

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
August 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm by Board Chair Christen Williams at the Ridgway Fire Department located at 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. Also, in attendance were Board Members Terry Schuyler, Pam Kraft, Jamie Gomez, and Adam Johnson; District Fire Chief Chris Miller; District Administrator Katy LaSala; District Legal Counsel Bo Nerlin; Todd Schroedel of United Country Realty; and Lia Salvatierra of the Ouray Plaindealer.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA INCLUDING ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

No additions or changes to the agenda were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

❖ MOTION by Gomez to approve the 7/22/24 special meeting minutes as presented. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

❖ MOTION by Schuyler to approve the July 2024 financial report as presented. SECOND by Johnson. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Board discussion and input from RFPD Realtor, Tod Schroedel, regarding sale options for RFPD property - Lot 26-B1, Trail Town Subdivision – that is currently listed as for sale.

Todd Schroedel, who is the District's listing realtor for the Trail Town Subdivision property 26-B1, presented to the Board the current listing packet. When questioned about the \$700,000 listing price, he stated that he believes the price is fair but most likely will not sell quickly in this market. He noted that the District does have options. Specifically, as the lot is rather large, .89 acres, well-marked, and zoned GC with very few covenants, he suggested it might be a more enticing option to subdivide the property into two or three parcels and sell them individually. Williams questioned the time frame of subdividing to which Schroedel stated that it would take time, but also create more interest as it may attract more buyers for a lesser priced property. Nerlin asked if there have been any offers. Schroedel answered that there have been no offers but lots of views noting that it is listed on 64 online sites including Zillow and Realtor.com. He also suggested the District remove the Training Tower composed of Conex containers to boost the listing. Chief Miller was tasked by the Board with taking care of that. Schuyler questioned whether the District consider raising the price. No action was taken at this time, and an executive session to discuss property will be held at the next meeting.

Board discussion concerning financing of the 22327 Highway 550 Training and Maintenance Center.

Nerlin noted that after discussion with Blake at Community Leasing and review of the District's prior years financials, they have created two loan options as were provided in a document presented to the Board. Option 1 is a 20-year loan with a down payment of \$200,000 and a total amount financed at \$1,350,000, annual payments of \$114,132.12 at a 5.62% interest rate. Option 2 is a 5-year loan also with a down payment of \$200,00 and total amount financed at \$1,350,000, annual payments of \$130,282.31 at a 5.88% interest rate, and a balloon payment of \$969,066.41 due one month following the 5th annual payment. The first payment for both options would be one year from closing. Nerlin noted that loan documents can be in the board packet as early as September. Both Williams and Nerlin suggested that Option 1 may be a better choice due to its lower payments and interest rate. Williams further stated that she does not think Option 2 would fit within the

District's annual budget. Kraft and Gomez echoed William's and Nerlin's opinions, with Gomez stating that he does not feel "Option 2 is a prudent way to spend the taxpayer's money." Schuyler also suggested that the Board should be considerate of the possibility of District consolidation and other Districts, noting the possibility to refinance in the future if necessary. The Board directed Mr. Nerlin to relay to Community Leasing that the Ridgway Fire Protection District would like to pursue Option 1 and have them draw up the appropriate loan documents.

Board update and discussion of contract between Ridgway Fire Protection District and Lyons Gaddis and agency consolidation options.

Nerlin stated that Williams executed an engagement letter with Lyons Gaddis per board direction at the beginning of August and noted that he was very impressed with their representative, John Chmil. He suggested that the Board hold a special meeting to answer any questions they may have and discuss consolidation options. Chief Miller added that all four Ouray County Fire Chiefs along with the OCEMS Chiefs held a meeting last week to discuss consolidation options, and all were generally in favor of the idea. A special meeting was scheduled by the board to be held on 9/9/24 at 5 p.m. to meet and receive a presentation by Mr. Chmil from Lyons Gaddis.

Board update on Employer's Council compensation study.

LaSala stated that Chief Miller executed an engagement letter with the Employer's Council at a cost of \$3,000 for them to perform a compensation study of the three RFPD job descriptions – Chief, Captain, and District Administrator. Chief Miller noted that both he and LaSala met with the Employer's Council representative, are feeling good about it, and that the representative stated she believes she can have the study done by 10/1/24. No action was taken at this time.

Board discussion of proposed parking policy at 22327 Hwy 550 Training Center.

Nerlin presented the attached draft parking policy for the 22327 Highway 550 Training Center that releases the District from liability for damage to personal vehicles parked on the property. Also, it writes that parking is for Ridgway Fire Protection Employees, volunteers, guests and invitees and for storage of District vehicles; parking of vehicles for emergency responders; or for those who have prior approval from District personnel. No camping is permitted, and no drug/alcohol use is permitted in the parking area. Williams suggested that, if approved, we should post the policy on the property.

- ❖ MOTION by Schuyler to approve the parking policy as amended to include the specific 22327 Highway 550 address. SECOND by Gomez. ALL IN FAVOR.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Miller reported the following-

- Trainings continue to be held every Wednesday alternating between Ridgway Fire and OVFD.
- While most of our incidents last month were lightning strikes, our most notable event was a structure fire on Lynx Rd. He noted that it showed our trainings are paying off but also that we have a severe lack of manpower, and it bothers him that we do not have enough people responding to calls. He would like to push to recruit more volunteers so that we have the allotted 30. Williams echoed the statement that even though we are now a combination department, we do still need our volunteers. Kraft asked what the Board can offer to help. Miller stated that he doesn't have an answer yet but will be working on a solution for the 2025 budget calendar. Miller also reiterated that the lack of volunteers does not reflect the deep dedication that our current volunteers have to this department.
- Chief Miller noted that he assisted Norwood agencies with the District's drone on a search and rescue mission.
- The Wildland Team is home from a 33-day assignment and will be listing as "available" tomorrow.
- We should be getting our Certificate of Occupancy for the training center this week.

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

❖ MOTION by Schuyler to adjourn until a Special Meeting on 9/9/24. Second by Kraft. ALL IN FAVOR.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,
-Katy LaSala