

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District  
Regular Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes  
October 7, 2024 - **AMENDED**

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair	Bob Baker, Fire Chief
	Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Chief Govt. Affairs Officer
	Rich Sokol, Treasurer	John Curtis, Deputy Chief– Emergency Services
	Sue Roche, Secretary	Kristin Eckmann, Deputy Chief – Community Services
	Kevin Leung	Matt Weller, Deputy Chief – Employee Services
	William Shriver	Stephanie Corbo, Chief Financial Officer
	Bruce Stahlman	Camie Chapman, CHRO Employee Services
		Allison Ulmer, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff Members

#### **MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Albee called the Regular Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:03 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**

All of the Board members were present in person.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Director Roche motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Director Stahlman seconded the motion. 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

#### **PROCLAMATION**

1. **Fire Prevention Week Proclamation** – Chief Eckmann introduced the CRRS Team Members Selena Silva and Brandi Miller who walked everyone through this year's campaign of *Smoke Alarms. Make them WORK for you.* The team is focusing on core initiatives this year – elementary school contest, marketing campaign, smoke alarm blitz.

At Director Shriver's request, CRRS Silva recommended checking the batteries once a month, test the hard wiring and replace the detector every ten years. If the wiring is not compatible, recommended contracting for a handyman's assistance.

At Director Leung's request, CRRS Miller stated that the team is still determining their level of engagement so have concentrated on reaching out to the schools that they already are working with and that is why there is only about 10 percent participation from the 100 elementary schools in the District. CRRS Manager Molitor added that the Team has almost 50 percent engagement from the middle schools. Director Leung expressed interest in how many schools in his district, District 6, participate and if there is anything he can do to get the word out. The team welcomed him to pass along the information and help them educate the students.

At Director Leung's request, CRRS Miller stated that they are focusing on ion lithium battery education at the high school level to help hold parents accountable or share in the initiative separate from the Fire Prevention Week campaign they are promoting in the elementary and middle schools.

At Director Sokol's request, CRRS Miller stated the technology makes it easier to test the detectors by **pushing** the test button monthly.

Director Shriver read SMFR Proclamation No. 2024-03, in recognition of Fire Prevention Week – October 6 – 12, 2024 recognizing the CRRS, FMO, Communications, Strategic Services, and Emergency Response Teams' commitment to ensuring the safety and security of all those who live, work, visit and play in our District.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

September 9, 2024 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Regular Board Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2024 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Special Board Meeting Minutes

Directors Stahlman and Shriver recommended correcting two spelling errors for the September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Director Leung recommended changing his statement regarding the 2025 budget discussion to "The voters asked why they didn't continue to raid the capital fund each year" in the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes and Director Sokol recommended adding that he expressed similar sentiments regarding abatements, both on page 2 of the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

Director Shriver motioned to approve the consent agenda as amended. Director Roche seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS**

- 1. 2024 Budget Supplemental Appropriation: Fire Chief Selection Process** – CFO Corbo noted that the Fire Chief Selection Process was initiated after the adoption of the 2024 budget. The estimated cost for the nationwide search and selection is up to \$200K. Staff is requesting a budget amendment to the 2024 budget by increasing the operating expenses by \$200K at a future meeting. Additionally, any unspent amount from this allocation be allowed to carry forward into 2025 to ensure the continuity of the project.

At Director Anderson's request, CFO Corbo stated this would be moving \$200K out of the General Fund to the Operating Expense budget specifically for the Fire Chief Selection Process, although it is not normal to request that any unused funds be carried over into 2025. CHRO Chapman added that part of the funds will be for consultant Dan Peterson's assistance with the process to this point and the assessment process with the remaining funds be for out of state candidate travel expenses.

At Director Stahlman's request, Chief Dell'Orfano informed that there will be two public hearings at the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, one for the budget supplement appropriation for the Fire Chief Selection Process and one for the 2025 Budget.

2. **Future Revenue Initiative** – Chief Dell’Orfano reviewed the Potential Ballot Measure Timeline & asked the Board if they have any thoughts on options and the RFP for a consultant, depending on their recommendation this can bump up to an action item.

At Director Anderson’s request, CFO Corbo stated that they just went through this process in Jefferson County, which was a very extensive engagement that included the polling and review of polling results and the price tag was \$300K, so for SMFR she believes it would be around \$150K with most of the funds being used in 2025.

- a. **RFP – Consultant for Potential Solutions to Funding Challenges** - Chief Dell’Orfano stated that with the recent legislation that reduces revenue in the coming years, the organization needs to develop revenue solutions, potentially including those that require voter approval. Staff recommends formalizing the approach to evaluate options and prepare for an election if desired. To support that effort, this RFP is to secure the services of a consultant that will help us connect with the community through quantitative and qualitative polling and a strategic communication outreach plan.

