

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Meeting Minutes of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District

July 31, 2024 4:30 p.m.

Dannels Fire Station, 901 N. St. Vrain Ave., Estes Park, CO 80517

Board: Dave Hamrick, Brian Tseng, Ryan Bross, Mike Lewelling, Chris Buser

Staff: Asst. Chief Jon Landkamer; Asst. Chief Paul Capo; Chief of Staff Erika Goetz, Lt. Stacy Sutherland, Marinda Baxter

Also Attending: Captain Justin Kearney, Lt. Ron Bruchwalski, Lt. Nathen Meulener, Brian Schaffer, Mark Igel, Mercedes Collins, Heidi Salow, Michael Barnhouse, Kelly Brenner, Talia Filsinger, Dylan Wallace, Doug Klink, Katie Stiner, Lindsey Sutherland, Patti Brown, Mike Kearney, Aracely Thomas, Tom Hannah, Aspen Eye, ipad guest

Absent: Mike Lewelling

President Ryan Bross called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Assistant Chief Capo led the Pledge of Allegiance

Erika Goetz performed roll call – Mike Lewelling absent excused

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Dave Hamrick and seconded by Chris Buser to approve the agenda moving board comment to after public comment, followed by executive session. Motion carried unanimously.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Kearney - I'll start. Good evening. I'm Justin. I think most of you guys know me. Had some comments. We had a staff with a volunteer meeting a couple weeks ago. Unfortunately, we got the new guy. Not unfortunately, I appreciate his time there, but I felt that the time that the board members could step up and present to us what happened with Chief Lasky to the membership. Not having a work representative there that has been on the board more than eight days was disappointing to me. I wrote some notes down that I took at that. I questioned that the fire district, staff, and volunteers do everything that we could do to make Chief Lasky successful. Comments were made that the board was reminded several times to do his evaluations that never got done until his 90-day evaluation. So, I feel like, with those comments from the membership and from paid staff, did we do everything we could do for Chief Lasky? 90 days is not a very long time to have a Chief here when we've just gone through, what was it a year ago at this time. I feel, I don't know, it sucks right, like our membership has been through a lot in the last year. My closing comments, I'll get to that in just a second. I want the best for the fire district, right? Probably 17 years here as Captain. I've put in a lot of time and energy, and I want to see us be successful moving forward and I feel like bringing in a new chief, whether there's an interim chief, whether obviously there's going to be an interim chief. But if we bring in an inside Chief, which I hear there's some possibilities of doing down the road or an external chief. You guys as support, you have to give them the tools to be successful. They need leadership from the board, from the president of the board. That's your job, right? So, I feel like going forward, I hope that we're not doing this again in six months, whether it's an internal chief or an external chief. We need leadership from the board and that's the whole board. I'm not just looking at you Ryan. I commend the members of the district. We've got a lot of people here. We have a lot of people at the volunteer meeting because it's shook up again, right? So, I commend these guys for showing up, doing the job. We've had a busy week this last week with some mutual aid. I'm sure you guys all know about it. So, I'm proud of you guys for stepping up in a terrible time, in my opinion, with not having a Fire Chief. We have good leaders within our department and that needs to keep going up in my opinion. I was not impressed that we didn't have a board representative at that meeting. Those are my comments and thanks for letting me speak.

Mike Kearney - That's my son. You know, I was on the board a while back before your board. We also went outside the district at that time and hired Wolf. And as far as I know, that went very well for a decent period of time before things just kind of fell off the wheel. Look at it however you want, but that's the way I do. Your board picked somebody that was about as world renowned as you could get in Estes Park. And obviously the wheels fell off of that for whatever reason. I don't really care what the reason is, it doesn't matter now. It isn't going to help our fire department. I think this time, as a board, you should seriously consider, and I brought this up last time when I came, when you were looking for a chief at that time. That we need to look internally. I think we went outside; we've spent I don't know how much it cost us when we did it, but it was an amount of money. It consumed a lot of time. And it didn't end up as well as obviously any of us would've hoped. And the same with your board. You went and spent a lot of money just like we did. So, I think this time, and I stated last time that I felt that the best person for this job is here. He's already here. He's been here and he's sitting at the end of the table. And that's exactly what I said last time. The last chief? I have no idea what happened. I don't really think...I really don't want to know. I don't think it's over with now. It's water under the bridge. We need to move forward. I think there's a little uproar within the fire department over it. I think there should be. There's some worry, of course. Just like when Wolf was here, there was some uproar in the fire department and there was worry. That's your man sitting right down there at the end of the table. I said that last time and I mean it again this time. That's all I have to say is that I think this time you should look internally to

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

someone the volunteers know, someone who volunteers trust and whose demonstrated he's a born leader. That's all I have. Thank you.

