

Aspen Fire Protection District



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Board of Directors Regular Meeting November 12th, 2024

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

Meeting called to order by John Ward at 5:05pm

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward, Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Emily Taylor, Charles Cunniffe, Parker Lathrop (zoom, then arrived in person at 5:13pm).
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Ali Hammond, Amanda Perusse, Scott Arthur, Ken Josselyn (arrived at 5:28pm on zoom, and then in person at 5:34pm), Jan Legersky (via zoom), Station 62 duty crew (via zoom), Max Lyall (arrived at 5:38pm on zoom)
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson

MOTION: Motion made by Wabs to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on October 8th, 2024.

Second: Charles Cunniffe

Discussion: There are some mis-spelled words on the last page of the minutes, under the AWF update, please amend muyle der to mule deer.

Vote: All approved.

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: None

Financials

- October Monthly Financials were provided in the board packet
 - Discussion and request for a monthly financial report summarizing key budget changes, income, collections and special items to be provided in each Board packet moving forward.
 - Discussion on the profit and loss statement. Shows more money coming in that we had budgeted for. This is attributed to the state backfill in 2024 of \$240,000.
 - Discussion on line items 41214 - Info Systems and Support, and 41920 – Capital Outlay – Computers+. It was noted that these two line items have been consistently over budget
 - Due to some unexpected expenses, including more of our members doing reports, more computers needed in certain rooms and a few iPads that were no longer able to be used.

- We also switched over on some of our systems, including BambooHR and moving from Google to Microsoft. Mitch and Company has been instrumental in the change overs but this is not expected to be a large expense moving forward.
- This cost will move to the Cap side of the 2025 budget, with 200k allocated for it.
- There were significant unexpected expenses related to the ladder truck as well as a brush truck while out on a wildfire assignment.
- Discussion line items 49507 – Transfer to FPPA Annual Accrual Fund and 49515 – Contribution – FPPA Vol. Pension. Both entries are \$300,000. Suggested it might be a double entry and asked for the Finance Manager, Jan Schubert, to review.

Parker Lathrop arrived in person at 5:13pm.

- FPPA YTD was provided in the board packet
 - Noted on page 2 of the FPPA report that there is an unfamiliar term; “settlor” expense. Richard Peterson will look into this and get back to the board at the next regular meeting in December.
 - Noted that there was a return of 15.3% on the first phase, suggested that we invest earlier rather than at the end of the year.
- Proposed 2025 Budget – Draft #1 was provided in the board packet
 - Same numbers that were presented to the board in the 11/07/24 Board Work Session
 - As our public notice states, the board is unable to approve this budget until the Board Regular meeting of 12/10/24.

Board member comments/action items:

- John Ward comment:
- Action items: Proposed 2024 amended budget – Draft #1
 - Previously reviewed in the 11/07/24 Board Work Session
 - Discussion on G.O. Bond Debt Service Bond; why do several line item shows as \$0
 - Due to the \$1.1M that the Board chose to forego collecting last year to give our tax payers a break
 - Will wait to approve in January once all amendments have been completed.

Ken Josselyn arrived on zoom at 5:28pm

Staff Report for September:

Fire Marshal Report - provided in the board packet. Reviewed by Fire Marshal, Jan Legersk.

- The Fire Prevention team attended the Leadership Conference in October and learned a lot of good information.
- Fire Prevention Week – coordinated by Ben, with assistance by Zach. Special shout out to Elijah, Drew, Alex and Jeff for their help. It makes a big impression for kids to see Firefighters at those events.
 - The weather was great, and we were able to run 600 kids through the trailer.
- Busy time of year now as the holidays approach, there will be several last-minute requests for inspections, as homeowners will want to get into their houses quickly.
 - Currently 75 plan reviews ahead of last year at this same time.

Ken Josselyn arrived at the meeting in person at 5:34pm.

Operational Report provided in the board packet, reviewed by Deputy Chief Jake Andersen

- Lots of photos and public events
- Charlie and Drew set up car seat inspections, open house event, which went well.
 - Great job of initiation from the floor
- Small grass fire, was out before most of us our folks could even arrive

- Keep getting small wildland fires, which we have to change pants as the current duty crew pants are not NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) compliant for wildfire, or NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Group) compliant
 - Looking at purchasing dual duty or Nomex pants for our member
 - Currently they have to put on bunker gear, or change into other pants etc, which slows down response. Looking to have a 60 second turnout time to events such as these.
 - Initial purchase would be \$16,000 to get 100 pairs.
 - Crews found the pants they like the best and were able to get a discount on them.

Max Lyall joined on zoom at 5:38pm

- Hosted Jill Sheely for a book reading, Sam and Ritchie helped with the event and other FF helped in writing the book
- Drew Barr crushed Halloween this year
 - First annual family pumpkin carving at station 62
- Jason Lasser completed practical for driver operator tender
- Will Hardenbergh is the first FF that finished paramedic school through Aspen Fire
 - Not easy to get through this schooling while still on shift etc.
- Max Lyall is the first LT to go through this program, asked to make a special challenge coin for those who complete this program. Presented by Jake to Max at last ops meeting.
- Hose management training on RIT (rapid intervention Team) and maydays.
- Several LTs went to the NFA for Officer Command and Control training. Several valley LTs and BCs were able to attend well. Sparked a quarterly meeting with BCs, and they have just passed their 7th Valley-wide standard operating guideline as of 11/12/24, which will be Incident Communications, that will tie on top of Structure Fires.
- Explosion call at west 2nd, used drone to try and figure out what it was, worked with APD on this.
- Picture of several members jeeping together, off duty.
- Press release on chimney fire incident, a good reminder to the district to get their chimneys cleaned and inspected. Luckily the incident was contained inside the chimney and easily put out.
- Update on the ladder pump: Currently waiting on parts. Issue with impeller and the housing. No final date on when the parts will arrive and the ladder will be fixed, but it is currently operational, just not at it's proper capacity. We can still pump water through it from another apparatus if need be.
- Ken and Jake are working on the capital plan for facilities and apparatus, needs major updating.