CFO Corbo reported that recent legislation will impact revenues starting in 2025 by \$7.4M and another \$9M in 2026 and beyond. This revenue loss will not allow us to maintain services and continue to fund the initiatives in our 10-year capital plan.

Director Sokol stated that this is a chance to really engage our citizens and get some feedback & believes Staff and the Board need to sit down to see what the difference would be to the citizens if we don’t do a revenue increase. CFO Corbo informed that the first strategic meeting is tomorrow with the ETeam and hope to have that defined by the end of the year so the District can go out and poll the community. Director Anderson added that we would need to know what happens to the organization if a vote of the public doesn’t pass.

Director Leung stated that a good consultant in terms of messaging and engaging to determine the public’s tolerance regarding mil levy increases and bonds will help make good decisions and we should move as quickly as possible, recommending this be moved to an action item.

At Director Shriver’s request, CFO Corbo stated that there are a handful of good consultants who do this for a business. They do the strategic communication and partner with the polling company.

At Chair Albee’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that if there is an election, it would be the same lead time as the regular district election. At Director Sokol’s request, Legal Counsel Ulmer stated that the election could be at the same time as the next regular district election in odd numbered years, the next one is May 2025, or the State’s general election in November of 2026.

Director Leung motioned to amend the agenda to move Agenda item I-2a from Discussion Item to an Action Item. Director Roche seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Director Leung motioned to approve the draft RFP – Consultant for Potential Solutions to Funding Challenges and direct Staff to finalize the RFP, move forward with a selection process, and execute the associated contractual documents with an overall cost not to exceed \$150,000. Staff will report back to the Board with the final selection and cost. Director Stahlmann seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

3. **2025 Draft Budget** – CFO Corbo opened the 2025 Proposed Budget Discussion with a review of changes from the September 16<sup>th</sup> budget workshop & presented highlights from the 2025 Proposed Budget.

Additional Discussion Items:

- **Abatement:** Chair Albee reminded that there were four in favor and three opposed at the last meeting, unless something has changed it will stay in the budget. Agreed to keep abatements in the budget.
- **Benefit Costs:** Staff will bring the benefit costs back to the Board.

- 2024/2025 New Costs Not in Budget – Staff will add the remaining 2024 budget to the model, including the Fire Chief Selection Process and Campaign Consultant, noting that some of the funds in these two budgets will be used in 2025.
  - Fire Chief Selection Process \$200K
  - Campaign Consultant \$150K
  - Ballot Question 7 Districts ~\$875K

At Director Leung’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that the ballot question is an estimated number for a consolidated district election with the counties plus a Tabor notice, there may be some savings if the election was held in November.

At CFO Corbo’s request, the Board confirmed the 2% increase in the Operating Budget and \$400K for a 3 District Director mail ballot election. Chief Dell’Orfano reminded that they typically call for an election in December, so Staff will bring a list of pros and cons of a mail ballot versus polling place election before the Board at the December meeting.

At Director Sokol’s request, Chief Weller reported that Keiding Architects was consulted for remodeling of the HQ’s lower level and the original budget for the project was \$3M. At the Board’s direction, Staff worked through combining the Wellness space with the IT space and working to get costs for those projects down to a \$1M placeholder in the budget. Director Sokol stated that \$1M was still a lot of money for a remodel and asked Staff to come back with alternatives. Chair Albee suggested removing it since we are still trying to figure it out and maybe revisit it as a separate effort and do a budget supplement in 2025. CFO Corbo stated that she could put it in as a placeholder & note that we are scoping estimates. Director Sokol proposed the placeholder be zero knowing that we are going to look at it again. The Board agreed with the placeholder. Director Anderson requested that when the information is brought back, the board is informed on what we thought it would be and what is recommended.

At Director Stahlman’s request, Fleet Services Director Frank reported that the \$200K is for a Dive Boat and two Dive Rigs was a 2024 request for 2025. Chief Richardson explained that the dive rigs are to pull the boats, one aged out and the other is an old Littleton unit and the new ones were ordered almost a year ago.

At Director Stahlman’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that discussions continue with the developer regarding land for Station 16. Chief Weller added that it could be sooner than 2025 as the development of the lots is shifting, so we **may** be looking at land that would better meet our needs. There are some drainage and topography concerns that actually put us in a position to negotiate for the property. There are no specifics on a timeline yet.

CFO Corbo stated the next time she will be before them will be at the November Regular Meeting and Budget Approval at the December meeting.

