

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

**August 17, 2021**

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Authority Board President Ed Van Walraven called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present were Ed Van Walraven, Leroy Duroux, John Young, William Boineau, Dave Heivly, and Elizabeth Striegler. Other's present were Chief Scott Thompson, Deputy Chief Kevin Issel, Fire Marshal John Mele, Deputy Fire Marshal Brook Stott, Division Chief Richard Cornelius, Finance Director Jennifer Thompson, Human Resources Director Renee Thomas, IT Director Erik Johnson, Attorney Bob Cole, Battalion Chief Jason Hutter, Lt. Gregor Dekleva, Firefighters Eric Goldberger, Matthew Mikowski, James Dirkes, Tucker Hinchliffe, Will Shoesmith, and Administrative Assistant Susan Herwick.

Guest: Lt. Aaron Munch from Basalt Police Department

**Swearing in Ceremony:**

Chief Scott Thompson swore Division Chief Richard Cornelius in as our new Deputy Chief.

**Minutes of July 20, 2021 Meeting:**

Director Heivly asked that the mental health training talked about in the minutes on page 5 be clarified to state that the crisis intervention training is a training that staff can attend in order to have better skills to help people in mental health crisis. PEER support is something that exists for staff that need counseling. Director Dave Heivly made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, the motion was seconded by Director Elizabeth Striegler. All were in favor and the motion carried 6 – 0.

**Public Comments:**

None

**Attorney's Report:**

Attorney Bob Cole stated that the stock construction contract for Station 46 with Gary Johnson needs some work in order to comply with Special District state law contracting requirements. The main components of the contract are fine. Gary's bid was the low bid at \$2,102,823.25 which is \$300,000 over what was expected. It is okay to approve the contract as submitted with the revisions submitted by Bob Cole's office. He will then work with Gary Johnson in order to get the contract finalized.

Our office is also working on one personnel matter with HR Director Thomas.

**Chief's Report:**

Chief Thompson stated that contractor Gary Johnson has come up with an excavation plan to keep all of the dirt on site or across the road for an irrigation project that Sopris Mountain Ranch is doing. This could potentially save us \$250,000. Chief Thompson would like to get the excavation started in order to take advantage of this savings by using the dirt on site or at this other project across the street.

Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowners Association is in the process of collecting the pledged money from their homeowners. Five homeowners who previously pledged money have sold their properties. Some of the new homeowners have pledged money towards this project.

We are working with the Pitkin County Commissioners to help fund the three employee housing units. They have money set aside for projects like ours. The County Manager is pretty confident that we will receive the help we have requested.

Water Court is almost ready to sign off on our well permit.

The tax-deductible donation from the homeowners is the only hurdle that we have right now. We do not know how much money we are going to receive in donations. Chief Thompson stated that he would like to work with Director Van Walraven and Don from the Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowners Association and get some money transferred into our account at the bank. Discussion ensued.

Chief Thompson stated that we have the excavation permit so we can legally dig. Chief Thompson stated that we can have Bob Cole put a clause in the contract that we could shut this project down if we had to because of lack of money. Worst case scenario the Authority will be spending \$500,000 in order to get three employee housing units.

Chief Thompson stated that we have an IGA with Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowners Association regarding this project. If they do not come up with \$900,000, they will not be in compliance with the IGA. Their only buy in to this project is the donations from their homeowners.

The Board is concerned with the Authorities liability for this project if the donations don't come through. Chief Thompson stated that we have a 50% matching grant from the State for \$975,000 so our liability for anything that we put into this project would be 50%. Chief Thompson thinks that our maximum exposure would be \$500,000 (the \$200,000 that we are already putting up and the \$300,000 that we are over on the bid).

Chief Thompson has created a tri-fold brochure for the Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowner's Association that explains the Station 46 project and the ISO benefits.

Director Van Walraven stated that if we go ahead with the excavation, we need money in the bank from the Sopris Mountain Ranch HOA to at least cover the costs of the excavation. If we don't build Station 46, the State is going to want their grant money back.

