



Basalt & Rural Fire Protection District

“Protecting Our Community Since 1970”

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

BASALT & RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REGULAR BOARD MEETING August 15, 2023

Roll call:

President Van Walraven, Vice President Duroux, Treasurer Young, Board Member Foster, Board Member Williams, Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius, HR Director Thomas, Director of Finance Jenn Thompson, Chief Thompson, Executive Assistant Diamond.

Call to Order:

Noting a quorum was present, President Van Walraven called the BFD Meeting to order at 5:59 p.m. on October 17, 2023.

Approval of Minutes:

Board Member Williams made a motion to accept the regular minutes from August 15, 2023, as presented; Board Member Foster made a second motion to approve minutes, no discussion, all in favor of accepting notes; the motion carried 5-0.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thompson advised that a structure fire in the Blue Lake subdivision was handled well. Chief Thompson said two people were trapped on the second floor. Chief Thompson reported they escaped by climbing the posts outside; no one was hurt. Chief Thompson said he usually doesn't post this information on Facebook to show people's misfortune, but they were willing to talk to the press. Chief Thompson said Roaring Fork Fire featured the Aspen Times article and put some attention on their GO-FUND-ME account to help out the two occupants who escaped the fire. Chief Thompson said the initial investigation led to a lithium battery that caught fire due to degradation due to moisture under the porch where the product was stored. Chief Thompson said this was a \$200,000 loss, but the main part of the house is still livable. Chief Thompson said the after-action review will happen next week. Chief Thompson said today they finished another after-action review from another structure fire in Snowmass Village. Chief Thompson said he and President Van Walraven recently met with a citizen who was

upset, saying we are building our policy around false alarms; however, this last month, RFFR responded to two fire alarms that turned out to be structure fires. Chief Thompson said one of the fires was Valley Lumber, Basalt's third highest sales tax-paying business. Chief Thompson noted that some oily rags were left under the counter, then a customer spilled stain, then the employees wiped it up and put it in the trash; then, at 4:30 am, the building was full of smoke. Chief Thompson said the second incident was in Snowmass Village, where RFFR was paged for a single device fire alarm in the stairwell; upon arrival, the heat tape caught the under part of the roof on fire. There was \$100,000 damage to the roof and structure. Chief Thompson said this is why we respond to every alarm like there was a fire; we save a million dollars with a smoke alarm, which makes a thousand responses worth it. Board Member Williams added if you didn't respond and it was something, they would sue.

Chief Thompson said the Authority Board approved our orders to order a pumper. Chief Thompson said it will take four years to build the truck and two years more than our planned schedule, but we are moving forward with that. Chief Thompson said Deputy Chief Cornelius sent out the RFP for brush trucks, and we will cut the number of brush trucks we have and go to a specialty truck in three stations, which will eliminate one apparatus for us; one of the goals in the Master Plan. Chief Thompson said this will standardize our trucks between stations. Chief Thompson said our new tender built with AWD should be ready in the first quarter of next year. Chief Thompson said we have an ambulance with a VIN being constructed, ETA of June next year.

Chief Thompson said the Authority Board heard presentations on career progression moving from rookie firefighter and their progression through their career. Chief Thompson said this was one of the strategic initiatives in the Master Plan that was finished; good job, HR Thomas and Firefighter/Paramedic McPhee with this committee. Chief Thompson said a lot of work and effort went into this project. Chief Thompson said Renee worked on a compromise on the career progression document that worked out well. Chief Thompson said the compensation is done for 2024, with the budget increasing by 30 percent.

Finance Report:

Finance Director Thompson said the 1st reading of the budget and the Pitkin County numbers are still not in, so we are using the old numbers where we budgeted a ten percent decrease. Finance Director Thompson said the mill pension funds have gone down, giving back a mill to the general fund. Finance Director Thompson said we will know something concrete in the next meeting after the election when the numbers are in.

Attorney Report:

Attorney Bob Cole was unable to make the meeting.

Public Comments:

None

Board Member Comments:

Treasurer Young stated the election is flying under the radar, and I am not hearing anything. Treasurer Young thinks people will vote with little information. As the survey

showed, Treasurer Young hopes people favor Station 42's rebuild. Treasurer Young asks the Board if we should send letters to the editor or do something else. Board Member Williams said Eagle County put out a flyer that she felt was helpful.

Chief Thompson said a citizen was upset, saying we should lower mills so taxes don't increase; she is upset to raise taxes, then she can't afford her home. Chief Thompson said Magellan's survey shows you 30 -40 percent will not want a tax increase; hopefully, Magellan is correct on the other 60-70 percent to vote for us. Treasurer Young asked for discussion on letters to the editor, saying most people don't know we don't own the land under Station 42. Treasurer Young thinks people need to understand why we need a training facility. Treasurer Young says with the expansion of people in the valley each year, for example, Colorado State Patrol has four troopers living here in our area and are down 50% staff. Treasurer Young thinks we need more patrol on Highway 82, but now we are getting less due to active transfers and low employment. Chief Thompson said after a discussion with the Pitkin County Sheriff regarding a new program with approval to hit people in their pockets to slow down traffic. Chief Thompson said Pitkin County says you get a ticket if they pull you over. Chief Thompson said Pitkin County is also trying to get a motorcycle officer on the road; this will help get through traffic when needed and help slow down speeders. Treasurer Young says you can see the speeders every day; he points out services are going up, the need is prevalent, it never gets easier, it's always going to cost more money, and we want to fill solid in our future business. Chief Thompson said it is going to get busier by the new year.

Vice President Duroux asks what if there is verbal opposition? Board Member Foster advised that we must correct the public's view if we hear misinformation. Board Member Young said if the tides start to turn and we need to post a letter to the public, he is willing to draft one and have the Board pick it apart. Chief Thompson reminded the Board that per our Attorney, the staff couldn't send letters or help with letters, and any back and forth via email with the Board Members can only have up to two recipients at a time; be careful about Replying to ALL in an email. President Van Walraven asks if we can put a statement on the website. Finance Director Thompson said no, as we are paying for the website. Chief Thompson adds that we can only put facts on the website, and we want to avoid any online misinformation. Board Member Young said he is willing to draft a letter if required. Chief Thompson said it is better to be ready and not need a letter, so Board Member Young will prepare a letter to the editor if required. Vice President Duroux said his wife would do advocacy, if necessary, to send out emails. President Van Walraven said, let's go with a ready letter to the editor for now. Board Member Young said he will have a draft by the end of next week. Chief Thompson and President Van Walraven will attend a Q&A about the ballot questions at the Basalt Library next week to represent RFFR. Board Member Young comments that he thinks the survey is right on; we are about saving lives; who trumps that? It is our life-saving mission. Board Member Young reminds Board Members that we can call a special meeting if needed and have an emergency meeting within 24 hours.

Human Resources Report:

None

Staff Comments:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Adjournment:

Vice President Duroux made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Board Member Willimas seconded the motion, and the motion passed unopposed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

To watch this meeting in its entirety, please follow the link below.

<https://youtu.be/XZef93q4vP0>