

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District  
Special Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2025

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair Renee Anderson, Vice Chair William Shriver, Treasurer Sue Roche, Secretary Kevin Leung Rich Sokol Phil McCart	John Curtis, Fire Chief Mike Dell'Orfano, Chief Govt. Affairs Officer Jake Mayhew, Deputy Chief– Emergency Services Kristin Eckmann, Deputy Chief – Community Services Matt Weller, Deputy Chief – Internal Services Stephanie Corbo, Chief Financial Officer Camie Chapman, Chief Human Resources Officer Allison Ulmer, Legal Counsel
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Others Present: SMFR Staff Members & citizens

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Albee called the Special Regular 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 Flag of 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. Director Roche seconded the motion. 7 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 – no changes
- Director Leung – no changes

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**PRESENTATION**

1. **Review of the 2025 Arapahoe County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)** – Dan Stutz, SMFR Emergency Manager and Ashley Capelle, OEM Deputy Director Arapahoe County

<https://public.powerdms.com/SMFR/documents/3588122>

Emergency Manager, Dan Stutz and Arapahoe County, OEM Deputy Director, Ashley Capelle presented the 2025 Arapahoe County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). This plan serves as both a mitigation and recovery plan and includes significant community engagement. OEM Deputy Director Ashley Capelle outlined our partnership with Arapahoe to put in place a Hazardous Mitigation Plan, highlighting that this plan is required for FEMA mitigation funding eligibility and is updated every five years. The plan promotes disaster-resilient communities through proactive planning with actions to address wildfire, dam failure, flooding and more. This plan would include actions for hazards, goals, leading agency, costs funding and timeline. SMFR serves three counties and Arapahoe County is working with its contractor to ensure the entire district is addressed in the mitigation plan. Once the plan is adopted, one plan will cover the entire district.

OEM Deputy Director Capelle addressed Director Anderson’s questions regarding FEMA’s involvement and explained that the primary role with FEMA is to serve primarily as the final approver of these plans. Capelle also addressed Director Sokol’s interest in cyber security and explained that cyber preparedness varies by municipality, explaining some are better protected based on their readiness and past exposure to cyber events, and clarified why cyber hazards were prioritized over others, the selection aligns with the state hazard profile plan and focuses on what is most likely to impact the district.

Capelle addressed Director Leung’s question of flood insurance rates and stated that flood-insurance requirements are highly specific. While the state could potentially address certain aspects if they had very specific criteria, the only issue might involve ISO ratings and since SMFR already holds the highest ISO rating, Capelle does not believe individual insurance companies would treat the district differently.

The plan is anticipated to be presented to the board at the next board meeting on December 8, 2025, to finalize and adopt. After adoption of the plan, mitigation actions would be incorporated into SMFR operations, as well as continuing public education and interagency coordination, followed by tracking progress and update annually.

A copy of the draft was provided at [https://www.arapahoeco.gov/news\\_detail\\_T13\\_R1271.php](https://www.arapahoeco.gov/news_detail_T13_R1271.php)

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **SMFR Resolution No. 2025-13 Delegating Authority to the Fire Chief to Expend Funds and Execute Contracts on Behalf of the District**

Motion: Director Anderson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Director Shriver seconded the motion. 7 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **SMFR Resolution No. 2025-14: 2025 Resolution to Amend 2025 Budget and Appropriate Sums – Budget Manager Mike Smith**
  - a. **General Fund**
    - I. **Elections – May & November**
    - II. **Legal**
    - III. **GASB 87/96 Software Leases**
  - b. **Self-Insured Medical Fund**

Chair Albee opened the public hearing at 6:28 p.m.

Budget Manager Mike Smith presented an overview of the need for amending the 2025 Budget, which was just over \$2m in cash and non-cash expenditures. These items, requested for approval on December 8, 2025, included: May & November Elections, Legal fees, and GASB 87/96 Software leases in the General Fund and medical payments in the Self-insurance Fund.

Chair Albee asked for public comment, there being no public comment, Chair Albee closed the public hearing at 6:32 p.m.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. SMFR Resolution No. 2025-10: A Resolution Repealing and Readopting an Updated Fee Schedule for Ambulance and EMS Services**

Budget Manager Smith reviewed the proposed transport and mileage fees for 2026.

Motion: Director Shriver motioned to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2025-10: A Resolution Repealing and Readopting an Updated Fee Schedule for Ambulance and EMS Services as presented. Director Anderson seconded the motion. 7 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

### **2. SMFR Resolution No. 2025-11: A Resolution Repealing and Adopting an Updated Fee Schedule for Fire Code Inspections**

Budget Manager Smith reviewed the proposed inspection fees for Fire Marshal services in 2026. At Director McCart's request, Chair Albee stated this is an outside inflationary increase with the intent to cover costs. It exceeds the annual adjustment for cost of living; therefore, it needs to be approved by the board.