Director Boineau made a motion to move forward as long as \$125,000 from Sopris Mountain Ranch Homeowner's Association is deposited in our account at the bank. The motion was amended to include letting Chief Thompson and Chair Van Walraven continue with the fund-raising efforts and to enter into the construction contract with Gary Johnson for the excavation phase of the project. The motion was seconded by Director Striegler. All were in favor and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Director Duroux asked about the status of a building permit with Pitkin County. Chief Thompson stated that our project has been moved to the front of the list for approval.

Chief Thompson stated that the Fields Subdivision being built across from Blue Lake has been approved for ninety-two residential units. They will help us with land and affordable housing with four two- or three-bedroom employee condominium units and one residential lot for executive housing over the five-year build out of this project. This subdivision has been approved by Eagle County and is now seeking County Commissioner approval.

Director Young asked whether there was any movement in the Crawford land acquisition. Chief Thompson stated that it is in process. The principles have agreed to sell us the land. The land planner is now trying to figure out what is encumbered and what is not with the bank. The project is moving forward but it is a slow process. This project is not zoned for employee housing.

**Deputy Chief Issel's Report:**

Deputy Chief Kevin Issel stated that we currently have thirteen employee housing units. Whenever one of these units is vacated, there is a competitive process for occupancy. We appreciate the Boards support for additional employee housing. Director Boineau stated that we should probably start to think about creating a team of people to take care of all of our buildings and infrastructure. Jennifer Thompson stated that when the time comes an Enterprise Fund will be created to support this.

With the increase in population caused by all of the new construction in our district, Station 42 is going to explode in call volume. We need to keep the increase in staffing for that station on our minds. Chief Thompson stated that Dan Qualman had been in touch regarding the Master Plan.

Cody Espinoza is doing great as our fleet mechanic. He has been able to complete some major repairs to our apparatus without sending the equipment out of the valley for repair.

We are beginning the process of winterizing all of our facilities.

All of the sub-committees for the strategic plan are beginning to meet and work together.

**Deputy Chief Mele's Report:**

Deputy Chief John Mele stated that SWIFT (State Wildland Inmate Firefighting Team) has been in the Pines Subdivision here in Snowmass Village performing wildfire mitigation for the last three weeks.

The population of Tree Farm project is going to be significant with full-time occupancy. One in four homes has photovoltaic solar application added to their home which adds another layer of fire safety and review for these homes.

**Division Chief Cornelius's Report:**

Division Chief Cornelius stated that cases of the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant of the COVID virus continue to be of concern locally, regionally and throughout the State of Colorado and Nation. They are being investigated in nearly all counties in Colorado.

We continue to respond to incidents with patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 as well as those who previously had COVID-19 but have lingering symptoms or complications.

Updated guidance from the CDC published on July 27, 2021 recommends if you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission. Currently the CDC identifies both Eagle and Pitkin County as high transmission and Garfield County as substantial transmission.

CDC now recommends that people whose immune systems are compromised moderately to severely should receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after the initial 2 doses.

The Authority still has an enhanced PPE requirement and is following CDC guidelines and recommendations.

During the executive staff meeting today we will discuss current COVID-19 guidelines and any needed changes based on current conditions.

**New Ambulance**

Last week the order was placed for a Ford F-450 commercial chassis before the 2022 order bank closed. Members of the EMS Committee will be traveling to Portland, OR the

first week in September for a pre-construction meeting at the Braun Northwest factory in Chehalis, WA.

### **Training**

Dr. Livengood provided the July volunteer monthly EMS training via LifeSize and presented on hypoglycemia. The training had an ALS focus and also reviewed relevant protocols. For August's volunteer monthly EMS training the transition to Vector Solutions Check-It Controlled Substances will take place in person and also be provided via LifeSize.

### **Paramedic Education Program**

Eric Goldberger completed his capstone and other program requirements and returned to work yesterday. Ryan Lee, Claudia Kirby and Neal Martin are currently enrolled in the Denver Health Paramedic Education Program accelerated program and are doing great. They have their mid-term Friday.

