

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District  
Special Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2025

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 – Internal Services
	William Shriver	Camie Chapman, CHRO - Employee Services
	Bruce Stahlman	Stephanie Corbo, CFO - Business Services
		Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff

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

Chair Albee called the Special Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:11 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 Anderson motioned to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Sokol. 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 Leung – no changes
- Director Sokol – no changes

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

N/A

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

1. **Legislative Update** – Chief Dell'Orfano informed that the legislative session has begun & expressed appreciation of SMFR's Lobbyist Driver's participation. Lobbyist Driver stated that the legislative strategy positioned SMFR as collaborative, reliable and communicative which has allowed us to work on bills with legislators and interim committees for any changes we would like to see. A lot of the current bills that have been introduced are related to wildfire mitigation efforts so will see a lot more in the coming weeks. The first one is about vegetive fuel mitigation, we should see the bill later this week. The second is regarding prescribed burn liability funding, which would allow more of these to occur around the state. Others are related to establishing minimum building code requirements

regarding accessibility and limiting local regulation of factory-built residential and commercial structures. The single stair bill introduced last year and allowing a single exit stair for multifamily up to 6 stories in height will come back this year and it is on our radar. The Fire Chiefs are bringing forth a funding bill for the fire districts, although not drafted yet, we will be able to see it when it is done. SMFR's bill will likely be introduced for the ability to cancel individual, uncontested director district portions of a board election & at least one SMFR Board member will be encouraged to testify.

## **DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS**

1. **Fire Chief Selection Process** – Chair Albee reported that the Board tried to be as transparent as possible throughout the recruitment process & provided an overview of the timeline, competencies, resume screening, candidate screening interviews, leadership competencies assessment center and panel reviews that was outlined in the Board packet.

At Director Leung's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated that under the Executive Session provisions, only specific items can be discussed and he reviewed the citations. Knowing that the Board has already spoken to the three candidates, until the Board determines they are finalists, they are protected under the open records act. Once they become finalists, discussions regarding the finalist(s) must be held in an open meeting.

Director Sokol suggested the Board convene to executive session to review the application records to determine if further clarification is needed. Director Stahlman stated that although he is not opposed, he is not sure what additional deliberation would clarify the situation beyond public discussion of the "rubber hitting the road", at some point we need to make a decision. Director Sokol stated that, in his opinion, he believes there are some gaps. Director Shriver stated that he has some questions that have come to mind and there may be some things that he missed so would like comprehensive information.

Chair Albee motioned the Fire Chief Selection Process Discussion/Potential Action item be tabled until after the executive session, if the Board chooses to go into executive session. Director Roche seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. **Annual Acknowledgement of Bylaws** – Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that Per Section 17 of the Board's Bylaws, each member is required to annually acknowledge that he/she has received and reviewed the Bylaws along with the associated Rules of Procedure and Guidelines for Board Member Conduct. A copy of the form has been provided for each Board member to sign.

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

- Chief Baker:
  - During recent training for all of the formal leaders at SMFR, they experienced a truncated version of Bruce and Kelly Stahlman's gratitude and resilience video and were asked to provide some feedback to the Stahlman's. He read the feedback he provided and gave the compiled book to the Stahlman's.
- Chief Dell'Orfano:
  - The 2025 Board Regular Election is underway. The Self-Nomination Form and Acceptance Form was posted on the website since January 1<sup>st</sup> and will be open for submission until February 28<sup>th</sup>. The nomination period closes on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, so on March 4<sup>th</sup> we can cancel or move forward with the election. Since our proposed legislation has not moved forward, even if there is only one candidate in a director district, the electors will receive a ballot with one name on it.
  - The initial survey related to our revenue initiative (determining the perceptions of SMFR and potential voter support for increasing our revenues), will likely be released next week. The February 3<sup>rd</sup> Board Meeting will provide opportunities to talk about the finances, and what revenues have done over the past few years due to legislation, as well as future trends. At the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, we will be revisiting the important philosophies and initiatives the organization has funded over the years and provide talking points for why

we've pursued them and what happens if we can't fund them in the future. The Board may start the meeting early. In early March we should have the survey results and have a good feeling for whether or not to pursue a revenue initiative, and what comes next. There could be another survey in June to see how opinions have changed and potential ballot language prior to calling for an election in mid-summer.

