

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Special Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2024

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair	Bob Baker, Fire Chief
	Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Chief Govt. Affairs Officer
	Rich Sokol, Treasurer (via Teams)	John Curtis, Deputy Chief – Emergency Services
	Sue Roche, Secretary	Kristin Eckmann, Deputy Chief – Community Services
	Kevin Leung	Matt Weller, Deputy Chief – Internal Services
	William Shriver	Dillon Miskimins, CFO Business Services (absent)
	Bruce Stahlman	Camie Chapman, CHRO Employee Services
		Legal Counsel (absent)

Others Present: SMFR Staff Members & Guests

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chair Albee called the Special 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

Director Sokol participated via Teams. All of the other Board members were present in person.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Director Roche motioned to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Shriver. All were in favor and the motion carried.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Chair Albee asked if there were any changes to conflict of interest affirmation:

- Director Stahlman – no changes
- Director Roche – no changes
- Director Anderson – no changes
- Chair Albee- no changes
- Director Shriver – no changes
- Director Sokol – no changes
- Director Leung – no changes

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

ACTION ITEM

1. **Public Hearing: Order by the Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Trig and Jacqueline Vanderhoef)**

Chair Albee opened the Public Hearing at 6:03 p.m.

Chief Dell'Orfano stated 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 Vanderhoef property is located at 24306 East Canyon Drive and includes a single-family home. The property owners have submitted a Petition for Exclusion, and the public hearing has been properly noticed. This property is capable of being served by Aurora Fire Rescue. The anticipated revenue loss, based on a 2023 assessed value of \$51,523, is approximately \$477. Exclusion fees have been waived in accordance with policy.

At Director Stahlman's request, Chief Dell'Orfano informed that the exclusion will also be filed in Douglas County District Court because it is the District's home county.

At Director Shriver's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reported that Aurora Fire does not have a fire district tax, the property owners are paying taxes to the City of Aurora.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Dell'Orfano stated that if this petition is approved the property owners will not receive ballots from SMFR. Of the two people who own this property, one is not registered and the other appears to not have been registered at the time of our last election. The owners of the other two remaining properties are not registered voters. In theory, this property would have been included in SMFR's election but by the next election they will not receive a SMFR ballot because they are in District 1, which is not up for election.

Chair Albee invited public comment.

There was no public comment and Chair Albee closed the Public Hearing at 6:11 p.m.

Director Roche motioned to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Trig and Jacqueline Vanderhoef) as presented. Director Stahlman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Chair Albee closed the Public Hearing at 6:11 p.m.

DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

1. **Fire Chief Selection Process** – Chair Albee opened the discussion as a continuation of discussions over the last few meetings, stating that there are two things to accomplish: decide if the FYI tool will be utilized and if there is a need for a facilitator to help them through the selection process.
 - a. **Facilitator Introduction – Dan Petersen** – Chief Baker introduced United Fire Authority Retired Fire Chief Dan Petersen, who took over as their Fire Chief at a very tumultuous time and worked with their 17-member board to identify the essential leadership competencies necessary for effective performance and helping Chief Fire Officers to excel. Chief Baker stated that there is no other fire chief he holds in a higher regard & believes he will be a great advocate for the Board and a great source of information.

Chief Petersen stated that he learned about the FYI program about 15-16 years ago. The concept is to build a job description, which outlines the essential functions of the job, and use the FYI program's compilation of 38 competencies which are narrowed down to allow the team to evaluate candidates effectively. The process takes a group of different perspectives to determine what is important. When this program is integrated into all job descriptions, it engages the entire organization's leadership.

Chief Eckmann related her experience with the program through an exercise at the FESDI conference along with 24 other chiefs & how interesting it was to work through the process to come together to determine the final competencies.

At Director Stahlman's request, Chief Petersen stated that he feels the SMFR process is pretty much on track right now, but the job description will need to be adopted before starting the program and then time is needed

to work through the process with the Board, Local, Command Staff groups and then have the Board come back together as a team to create the final list.

