeting:

We will have a virtual meeting on September 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. We have requested that questions be submitted ahead of time. Director Dave Heivly stated that he would attend this meeting.

Adjournment:

Director Bill Boineau made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Director Duroux. All were in favor and the motion passed 6 – 0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.