- CFO Corbo:
  - The 2024 audit has begun, and auditors are on-site this week. They will come back around in April/May.
  - Audit & Finance Committee Quarterly Meeting is on May 5<sup>th</sup> & the auditors will be there as well.
- CHRO Chapman:
  - Gallagher Benefits Services has voted SMFR best in class employer for 2024, which supports our past efforts.
  - Posting now for 2025-02 academy. New recruitment video launched last week. PIO Staff did a great job on it.
- Chief Mullane:
  - Type 3 brush engine has been deployed to California, reassigned from the Eaton Fire to the Palisade Fire, with 4 crew members.
- Chief Milan:
  - Provided an update on Station 15. It is tracking to be on budget but had some delays due to weather and utilities, so they are about 4-6 weeks behind. March 3<sup>rd</sup> is the current substantial completion date and final completion on the 31<sup>st</sup>. With weather next week in the single digits there may be some additional challenges.
- Local 2086 President Dzengelewski:
  - Introduced the Executive Board who are present. They are in attendance because there's a lot going on, they are heavily vested and want to remain aware and continue the positive momentum. He is extremely proud of the work that this Executive Board is doing.
  - First paycheck of the year came out recently, which was noticed and well-received. Thank you to the Board, Chief Baker and the District.
  - Historic legislation passed at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision which now acknowledges credit earned toward social security benefits through other employment even though a firefighter job may not pay into it. The IAFF took the lead on it and the new administration will figure out how to execute it.
  - Actively meeting with the Firefighter Inspiration Readiness and Education survey & working with Chief Baker to gather information.
  - Members of the Executive Board attended the recent Affiliate Leadership Training Summit in New Orleans, and it was very surreal after seeing the aftermath of the tragedy right down from their hotel.
  - Thank you to the District Chiefs and Operations Chiefs for getting some help out to California.
- Director Anderson:
  - The Highlands Ranch Senior Center opened today and there are lots of happy seniors and staff since 26% of the Highlands Ranch community is in the aging in place senior category.
- Director Sokol:
  - Obviously, California is on everyone's mind, are we prepared for something of the same scale? Chief Baker replied that the Marshall Fire could happen in our district and the high winds could also happen here. California struggled with budgetary issues. Our municipal water system is more dependable than theirs and they are short 64 fire stations, we are not. Their fire chief has done a good job advocating for their rank and file. He doesn't know if any fire department is prepared for 100-125 mile an hour sustained winds in a dry environment. We have significant wildland resources, but could be more prepared, however, we have four-person staffing and numerous specialty apparatus. Chief Burke added that the capability of our Wildland Team is very good, and we carry a lot of water to sustain for a long period of time. We also have a really good collaborative relationship with our neighboring departments and believes we are as well set up as any urban fire department could be.
- Chair Albee:
  - Last week there was a public comment regarding a proposed ordinance change in Littleton & requested an update. FM Everitt informed that the city was looking to make an adjustment in their zoning processes to allow one residential lot to change to a 4-unit lot. There was concern that SMFR would be left out of the review process, but the City of Littleton confirmed that SMFR is still able to make comments in the early

processes through the building and development phases. This also was a good opportunity to collaborate with the city and strengthen relationships. The ordinance in question was voted down indefinitely.

- He was contacted by a team member from the Firefighter Inspiration Readiness and Education group, who are conducting an organizational evaluation, that wanted to focus on executive level and board action and interactions. They asked if the Board has any objectives but since this was conceived outside of the Board, so there are none, but they are interested in the results. The Team will be on-site on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and he will be meeting with them. Other Board members may be invited and encourages participation.

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

1. At 8:03 p.m., Director Sokol motioned to convene to Executive Session pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(g) C.R.S., for consideration of documents protected by the mandatory disclosure provisions of the Colorado Open Records Act with respect to the application records for Fire Chief candidates. Director Shriver seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The regular meeting reconvened at 10:01 p.m. with no action taken.

Chair Albee stated they identified the need to gather more information from all three candidates. The Board's next opportunity to do that is January 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. and they will confirm the availability of the candidates for further consideration of the documents in Executive Session.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next Special South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on January 27, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on February 3, 2025, 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 February 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Attested by: 

Date: Feb 3, 2025