

Roaring Fork Fire Rescue Authority
1089 JW Drive
Carbondale, CO 81623
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roaringforkfire.org



SCOTT THOMPSON
FIRE CHIEF

Record of Regular Meeting Minutes January 16, 2024

Call to Order: Noting a quorum was present, President Van Walraven called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on January 16, 2024.

Roll Call: President Van Walraven, Chief Thompson, Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius, Finance Director Thompson, HR Director Thomas, Board Member Young, Board Member Duroux, Treasurer Striegler -Lifesize- Vice President Arthur, Board Member Heivly, Attorney Cole, Deputy Fire Marshal Stott, Deputy Chief Fire Marshal Mele, Jennifer Diamond.

Approval of Minutes:

Board Member Duroux motioned to accept the January 4, 2024, board minutes, and Board member Young seconded the motion. President Van Walraven would like to see a correction on the last page 7 under Board Member Comments to read: *President Van Walraven said this budget keeps the staff looking towards tomorrow and wants them to know how much they are appreciated by the Board for their hard work.* With this correction, Board Member Young motioned to accept President Van Walraven's change. All were in favor of the change, and meeting minutes were none-opposed.

Attorney Bob Cole: Attorney Cole is working on the property transaction in El Jebel. Attorney Cole is also working on the bond issue and has a call this afternoon to keep it moving. Attorney Cole is hopeful that we will get some reasonable rates. Attorney Cole said there is some legislation that has been proposed that we need to keep an eye on, and it's probably going to be one of the numerous efforts this legislative session to try to force districts to lower their mill levies. Attorney Cole said House Bill 24 1026 takes the tact of saying that any district, any local government, this would include municipalities and counties that have previously de bruised, have to go back to the voters and renew that on a four-year basis, with the first renewal being due at least by 2029. Attorney Cole says he's still determining if that legislation will be passed. Attorney Cole says he suspects the municipal league will oppose the legislation, the Special District Association, and Colorado Counties, Inc. Attorney Cole says it imposes state-level controls on local matters. Attorney Cole thinks we will see a lot of direct and indirect efforts to force local governments to lower their mill levies in this session. Attorney Cole said there is nothing you can do about it other than be aware of it. Attorney Cole said if these bills start moving forward with some chance of success, you'll be hearing from people to contact your

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legislatures and tell them what kind of impacts in the case of the Snowmass District and Basalt District, these would require you to go back to your voters and ask them to approve what they've already approved. Attorney Cole says we'll keep monitoring that and see what happens. Attorney Cole asked for any questions.

President Van Walraven asks about the requirement to lower the mill levy. Is there any number they put on that?

Attorney Cole responds with, " I can't answer what the mill levy would go to. Attorney Cole said this current bill, House Bill 24 1026, doesn't require for the mill levy to be lowered, other than if you don't get voter approval, it resets back to where it was before you got your approval, and you're not allowed to keep and retain excess revenue under Tabor. Attorney Cole said it's an indirect attempt to lower the mill levy, thinking that if you take these authorizations back to the voters who were voted on many years ago, they may not approve them again. Attorney Cole said you have to reset to where you were. Attorney Cole said the language of the bill itself, if it goes forward, has to have some change.

Chiefs Report:

Chief Thompson commended executive staff after the Board approved our budget; Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius, Finance Director Jennifer Thompson, and HR Director Thomas did nine job offers in one day. Board Member Young asked how many offers went out. Chief Thompson said that of a total of eleven offers, six were outside of RFFR. Chief Thompson said they have four new lieutenants, and one started on Monday who is not from the Valley, so he's doing onboarding and the academy. Chief Thompson said they could transition some part-time people more quickly as they had already completed some credentials. Chief Thompson greatly thanks HR Director Thomas for all her hard work with the new hires. Chief Thompson says thanks to the Board for approving the budget. President Van Walraven asked if there were any questions for Chief. none

Chief Thompson informed the Board that Fleet Supervisor Espinosa, someone from the tender committee, and Chief Thompson will do a site visit in Boise on February 5, 2024, to see the new chassis. Chief Thompson said that since it was ordered two years ago, they want to go through a line-by-line with the manufacturer.

Chief Thompson said all the tanks are in place at Station 46, and the excavator will be mobilizing in the next few weeks while we wait for Pitkin County to give us an expedited permit.

Chief Thompson said he received a contract for the Crawford Property from Attorney Cole's office and presented it to the Crawford's realtor yesterday.

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Finance Report: Finance Director Thompson said audits are scheduled for the end of February for all three Districts. Finance Director Thompson said the final numbers for 2023 are close, and we are about 104 - 105 % over the initial budget, and that is why we passed the supplemental budget at the last meeting, which avoids having a budget violation. Finance Director Thompson said she has submitted all the 2024 resolutions for the budget to the state. Finance Director Thompson said we went over budget because the apartments were purchased, and the mid-year bonus was not budgeted. Finance Director Thompson said we received enough revenue to cover the 2024 budget. Finance Director Thompson said she is working on the first payroll for 2024 with all the new wages and benefits. Finance Director Thompson said she has a standard bond meeting this afternoon for Basalt. Finance Director Thompson told the Board the rating for Basalt went from an AA minus to an AA, which is fantastic. Board Member Young confirmed we have the same rating as Snowmass. Finance Director Thompson said that is correct. Finance Director Thompson said that should reflect in the interest rates we get, and we will close the first or second week in February.

