

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District  
Regular Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes  
April 5, 2021

Present:

Jim Albee, Chair	Bob Baker, Fire Chief
Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Assistant Chief
William Shriver, Treasurer	Tobias Kirschke, Assistant Chief
Hank Eng, Secretary	Kevin Milan, Assistant Chief
Sue Roche	Jon Adams, Assistant Chief
Cindy Hathaway	Dillon Miskimins, Chief Financial Officer
Alison Rausch	Kristin Eckmann, Chief Communications Officer
	Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: PSAP Operations Manager Tyler March & other SMFR Emergency Dispatch and Staff Members

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Albee called the Regular Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Albee led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**ROLL CALL**

All members of the Board were present in person.

At Chair Albee's request, Local 2086 Representative Pete Scully provided a short personal bio.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

N/A

**PRESENTATION(S)**

Update on Emergency Dispatch Center – PSAP Operations Manager Tyler March highlighting:  
Overview

- Our History
  - MetCom opened its doors on January 19, 2006 to provide a regional Fire and EMS Communications Center.
  - When the Center opened, it first served SMFR and shortly thereafter Parker Fire joined, making it an Authority.
  - The Center has built a reputation for being the leader in the industry nationwide.
  - The Center is considered a secondary PSAP and is accredited in both National Academy's Emergency Medical Dispatching and APCO's Project 3 standards for training.
  - In 2016, MetCom re-integrated back into SMFR as its own bureau.
- Agencies Served
  - The Center services over 500,000 citizens, 7 fire departments covering 1,800 square miles.
  - The Center dispatches for large portions of Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson & Douglas Counties.
  - Our philosophy is regardless of the size of the agency, the citizens and departments all deserve the highest level of customer service and best dispatching possible.
- Role of a Dispatcher
  - Answer calls for assistance.
  - Assess incident information.

- Dispatch appropriate resources.
- Maintain resource status.
- Track incident progress.
- The first, first responders.
  - Ability to positively or negatively effect the outcome of the incident within seconds of the initial call.
- The voice of the department.
  - Attitude & voice inflections has drastic effects.
- Researcher of many subjects.
  - 911 is sometimes confused with 411.
- Current Operations
  - In 2021, the MetCom name was officially retired with the re-organization of the department.
  - We have rebranded to the South Metro Emergency Communications Bureau, reporting to the Emergency Services Division.
  - We continue to operate 24-hour shifts consisting of 1 Dispatch Supervisor, 1 Lead Dispatcher and 5 Dispatchers per shift.
  - In 2019, we were re-accredited in Emergency Medical Dispatch and APCO's Project 33.
- Incident Dispatch Team
  - The IDT is a team of specially trained dispatchers operating during the initial response to an emergency. Established for rapid deployment to major incidents to facilitate communications, logistics, and planning functions during the first operational period.
- KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Reports
  - Service Area Call Volume.
  - Quality Assurance Standards.
  - Emergency Communications: Performance, Hours, Telecom Compliance.
  - SMFR Call Volume by Battalion.
  - Total Incidents by Call Type.

At Director Eng's request, PSAP Ops Manager March stated that with assistance from the Douglas County Radio Shops and SMFR Fleet, radio interoperability is key. In 2020, every mobile and portable radio in our 29-station fleet were upgraded over a four-day period.

At Director Anderson's request, Ops Manager March informed that on average, it is between 40 and 55 seconds for a call to transfer from one PSAP to another, and it then takes approximately 30 to 40 seconds for the calls to be processed and dispatched through the SMFR Dispatch Center. The Center falls under the Arapahoe County E-911 Authority, so they are unable to control other Authority's (such as Jefferson County's) processes but they are able to work with the other agencies to analyze the monthly call transfer time reports. March added that AC E-911 is funded through a surcharge affixed to each landline, wireless, and voice over internet protocols & provided an example of a grant award to use those funds to purchase equipment that allows CAD-to-CAD communication.

At Director Shriver's request, Ops Manager March stated the Center is staff on a modified Kelly schedule (1 day on, 1 day off, 1 day on, 1 day off, 1 day on and 4 days off), the shift is 24-hours starting at 0700 hours each day. At 1800 hours, half the shift goes to bed and at 2400 hours, they return to the Center and the other half of the shift goes to bed. The unique schedule also allows time away from the console by providing full kitchen amenities, flexible breaks, full gym and private sleep rooms.