Jami Lasky - OK, well. I'm going to follow up on that. I'm not supposed to be here. My husband is not happy with me right now being here, so I'm letting you know that. You are probably correct, but I was told in January face-to-face with this man over here that he did not want the job as Fire Chief because he'd never been a Fire Chief. He's never done budgeting. He's never done a lot of things. I'm not taking anything away from him. He's world renowned as well, from what I what I understand. I understand that he's very good at what he does, training. Until there are some changes made here internally, and I am not talking about the firefighters because our firefighters here are unbelievable They give everything they've got They work jobs and still make it to all the calls that they possibly can and they protect this community The community deserves better than what they're getting right now and there has to be some accountability, not just with the board, but internally as well. That's with the paid staff. That's really all I'm going to say and I'm going to excuse myself from the rest of it, because the rest of it is garbage. Just letting you know. So good night. Thank you.

Doug Klink - I also was a member of the board in the past and the president of the board. I also spoke to you before. And I'm here to say basically the same thing, except that things are different this time. You have an internal candidate that you didn't have last time. You went through the process; we went through the process. It's absolutely stunning how many people apply for a job that they are completely unqualified for. And it's absolutely stunning how few really, really good people float to the top of. We had 70 resumes come in. Twenty of them were worth looking at. Ten of them were kind of hard to get down to that and honestly, David Wolf probably, you know, there were a couple of good candidates and then we chose him. But it wasn't like there's some star out there someplace that's going to apply. Internal is a great way to go at this time for a lot of reasons. You have the options; you have the support of I think a lot of firefighters. You know, it's just a lot shorter process. It gets us all back on track faster. So, I would just like to highly recommend that the board seriously consider just go internal moving forward.

Aracely Thomas - Can I say something? My name is Aracely, and I don't want people to see me as C.T.'s wife. I'm coming here as a community member and I have known a lot of you, like Brian. I'm going to echo what Justin said. I'm a former board member. The board had 35 members for a big organization in town. When my husband told me what happened last week, I was a little bit of, you know, disappointed in the board. And this is just for the board. Because I would say the lack of caring and commitment was evident. I know that you guys are going to be held higher than maybe for the community, right, because we chose you to be. I just ask for you to care for these guys. They're the ones out there doing the job. They're the ones bringing the fire department name higher. And I just ask you to, like. Mr. Kearney said here, just forget about the past and move forward. Just be wise in the decisions that you're going to make and give for them, work for them, care for them. They work super hard. Brian Tseng knows a little bit of the history that me and my husband went through last year. Many people don't know he suffered a lot for each one of you, even the board. I just ask please care, just please take care of them. We have a great internal candidate here. Just do not disappoint the community, nor any of the members. That's all I ask. Thank you.

BOARD COMMENT

With the unexpected resignation of Chief Richard Lasky, the Board of Directors wants to thank the volunteers and staff for their steadfast and professional dedication to our mission of providing residents and guests with superior fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency services. It's unfortunate to lose anyone, and we appreciate Chief Lasky's contributions and wish he and Jami the best in their next chapter. The Board will discuss interim- and long-term plans. In the meantime, the guests and residents of the District continue to be well-served. Through the end of June, the District is now protected by 47 volunteer firefighters, an all-time high in our history since being formed in 2010. They have responded to 334 calls, an almost 30% increase year-over-year. The District has expanded our Public Information and Wildland Fire education programming. In August we'll start our annual Fire Academy, an intensive 12-week training program not only for our own internal volunteers but also sought out and attended by our mutual aid agencies as well. We've successfully secured grant funding for much needed fire mitigation efforts. Thank you for your support of our staff and volunteers during this transition, and be sure to thank them for what they do.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Chris Buser, seconded by Dave Hamrick to move that we go into an executive session pursuant to Section 24-6-402(4)(b) C.R.S. for purposes of consulting with our attorney on personnel matters including resignation of fire chief and appointing an interim. Motion carried.

