

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Special Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
October 21, 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 (Absent)	Kristin Eckmann, Deputy Chief – Community Services
	Kevin Leung	Matt Weller, Deputy Chief – Internal Services
	William Shriver	Camie Chapman, CHRO - Employee Services
	Bruce Stahlman	Stephanie Corbo, CFO - Business Services (absent)
		Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Safety Foundation Board Members, 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 6:07 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 Roche's absence was excused. All of the other Board members were present in person.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Albee suggested an amendment to the agenda for a Special Presentation by the South Metro Safety Foundation.

Director Shriver motioned to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Director Anderson. 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 (absent)
- Director Anderson – no changes
- Chair Albee- no changes
- Director Shriver – no changes
- Director Leung – no changes
- Director Sokol – no changes

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

SMFR Safety Foundation – Foundation Member Mark Lampert introduced Board Members Cindy Hathaway and Linda Ganz, Foundation Director Mink, and Chief Eckmann who is their SMFR liaison. Mr. Lampert thanked the Board for the funding provided on an annual basis so that they are able to continue to provide services to the district & provided an overview of the services provided. Adding that they are hopeful that the strong relationship continues into the future.

The Board thanked the Foundation members for their work & for the presentation.

ACTION ITEMS

N/A

DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Ambulance and EMS Service Fees** – Chief Curtis informed that “transport” fees have not been significantly updated since 2020 and Staff has identified that we have fallen below fees charged by neighboring Fire/EMS agencies. On July 20, 2020 the Board adopted Resolution No. 2020-10: a Resolution Repealing and Readopting a Fee Schedule for Ambulance and EMS Services. The intent was to recover the costs related to the transport of patients to the hospital, which were supported by an analysis by the consultant TischlerBise. The 2020 fee scheduled increased transport fees from \$800 (established in 2008) to \$1,270 plus a mileage fee of \$15.00 per mile. The Board’s resolution also authorized the Fire Chief or CFO to periodically adjust fees within CPI-U. The current fees are \$1,374 with a mileage fee of \$17.51 per mile. An overview of current payer mix and billing collection rates, along with estimates of increased revenues based on potential fee increases, was provided.

Chief Curtis stated that Staff’s recommendation is to increase the transport fee to about \$1,600 + mileage, which is within the market comparables median and reasonable since we are providing the best EMS care. This is a potential \$1.2M in fees and another \$900K in mileage annually. If the Board would like to move forward with the proposal, Staff will put together a resolution.

At Director Anderson’s request, Chief Curtis stated that generally it is self-pay and private insurance that pay the full price of whatever we charge & Staff will bring back more details in November including our actual transport costs, area agency fee details, our collection rates, and estimated increases in revenue.

At Director Shriver’s request, Chief Curtis informed that the ranges provided are the actual current fee vs. the new fee for each comparable agency & believes they all charge mileage in addition.

Director Sokol stated that he believes, when he was on the Board previously in 2019, the philosophy was not to make money but rather to cover our costs. Chief Curtis confirmed Director Anderson’s statement that the actual cost is likely much higher.

At Director Leung’s request, Chief Curtis stated that three of the comparable agencies border SMFR’s district and Arvada Fire & Staff can look into each of those agency’s philosophies and actual transport costs.

Chair Albee polled the Board and directed Staff to provide actual transport costs, comparable values to area agencies and if the comparable agencies charge mileage. Chief Curtis stated that he and CFO Corbo have already begun the process of pulling together the information and should be able to provide it to the Board at the November 4th meeting.

- 2. Budget Work Session 11/18** – Chief Dell’Orfano worked with CFO Corbo not only for 2025 but also any other revenue generating that we would like to do as well as the proposed transport fee increase. The consultant should be on board within the first couple weeks of November and some of the polling numbers should be available, so the Board and Staff can continue discussions about bonds, mills or sales tax and make sure the Board is comfortable with those topics and define our future needs. These are just some of the topics, if the Board is willing and able to conduct the work session. Chair Albee polled the Board and all in attendance are available for the work session on November 18th at 6:00 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 1. Fire Chief Selection Process** – Chair Albee stated there are 76 candidates, narrowed to about 30 that will be interviewed over a 4-day period. The Assessment Center will take place December 6-9, before the Board Meeting on the 9th. The Board will be participating in the Assessment Center, in part, with a smaller pool of candidates to determine finalists for board approval. The full Board interview process will take place January 6-10 and it is critical

the entire Board is available for this process. Director Anderson clarified that the request is to have the Board reserve all the dates listed as there might be multiple participation required.