At Chair Albee's request, Ops Manager March reported that the pandemic of the last year was not only taxing on the dispatchers but the crews also. It was challenging, but they made sure to keep a pulse on everyone and ensuring that they were getting the time off they required to alleviate stress, including pulling someone off the console, if needed. Ops Manager March added that the Center is staffed through APCO and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA). Staffing levels are evaluated annually to ensure they are on par with Arapahoe County PSAPs as a whole. Based on call volume and accreditation standards, March believes that we are probably at a point that we will need to increase the staffing levels in 2022/2023 & is happy to report that people are leaving due to life changes, not because of the job.

At Director Eng's request, Ops Manager March stated that there are no metro area communications center of the same size and are somewhat of a unicorn because the Center was built specifically for Fire and EMS dispatching. Nationally, it might be comparable to Orange County.

At Chair Albee's request, Ops Manager March provided a synopsis of his background and family, noting that he was one of the original MetCom dispatchers working in the center when it opened in 2006 & that his step-dad was a Captain with the Phoenix FD with 35 years on the job, which likely drove his ambition.

The Board thanked PSAP Ops Manager for the presentation.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

March 1, 2021 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Regular Board Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2021 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Special Board Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Hank Eng and seconded by Alison Rausch to approve the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

Chair Albee noted that SMFR Resolutions 2021-03 and 2021-04 will be moved up on the agenda.

SMFR Resolution No. 2021-03 Proclaiming the Week of April 11-17, 2021 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week – Chief Adams reminded that in 1991, House Joint Resolution 284 was approved by Congress in order to designate the week beginning April 12, 1992, as 'National public Safety Telecommunicators Week'. Similar resolutions were passed the following two years until it was permanent with no need for a yearly introduction. These resolutions were intended to designate a time when citizens can thank public safety men and women who dispatch emergency professionals and equipment during a time of crisis. Today, there are more than 6,100 emergency call centers in the U.S., handling more than 200 million 911 calls every year according to the National Emergency Number Association. Currently, there are about 100,000 professionals working throughout the country, with about 10,000 dispatchers being hired every year to perform this critical role for the nation's emergency services.

A motion was made by Sue Roche and seconded by Hank Eng to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2021-03 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

SMFR Resolution No. 2021-04 Recognizing Emergency Dispatchers as First Responders – Chief Adams took a moment to recognize the dispatchers that are here tonight and the ones joining via Teams.

Chief Adams stated that this resolution recognizes the critical role of emergency dispatchers in the 911 system. Their impact on patient survival, emergency responder safety, and the overall successful outcome of emergency incidents has dramatically evolved over the past several decades, yet federal job classifications have not kept up with these changes; currently dispatchers are considered "Office and Administrative Support" under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), which does not truly define the work that is being done, citing personal background & working in the center, and our dispatchers take it above and beyond anything that we would expect. Several neighboring agencies, as well as others throughout the country, have passed similar resolutions to locally recognize the importance of their emergency dispatchers and urge the federal government to reclassify the profession so that the research, data, and programs that evaluate all first responders are inclusive of emergency dispatchers. Chief Adams stated that he is proud of the dispatchers for bringing it up, proud to present it as this is long overdue & staff recommends approval of the resolution.

Chair Albee read the resolution in its entirety and concurred that it is very important and long overdue. Chair Albee offered his assistance and assistance from the board that would help Federal reclassification.

A motion was made by Hank Eng and seconded by Jim Albee to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2021-04 Recognizing Emergency Dispatchers as First Responders as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

The audience applauded the Board for approving the resolution.

Public Hearing: Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property: Jacob and Kaitlyn Jones; Timothy J. Meahl and Meaghan M. Meahl; Jessica Heywood; Anastasia Cordova-Melton and Brian Drake; Steve and Michele Folan; and, Francis and Shamira Joanna Acosta.

Chair Albee opened the public hearing at 6:44 p.m.

Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that there were a total of 13 homes in the City of Aurora, in the general area east of E470 and south of Smoky Hill Road, that used to be in the Parker Fire Protection District boundaries and much of which has since been annexed into the city of Aurora. Chief Dell'Orfano reviewed the reasons for inclusions and exclusions, criteria and process, noting that despite several attempts in writing and in person, there are still five property owners within our district that are served by dual jurisdictions. Today is the last day to get these petitions processed by the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline to not be paying us taxes in 2022. Staff will likely make another effort later this year aiming for exclusion by the deadline for taxes in 2023.

At Director Roche's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reported that each of the property owners pay approximately \$300 to \$400 to SMFR and although Aurora would respond now, we also responded in the past and have an automatic aid agreement with Aurora, so we would not offer a refund. Chair Albee noted that the City of Aurora's mill levy is 8.76, which includes many services provided by the city, at about 88% of what they pay SMFR.

At Director Eng's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that SMFR does not have to notify the property owners and although there is no official confirmation they received the notices, he has had several conversations with at least one of the five property owners. Director Anderson stated that she is more than comfortable with the efforts that have been made and is willing to defend their efforts if it ever came into question.

