



**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 18, 2022**

Authority Board President Ed Van Walraven called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present were Ed Van Walraven, Leroy Duroux, John Young, Scott Arthur, Elizabeth Striegler, Dave Heivly (via Lifesize). Others present were Chief Scott Thompson, Deputy Chiefs Richard Cornelius, Kevin Issel, Fire Marshal John Mele, Finance Director Jennifer Thompson, Human Resources Director Renee Thomas, IT Director Erik Johnson, Executive Assistant Jennifer Diamond, and Lieutenant Mo McPhee.

Minutes of September 20, 2022 Meeting:

Director Arthur made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Director Duroux. All were in favor and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Attorney's Report:

Chief Thompson stated that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is for the Roaring Fork Valley Wildfire Collaborative. This Collaborative is made up of thirteen or fourteen agencies was started two years ago and is now taking off because of the wildfires and the grant money that is available. This agreement simply states that we agree to cooperate. No money is involved this year. Money is budgeted next year to help pay for an administrative position. We are working with the Aspen Institute to get money for us and manage it for us. Before we can ask for any grant money, we need to sign the MOU. We are working with fifty-five organizations. Lots of discussion. Director Striegler made a motion to accept the MOU as presented, the motion was seconded by Director Arthur. All were in favor and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Chief's Report:

Chief Thompson stated we should be able to have the Grand Opening of Station 46 towards the end of November. We have filled the apartments with firefighters, two of which are Paramedics. All of our employee housing units will be full by the end of November.

Fire Marshal's Report:

Fire Marshal John Mele stated that he didn't have a report. The construction projects are being visited frequently.

Deputy Chief Cornelius' Report:

September Volunteer Hours

478.49 total volunteer hours; 88.18 In-station hours; 135.48 Responding from Home/Work (60 of which were OCO hours); 232 All-Call Only; and 22.83 Special Events

Incidents

September 2022

We responded to a total of 217 incidents. 95 of those were EMS related incidents.

September 2021

We responded to a total of 179 incidents. 86 of those were EMS related incidents.

This is an increase of 38 incidents or 21.2% over last year.

January 01, 2022 to September 30, 2022

We responded to a total of 1893 Total Incidents. 907 of those were EMS related incidents.

January 01, 2021 to September 30, 2021

We responded to a total of 1758 Total Incidents. 861 of those were EMS related incidents.

This is an Increase of 135 incidents or 7.7% over last year.

EMS Committee

Quarterly Operational Changes for October 2022 were pushed out through a Vector Solutions assignment. Changes include updating and standardizing TRIAGE kits, adding neonate reference cards and updating CPAP mask inventory in now include three sizes.

FAST

Quarterly operational changes for October 2022 will be pushed out through a Vector Solutions assignment. They have worked hard to standardize fire apparatus inventory. A recent example is the additional of battery powered extrication tools to Engine 42 and removal of hydraulic extrication tools. Recent changes include a 2.5" rear minuteman hose load and new pump charts that have modified information on engines and ladders.

Next month I will highlight the Wildland Committee

Denver Health Paramedic Education Program

Catharine Pieck and Rachel Thomas are completing hospital clinicals and their field internships. Both are doing great.

Hose Testing

Annual hose testing took place throughout September and ended in early October. This was a major project and a big thank goes out to everyone involved, especially the on-duty crews. All hose located on apparatus and on the racks has been tested. Building caches will be tested throughout October and all hose testing will be completed this month. Multiple sections of hose failed and an order has been placed to replace the failed hose. A new inventory system was implemented and all hose is now tracked in CheckIt. We are now in compliance with NFPA 1962. We can also receive the maximum credit from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). Overall volunteer participation was very low. Thanks to Steve Howard, Bryce Christensen, Craig Mackey, Chuck King, Monroe Dodd, Gary Lutzeier, John Perko, Lawrence "Buck" Buchholz, and Melanie Buchholz.