At Chair Albee's request, Chief Petersen provided an overview of SMFR's process.

At Director Shriver's request, Chief Petersen reiterated that the expectations for the job description need to be complete first, noting that the essential functions should be kept to a small list that will drive the competencies.

At Chief Baker's request, Chief Petersen explained how the competencies will be a part of the job announcement and candidates must be able to work in these areas. Not everyone will be good at all of them but the candidates' explanation of how they work in these areas will help with the selection process.

At Director Sokol's request, Chief Petersen recommended the Board work through the process first and then, if wanted, he can talk about his thoughts going forward. Reiterating that the best decision will be made by a well-informed Board, which is very dependent upon the climate of the organization.

At Director Leung's request, Chief Petersen stated that a July/August deadline to determine internal and external recruitment will work as long as the job description and compensation package are approved.

Chair Albee polled the Board on the use of the FYI tool or do they want to find another method. The Board agreed to use this tool.

Chair Albee polled the Board on the use of Chief Petersen as the facilitator, the Board agreed they are very comfortable with Chair Albee and Director Anderson's recommendation to use the service of Chief Petersen.

1. Chief Selection Process Continued

Chair Albee opened a review of the draft job description that was included in the Board packet, which included input from the Board.

- Leadership Competencies & job description review:
 - Agreed Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred.
 - Agreed to keep experience at 10 YOS in the fire service and a minimum of 5 YOS in a chief position or equivalent.
 - Agreed Colorado Driver's License requirement be in the position announcement, not in the job description.
 - Agreed to keep the Red Cross CPR requirement, as it is a requirement in all SMFR job descriptions.
 - Agreed EFO, CFO and/or completing of the FESDI program desired.
 - Chair Albee will insert a rendition of what was discussed regarding residency requirements.
 - Chair Albee will review the 22 competencies and narrow them down to get to the meat of the matter for the next review. Next draft will be emailed to the Board by CHRO Chapman.
 - Expectation to approve/adopt the job description at the April 1st or 15th meeting.
 - Suggested Groups: ETeam, BC/DC Chiefs, Local 2086, potentially staff leadership, & agreed CHRO Chapman will facilitate those groups.
- Timeline Reviewed
- Compensation Package Reviewed
 - Chair Albee reminded that the Board should be intentional about whether they want to pay differentials. Chief Baker informed that the current differentials will likely change for 2025.

2. **Culture Survey** – Chair Albee stated in general, he believes it is fair to state that the Board has a blind spot when it comes to the culture of the organization, it is healthy for organizations to do surveys, as it helps shine light on that blind spot. Appreciates that the information is being provided quickly.

Director Sokol stated that he thought it was very helpful and that the organization should do this on a regular basis since we are now such a large organization it helps the Board to get a better pulse for what's going on.

Director Stahlman agreed with Chair Albee and Director Sokol's comments and that issues should get out into the light so they can be addressed.

Director Anderson also agreed adding that she watched the livestream and read the summary provided by Chief Baker. Chief Baker and Local President Dzengelewski talked about working together to address issues and wondered if there was a timeline. She was most surprised with the frequency of the word retribution.

Chief Baker informed that they started working through the issues before the livestream. They met with the DCs and BCs and interested members of the Local, and in those conversations got feedback that the fear of retribution is not from the Fire Chief and they are very comfortable within their station environment, so somewhere between the station culture and the Fire Chief there's a breakdown. The ETeam is working to figure out what that looks like and fix the "disease", but it is going to take some time.

Chief Curtis stated the survey highlighted what people have been saying for a long-standing period of time. Discussions with the Command Staff have been very beneficial. He tasked that group with doing their own SWOT analysis and dig into two of the four recommended areas to work together to determine how to address and confirm that middle management is not contributing to the issue.

Local President Dzengelewski agreed that it's a good start and there is positive response toward working to fix things. He came into the office to work with Chief Baker on some of the systemic issues by getting some work groups created. He will also be working with Chief Baker on the new contract.

Director Shriver stated that he was also surprised by the retribution comments. The information helps the Board and ETeam improve the organization across the board.