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

- Chief Dell'Orfano:
 - Legislation was passed in 2018 requiring special districts to move their elections to odd years in May. Part of the reason was for County Clerks to be able to assist in those elections. Staff has been in discussions with our 3 county clerks but not much traction was made until recently and now working with the County Clerk's Association. Also, staff was able to meet with Douglas County's Clerk who is willing to do some of the leg work to coordinate with the other county clerks in a 2025 board election. We are looking at the potential for a pilot project which includes a few special districts in our area that are willing to try and conduct their May election together, which could go a long way to discover any cost savings, process improvements, and areas that need clarification in future rules or legislation.
 - Director Anderson added that there are potential cost savings if we are able to work with other special districts as long as it is a mail in ballot and if their clerk is not willing to run it, to allow the DC clerk to handle it for them. They are meeting again on Friday.
 - The subject of a revenue election was thrown out but nothing was really decided. Staff has been talking quite a bit with Legal Counsel Cole and his staff & determined that we could squeeze in four months of education and talking points with stakeholders and still work with the county clerks to conduct the election. If the Board is interested in discussing further, could coincide consultant discussions and come back in November with the pros, cons, legal issues and decide if this were something the Board would like to move forward with. There would still be time to eject from the process before calling for the election on December 9th. Director Anderson added that a Tabor notice would need to be sent to every household. Director Sokol stated that he thinks this is way too premature. Director Leung agreed adding that he is not comfortable with so many unknowns in time for May. Director Stahlman has no problem seeing additional information but concerned with the timeline of a new fire chief walking into this and there still being a hangover from the national election affecting the results. Director Shriver agreed that more time is needed to analyze. Director Anderson stated that she would like to know all of the options and where and when & is up for beginning to see what it looks like and recommended not waiting to start collecting the information. Chair Albee polled the Board and there were four against so a revenue election in May will be **taken** off the list.
- Chief Curtis:
 - Last Thursday two injured California firefighters, from Orange County Fire Authority and San Diego Fire Rescue, were assisted in their transport to Craig Hospital Rehabilitation Center from Station 35 and 38. Also, much appreciation to Englewood and Denver Fire for their assistance.
- Chief Eckmann:
 - With mixed emotion, informed the Board that Chief Valdez has accepted a position out of state and his last day at SMFR will be November 4th. He was recognized for his years of dedicated service, and he will be missed but his legacy will live on. Chief Valdez thanked the Board and acknowledged the successes could not have been done without their support to deliver exceptional service. Chief Valdez will be going to work for the Prescott, Arizona Fire Department as Division Chief of Community Risk Management and Emergency Manager.
- Local President Dzengelewski:
 - Wished Chief Valdez well in his new venture, they have known each other a long time & thanked him for making his part of SMFR so great.
 - Special Districts are all feeling the push for long-range funding, including West Metro, Poudre Fire and Castle Rock.
 - Mets testing is underway. This is considered one of the highest and hardest fit for duty punitive test. Members are once again meeting the call for a healthy and resilient workforce.
 - Local 2086 will be hosting the November CPFF Delegate Meeting in November at the Union Hall, to discuss issues and hopefully find out about some additional legislative issues.
 - Meet & Confer with the Chiefs is to be scheduled soon to work through issues that they have been working on since last Spring.

- Membership has provided feedback on questions and are being polled to see what they want in the next fire chief. He is grateful to be a part of the process.
- Chief Baker:
 - Reminded that the Alumni Luncheon is on Wednesday at Station 34 starting at 11:00 a.m.
- Chief Richardson:
 - The last seven of the USAR members came home today & Channel 9 did a good story on their arrival. One person is still deployed working on efforts as a result of Hurricane Milton.
- Chief Powell:
 - It is week 13 of the Academy & down to 19 recruits, two are injured. Graduation will be held on December 13th at 6:00 p.m. at Arapahoe Community College. Invitations will be sent out as soon as details are finalized.
- Director Stahlman:
 - Acknowledged former Director Cindy Hathaway, who is in attendance tonight. Glad to see that she is doing well.
- Director Anderson:
 - Thanked Staff for the Division Chief Q&A for their video podcast. Thought it was really interesting and appreciates the information that was shared.
- Director Shriver:
 - Stated it was nice to see the Safety Foundation Board, it was like old homecoming night.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)

At 7:22 p.m., Director Albee motioned to convene to Executive Session pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(b), to consult with Legal Counsel to receive legal advice pertaining to the Fire Marshal's Office Permit Fees. Director Sokol seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The regular meeting reconvened at 8:10 p.m. with no action taken.

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on November 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

The next Regular Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board of Trustees meeting will take place on November 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Attested by: 

Date: Nov 4, 2024