

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
October 13th, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm by Board Chair, Charles Mueller, at the Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department located at 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway Colorado. Also, in attendance, were Vice Chairman Ned Bosworth, Board members Gary Redmond and Eric Dickerson, Administrator Katy LaSala, Ridgway Fire Chief Chris Miller, Telluride Fire Chief John Bennett, and Telluride Fire Wildland Coordinator John Cheroske. Attending via Zoom were Board member Mary Reinhardt, Ridgway Fire Captain Tom Sisler, Ridgway Fire Lieutenant Bumper Williams, and Ridgway Fire members Tony Gualtieri and Mike Trahan.

FINANCIALS

BILLS

- ❖ MOTION by Bosworth to approve bills as presented. SECOND by Dickerson. ALL IN FAVOR.

MINUTES

- ❖ MOTION by Bosworth to approve the 9/8/20 minutes as amended to clarify the Trail Town Agenda item. SECOND by Dickerson. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Wildland Team Proposal

Telluride Fire Chief John Bennett and Wildland Coordinator John Cheroske gave a presentation on the dynamics of creating and maintaining an all hazards incident team specifically designated for wildland fire incidents. They explained to the Board the benefits of sending personnel and apparatus on wildland fire assignments including increased experience and monetary compensation for firefighters, a growth in revenue for the Fire District, and building relationships with personnel from agencies located not only in Colorado but throughout the United States. This networking results in further reciprocation from other agencies in times of need at home. Moreover, they reiterated that the fire industry is a family and the benefits of paying it forward. Thus, when one agency needs assistance, not only will the surrounding fire agencies jump in to help, but so will our state and federal agencies. There is no lack of resources in times of need, even when sending our personnel and apparatus to incidents outside of our local jurisdiction. For example, during the Green Meadows fire outside of Placerville earlier this year, they had several helicopters and airplanes and 140 firefighters on the ground within 1.5 hours of the beginning of the incident. Additionally, they explained the financial dynamics in which all costs while on an Incident while on the Incident including personnel costs, as well as compensation for any apparatus we send. They did acknowledge that while there is a risk involved when sending the District's equipment and personnel, the benefits outweigh those risks. Lastly, they acknowledged the need for the creation of more wildland fire teams as the wildland fire season continues to get longer every year. Also, they mentioned the need to working with our immediate surrounding wildland teams now and hopefully us in the future within the West Slope Wildland Taskforce.

Bosworth and Dickerson both claimed to like the idea. Mueller acknowledged that there would be a financial risk primarily during the first year, but the future profit margin looks promising.

- ❖ MOTION by Mueller to accept the proposal as presented by Chief Miller to create an all hazards/wildland response team by dispatching the Ridgway Fire Protection District's apparatus, equipment, and personnel to incidents as

appropriate and allocate \$40,000 from the District's Alpine Savings account to purchase a Chase vehicle (\$25,000) as well as needed wildland PPE and equipment. SECOND by Bosworth. ALL IN FAVOR.

W2 Employee Creation

After reviewing supporting documentation as presented by LaSala and RFPD legal counsel Bo Nerlin, the Board agreed that our District needs to switch our personnel from 1099 contractors to W2 volunteer employees. LaSala suggested we implement the change beginning January 1, 2021.

❖ MOTION by Dickerson to implement a W2 payroll system for all Ridgway Fire Protection District personnel beginning January 1, 2021. SECOND by Bosworth. ALL IN FAVOR.

RVFD/RFPD Merge

It was decided by the board to table this item to the February 2021 District Meeting.

Communication Van Update

Chief Miller said that Mr. Nerlin has created an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that will be sent to the Ouray County Sheriff this week.

Ladder Truck Update

Chief Miller spoke with High Horsepower Diesel. They said the truck is mechanically sound. All repairs should be finished within a week. The cost is projected to be under \$5,000.

Monthly Chief's Report in Paper

No action was taken on this line item at this time.

Trail Town Lot Offer

The owners of the Ouray County Food Pantry contacted Mueller to discuss the purchase of the RFPD Trail Town lot. They are looking for a ½ acre lot. Mueller mentioned the possibility of leasing or selling them part of the District's lot and using the other portion of the land to construct a wildland building in the future. This discussion was tabled to be examined later.

2021 Budget Discussion

LaSala explained to the board that a format change to the budget as suggested by the District's accountant will allow for the utilization of more District funds within the budget as allotted by the board as well for a Tabor reserve. Mueller noted the concept behind the accountant's suggestions are solid. Miller and LaSala suggested putting \$100,000 in the contingency line. Captain Sisler suggested that while a contingency line is important, it is usually good not to pad it too heavily. It was decided to follow the accountant's format change recommendations and put \$50,000 in the new contingency line.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Miller explained that all our firefighters along with several Ouray firefighters attended a hoseline advancement and forcible entry training provided by Canvas Corners. We also hosted the DFPC burn trailer in which members of Ouray, Log Hill, and Norwood fire department joined us and OCEMS in a four-day live fire training event. We also have a house outside of town that was donated to us to be used for training purposes. We should be able to start using it next week, and hopefully burn it down in December.

NEW BUSINESS

Admin Salary Increase Request

LaSala excused herself during this discussion. Reinhardt recommended approving LaSala's request for a salary increase, which would give her \$45,000 annually. Mueller expressed reservations on the amount with concerns over the budget and possible future district income losses if Amendment B does not pass but also suggested the possibility of approving a

gradual increase throughout time. Chief Miller suggested LaSala provide a revised duties list and present it to the board. Bosworth agreed with the idea. Overall, all board members recognized the importance of the issue. They asked LaSala to create a duties list that can be discussed alongside the request at the next District meeting.

Request to Give Chief Authorization to Sign Mutual Aid Contracts and MOUs

❖ MOTION by Redmond to give the District Chief authorization to sign mutual aid contracts and memorandum of understandings. SECOND by Bosworth. ALL IN FAVOR.

ADJOURNMENT

❖ MOTION by Mueller to Adjourn. Second by Redmond. ALL IN FAVOR

Meeting Adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
-Katy LaSala