

Aspen Fire Protection District

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Board of Directors Regular Meeting October 12, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Aspen Fire Protection District met for their regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public virtually via Zoom.

Meeting called to order by John at 5:02pm

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Denis Murray, Stephen Wertheimer, Michael Buglione, Dave (Wabs) Walbert
- Board of Directors Absent:
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Schubert, Jan Legersky, Ryan Warren, Arnold Nimmo, Bruce Bradshaw, Mike Haman, Roya Beklik
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson, Sebastian Wanatowicz, Ali Hager

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Motion by Steve to approve minutes from: Regular meeting held on September 14th, 2021. Wabs second.

Discussion:

There was clarification made to the second motion that should have read "10kw", not 10,000kw. There was further discussion on the amended motion in regards to battery backup. Denis gave a recap as to where it stood after last meeting; moving PV panels back onto the Fire Place building, going to meet the minimum requirements of Pitkin County code, store 25% of panels on the building unless we can get it as a campus. At a minimum there will be 38kw on the roof, 10 kw of storage in the building. The original design of building did not include storage, so the equipment purchased that is onsite does not accommodate battery backup to every unit and will be a 30 week lead time. Due to the delay, it was determined to try get 10kw storage and match minimum requirement by Pitkin County. Sebastian confirmed that the easiest and cheapest way to do this would be to supply house panel that runs the garage, the building lights and some other backbone of the facility, to tie the battery to the main distribution panel instead of the 15 sub metered panels in the units.

Vote:All approved.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc., Ryan Warren: Not Present

- Ryan addressed the AVFD board being a sounding board for firefighters. There have been good meetings with Chief and DC Andersen. This has been effective with solving issues or parties feeling

like they have been heard. There was an incident involving a volunteer getting into issue with health insurance that ran into financial needs. A current member stepped forward with financial assistance and AVFD Inc. is going to match. The department has been gracious to discuss policies and procedures that may affect firefighters. This has been encouraging.

- There is continued concern in regards to rental rates with Fire Place housing.

North 40 Housing Project Update: Sebastian Wanatowicz

- Fire Place Project Update:
 - Curbs have been poured on the podium slab which is complete.
 - First building in southwest corner is being framed. Things are moving quickly.
- Fire Place Budget Review:
 - Project just had pay application #8 for a million dollars due to finish of concrete podium slab, finishing up excavation backfill, waterproofing up the sides of building and the framing package.
 - Sebastian reviewed the budget, allowance report and contingency reconciliation. He noted there may be large soft cost coming next for BG Works change order to redesign of the battery.

Wildfire Community Action Fund Project

- Rick gave a brief background about how this program has come to fruition. Ali Hager was introduced to the board. Rick recommended bringing on Ali as the potential Fuels Reduction Specialist for this proposed program. This would be a temporary, full-time position. A job description was included in the board packet. The salary for this position would be paid through the fund, so no out of pocket costs to the district. Her position will be solely fuel reductions, representing Aspen Fire at meetings throughout county and state, grant writing and fundraising for this fund.
- The goal of this program is to build a fire resilient community. Multi-jurisdictional teams are being made across the country. This position will pull these different agencies together.

MOTION: Motion by John to authorize the setup of a special revenue fund the Wildfire Community Action Fund Project and create a position for a Fuel Reduction Specialist. Michael second.

Discussion:

The board directed staff to put together policy and procedures for the program. These need to be in place before moving forward with hiring of consultants and/or raising of additional funds. Further discussion was to bring on Ali Hager to create procedures to administer funds, procedures to apply for grants and create list of projects.

Vote: Motion and second motion was withdrawn.

AMENDED

MOTION: Motion by Denis to establish a special revenue fund to promote wildfire resilience across the Aspen Fire Protection District through holistic fuels reduction, wildfire habitat improvement and water shed protection. John second.

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

SECOND

MOTION: Motion by Denis is to hire a Fuels Reduction Specialist, Ali Hager, to implement policies and procedure for the Wildfire Community Action Fund Project with the maximum expenditures of \$50,000. John second

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Steve noted that once she comes back with policies and procedures, the maximum funding and expenditures can be lifted.

Strategic Plan and Staffing Review

- Strategic Plan: DC Andersen commented staff is ahead of schedule with multiple items on the strategic plan. They are functional and continuing to be updated.
- Staffing Review: Aspen Fire is one year in as a combination department. A mid-year review was given a few months back. DC Andersen discussed that we are not currently meeting the minimums and is looking at solutions. Data pulled for all of 2021 shows we have currently paid 1800 hours of overtime to cover shifts. We had 70 days understaffed and 90 days to pay overtime to keep stations open. DC Andersen will be working with officers and volunteers to see what solution may be. The volunteers have been stepping up to help.

