



ESTES VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

PREVENT PREPARE PERFORM

January 3, 2025

As our community already knows, in November, Patti Brown and her for-profit news organization filed a lawsuit against the EVFPD Board seeking access to records of an executive session meeting conducted by the Board of Directors during its process of hiring a permanent Fire Chief. The District's process for selecting then-acting Chief Paul Capo was robust and involved extensive public input, interviews of three internal candidates, and careful consideration by all involved. The Board's meeting records reflect this; and the Board stands by its process.

The court hearing Patti Brown's case largely agreed with the intentions and approach of the District: at no point did the Board seek to exclude the public from the hiring process. However, the court utilized a strict reading of Colorado's open meetings law to find that the Board should have described the purpose of its executive session differently and should have engaged in portions of its deliberations in open, public session. The District does not agree with the court's legal conclusions. Nevertheless, the Board has at all times sought to comply with the law and fulfill its responsibilities with forthrightness and respect for the law. The District made every effort to comply with the open meetings law at the time. Now, having received an unfavorable ruling from the court, the District will comply with that lawfully issued order.

Given the court's ruling, the District is making the subject recording—with a small portion removed from the recording pursuant to the court's order—available to the public on its website. The District stands behind the hiring process in which it engaged. And the District stands by its promotion of interim Chief Paul Capo to permanent Fire Chief. The mission of the EVFPD to provide the residents of and guests to the Estes Valley with superior fire prevention, fire protection, and emergency services is the overarching priority and this Board thanks all the firefighters, staff and broader community for their support.

Serving the Residents and Visitors of the Estes Valley with Superior Fire and Safety Services

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