

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Regular Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2025 - **AMENDED**

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair	John Curtis, Fire Chief
	Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Chief Govt. Affairs Officer
	Rich Sokol, Treasurer (via Teams)	Jake Mayhew, 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 (absent)
	Phil McCart	Camie Chapman, CHRO Employee Services
		Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff Members & citizens

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chair Albee called the Regular Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:22 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited at the South Metro Fire Rescue Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board of Trustees Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Director Sokol joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m. 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. Director Anderson seconded the motion. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

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

- Director McCart – no changes
- Director Roche – no changes
- Director Anderson – no changes
- Chair Albee- no changes
- Director Shriver – no changes
- Director Sokol – absent
- Director Leung –As some of you know I have filed to run in 2026 for the Colorado State Senate District 30. I have consulted with Bob Cole, South Metro's attorney, and my candidacy does not by itself create a conflict of interest. If a conflict should arise, I will inform the Board. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know after the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **06/16/25 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Workshop Meeting Minutes - Amended**

2. **07/14/25 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Regular Board Meeting Minutes**
3. **07/21/25 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Special Board Meeting Minutes**

Director Shriver motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Director Leung seconded the motion. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Election of Officers** – Chief Dell’Orfano reminded that per the SMFR district bylaws, the Board is to elect officers at the first regular meeting after the election or “at such time as deemed appropriate” by the Board. The positions include Chair/President, Vice-Chair/Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. This election was delayed in order to fill the Board District 4 vacancy.

Chair: Director Anderson nominated Jim Albee for Chair. Director Shriver seconded the nomination. Jim Albee accepted the nomination. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed & Jim Albee was elected as Chair.

Vice-Chair: Director Albee nominated Renee Anderson for Vice-Chair. Director Leung seconded the nomination. Renee Anderson accepted the nomination. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed & Renee Anderson was elected as Vice-Chair.

Secretary: Director Shriver nominated Sue Roche for Secretary. Director Anderson seconded the nomination. Sue Roche accepted the nomination. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed & Sue Roche was elected as Secretary.

Treasurer: Director Lung nominated Bill Shriver for Treasurer. Director Roche seconded the nomination. Bill Shriver accepted the nomination. 6 were in favor, 0 opposed & Bill Shriver was elected as Treasurer.

DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

1. **Strategic Plan Consultant Status** – Chief Dell’Orfano reminded that a couple of months ago, they laid out general approach regarding the strategic plan. At that time, the Board directed Staff to move forward with the process to solicit proposals, interview, and bring back a recommendation to the Board. The RFP received 23 responses. The proposed cost for service ranged from low \$50K to \$100K, 17 of them were over \$80K. The plan for Tuesday and Wednesday is to bring in 5 of those consultants, conduct interviews and staff is asking the Board to direct staff to make a selection and sign the contract. Staff feel pretty confident in the five candidates and would like to move forward with the process.

At Chair Albee’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that the RFP was very specific that we had already completed the surveys and we are not looking for external/community engagement in that part of the process. The proposals did not include quotes for that part of the process and could only venture that the prices would be higher without us having already had the work done.

At Director Shriver’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that he hopes the interview process will provide light on why there’s a wide range in estimates. All five hit across the price range.

At Director Anderson’s request, Chiefs Dell’Orfano & Curtis, CFO Corbo and Bryan McClure – the new Procurement Specialist – are on the committee.

At Director Leung’s request, Chief Dell’Orfano stated that in the next couple of days, Staff will be digging into the Board’s role in the process, which will likely include a retreat. The hope is that the Board will help direct those overarching guiding principles. Chair Albee stated that he was asked to participate on the interview panel, but he cannot commit to the entire time, if no one else is available he will participate as much as he is able.

Chief Curtis stated that one of the biggest drivers is more involvement from the Board than last time to find out what is important to them, what is important to the organization, and put the plan into place to drive the organization. Adding that cost was certainly a part of the interview plan to get a full detail on the difference in cost amongst the contractors.

Director Anderson stated that there is a lot of talent in this organization that would be utilized to help organize and guide the process. She would like to have one Board Member who can quickly speak about it to help all of the other Board members do the same.

Chair Albee stated that there were differences of opinion on the plan, but the Board did direct Staff to go forward. Reminding that this will be something that is relied upon heavily no matter the outcome of the election, Chair Albee polled the Board whether or not they want Staff to continue.

Director Shriver stated that he would be very interested in finding out the feedback from the consultants.

Director Anderson suggested moving forward with choosing a consultant.