Financials

- Monthly Financial Review:
 - Confirmed sale of two vehicles, ATV's and trailer. This will be reflected when check is received.
 - Worker's Compensation: This was under budgeted due to the adding of 9 firefighters in 2021. This was not originally budgeted.
 - Reviewed year to date expenses versus year-today budget.
- 2022 Draft Budget Review
 - Property Tax Revenue: Increased revenue on property tax is \$450,000 additional plus \$100,000 due to last year abatements.
 - Wages/Salaries: Increased by \$47,000. This is cost of living allowance. There is \$150,000 built in for overtime.
 - Health Insurance: There is a 5% increase. Staff is proposing STD/LTD and increasing the HSA contribution to be competitive.
 - Radio Cost: Proposed \$20,000 for radios. There was discussion of putting apparatus radios in apartments at station 65 due to challenge with reception.
 - Supplies/Expenses: Operational supplies under firefighter includes tools, gear and miscellaneous supplies.
 - Pano AI: Currently have \$20,000 budgeted. This amount is not set. It's been slow season for wildfire. Aspen Ski Company will be doing some burning, so Rick will be monitoring to see if PANO picks up any smoke. There is further discussion to have with Pano.
 - Honor Guard: Budget includes coast of travel and additional uniform items needed. The original honor guard budget came from board stipend. Board had voted not to take it and put toward honor guard.
 - Capital Acquisitions:

- Air Conditioning: Last year the board approved air conditioning for Woody Creek and North 40 bunk rooms, but not apartment upstairs. This budget includes air conditioning for bunk rooms at Headquarters and North 40 apartment.
 - Loft system: Proposing loft system at North 40 for extra storage.
 - Roof Replacement: Price has increased from last year.
- Overtime: The board would like to see this broken out as a different line item.
- The board would like to see a staffing plan by November meeting to discuss and review.
- Volunteer FPPA
 - There has not been a raise to the volunteer FPPA in the past six years. It is proposed to increase. Discussion of what that should look like.

MOTION: Motion by Wabs to raise FPPA payout to volunteers, that are eligible, to \$750 effective January 1, 2022. Steve second. Wabs recused himself due to being a recipient. All approved.

Board Comments & Action Items:

- Steve commented that he is pleased with progress of North 40 with timeline and budget. Rick acknowledged the work Denis has put in.
- Denis would like to see a demo on fire mapping, do testing on Pano AI or find out how it works during Aspen Ski Company's burns, and see a fire ordinance update sooner than later.
- John echoed Steve's comments in regards to North 40 project. Rick gave praise to John McBride for allowing the use of extra piece of land next door.
- Michael is on board with the project at North 40.

Staff Report:

- Fire Prevention: Jan reviewed numbers presented in the staff report. There will be ability to test Pano AI during Buttermilk burn. There have been more fire trainings going on. Denis suggested getting coordinates of the burn piles at Buttermilk.
- Training Report:
 - EMR practical was today. All passed except one.
 - In process of recruiting for next year. We were approached by CMC academy. There were 10 candidates interviewed with hope to bring on at least 6. The cost is approximately \$1,000 per student. The grant will not cover this cost. This will be an experimental project with many not living in district. There was discussion of out of district and are there bigger requirements and/or different benefits.
 - Staff is currently in the process of revamping the training program.
- New mission statement posted in conference room.
- Wildfire Assessments: These assessments can be booked online through Aspen Fire website. There was discussion of Aspen Fire working with City when tree mitigation is needed.

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Good of District: Rick included an email with pictures from a citizen that attended 9/11 Remembrance. Also, Roy Holloway was nominated for the Pitkin County Cares Greg Mace Award. Great turnout to show support.
- Captain Dan Palmer will be leaving as he accepted a Division Chief position with another agency. Rick and Jake will be reviewing this position and how to proceed.

Old Business:

- Aspen Fire Place Housing Guidelines and Rates: There will be a special work session on Thursday, October 14th.

- North 40 Roofing Update: Report was included in the board packet. Staff is working to get an RFP out.

MOTION: Motion by John to adjourn at 8:28pm. Wabs second. All approved.

***** A full recording of this meeting can be requested by contacting the District Administrator at nikki.lapin@aspensfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**