HR Report: HR Director Thomas reports being very busy for the last week and a half coordinating eleven people moving from part-time to full-time and bringing in new external team members. HR Director Thomas said there is lots of teamwork and coordination bringing in the new compensation plan, and we could only have done it with all the teamwork. HR Director Thomas said we interviewed in late November / early December, putting offers on hold until the Board approved the budget, and she said she heard people saying this is where I want to work. HR Director Thomas noted that the feedback from firefighters and paramedics shows that the atmosphere we have created is the best workplace. HR Director Thomas said the compensation team met once the budget was passed. HR Director Thomas said they are working on individual letters that will go to each member talking about how you're impacted in this new compensation plan, and here's what it changed from your 2023 compensation into 2024 and the different kinds of benefits they may be eligible for. HR Director Thomas said the compensation plan is also working on writing a manual and training in February to bring to admin staff and every single shift to explain the plan details and roll everything out at that point.

HR Director Thomas said she has yet to have time to follow up with many of my teams regarding the strategic plan. HR Director Thomas said the process mapping team is working on onboarding and offboarding and is about 40% complete. HR Director Thomas said we're winding down compensation for the plan; I think the team will stay in place to discuss other opportunities. HR Director Thomas said something was requested the past summer to do quarterly turnover reports; HR Director Thomas will have information for the last quarter of 2023 at the February board meeting. HR Director Thomas said she would also have an updated policy manual showing legislative changes from 2023 at the February board meeting. HR

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Director Thomas said part of the insurance rating for workers' compensation is to have a cost containment program we file with the State Department of Labor workers' compensation to discuss different safety mitigation things we do. HR Director Thomas said that if we pass, they will present us with a seven or ten percent reduction on our premiums and workers' compensation. HR Director Thomas said we are on a three-year cycle that is up now, so we are working on that to ensure we get the premium reductions on our worker's comp. Any Questions?

Board Member Young thinks it's a big deal that new hires want to come in and be a part of our team. Board Member Young said he has been here forty years and seen the progress between Snowmass and Basalt and the community; we've grown, and the merger has made us stronger and better. Board Member Young said he thinks the community receives us well, which is reflected in the Bond the community passed. Board Member Young commends everyone for their hard work.

Vice President Arthur is happy about getting everyone hired and asked how many persons we have from outside agencies and the timeframe to bring them online and functional. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius answered that four people are now coming into our agency; one is a lieutenant going through the tailored firefighter, EMS, and Paramedic four-week orientation and onboarding; he could not attend the last week. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said this four-week program would help them complete credentials such as introductory credential driver, operator basic firefighter, and FTEP. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius noted they also have three external firefighters / EMTs and firefighters/Paramedics; two started in orientation yesterday, and a third is a single-roll paramedic relocating from MD beginning in February.

Treasurer Striegler comments that it's great that people say they want to work here; it is such a compliment that they want to be a part of this organization.

Deputy Chief Issel- Nothing to report

Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius:

Board Member Duroux asked if we will have volunteer recruitment since our volunteers are moving up to full and part-time positions. HR Director Thomas said she will work with the Advisory Board in February

on an April volunteer academy posting. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius added that volunteer hours have decreased by about 20 volunteers, but not all of them are active. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said we will focus on getting the new hires up to speed and building the part-time roster. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius says the goal for the volunteer program is April. Board Member Young says that when he attends the volunteer meetings, he is always impressed by the quality of our volunteers; it is a credit to how fortunate

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we are to have quality. Board Member Duroux added that many of our paid staff start as volunteers, so keeping the volunteer program moving is essential.

Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said he needs approval from the Board to purchase a type 3 brush truck. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said he sent an RFP to 8 different manufacturers that could meet our needs. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius noted that based on the 8 RFPS, we received three bids from Skeeter Emergency Vehicles, Iturri based in Europe, and the third Heiman Fire Equipment. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said the Wildland committee met to review the proposals and had a follow-up meeting with Skeeter and Iturri. Iturri will be the manufacturer directly, as they currently do not have a location in Colorado. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said Iturri came in at \$366,000 and is the preferred vendor; the Wildland committee would recommend purchasing three of these units starting in 2024 and the project completed in 2026. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said Iturri, in the near future, will be identifying a vendor for Colorado; since we are ahead of that, we are getting the best pricing, which will be higher once the vendor is established in Colorado. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said, based on the proposal from Iturri, they will lock in pricing for years two and three because we plan to purchase three identical units, and they are only adding a 2.5 % price increase. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said they have good availability for the commercial chassis we will need and could have it as early as nine months. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said time is of the essence; if we can provide a letter of intent after this board meeting and move into a contract after the review of Attorney Cole, we can secure one of the international chassis and then work to schedule a preconstruction meeting in Oregon. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said that because this is a European company, they manufacture the poly body in Spain and then ship it to Oregon. Board Member Young motioned for a letter of intent that Attorney Cole would review; Board Member Duroux seconded the motion and asked if they were established companies. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said Iturri is well established in Europe and expanding its Northern American footprint in 22 of the 50 states where a vendor is established. Chief Thompson reminds the Board that this meets one of our master plan objectives: to lower the number of vehicles in our fleet; we'll take four, and three will be replaced when we finish this program. Chief Thompson said these are going to be type three vehicles, and we will replace a couple of type six and a type three with them. Chief Thompson said they do not require a CDL. Attorney Cole said he expects the letter of intent will not be contractually binding in a financial way. Attorney Cole said that once we enter into the contract, we will have to be cautious of how that's written, and it will have to have some level of annual appropriation in terms of Tabor. Attorney Cole said the contract would have a language of a lease purchase that would allow the District or Authority to withdraw from that contract annually, showing a commitment to carry through to the current intent. Attorney Cole said if it's written that way, future boards could change the direction annually; this can be changed with a vote or have present cash reserves that become irrevocably pledged. President Van Walraven said there is a motion and a second on the floor, all Board members are in favor,



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and none are unopposed the motion carries. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said he would work on the letter of intent with our Attorney; when Iturri sends us a contract, we will have Attorney Cole review it to ensure it complies with his recommendations. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius wanted to express his appreciation to the Wildland Committee for the critical process and the need to show appreciation to the Board for their support, as this allows us to move forward with standardizing equipment. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius said, for example, it would enable us to send these resources out on federal assignment; not needing a CDL to drive to California has been challenging, and this will solve those issues. Deputy Chief of Operations Cornelius gave a quick update to the Board and thanked them for the budget increase for staffing; as calls increase, we can utilize the staffing matrix to place the staff throughout our District to best meet the needs of the Authority.

Deputy Chief of Operations said Ethan Printy started the accelerated Arapahoe Community College Paramedic Education Program yesterday; he should finish in late June or mid-July. Deputy Chief of Operations said two more members will start a Paramedic program in 2024, a year-long program held locally so they will not have to travel to Denver. The Deputy Chief of Operations acknowledged the considerable expense of getting these people certified and is happy to have the support of the Board and the budget to make this happen. The Deputy Chief of Operations says much behind-the-scenes training happens and wants to thank the Battalion Chiefs and the Training Division Chief for their hard work and the staff for supporting the new people.

The Deputy Chief of Operations told the Board that our Professional Services Agreement covering the calendar year 2024 with Dr. Livengood as our medical director needs updating and will need the Board President to sign the agreement. Any Questions? none

Fire Marshal-

Deputy Chief Fire Marshal talked about significant residential development, such as the Essex Tree Farm Project, 155,000 square feet, and more employee housing in SMV. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal says the additional staff helps bring us there but will need more staff in the future.

Deputy Chief Fire Marshal has been working with Snowmass Village, Pitkin County, and others for the last decade, ensuring the development is reviewed for emergency access and that we have the proper water supplies reviewing fire alarm/suppression systems. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal says municipalities are relying on us for information. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal says we have four plan examiners on staff qualified to do these things. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal said prevention is stepping up; Assistant Fire Marshal Pidcock is educating the crews, showing them different things about the developments that are unique, and accepting their input. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal said Snowmass Village had asked us to lead their Wildfire Mitigation project this year. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal said they had worked together over the past 15 years and threw \$100,000 into the mix. Deputy Chief Fire Marshal said this will allow us to go after employee



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housing infrastructure and town hall. President Van Walraven confirmed that the planning review committee is on our payroll, and we bill out for plan review. The Deputy Chief Fire Marshal confirmed that the planning committee is on our payroll, and we are bringing in reasonable compensation. Any questions? None.

Deputy Chief Kevin Issel Report: Chief Thompson informed the Board that Deputy Chief of Administration Issel is attending the Regional Chiefs Meeting, so there is no report.

Master Plan Discussion:

Chief Thompson told the Board they checked off on the capital assets fleet side. Chief Thompson said we will now limit the size of brush units with this plan. Chief Thompson reports no other updates.

Public comments: None

Board Member Comments: President Van Walraven says thank you for the Awards Ceremony Party. Board Member Young echoed the Chiefs' thanks. Board Member Young also applauds the Chief for his challenging job with employees and working with Bond; this is his 4th Bond, a 26-million-dollar project; we are blessed to have Chief Thompson.

OLD business:

New business:

President Van Walraven reminds Board Member Van Walraven and Vice President Arthur that they volunteered to attend the Volunteer meeting on February 6, 2024.

Chief Thompson says this is a mandatory volunteer meeting to elect officers after the volunteer meeting, so this will be a short meeting.

Adjournment: Board Member Duroux made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Striegler seconded the motion, and the meeting ended at 9:46.

