

Aspen Fire Protection District



420 E Hopkins Avenue ▪ Aspen, CO 81611 ▪ 970-925-5532 ▪ www.aspenfire.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting February 11th, 2025

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 Parker Lathrop at 5:03pm.

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward (zoom), Parker Lathrop, Dave “Wabs” Walbert, Emily Taylor (zoom)
- Board of Directors Absent: Charles Cunniffe
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Nikki Lapin, Jan Legersky, Ali Hammond, Jan Schubert, Fabi Brovelli, Shawn Jones, Sara Fioretti, Ken Josselyn
- Staff/Volunteers online: Ryan Warren, Shannon “Shaggy” Fink, Adam Cohen, Station 62
- Public/Others: Lawrence Bond

MOTION: Motion made by Wabs to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 21st, 2025.

Second: John Ward

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved.

MOTION: Motion made by Wabs to approve the work session meeting from February 7th, 2025.

Second: John Ward

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.: None

Financials

- Discussion on building maintenance budget line item that has been spent at this station YTD
 - This is due to a service by Wiley and Sons Mechanical to fix the recirculating pump for the snowmelt system. This was built into the Capital plan, so even though it came out of repairs, there are enough funds in the budget to cover the cost.

Board member comments/action items:

- Discussion on the Aspen Fire Department position on the Entrance to Aspen. The Aspen Fire Departments position on this is that we are for a safer, more effective aggressive evacuation route. Will deal with whatever the public thinks is the best option, as there are a lot of complexities surrounding the entrance to Aspen.
 - Request from Board for Rick Balentine to create a clarifying Op-ed piece stating Aspen Fire’s official position on the Entrance to Aspen.
- Request by Board to have a joint session with the City Council for further discussion.

Staff Report for September:

Fire Marshal Report - information was not available at the time the board packet was created. Information was provided and reviewed by Fire Marshal, Jan Legersky.

- ***Wheeler Opera House Evac Plan:*** DFM Ben Smith continues working with the Wheeler Opera House to fine tune their evacuation procedures. I think the Wheeler staff should be commended for their proactive efforts for fire safety. They've been doing a great job, and we very much appreciate that.
- ***Citizen Education & Outreach:*** Ben coordinated with the City of Aspen Water Department on messaging after the LA fires. Both Fire and Water have fielded a number of concerned citizens calls and emails, and have coordinated the message that needs to be put out.
- ***Blazestack for Fire Investigations:*** We have started using a program called Blazestack for fire investigation data maintenance and report compilation and writing. This program is used by other Fire Prevention Divisions, and the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control, also. consider this as incident reports for fire investigators. The cost is will be \$2,000 a year for the subscription.
- ***Brycer, Compliance Engine.*** We will soon begin using a web-based system called Compliance Engine to help us track and maintain Testing & Inspection reports from sprinkler and fire alarm companies.

Fire Investigations:

- We conducted five fire investigations during January, with Ben being the lead investigator. Investigation reports for each of these fires are now completed and public record. Those incidents included: A sauna fire, a flu closed fire, smoke inside a unit but no origin found, a fryer unit that was set on fire and a vape pen caused a fire inside a backpack.

Upcoming Events:

The annual Palm Tree Festival, February 21-22.

Food & Wine Classic June 20-22.

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

- Reviewed recent incidents including the fires mentioned in the Fire Marshal report, a call for someone with SVT (really high heart rate),
- Great job to our crews on the water-main breaks on Red Mountain and here in town. Lots of residents were impacted by it and we did everything we could to minimize those impacts. There was great volunteer response on both calls. The City Water Department were very grateful for our help.
- Single Engine Tanker IGA will be presented in the next month or 2, involves the county, city, Sardy Field, city water department and the fire district. We will provide \$1500 of backfill prevention hoses and a cart to keep it in.

Training and Recruitment report –provided in the board packet, reviewed by the Division Chief of Training, Scott Arthur

- The January fire training was our annual SCBA Recertification.
- The February fire training is a physical, hands-on Search and Rescue training taught by FF David Richardson and FF Ben Gotlieb who have brought in new cutting-edge techniques from trainings that they have attended outside of the valley. The training is being held in the Mountain Chalet building, graciously donated by FF Craig Melville.
- The Class of '25 have been coming into the fire stations and getting their department orientation taken care of. They started their academy on 1/14 and will be working through all of the major schooling for Firefighter I and Hazmat over the next 4 months.
- With wildland season right around the corner the Upper Colorado River Unit of the Forest Service has published their list of classes to be offered in the area and we have 7 firefighters who have already signed up for 12 classes. These are specialized wildland offerings that are taught by veteran Forest Service employees. Additionally, BC Spaulding will be working with FF Fabrizio Brovelli and personnel from RFFR to put on an S212 Wildland Fire Chain Saws class here in the valley this spring.

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

- Shaggy
 - Just passed his drone pilot certification which will be helpful in showing before and after mitigation work.
 - Reviewed the Genesys Evac software. Working with all agencies in Pitkin County on training this month.
- Ali
 - FireAside assessment software ready to launch on May 1st. Making sure all internal processes are in place.
 - Sunnyside burn still tentatively on the schedule for this based on the late March, early April conditions.
 - March 4th – wildfire talk at Station 61, which will include Sunnyside information
 - Currently exploring Xyloplan, a fire pathways modeling system
 - Included in her packet were wildfire articles that were written by Ali Hammond, Rick Balentine and Angie Davelyn (RFVWC)
 - Starting to look at dates for the summer AWF fundraiser.

Human Resources – Fire Chief Job Description Draft

- Finalizing the Fire Chief job description with legal counsel, as well as creating a schedule on how to roll out the internal hiring process. Should have it ready for the March regular board meeting of 3/11/25.

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Wildfire Code Board – still going strong. Several meetings are coming up. Senator just proposed a bill to change the code board and go in a new direction, but has not moved forward as of yet. More to come on this.
- Asked to speak at a Senate hearing on artificial intelligence and wildfire cameras, which was pushed to next week.
- Beyond Your Base PR company proposal was provided in the board packet and reviewed by Chief Rick Balentine.
 - They would help us find the right way to ask our district voters to help stabilize our income moving forward, with a question/s on the November ballot. Exact questions to be determined by the help of the PR company. Their fee for us is reduced to \$45,000.
 - The Board would like more information from this firm as well as some other options/firms at the march 3/11/25 before they make a decision.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Request from Ali Hammond and WCAF about Shannon Fink’s contract, which comes due April 1st and what the Board would like to see from her in order to continue his contract. Board requests a letter showing his accomplishments from this past year and expectations going into the next year.

MOTION: Motion made by Wabs to adjourn.
Second: Emily Taylor
Discussion: None
Vote: All approved

Adjourned at 6:12 pm

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