Motion: Director Shriver motioned to approve SMFR Resolution NO. 2025-11: A Resolution Reappealing and Adopting an Updated Fee Schedule for Fire Code Inspections as presented. Director Roche seconded the motion. 7 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

### **3. SMFR Resolution No. 2025-09: A Resolution to Adopt 2026 Budget and Appropriate Sums**

Budget Manager Mike Smith provided an overview of the proposed 2026 budget.

Motion: Director Shriver motioned to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2025-09: A Resolution to Adopt 2026 Budget and Appropriate Sums as presented. Director McCart seconded the motion.

Director Leung requested further discussion on whether to collect abatements. Collecting these funds will provide an additional \$1.4M to the budget which will help off-set declines in Medicare reimbursements, maintain reserves above 23%, fully fund initiatives, and avoid additional requests for tax increases.

Director McCart stated his first thought on abatements was why would some people be paying more tax because some other people filed a protest. Really wanted to find out why errors happened and how protests happen. The protests appear to be filed in good faith due to unintentional errors by assessors. Didn't appear to be a widespread case of bad assessments. Thinking through that and what he believes his role is, he should protect his constituents from paying more than they should have to and keeping the abatements helps to prevent those future tax increases.

Director Sokol stated that Director McCart's assumptions seemed erroneous. After the protests are processed we are provided with the assessments. Provided an example of a non-profit church being non-taxable and billed them as a taxable entity which is incorrect because the paperwork was not filed. When that is fixed by the assessors, it becomes an abatement.

Chair Albee asked if Director McCart is in favor of the abatements for 2026 or in general as part of the budget. Director McCart stated he is in favor of keeping it in the budget for 2026.

Director Sokol stated that the money was never rightfully ours, it was a clerical error.

Director Anderson stated that the majority trusted us and voted yes. The 43% are still paying even though they voted no, so would like to review it every year to see what our situation is. The 57% that voted yes, did not approve the 3.12 mill levy increase. Does not think it is right to accept the \$50M plus the abatements onto all of the taxpayers so feels for sure not to collect this year, but look at it next year. The bigger issue is healthcare that defers the non-payment to the lowest level, so believes they deserve a small break for 2026.

Director Shriver stated he looks at abatements as voter unapproved tax increase. We just had voters approve a 3-mill tax increase of \$50M. To say we need another 3% on top of that is certainly not the right year to do it.

Director Roche stated she would like clarification because it seems like in the past she has had a very different definition of abatements & for her it feels more fair to make sure this organization is doing what it says its going to do. In favor of including them for 2026 and more discussion in the future.

Director Sokol is against collecting them. We just got a huge win and to add on top of this is not right. We told them the mill levy is now 12.25. He believes the revenue over the next several years is going to be significantly larger than predicted. Does not believe this is the time to collect the additional taxes.

Director Leung stated he does not believe that we are increasing the mill levy beyond what was approved and the state has approved us collecting it. Would love to give this organization every single dollar to strengthen our organization.

Chair Albee stated he is not in favor of abatements. Everyone has made good points and regardless of how abatements exist, they do exist. We can charge if that is what we choose. Maybe some additional information about how the abatements came about, so his opinion is for 2026 only. We just spent 10 months to get the 3 mills, another \$1.4M doesn't pass his personal red face test and can look at it again next year.

Director Anderson stated that she looks forward to the discussion once we have the strategic plan in place.

The Board agreed to not collect the abatements for now and revisit the issue annually, with the finance team conducting additional research to provide further clarification of what types of circumstances have been resulting in abatements.

Director Leung also wants to make sure that people trust us to spend money responsibly and he has huge issues with the projections of overtime over the next 10 years. Overtime, benefits and salaries have increased by 35% but property tax revenue will go up by 18%. He would like to see how we move the issue into the strategic plan to reduce the deficit. In 2026, seriously look into overtime as one of the biggest things we can cut down.

Chair Albee stated we are short \$100M over 10 years, there needs to be something that helps bend that curve and overtime is definitely one of those things.

Director Leung thinks that overtime should be cut by 10% in 2026 and 10% or maybe 5% each additional year so that we are not going to fall into a financial deficit in 5 – 10 years which would show good faith that we are able to handle our budget. Director Anderson stated that something would need to give to provide the service that we said we would provide if we start cutting overtime. Director Sokol reminded that there is a 3-year Union contract in place but may be a discussion for the next contract.

Chair Albee stated that budget approval is usually conducted at the December meeting, but this year is almost a month earlier. We have done all of the work that is normally done so that when we adopt the budget, with our financial systems and processes, there's still a significant amount of work that needs to be done by January 1<sup>st</sup>. The objective would be that we do the things we need to do at the right time, so this would be the new norm.

After reviewing the budgets, Deputy Chief Eckmann presented the budget communication plan, outlining how we will ensure transparency in the allocation of additional funds. At this time, the information will be posted on the main page of our current website. When the new website launches in Spring 2026, enhanced communication tools, including widgets that provide more detailed spending information will be added.

At Director Sokol's request, CHRO Chapman stated that she will bring the average salary of positions under the contract and not under the contract to the next meeting.