CO EMS Supplemental Payment

We received our FY 2021 CO EMS Supplemental Payment. The supplemental payment was less than expected. After the 10% State Administration Fee we received \$76,860.02. That's down from the FY 2020 CO EMS Supplemental Payment of \$85,669.51. The reason for the decrease is because we transported less Medicaid patients in FY 2021. We have submitted our Intent of Participation Form for the FY 2022 CO EMS Supplemental Payment. Please note because the new Medicaid Fee for Service (FFS) rates went into effect on July 01, 2022 the FY 2022 supplemental payment will be reduced. The cost report is due by November 28, 2022 and I will be working on compiling all of the information this month and next.

Medicare Cost Reporting

Our Medicare Cost Reporting data collection period will run from January 01, 2023 to December 31, 2023. We must submit all data within 5 months after our data collection period ends. Any agency that does not participate in Medicare Cost Reporting will be subjected to a 10% reduction in payments under the ambulance fee schedule (AFS).

Medicare Payments

CMS has announced the 2023 Ambulance Inflation Factor (AIF) of 8.7% beginning with dates of service on or after January 1, 2023. This is the largest percentage increase in the AIF in the history of the Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule, dating back to 2003. The previous highest increase was 5% in 2009. Remember when considering our 2023 "raise" that we are hopefully awaiting passage of the legislation necessary to renew the ambulance fee schedule bonus payments (the 2 urban%, 3% rural and 22.6% super-rural add-on payments) for 2023. We are classified as super-rural.

Ambulance Base Rate Charges and Bundled Billing

For the month of September, we billed \$196,595.87 for 69 patients that were transported to the hospital. This averages out to \$2849.22 per transport. August was similar with \$190,131.32 billed in gross charges for 65 patient transports. This averages out to \$2925.10 per transport.

Ambulance Service Billing Policies

I am still doing research on best practices. On December 07, 2016 the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) published a new “safe harbor” regulation under the anti-kickback statute (AKS). Under the safe harbor, government-owned/operated ambulance providers and suppliers can receive protection under the AKS if they choose to waive the collection of beneficiary cost-sharing amounts, if they meet certain requirements. Those “certain requirements” are what I need to do more research on. One such requirement is that the reduction or waiver must be offered on a uniform basis to all of its residents. We could still charge cost-sharing amounts to nonresidents. A separate financial hardship policy should also be developed to address nonresidents who would not be eligible for waiving cost-sharing amounts.

Celebration Events

The Fall Social took place at Woody Creek Distillers on Saturday. It was well attended and everyone enjoyed specialty cocktails and mocktails as well as empanadas from The Whole Empanada. The Master Distiller provided a VIP tour to those in attendance. Multiple raffle prizes were also given out. Many of these were purchased from local businesses. Five of our 10 current Directors attended. Thanks to the Authority Board for providing funding to support our quarterly celebration events. The next celebration event is scheduled for Saturday, December 17, 2022. The location has yet to be finalized.

PTO Policy Change

OPS check in meetings took place with all three shifts on September 30 and October 3 & 4. All full-time responder personnel attended one of the OPS check in meetings. The vast majority of the conversation related to the PTO policy change that will take effect in the first payroll of 2023. Simply put the policy change was not popular. Some of the comments were: “Feel like they will be making less money next year.” “Don’t know the temp of the water I am standing in.” “Alternatives to policy change – were they considered?” “Stop being reactionary.”

Most feel like the situation was misrepresented during the September Authority BOD meeting. However, the Authority BOD Memo contained the same information in the letter sent to all full-time responder personnel immediately following the September Authority BOAD meeting. They feel like they held up their end of the bargain by utilizing more PTO. They also feel like the expectations were not clearly outlined, specifically the overall reduction in PTO balances necessary to reduce the Authority’s unfunded liability. With all of that being said, it was reinforced the PTO policy was changing effective the first payroll of 2023, and assuming the Authority BOD approves the 2023 budget each shift would have 10 full-time responder personnel and minimum staffing would go from 6 to 8.

As covered in the Authority BOD Memo we did see a 10% reduction in overall PTO balances. We anticipate the current PTO policy to cost \$86,500 based on actual costs and anticipated future trends. Had we simply paid out 10% of PTO balances the cost would have been \$14,417. This was calculated by taking 10% of every full-time

responder personnel's August 2022 PTO balance and multiplying it by their current hourly rate. Lots of discussion.