At Director McCart's request, Chief Dell'Orfano confirmed that the strategy and objectives are independent of the level of resources.

Chair Albee confirmed direction from the Board is for Staff to move forward.

2. Revenue Initiative Discussion

- a. Fair Campaign Practices Act** – Legal Counsel Cole provided a memo in the board packet highlighting important aspects of the FCPA that the Board and employees need to know if the Board chooses to call for an election.

At Director Anderson's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated that an issues committee can issue any information as long it is not under copyright infringement. If people want to dig into it, we may already have the information available in the videos and other items that are on our website or linked to a website elsewhere.

At Director Shriver's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated that if asked how to vote, any employee who is not on duty, not in uniform, and only speaking for themselves can provide their opinion.

At Director McCart's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated there are no restrictions on discussing the issues when not on the clock. Adding that it is important that no public funds are utilized.

The Board thanked Legal Counsel Cole for the information.

- b. Follow-Up Items** – Chief Dell'Orfano stated he wanted to close the loop from previous conversations & provided a spreadsheet with listing of agencies that will have a revenue-related ballot measure in November.

Chair Albee concluded that as far as big things it is relatively an uncrowded ballot.

Chief Dell'Orfano stated that additional information will be available once the deadlines are met in September to commit to a ballot item. The good thing is that the State pays 45% of the election cost, so SMFR's share is estimated to be under \$250K.

Chief Dell'Orfano referred to the website information packet provided by Public Alignment and informed that the website now becomes a reference for information and to assist the Board in making their decision. All of the interactive areas are closed. The contracts with Magellan and Public Alignment have also ended.

At Chair Albee's request, Chief Eckmann stated her team thought that the Public Alignment team was wonderful and easy to work and interact with from a communications perspective. The Team was able to create content,

bounce ideas off of each other and they were very valuable to the process and had the ability to navigate well. Overall, the website was successful and effective and very positive. Initially, the stats were slow but an uptick started as more people went through the process.

CHRO Chapman provided updated FTE numbers, 170 Staff members with 66 considered administrative and 104 line support & explained about where people are assigned that are technically Line personnel but are assigned to Staff.

At Chair Albee's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated that pretty much anything on a personal account, on personal time, can identify themselves as a SMFR employee and post information on social media. Employees should be encouraged not to engage in anything about this issue while on duty.

At Chief Curtis' request, Legal Counsel Cole will work with Staff to create a good talking point list for employees.

At Chair Albee's request, Chief Dell'Orfano stated that if the Board goes forward with a ballot measure, the drop-dead date is September 6th to have the information to the counties so they can coordinate and so that the same issue number is on all of the ballots.

- c. **General Discussion** – Chair Albee referred to the flow chart from the past couple of meetings direct staff on ballot questions. It is now between the last two twigs on the decision tree, property tax or sales tax.

Director Leung stated he thinks sales tax is the better decision **especially from taxes collected in November and December**. First, based on information from the last meeting, it would help increase the cash flow, especially in November and December. Second, sales tax and property tax are in alternating cycles. Third, survey data seems consistent that the number of people who support sales tax is higher than for property tax. He will support whatever options give us the best chance but appears more in favor of sales tax. Lastly, from the business side, he does not see it as a huge increase in sales tax and a lot of businesses in the district draw people in and would subsidize and lessen the burden on property tax.

Director Shriver stated that he thinks everything Director Leung said is true. The sales tax seems to have a somewhat better chance of passing but he **thinks** if we get the property tax passed it would be better. **We would be getting backlash from all of the municipalities with a sales tax proposal. Even though a sales tax may have a slightly better chance of passing according to our surveys, we should stick with a mill levy proposal and try to leverage support from the municipalities, rather than propose a sales tax against their wishes.**

Director Anderson stated she can see both points. She thinks she aligns with what Director Shriver had to say regarding the municipalities and organizations that are sales tax based, but they are struggling and worries that is a more unstable route. Not sure if it is a thing, she but worries that people will associate tariffs with sales tax.

Director Roche stated she leans toward property tax. She feels like sales taxes are dependent upon people's disposable income to a certain extent, but they have to live somewhere. She can choose where to spend her discretionary dollars but commits to the community through property taxes when purchasing property.

Director McCart stated his position has not changed too much. He has been looking into different forecast models and thought Staff's models were slightly optimistic. Although property tax is considered a bit more aggressive, he still favors the property tax at 3 mills.

