

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

April 20, 2021

Authority Board President Ed Van Walraven called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. Board members present were Ed Van Walraven, Leroy Duroux, John Young via Lifesize, Bill Boineau, and Dave Heivly. Other's present were Chief Scott Thompson, Deputy Chief Kevin Issel, Fire Marshal John Mele, Deputy Fire Marshal Brook Stott, Division Chiefs Richard Cornelius, Finance Director Jennifer Thompson, Human Resources Director Renee Thomas, IT Director Erik Johnson, Attorney Bob Cole, Lieutenant Brent Perusse, Firefighters Nicholas Wall, Evan Levine, Ben Mackoff, and Mike Lyons, and Administrative Assistant Susan Herwick.

Guest: Kaya Williams with the Aspen Times

Swearing in Ceremony:

Chief Thompson swore Nicholas Wall in as a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic. Nick was hired from Grand County.

Minutes of March 16, 2021 Meeting:

Director Bill Boineau made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Director Leroy Duroux. All were in favor and the motion carried 5 – 0.

Public Comments:

None

Attorney's Report:

Chief Thompson told Attorney Bob Cole that we had reached out to Kathryn in his office regarding the legalities of adding some temporary full-time firefighter positions this summer during wildfire season (June thru September 11).

Attorney Bob Cole stated that he has been working on a large-scale Forest Health Fire Mitigation program that would be funded by La Plata County, City of Durango, and the Water Conservation District and other Special Districts. As a part of that Attorney Cole wrote some legislation that has been working through. It extends authority for the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority to issue Bonds and make loans and develop grant programs for wildfire mitigation projects. The legislation also clarifies the Authority for various types Districts to form Authorities to do this large-scale mitigation work. It also allows for Lease purchase financing. It also will help put in place special assessments to property owners who benefited from the mitigation work. This legislation has made it through the House and is headed to the Senate for approval. This will be some additional authority for this kind of cooperative multi-agency large-scale mitigation projects that have been attempted in various areas of Colorado

but have not been successful because of how complicated they are to put together. Maybe you can get the ear of the County and the municipalities to recognize what you are recognizing when you are funding a temporary crew for the summer because you know what will happen to our tax base, if you don't. This legislation should be signed by the Governor within the next couple of weeks.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thompson stated that the cost of building Station 46 is skyrocketing. A request for proposal (RFP) will soon be sent out for a contractor. The Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowner's Association is calling in their pledges. They need \$900,000 in the bank before we sign a contract with a contractor. It will be August before we get a building permit from Pitkin County. Chief Thompson is afraid that it is going to cost us a lot more than \$1,800,000 to build the fire station. We should have some solid pricing by the meeting in May. We will pick a contractor in June. We are estimating 20-30% more money will be needed for construction.

Hillary will do a Strategic Plan presentation on Lifesize at the next meeting. Teams have been working on initiatives.

Chief Thompson stated that wildland fire season is our priority right now. All of our apparatus and equipment has been readied to respond. We are completing pack tests today. All other wildfire training has been completed for the year. He feels the need to add four additional temporary full-time personnel from June thru September 11, 2021 during wildfire season due to the exceptional drought that we are experiencing in our area. The cost of this program will be approximately \$100,000. Last year we were the only county out of ten in our region that didn't have a major wildfire event. Next month is wildland-urban interface awareness month. We want to put a severity patrol on the road in order to catch wildfires when they are small. He wants to guarantee that a wildland truck will be on the road every day.

Director Boineau asked if this was something we should budget for each year. Chief Thompson stated yes. Attorney Bob Cole stated that people can't volunteer for the same job that they get paid to do. Part-Time personnel can only work a certain number of hours per week. People who are hired for these positions will have to be terminated from their regular status in order to be employed as a temporary full-time firefighter for the wildland season. They will be reinstated to their regular status after they are terminated as a temporary full-time employee.

Chief Thompson asked for the Board's approval on the seasonal hiring of four temporary full-time firefighters during wildfire season for 10-hour shifts (10 a.m. – 8 p.m.). Director Boineau made a motion to approve the over hire and the approximately \$100,000 in funding for the project; the motion was seconded by Director Leroy Duroux. All were in favor and the motion carried 5 – 0.

Chief Thompson stated that he will start weekly phone calls with the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and local County Sheriffs in order to determine when to

initiate a burn ban. We will coordinate this regionally so that we don't confuse people. Contracts for helicopters and SEATs have been extended another month on each end of wildfire season. Any resources that are available will not cost us anything during the mutual aid period. The Mountain Chiefs have a contract to send immediate emergent aid when called. Then we will backfill our stations.

We have asked City Market to not sell fireworks and they have voluntarily complied with this request. Clark's Market is not going to sell fireworks either. Director Heivly stated that he noticed that City Market stopped selling firewood during the fire ban last year. Deputy Chief Mele stated that if a fireworks stand is in an unincorporated part of the County, it falls under State legislation.

Deputy Chief of Administration Report:

Deputy Chief Kevin Issel stated that he has requested bids from landscaping companies to take care of the grounds at Stations 41, 42, and 45.

Deputy Chief Issel stated that the 2020 annual report had been finished and will be posted on our website so that we are transparent to the public. He explained the highlights of the report to the Board.

Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal Report:

Deputy Chief Mele stated that we are a big participant in the Pitkin County Wildfire Committee. Two Forest Service projects that were previously approved then shelved for six years have recently been approved. We have the first working document to mitigate forty acres next to a subdivision in the Crystal River Valley. There will be a work session this afternoon at 4:00 p.m. regarding this project.

The Tree Farm project is our main concern right now. It has a weak infrastructure and two major buildings. A 140,000 square foot assisted living facility and a five-story hotel. We are working out some fire hydrant problems with them.

