

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
October 6th, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm by Board Chair, Charles Mueller at the Ridgway Fire Department located at 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway Colorado. Also, in attendance were Vice Chairman Ned Bosworth, Board members Eric Dickerson and Christen Williams, RVFD Chief Chris Miller, RFPD Administrator Katy LaSala, RFPD Attorney Bo Nerlin, and RVFD Firefighter Chris Bolane.

FINANCIALS

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

MINUTES

- MOTION by Williams to approve the 8/18/21 special meeting minutes as presented. SECOND by Bosworth. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Demolition Burns

Attorney, Bo Nerlin, presented a letter drafted for the Ouray Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in response to their request to provide in-depth burn demolition/mitigation plans to be approved by them before each controlled and supervised burn executed by the members of the Ridgway Fire Department. The letter explained that while the BOCC's interest in ensuring safe and proper fire mitigation is appreciated, the Ridgway Fire District respectfully rejects the need to provide a mitigation plan and is not lawfully required to do so as pursuant to C.R.S. 32-1-1001(3)(a), which states that the "...chief of the fire department in each fire protection district in the state of Colorado...shall have authority over the supervision of all fires within the district; except that responsibility for coordinating fire suppression efforts in case of any prairie, forest, or wildland fire that exceeds the capabilities of the district to control or extinguish shall be transferred to the county sheriff..."

Chief Miller said he was happy with the letter. All board members praised the respect within, yet firmness of, the letter. Williams reiterated the importance for the BOCC to understand the authority the District has over their live-burn trainings so as not to set a precedence that we are not equal government entities.

- MOTION by Bosworth to send the Fire Mitigation Plan Rejection Letter as presented to the Ouray Board of County Commissioners. SECOND by Williams. ALL IN FAVOR.

2022 Budget Discussion

Discussion of the 2022 RFPD Budget was reschedule for the November Board meeting.

District Restructuring

Attorney Bo Nerlin presented a resolution to incorporate the use of District volunteer and members from the RVFD to be approved by the Board. He highlighted three import aspects of the document-

1. It recognizes the commitment of the RVFD members.
2. All RVFD volunteers will "fold" into members of the District.
3. The Chief will be made an employee of the District that can be hired and fired by the Board of Directors.

Nerlin noted that the current RVFD bylaws will need to be updated into a District Directives Manual and be approved by the Board. Chief Miller suggested creating a committee of RVFD Officers and RFPD Board members to complete new and update policies to which the Board agreed.

When inquired by Mueller, Chief Miller noted that the RVFD members are concerned about the Board holding responsibility of hiring and firing of the Fire Chief. Nerlin advised including a clause in the Directives Manual in which the volunteer firefighters' input on who they would like to hire as Chief is weighed heavily by the Board. As such, the volunteers would vote on their preference for Chief, and the Board would then hire for the position based on the members' voted recommendation.

- MOTION by Dickerson to approve the resolution to incorporate the use of District volunteers and members. SECOND by Mueller. ALL IN FAVOR.
- MOTION by Bosworth to incorporate the current Fire Chief's hiring process as is held by the Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department into the new RFPD District Directives Manual. SECOND by Williams. ALL IN FAVOR.

Nerlin stated the next step in the process will be to confer with the RFPD account and create a bill of sale of RVFD equipment to the RFPD as well as create the new and updated directives.

Bay Door Discussion

The discussion of a new bay door was postponed to the November District meeting as Board Director Reinhart was not present.

New Apparatus Registration

Chief Miller explained that the seller, Lynn Irwin, has been in contact with the Ouray County Clerk and all the necessary registration paperwork has been turned into the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles for processing. After which, Irwin will mail it to us so that we can register the truck in the District's name. Nerlin noted that, as Irwin has taken initiative in resolving the issue, he did not see the need to write him a letter. Chief Miller will update the Board on the titling progress at the next board meeting.

County Road 5 Training Exercise

Chief Miller noted that Ouray County Sheriff Perry is in full support of having the Ridgway Fire Department conduct the County Road 5 training exercise as well as a separate training exercise on a property owned by Tate Rogers. In direct relation to the Fire Mitigation Plan Rejection Letter and after a thorough discussion, the Board agreed that it is acceptable for Chief Miller and the RVFD members to carry out any future trainings that fall within the Chief's authority. Mueller suggested holding the County Road 5 and Rogers training closer to the winter months to help ease concerns of neighbors and other civilians. Chief Miller also noted that he will notify all residents in both neighborhoods before performing any training exercises.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Miller stated that the Ouray Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD) has taken over the Ouray County Extrication team from OCEMS. However, he stressed that not much will change because any accidents that occur outside of District 1 will still be forced to wait on a response from Ouray. This especially affects District 3, which

does not currently have an extrication team. He suggested that, because there are not enough members from either department who respond to incidents, the RFPD respond to extrication incidents outside of our District. After a brief discussion, the Board decided it to be appropriate for the RFPD to respond to extrication calls outside of District 2.

To continue, Chief Miller mentioned that he and OVFD Chief Kunz are working to create a mutual aid agreement in which Ouray and Ridgway Fire Department's can respond to all fire and visible smoke calls together. He will update the Board on the Agreement's progress as necessary.

Finally, Chief Miller requested that they raise the maximum amount of volunteer members on the RVFD from 30 personnel to 45. Mueller noted that further thought and discussion is needed, and the request was tabled to the next District meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposal to Implement a Budget Committee

Williams proposed the creation of a Budget Committee to take some of the responsibility off the Administrator while involving more members of the RFPD in the budget creation process. She suggested the committee consist of two board members, two RVFD officers, and the Administrator. Mueller stated that he believed it to be unnecessary to create a committee as the Administrator has always worked with the Board at District meetings to create a budget. He also thought it inappropriate for RVFD members to make budgetary decisions. After discussion, it was decided to create a budget committee for future RFPD budgets.

- MOTION by Williams to create a RFPD Budget Committee consisting of two RFPD Board Members, two RVFD Officers, and the RFPD Administrator.

At this time the committee will consist of Board members Reinhardt and Williams, RVFD Officers Miller and Sisler, and RFPD Admin LaSala. SECOND by Dickerson. ALL IN FAVOR.

Proposal to Implement a Ballot Measure Committee

LaSala inquired as to whether we want to put a mil levy increase question on the 2022 ballot. If so, the creation of a committee should be discussed. Mueller is in favor of requesting a mil levy increase from the District's constituents. However, he suggested do not put it on the ballot of a big election year, suggesting 2023. Williams agreed and noted that she did not believe we have enough time to put together and market such a large petition before the 2022 election. It was decided to discuss the topic further at the next District meeting.

OTHER NON-AGENDA BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

- MOTION by Mueller to Adjourn. Second by Bosworth. ALL IN FAVOR

Meeting Adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
-Katy LaSala