4. **Fire Chief Selection Process** – CHRO Chapman will be sending out an update with information regarding the closing of recruitment. The applications have been reviewed, virtual interviews start October 28<sup>th</sup>, and the first weekend in December will be in person interviews, each step narrowing the field. Chair Albee added that external communication will also be distributed to keep the public informed. There will likely be some full Board participation needed between December 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, with one or more event for interaction with the candidates. They are not finalists at that point, but the announcement would be made soon thereafter.

At Director Leung’s request, Chair Albee stated that there were 75 applicants, which were reviewed to determine who met the criteria and that group will be invited to be in the virtual interview process. Director Anderson stated that it will be difficult because there are a lot of good candidates.

Director Leung stated that Chair Albee and Director Anderson have a huge challenge before them and they have his full support. Director Stahlman echoed that sentiment & acknowledge a great job done by CHRO Chapman.

## ACTION ITEMS

1. **SMFR Resolution No. 2024-07 – Resolution and Order of Exclusion (Castle Cliff Estates) – Initial Adoption** – Chief Dell’Orfano informed that the Castle Cliff Estates development is located on the west side of Daniels Park Road approximately 2 miles north of the intersection of US Highway 85 and Daniels Park Road. The area is almost completely within the West Douglas County Fire Protection District’s boundaries, but a small, 2-acre portion is in SMFR’s district. The anticipated revenue loss, based on a 2023 assessed value of \$2,920, is approximately \$27. The owner/developer will reimburse the costs associated with the exclusion/inclusion process.

At Director Anderson’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that he will be keeping track of the exclusion process to ensure that we hold off on providing the county with the new boundary map until this is completed so that no ballots go to the individuals in that area.

At Director Shriver’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that they are still trying to find out how the land was divided into two fire districts.

Director Anderson motioned to approve the initial adoption of Resolution No. 2024-07 - Resolution and Order of Exclusion (Castle Cliff Estates). Director Shriver seconded the motion. With a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against, the motion carried.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

1. **IGA Update** – Update on the following IGA changes:
  1. There are no new IGAs this past month.

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

- Chief Baker:
  - Starting next month, PACE classes will begin, which were created in direct response to the issues identified in the survey. There will be 20 2-day classes. Professional Development is shepherding the process. Board members are also welcome to attend.
  - Provided a historical perspective of the past 40 years of his career and how citizens have supported previous ballot measures related to funding, noting the huge reductions in mill levies in the last two consolidations as well as an ISO Class 1 rating, best fire and EMS systems in the state. He believes the citizens would support our future funding needs rather than have a reduction in the services we provide.
- Local 2086 President Dzengelewski:
  - Thank you to the Board Members and Chiefs who attended the Chili Cookoff on Friday night at McGregor Square. The event had a smaller attendance than in years past but still many fire departments were there and a good time for all.
- Chief Curtis:
  - Spooling up some help for Castle Rock FR who lost one of their own due to a sudden illness. He leaves **behind** a wife and four kids. SMFR will be offering coverage for their district so that their members are able to attend the service.
- Chief Weller:
  - Completed first round of cardiac scans. 317 members, 11 were referred for procedures, 10 ended up with stints and referred 81 who were identified as significant heart disease and treated for those conditions. That completes this year’s scans & will kick off again in the first quarter of next year. Thanks to Chief Powell, Dr. Burns, Health & Wellness Officer Macklin and the teams who got this off the ground and for the Board’s support and funding. Chief Powell stated the age range of the individual who needed additional procedures was 35 to 60.
- Chief Dell’Orfano:
  - Quick shout out to Legal Counsel Cole for his work with the organizations for the past 30 years. It has been a great partnership.
- Chief Powell:

- The Recruit Academy is in week 11. One recruit is injured and being evaluated.
- Chief Richardson:
  - There are 6 team members returning from hurricane deployment 7 more members deployed for the Task Force just arrived in Orlando. The previous team's deployment was extended because they were unable to get the team out and another team in before the hurricane strike. Task Force 1 is comprised of 26 partner agencies. The primary functions are hazardous materials and Search & Rescue efforts. Chief Burke added that there is no forecast for wildland deployment, but they do watch the weather models and have the ability to upstaff for multiple wildland deployments, if needed.
- Director Anderson:
  - Thank you to Chief Dell'Orfano and Lobbyist Driver and all of our great members that helped during the two recent Legislator Visits designed to strengthen relationships and provide a better understanding of our fire service and what we do. Everything was very impactful & hopefully will help them make decisions at the legislative level. Chief Dell'Orfano thanked the board for their participation and flexibility in getting this scheduled.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)**

N/A

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Special Board of Directors' Meeting to be held on October 21, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

Regular Board of Directors' Meeting to be held on November 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

Regular Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board of Trustees' Meeting to be held on November 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Attested by: James E Allen

Date: Nov 4, 2024