We currently have over one million square feet of development underway in our District. We have upped fire prevention training/certifications and now have four Inspector III plans review people on staff.

Deputy Chief John Mele stated that he is struggling with managing the wildfire mitigation projects that are scheduled for this year. The State Wildland Inmate Firefighting Team (SWIFT) is in high demand now and is harder to schedule for projects. We need to prioritize our projects. Director Heivly asked if HOA's could provide the labor for mitigation projects. Deputy Chief Mele stated no, because large mitigation projects are too dangerous. They could help each other out with small projects such as trimming back shrubs, raking leaves from under decks and out of gutters, moving firewood piles away from structures, etc.

Deputy Fire Marshal Brooke Stott stated that the Fields project across from Station 42 was rejected two years ago. They have redone the plans and reapplied for approval. Crown Mountain Park is working on a club house project and expansion plans. The Recreation Center is now planned for the Crawford property near the Tree Farm. Sopris Meadows behind the lake is now in the works. They are going to connect the road through to Lake Drive.

Division Chief of EMS:

Division Chief Cornelius provided the following COVID update. On Friday, April 16, 2021 the State COVID-19 Dial evolved into Public Health Order 20-38: Limited COVID-19 Restrictions, allowing counties to implement regulations at the local level while still maintaining some limited requirements across the state. Counties may continue to use the statewide dial framework as a model for implementing their own regulations.

Starting April 2, 2021 all individuals over the age of 16 will be eligible for the Pfizer vaccine and all individuals over the age of 18 will be eligible for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

There is a Colorado vaccination provider page to find vaccination locations across the state. Grand Junction is the closest state community vaccination site.

Effective April 3, 2021 the Governor extended the statewide mask mandate another 30 days.

At this time Pitkin County is utilizing the statewide dial framework and is currently in Level Yellow: Concern. Pitkin County's COVID case incidence rate continues to decrease.

Pitkin County is deactivating the IMT for mass vaccination clinics as there is less demand and they are seeing individuals make appointments and then not show up as scheduled. They are trying to push the vaccine distribution out to local primary care providers and pharmacies.

Eagle County is targeting May 27, 2021 to drop COVID-19 public health orders. They will begin allowing indoor and outdoor events of 500 to 1000 people upon application approval and adherence to COVID safety guidelines.

Eagle County is targeting to have 60% of the county population vaccinated by the end of May. As of last Monday (04/12), they have vaccinated approximately 49% of the county's population.

Garfield County residents are "encouraged," but not mandated, to continue wearing masks indoors and follow other health-safety practices to keep the spread of COVID-19 in check.

Beyond that, though, the county is essentially reopened to pre-pandemic levels in all but a few sectors still governed by state public health rules.

The exception is within Glenwood Springs city limits, where City Council last week extended its ordinance requiring masks to be worn indoors, at least through May 20, 2021.

The CDPHE agreed to offer a community mass vaccination site in Glenwood Springs, possibly by the second week of May

A report in The New England Journal of Medicine shows antibody persistence through 6 months after the second dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. This finding was similar to a report recently released by Pfizer which showed that protections last at least 6 months.

Desk review for the Colorado EMS Supplemental Payment is complete (all participating agencies are subject to this). Comprehensive audit reviews began in April with notification on April 06, 2021 for agencies selected for a comprehensive audit review. We were not selected and successfully went through a comprehensive audit last fiscal year. The Colorado EMS Supplemental Payment is expected in September.

We are hosting a Basic EMS Field Training Officer Course developed from the National EMS Management Association April 26 – 28, 2021 here at Station 45. This will bring EMS providers from all parts of the state. We have seven of our members enrolled.

Division Chief of Training:

Division Chief Cox has been busy making sure all of the required wildland fire training has been completed for the year.

HR Report:

Human Resources Director Renee Thomas stated that she recently made eight contingent job offers to people (5 part-time, 2 full-time, and 1 fleet mechanic). We are having a Lieutenant's assessment center tomorrow for six applicants. An eligibility list will be created for the Lieutenants position. Next week we will be having a Battalion Chief's assessment center for five applicants.

Finance Report:

Finance Director Jennifer Thompson stated that the 2020 audit had been completed. One issue was noted. We need to complete a current inventory. IT Director Johnson is looking into an easier way of tracking inventory.

Finance Director Thompson stated that we switched to the Public Sector Health Care Group on January 1, 2021. A dividend check has come in for \$ _____ which is more than was expected.

Property taxes are in and have been allocated to

We made the first submittal for \$9,000 to the grant for Station 46. We should receive a reimbursement check

Information Technology:

No report

Board Comments:

Director Young stated that we should let Director Irene Greiser know that we are thinking about her and Ray. Director Boineau will send out a link to their GoFundMe page for Ray.

Director Duroux thanked the staff who brought the ambulance and ladder truck to the football game. The Community appreciates it.

Staff Comments:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Volunteer Meeting:

Director Duroux stated that he attended the virtual volunteer meeting on Lifesize at 6:00 p.m. on 4/6/2021. Everyone seemed excited about starting to get back together. They are still excited about being a part of this organization.

The May 4, 2021 all hands meeting will be limited in person to about 30 people plus broadcast on Lifesize so that people can attend via computer. You need to sign up in Target Solutions to attend the event in person.

Director Duroux stated that we need to have an appreciation event. Chief Thompson stated that both Districts (B&RFPD and SWFPD) turned 50 years old during the pandemic and should be celebrated.

Director Young will attend the next volunteer all hands meeting scheduled for May 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in person and on Lifesize.

Non-Agenda Items:

None

Adjournment:

Director Boineau made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Director Duroux. All were in favor and the motion passed 5 – 0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

To watch this meeting in its entirety, please go to the following link:

<https://youtu.be/di4tZcXSxuk>