### **Field Training and Evaluation Program**

FTEP Committee members and Field Training Officers (FTO) Jimmy Dirkes, Chelsey Johnson, David Klebes, Ben Mackoff, Mo McPhee and Jess Tanner have all been diligently working on the Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP). Matt Evans and Matt Mikowski complete Phase III of the FTEP this week and will soon be able to function autonomously. Special thanks to Ben Mackoff and Jimmy Dirkes for all of their hard work as FTOs over the last three months and a big congratulations to Matt Evans and Matt Mikowski for successfully completing FTEP. Tucker Kinney and Michael Hall started their 120-day FTEP. Eric Goldberger will start next week and Chris MacGregor, a new full-time firefighter/paramedic will start in the near future after he completes the new hire orientation. Lt. Mo McPhee will take over as FTEP Coordinator and we are currently working to bring on Nick Wall as a new FTO.

### **Incidents**

January 01, 2020 through July 31, 2020 we had 1134 total incidents; 580 of those were EMS. January 01, 2021 through July 31, 2021 we had 1404 total incidents; 686 of those were EMS. There was an increase of 270 calls (**23.8%**) in YTD of '21 versus YTD of '20. There was an increase of 106 EMS calls (**18.3%**) in YTD of '21 versus YTD of '20

July 2020, we had 165 total incidents; 77 of those were EMS. July 2021, we had 216 total incidents; 104 of those were EMS. There was an increase of 51 calls (**30.9%**) in July '21 versus July '20. There was an increase of 27 EMS calls (**35.1%**) in July '21 versus July '20.

We continue to see more EMS incidents with a mental health component. Unfortunately, we have responded to back-to-back weeks with suicides this month.

### **Human Resource Director's Report:**

Human Resources Director Renee Thomas stated that we just promoted Richard to Deputy Chief. This leaves an opening for Division Chief. We have posted this position

internally. When the position of Division Chief gets filled, it could potentially create three more recruitments. Chief Thompson stated that we are only going to hire one Division Chief and they will be in charge of EMS and Fire training. We will hire one additional Lieutenant that will be moved into the training division under the Division Chief.

Strategic plan committee members are starting to get back together. The Board will be provided with an update on strategic plan progress each month. Work capacity is creating slow but steady progress.

Our biggest obstacle of 2021 has been Aspen Fire creating job openings for full-time staff that require less work but pay the same as RFFRA. Our salaries need to be competitive. We will be discussing salaries at the executive staff meeting later today.

Director Van Walraven stated that we need to make sure that we stay on track with implementing the strategic plan and make changes as needed. HR Director Thomas stated that the line staff are committed to keeping the strategic plan moving forward.

#### **Finance Director's Report:**

Finance Director Jennifer Thompson stated that budget meetings start today. Our mill levy certification is due on August 24, 2021. 2022 is a change year so we will have to see the County gives us to work with.

Jennifer stated that she would present the preliminary budget at the September meeting.

Jennifer stated that she has been putting money into the vehicle and capital replacement funds for future use. She sees a bond question in our future and we will be able to tell the taxpayers that we do not need money for apparatus. We have over \$300,000 in impact fees collected from the Fire Prevention Division with more money coming in. Impact fees and how they are collected were discussed.

The Authority is in good shape fiscally right now.

#### **Board Comments:**

Director Young stated that he is constantly amazed by our staff. They are a well-oiled machine and are delivering a good product to our community. Director Young thanked the staff for the job they continue to do.

#### **Staff Comments:**

None

#### **Old Business:**

Chief Thompson stated that the final Strategic Plan Summary had been included in the Board packet for everyone's review. HR Director Thomas stated that she would provide an executive summary for the Board at each meeting.

**New Business:**

None

**Volunteer Meeting:**

Director Leroy Duroux stated that he would attend the All-Hands meeting at Station 42 on September 7, 2021.

**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 6 – 0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

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

<https://youtu.be/tNUE5UcPPFg>