Deputy Chief Issel's Report:

Deputy Chief Issel stated that facilities and fleet are being prepared for winter. We received a grant for the electric vehicle charging station. The charging station will be tied into the fire stations electricity but we won't be paying the bill. All of the details are going to be worked out in a meeting with the Snowmass Chapel and Anderson Ranch. The two bedroom/two story apartment at Station 41 has a lot of water damage from an unforeseen bathroom issue that wasn't discovered for a couple of days. This apartment is currently being remodeled due to this incident. Lots of discussion.

Human Resource Director's Report:

HR Director Thomas stated that information was presented at the last two Board meetings regarding this insurance-based program run by the State of Colorado. This program that would cover twelve weeks of leave. It is a partnership between the employee and employer to pay into this fund. It works similar to unemployment insurance for all employees. Public employers can elect to decline this coverage. The three different options were discussed. You can elect to go with the program, decline all together, or decline the employer's contribution but allow employees to sign up for this program, if they want. Lots of discussion. Employees can't be on two different wage replacement policies at the same time. Resolution Three Declining Participation in the Colorado Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program was read. Director Young made a motion to decline FAMLII as an employer and elect option three as stated in resolution three. The motion was seconded by Director Duroux. All were in favor and the motion carried 6 – 0.

Director Arthur asked how we figure out our hourly rate and salary for new line personnel. HR Director Thomas stated that she uses 7K it is part of public service compensation under the FLSA. We base our hours on 212 hours per 28-day pay period or 2756 hours annually. This does not include built in over-time. Lots of discussion ensued.

Chief Thompson stated that we are going to do an assessment center before the end of the year to fill the current opening and establish an eligibility list for the three positions needed in January.

Finance Director's Report:

Finance Director Jennifer Thompson stated that this is the first reading of the 2023 budget. The resolutions don't need to be signed until the December meeting.

Resolution Four approving supplemental expenditures and revenues for each fund and adopting a supplemental budget for the General Fund the calendar year beginning on the first day of January, 2022 and ending on the last day of December, 2022. Jennifer explained why the supplemental budget was necessary. The budget message was explained.

The 2023 budget message was explained. The 2023 Operations and Capital budgets were explained. The budget is flat for 2023.

Resolution Five to Adopt a Budget for 2023 was presented.

The **Ambulance** Fund and the Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority Fund each have two pages. The first page is the actual budget page that will be sent to the state. The second page is more for the Boards information. It breaks out the operating and capital budgets.

Jennifer stated that we have spent approximately 71.0% of the total 2022 budget and 73% for operations. We should be at 75% so we are doing pretty well. Impact fee revenue from Basalt Fire was transferred to Roaring Fork Fire capital fund to help pay for the construction of Station 46. We have about \$200,000 left in grant money.

Two bond payments will be paid next month. The Basalt payment will be \$210,000 and the Snowmass payment will be \$870,000.

Master Plan:

Chief Scott Thompson stated that we made our goals a little easier to read by grouping them together. We are checking items off as they get accomplished. Chief Thompson would like to have Hillary come back and sit down with both Boards to discuss the Master Plan. We need to come to a consensus on staffing, mill rate changes in both Basalt and Snowmass, rebuild Station 42 in order to meet the needs of that area, and adding a training facility. The training facility will be a bond issue for the Basalt area.

Public Comments:

None

Board Comments:

Director Heivly stated that we can't please everyone all of the time. He stands behind what we had to do regarding the PTO policy last month. Our employees are the most important asset we have. If we are not doing everything possible to retain tenured employees, then we are failing. We need to be at the top of the pay scales in our area. He has seen a lot of turnover over the years and regardless of the reason we need to have happy tenured employees.

Staff Comments:

None

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Volunteer Meeting:

The next volunteer meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, November 2, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Station 42. Director Heivly stated that he would attend this meeting.

Non-Agenda Items:

Chief Thompson stated that he would be hard to reach the first part of November. During his absence both DC Cornelius and Issel are in town. They will become Fire Chief in his absence, if needed.

Adjournment:

Director Young made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Director Duroux. All were in favor and the motion passed 6 – 0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

To watch this meeting in its entirety, please go to the following link:

<https://youtu.be/0FrNKbidx8c>