Training and Recruitment report – Information was unavailable at the time the Board packet was created. Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur provided a hand out to the board and reviewed the information.

- The October fire training was on Rapid Intervention Team Rescue and Maydays taught by BC Nimmo. The medical training was EMT Level Medication Use and Administration by FF Brovelli
- The November fire training is Live Fire Evolutions at the Carbondale Fire Training Center. The first session was today, and we had 14 personnel involved in over 5 hours of live fire evolutions simulating ground level, above ground level and below ground level fires as well as a live firefighter rescue scenario. Over the rest of the week we plan to put at least 25 more firefighters through the training for a total of almost 200 hours of training in total this one week.
- The Class of 2024 are coming into the fire stations now progressing on their in-house task books and three of them are completing their EMT class at CMC. Everyone is on course to be completed by the fall/early winter as expected
- We have a number of firefighters who are advancing themselves through multiple outside training programs. Here is a list of the classes that we have firefighters enrolled in over the next few months:
 - Paramedic Pre-Requisite Classes – 2 firefighters
 - Paramedic Class completed – 1 firefighter
 - Chief Officer Training Curriculum – 2 Battalion Chiefs (18-month class)

Recruitment

Our recruitment process for the Class of 2025 is progressing. 7 recruits were selected and are going through the background check, 2 more are pending. They will follow the same program as last year starting with a pre-academy task book in the stations that will get them actively involved in the history and culture of Aspen Fire and what it takes to be an Aspen Firefighter. They will then attend the CMC Academy starting in January. An additional 5 were selected to be on a list to pick from if any of the first group drop or if a fall academy comes available.

Wildfire Community Action Fund (WCAF) and Aspen Wildfire Foundation (AWF) – information was provided in the board packet and was reviewed by Ali Hammond and Shaggy Fink

Fundraising & Foundation

- Total 2024 WCAF income (through Oct): \$707,232.03
- Total 2024 WCAF expenses: \$92,992.65
- Strategic Plan for AWF is in progress

Projects

- Fire Aside with Prevention team to improve home hardening assessments and trackable metrics to measure our impact
- Water Department partnership was reviewed along with photos that were provided in the packet
- Chipping End of Season report
 - Onboarding with the Chipper Day software powered by Fire Aside was a success.
 - Reduction in administration time, after onboarding.
 - Ability to for members to control their sign up and resident investment data entry.
 - Capacity to use multiple contractors.
 - Potential for growth ... a goal of reaching the whole district in 2025.
 - Follow-up survey and comments to gain insight from members.
 - Geospatial data for future historic trends and mitigation efforts.
 - Exposing our members to Fire Aside for future Wildfire Assessments.
- Insurance Summit planned for June 2025, reviewed the proposed agenda that was provided in the packet.

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Frontline Physicals
 - These took place all month long in October and were very successful. Thanks again to our fitness and wellness team for putting it together. Some people learned about items that they can do follow up on, items that they might not have learned about otherwise, and some dramatic changes in people's lives.
 - Can't think of a better way to spend our money
- Ken Josselyn – great job
 - Did a great job on the interview with CORE, to promote their programs and anniversary. Discussions revolved around provided information on projects we have done at Aspen Fire and what we aspire to do in the future.
- Veteran's Day 11/11/24
 - Very successful event
 - AFHG posted colors, Chief and Roy Holloway both spoke at the event. A great event to be a part of.
 - Richard Sundeen retired, had a new bugler, did a little theme song from each sect, which was nice.
- Honor Guard

- Was hoping to have a few members who would be able to go to Golden to honor a fallen police officer, however, schedules and weather did not work out.
- WRCB update
 - Getting close to some decisions. Will be having several online meetings that Chief will be helping with.
 - In person meeting in Glenwood Springs. Chief Rick Balentine will make sure the information is sent out to our Board if they are interested in attending.
 - Mapping is still a big issue. The current map that AFPD has on their website is out of date as it hasn't been updated for a while. We will be using the Forest Service state map moving forward, until a better one can be created.
- Holiday party
 - December 14th from 5:30-10:30
 - At the Snowlodge, St. Regis.
 - A generous private donor has offered to fund the entire party. AFPD will be responsible for alcohol, entertainment and tips.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to move into Executive Session pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(a), C.R.S., concerning the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest, specifically related to Units 219, 223, and 232 at the Basalt Center Circle Project; and pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(f), C.R.S., concerning personnel matters relating to Fire Chief Rick Balentine, unless the employee requests an open session.

Second: Parker Lathrop

Vote: All approved

Moved into Executive Session @ 6:28pm

Returned from Executive Session @ 7:35pm

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to proceed with the purchase and sale agreement for units 219, 223 and 232 at the Basalt Center Circle Project and waive the district's due diligence and board approval objection rights.

Second: John Ward

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

MOTION: Motion made by Charles Cunniffe to extend Chief Rick Balentine's contract until August 1, 2025, at an annual salary of \$232,952 and 50 cents, under the same terms and conditions as the existing employment agreement, and a bonus of \$10,000 to be paid in the December 2024 calendar year.

Second: John Ward

Vote: All approved

Richard Peterson will bring information to the next Board meeting of 12/10/24 with regard to search firms to aid in the Chief search.

MOTION: Motion made by John Ward to adjourn.
Second: Charles Cunniffe
Discussion: None
Vote: All approved

Adjourned at 7:38pm

***** A board packet of this meeting can be requested by contacting the Executive Administrative Assistant at amanda.perusse@aspensfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**