Motion continued: 7 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

#### **4. SMFR Resolution No. 2025-12: Resolution to Set Mill Levies**

Motion: Director Shriver motioned to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2025-12: Resolution to Set Mill Levies as presented. Director Roche seconded the motion.

At Director Sokol's request Chair Albee confirmed the ballot asked that taxes be increased by \$50M annually or the total amount collected by 3mills.

Motion continued: 7 were in favor, 0 opposed. The motion carried.

## **DISCUSSION/POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Facilities Update – Weller**

Chief Weller presented a PowerPoint summarizing the Facilities Capital projects, providing the Board and staff with an overview that included the history, background, strategy, and upcoming steps for a potential relocation of the fleet maintenance facility. He outlined the planned work, the project timeline, and the goals for effectively using the available capital funds. His presentation addressed real estate costs, viable opportunities, current leasing options, as well as logistical considerations such as facility locations, cost impacts, operational needs, and the specialized requirements of a fire department, including the capacity and accommodation of apparatus we need.

Director Sokol stated that the price tags are outrageous. Asked if we have had discussions with our area agencies to partner in facilities. Deputy Chief Weller stated that our geography does not really seem to be logistical. Chief Weller stated we could definitely look at a shared fleet facility based on the costs.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Richardson stated that we do use the same apparatus manufacturer but different models than WMFR. Apparatus mileage is about 2 miles per gallon so closer, centralized locations are better. He stated that all of the departments around us are having similar issues with their facilities. A plus to our own facility is that we could have them bring in apparatus for us to repair.

Director Leung asked if we do any return on investment (ROI) on outsourcing certain portions and maintaining the big projects for ourselves, to get the best ROI. Chief Richardson stated that unfortunately no one has the skill set to do the work they would rather replace the major components. Our EVT's are triple masters, who are master certified in every piece of apparatus that we have. Did the research and just did not find anything more cost effective.

Director McCart stated it is obvious that Fleet does not have enough space but does not understand the impact of having such an undersized facility. Also finds it interesting that buying versus renting property is not as clear cut as it used to be. Chief Weller stated that the ROI on potentially replacing the leased logistics facility is worthwhile, but the fleet facility is more difficult since these facilities do not exist that can accommodate our apparatus. As we look into the options further, we will be determining ROI for new build or renovation.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Richardson stated the Littleton apparatus maintenance was conducted by the city. Chief Burke stated that Cunningham contracted with SMFR to maintain their apparatus.

At Director Shriver's request, Chief Weller stated that Staff really relied on Fleet to determine how much space was needed and how many EVT's were needed for each piece of apparatus and rolled that into the presentation for discussion with the broker. Chief Weller can get the information for how many bays and square footage and acreage required and bring it back to the Board.

At Director McCart's request, Chief Richardson stated that we have come close but have never been short on apparatus needed.

At Director's request, Chief Weller stated that we plan for dedicated space to store the apparatus that is not used on a regular basis.

Chair Albee stated that this is a good start to the discussion that we can continue in January and will be dealing with it earlier in the year rather than later.

At Director Leung's request, Chief Curtis stated that they have looked at similar fire districts and are exploring every opportunity on how we can get costs down. Other agencies that border us are building new fire stations which often exceed \$20m.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

- 1. **Strategic Plan Update:** Chief Dell’Orfano gave an update on the Strategic Plan process, outlining the robust engagement plan in place that will help shape this process, including deadlines and upcoming meetings that have been set up and sent out via email. This includes employee surveys due this Friday, 11/21/25 and meeting invites to stakeholder groups and all personnel, for the draft review in mid-February 2026.

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

Mark Dzengelweski expressed his gratitude for revisiting collecting the abatements and expressed his appreciation for both the discussion and how much education was given around the topic.

Director McCart shared that the Littleton City Council reached out to him regarding the ability to build multifamily structures with only a single staircase for an exit which was allowed by the state legislature in the 2025 session.

Director Roche stated that funeral services for Explorer, Kael Deslatte would be on Friday, November 21, 2025, at 2:00pm at the PACE Center 20000 Pikes Peak Avenue, Parker, CO.

Director Sokol addressed the topic of Patient Hospital of Choice during transport and what SMFR’s stance and policy in place states. Chief Curtis conveyed it is a very dynamic decision that is made collectively by patients’ request, the treating paramedics, hospitals’ current availability and the insurance.

Chair Albee recognized that Wednesday, November 19, 2025, will be the next promotion ceremony at Arapahoe Community College at 5pm.

Chief John Curtis presented a helmet and helmet shield from South Metro to Barb Andrews to commemorate her hard work and dedication to the organization for the last 26 plus years and delivered a heartfelt tribute to her, expressing deep appreciation for her exceptional service, dedication to the organization and to the happiest of retirement.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (upon motion)**

N/A

**NEXT MEETINGS**

Board of Directors’ Study Session to be held on December 1, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

Regular Board of Directors’ Meeting to be held on December 8, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Attested by: 

Date: 12/10/2025