Exit regular session at 4:47pm

Enter executive session 4:52pm

Motion by Dave Hamrick, seconded by Chris Buser to exit executive session. Motion carried unanimously. Exit executive session 5:36pm

Reenter regular session 5:40pm

Brian Tseng to reach out to Prothman to ask questions of process if we wish to utilize them again.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Ryan Bross and seconded by Dave Hamrick to approve the meeting minutes from the 6/26/24 board meeting as written. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

None

REPORTS

Administrative Division:

Family Dinner on Aug 6th – RSVP to Lt Bruchwalski

SDA Conf. Sept 10-12th in Keystone Any board members interested in attending?

Prevention Division:

- Lt. Shepard has started in her position and has been trained (Stacey and Raina) and is doing HIZ inspections
- Attended EVWC site tour of the Hurni Tree Farm mitigation project
- Very busy with inspections including picking up some WUI/HIZ inspections, thanks to Stacey and auxiliary
- WUI Educator position – FR-WRM grant will be posted internally only
- Working with the Com Dev Director (Steve) on WUI mitigation plans being required for new construction, and BOA update along with Town Attorney Kramer, and CPAW grant for development code rewrite
- Met with new CBO, Dan Wester, about change of occupancy/use for existing occupancies

Operations Division:

2024 – 419

2023 – 358 61 difference

52 FF’s – 47 vol. (1 app)

+8 Aux. = **55 Volunteers**

Alexander Mountain Fire

7/29 – Sun 3 app = 11 ff

7/3- - Mon 2 app =7 ff

Training Division:

Currently Structure fire

Eagle Rock Wildland

July FE Advanced

Academy – 23

4-BE

6 Lyons

2- PW

11 - Estes

Station & Apparatus:

- Ladder 71 has damage to the base section of the ladder and parts and timing is being worked out for repairs
- E716 had the turbo replaced
- Annual ground ladder testing has been completed and all passed
- Staff 71 in process, we have the truck and the topper has been installed
- HME/Ahrens Fox Type 6 is locked in with an October delivery at this point, pre-payment has been accomplished to receive the discount

Volunteer Captain Report – No update

Treasurer’s Report – Reviewed June’s 2024 balance sheet(s) including, but not limited to governmental fund and schedule of capital assets, statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance for general operations, operating reserve. Moved by Dave Hamrick and seconded by Ryan Bross to approve transactions listed in the Treasurer’s report. Motion carried unanimously.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

OLD BUSINESS

Strategic Plan – no update

POLICY UPDATES

None.

NEW BUSINESS –

Approval of 2023 Audit

The draft audit had been presented to the board at the 6/26 meeting, but was missing the MD&A. That has now been completed.

Motion by Dave Hamrick, seconded by Chris Buser to approve the 2023 audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2024-04 to Designate a Fire Chief During Interim Period

The board acknowledged interest by both assistant chiefs to fill in during this interim period. The board asked each chief about their capacity to fill in. Discussion took place among the board members. It was decided to keep continuity as Chief Capo had filled in during the interim before.

Motion by Ryan Bross, seconded by Brian Tseng to designate Assistant Chief Capo as Interim Fire Chief. Motion carried unanimously.

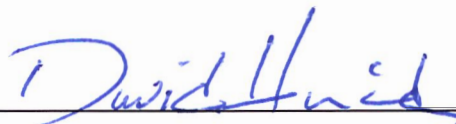
Identify Who Has Authority to Make Changes to Bank Credit Card Authorized Users

Updated authorization needed for Bank of Colorado to remove Rick Lasky. Erika Goetz and Jon Landkamer remain authorized users.

Motion by Ryan Bross, seconded by Chris Buser to approve Chief of Staff Goetz & Chief Landkamer as authorized users. Motion carried unanimously.

The next board meeting will be on Wednesday, August 14th.

Motion by Ryan Bross, seconded by Dave Hamrick to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.



David Hamrick, Secretary

The Mission of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to provide the citizens of and visitors to the Estes Valley with superior fire prevention, fire protection and emergency services in a safe and efficient manner."

"The Mission of the Board of Directors of the Estes Valley Fire Protection District is to establish policy, goals, strategies and financial leadership that are the foundation for the long-term sustainability of the District."