Chair Albee thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts and how well-equipped they are to make the decision. Overall, he favors property tax because from the onset he thought sales tax had a lot of virtue but most of what we do is deal with people as it generates activity. Property tax is subject to legislation and citizen reactions, so some diversification from that would be beneficial. The scale tipped a little bit with the predictability of property taxes and during this process it identified how you win matters. We could go and win a sales tax measure, but we value the partnerships with the surrounding municipalities. The spread is real, and the data is the data, but he hopes overall there's support of the property tax measure, which he thinks is the better policy choice.

Chair Albee polled the Board, and they directed Staff to bring the Board a ballot question to the meeting on August 18th with nothing over 3 mills and no floating mills. The Board provided suggestions for the resolution as to why we are doing this: 20 years without raising taxes, even with a 3 mills increase would still be the lowest compared to neighboring districts, length of time it takes to know the cost, it is our priority to protect our personnel, their health – mental, physical, preventative.

Director Sokol joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

- 3. 2026 Budget Approach** – Chief Curtis reported that the budget managers have been asked to do budget reductions, have the ERP project and Q2 Financial Statements ready for presentation at the September 8th meeting. Staff would like to do a work session prior to the September 15th meeting to review the 10-year plan, property tax projections, salary & benefit numbers and inflationary adjustment, capital improvement plan review and necessary reductions and deferrals to balance the budget. The Budget Managers will also put together priorities for what would be put back into the budget if the election is successful, in preparation of the budget presentation in October.

All available for a 4:00 start time – September 15th.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 1. IGA Update** – Chief Dell’Orfano informed there were no new IGAs signed.

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

- The first of several Adopt a Highway Program events, cleaning up University Blvd. between Arapahoe and Orchard Roads, occurred on Saturday. Several others have been scheduled between now and the end of the year. Anyone interested is welcome to come and help; the sign-up information was provided in the July 17th SMFR Communication. The Board intends to participate in an upcoming date.
- West Metro Fire Chief Don Lombardi’s Change of Command Ceremony took place on August 1st after 40 years of service. Nice ceremony and looking forward to working with the new Fire Chief Jeremy Metz.
- Thank you to the 12 members recently deployed with Colorado Task Force 1. It was a lot of hard work and saw some really tough scenes.
- Thank you to the Wildland Team members for assisting with the wildfires locally and at the Federal level. This is also a testament to our commitment to backfill while members are deployed. Thank you to Chiefs Richardson, Burke, and Pietryzk for making it happen.
- Congratulations to Chiefs Gilbert and Goedecker for their appointment to District Chief during the recent assessment process.
- The Pre-Hospital Blood Program went into effect Monday morning. This was a two-year joint effort making blood available on scene for those big emergencies.
- Local President Dzengelewski:
 - Upcoming Events:
 - August 8th – Charity Softball Tournament, partnering with the Avalanche Alumni Association
 - August 20th – CPFF Quarterly Meeting. This is an important meeting to recruit help with our potential ballot initiative
 - September 20th – IAFF Memorial in Colorado Springs starts at 11:00 a.m.
 - September 29th – Foundation Golf Tournament at The Club at Pradera
 - Labor & Management have been working together a lot thanks to Chief Curtis’ driving the more frequent meetings.
 - Lots of positive feedback in response to the communications that Chief Eckmann and her team have been sending out.
- Chief Burke provided Director McCart with a new perspective on the wildland area around Lockheed Martin. He appreciated seeing the “woods” from the perspective of a firefighter compared to working there, saw part of an acquired structure training in Highlands Ranch and toured three stations.

- Director Shriver came upon a bad bike accident at the Littleton Criterium where Medic 11 quickly responded and transported the cyclist.
- Director Leung thanked Chief Curtis for providing such an inspirational speech during the Asian Chamber of Commerce Cultural Experience on August 2nd.
- Thank you letters/notes:
 - Thank you email from the Carriage Club HOA for SMFR's support during their 4th of July Parade.
 - Compliment from the Website from a citizen thanking Station 22 for their assistance with a medical incident at Walmart on July 24th.
 - Compliment from the Website from a family who did a drop-in visit at Station 45 on July 23rd while visiting friends that live in the district.
 - Thank you email from the Denver Metro Regional Representative from Office of US Senator Michael Bennet expressing appreciation for SMFR's quick action and collaboration to ensure community safety in Douglas County during an extended vegetation fire.
 - Finance/LOGS/Fleet/IT gave back to the community in June by volunteering at Rosie's Ranch in Parker.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

N/A

NEXT MEETING

Special Board of Directors' Meeting to be held on August 18, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

Regular Board of Directors' Meeting to be held on September 8, 2025, 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: 9/8/25