Director Anderson asked if there are people that have the skillset to get to the best outcome.

Referring to the February 5th meeting, Chair Albee re-asked Chief Baker's question as to what the Board wants back from the survey.

- Chair Albee would like to see all of the comments, with the exception of comments regarding the Local.
- Director Shriver would like to review the information as well as a list of action items.
- Director Leng would like to know what kind of measurements will be used to see if we are doing better or what work is needed on particular items. Asked if it would be helpful to inform the employees about the Fire Chief selection process. He would also like to see all of the comments, except those pertaining to the Local.
- Director Sokol suggested monthly updates from Chief Curtis. He would also like to see the vehicle policy that outlines who gets department vehicles and the rationale.
- Director Roche requested more information on the disparate feeling that their job is to serve the citizens but that does not seem to be a priority of management, find out what is behind it and find a solution.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Baker asked the Board for direction if they find a great candidate before next year, what his compressed timeline looks like and it was agreed that this will need to be addressed in the future.

Chief Curtis committed on behalf of the ETeam that no one is in the room trying to subvert the issues and they will continue to work toward a positive resolution.

Local President Dzengelewski informed that anonymity was a huge component of the survey so the comments are not going to be released to anyone but specific chosen individuals that can help make change. That is why only the executive summary and comment trends were distributed. Chair Albee rescinded the request for written comments.

INFORMATION ITEMS

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

- Local President Dzengelewski:
 - Feels that the Members and E-Board have already started making some good changes, it has been well-received so far, and they will continue to keep a foot on the gas because they want it to work.
 - He is assigned to the office on a month-to-month basis to be available to assist the Board and Chief on issues and the new contract.
 - 3 E-Board Members were in Washington, DC earlier this month for the IAFF Legislative Conference where FEMA, AFG and SAFER Grants were discussed, as well as extending the public safety officer benefit to include certain cancer-related deaths, funding for national research on bunker gear, and Social Security benefits for firefighters. Colorado was well-represented by about 50 local unions.
 - At Director Anderson's request, discussion regarding dispatchers being recognized as first responders was not on the agenda but it might have come up in conversations with the senators.
 - The Foundation was the recipient of money raised at the Fire Chief Ale event in Highlands Ranch and there is a Poker Night planned for this coming Saturday at the Union Hall.
- Chief Curtis:
 - Last week's snowstorm created for some challenging days, but the crews did a great job. Chief Richardson worked with the counties to coordinate logistics, snowplows, delivering oxygen bottles, and dispatch. Director Anderson thanked PIO Hurst for the information he provided to the media regarding the snowplows and stated the little hydrant plow out idea was genius!
- Chief Richardson:
 - Arapahoe Rescue Patrol went out with the plows in teams of four to help shovel the snow to keep the apparatus moving. Fleet Services was also instrumental in assisting with snow removal during responses.
 - State legislation designating dispatchers as first responders was signed last week.
 - At Director Anderson's request, they are not aware of any snowblower accidents being reported.
- Chief Valdez:
 - As a follow up to the Public Comment from the two citizens at the last meeting regarding traffic and safety concerns near the intersection of Ron King Trail and Hwy 85 along with nearby open space, Deputy Fire Marshal Conroy made contact with one of them to provide the status of working with the county and upcoming permit reviews. CDOT will also need to be involved in intersection concerns.
 - In partnership with Greenwood Village PD, Arapahoe County and the 18th Judicial District, our fire investigators were able to press charges, several of which were felonies, in the commercial structure fire at the sushi restaurant and bar on Arapahoe Road a few months ago.
 - The fire at Quebec and Arapahoe Road recently was also determined to be an incendiary fire, so Deputy Fire Marshal Everitt has been working with the ATF and they have some really good leads in the investigation and charges are likely to be filed.
- Director Stahlman:
 - Attended the Littleton Elks Awards Ceremony, which was very well done and well attended.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)

N/A

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on April 1, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

The next Special South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on April 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Attested by: James E Albee

Date: Apr 1, 2024