There was no public comment and Chair Albee closed the hearing at 6:55 p.m.

A motion was made by Renee Anderson and seconded by Cindy Hathaway to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Jacob and Kaitlyn Jones) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Alison Rausch and seconded by Sue Roche to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Timothy J. Meahl and Meaghan M. Meahl) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Sue Roche and seconded by Cindy Hathaway to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Jessica Heywood) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by William Shriver and seconded by Hank Eng to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Anastasia Cordova-Melton and Brian Drake) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Hank Eng and seconded by Cindy Hathaway to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Steve and Michele Folan) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Cindy Hathaway and seconded by Renee Anderson to approve the Order by Board of Directors of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District for Exclusion of Real Property (Francis and Shamira Joanna Acosta) as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

SMFR Resolution No. 2021-05 Terminating Declaration of Local Disaster Emergency – Chief Baker reminded that on March 19, 2020, the District declared a local disaster in response to the national public health emergency and worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19. Staff has evaluated the need to continue the disaster declaration and finds that it is appropriate to terminate the declaration at this time. Employees have had the opportunity to receive the vaccination, most work-from-home arrangements have ended, special sick leave policies have been rescinded, and local restrictions have diminished. Additionally, rescinding the declaration will not have an adverse effect on SMFR's ability to receive grand funding & staff recommends approval of the resolution and thankful we are on the downside and can re-implement the declaration if needed.

At Director Eng's request, CFO Miskimins reported that just over \$500,000 has been reimbursed of the \$1.2 million extended to date and Staff will be submitting for the additional reimbursement by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Baker informed that the declaration did not have a direct impact on our day-to-day operations and some of the restrictions and requirements have been reduced for our personnel.

A motion was made by Sue Roche and seconded by Hank Eng to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2021-05 Terminating the Declaration of Local Disaster Emergency as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

February 2021 Financial Statements – Chief Financial Officer Miskimins reviewed the financial statements, highlighting:

1. Fund balance increased by approximately \$26.7 million compared to prior month, bringing fund balance to a total of \$78.7 million.
2. Through February, the District has collected \$39 million in property and specific ownership tax revenue, which reflects 33.26% collection vs. 35.61% at this time last year for property taxes, and 16.56% vs. 15.51% for specific ownership taxes. A total of \$227,636 of property taxes have been diverted to TIF in 2021.
3. As of February 28<sup>th</sup>, the District has expended \$20 million in the General Fund related to operations or 14.34% of the annual budget not including Capital Projects transfers.
4. Through February, the District has expended \$1.1 million or 17.65% of our total budgeted expenditures in the Capital Fund.
5. To help alleviate the seasonal cash flow challenge, the District has stuck with a strict net 30 policy for invoice payments resulting in higher than normal accounts payable balances. Normal payment terms have been restored following the collection of property taxes on March 10<sup>th</sup>.
6. The apparatus for Station 20 that was previously recorded in our prepaid account is now considered in service and has been expensed in the "vehicles and apparatus" line of the Capital Projects Fund.
7. As of March 24<sup>th</sup>, \$1,245,779 has been expended on COVID-19 related resources.

At Director Shriver's request, CFO Miskimins confirmed that the negative dollar amount in the investment earnings account is the result of a mark to market adjustment & reminded the Board of the inverse relationship between interest rates and bond prices. As the interest rate environment increases, the value of the District's existing bonds decrease, resulting in a negative adjustment to investment earnings.

At Chair Albee's request, CFO Miskimins and Bob Cole stated that it is possible to challenge Specific Ownership Taxes for vehicle registration.

Referencing the Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Chair Albee noted that there was an effort to include special districts but it did not make it to the final legislation. Other state delegations have written letters to propose changing how they distribute the funds to special districts of which he believes Colorado is anticipating approximately \$2 million & asked if there are any resources or efforts to ensure that special districts at least have an opportunity to receive some of those funds. CFO Miskimins stated that he had received an email letter sent to the treasury by several state special district associations so there is some advocacy happening and Congressman Crow received some of that feedback when he visited SMFR. CFO Miskimins stated that he believes that past funds were provided to special districts through the Department of Local Governments and those funds were distributed through grant awards and that is how SMFR received the \$500,000 in COVID reimbursement in the last go round.

A motion was made by William Shriver and seconded by Hank Eng to accept the February 2021 Financial Statements as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

N/A

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

Correspondence items in the Board's packet are summarized below as well as other information items that were communicated:

- The monthly Dispatch Dashboard and Emergency Services Reports were included in the Board packet.
- An article from April EMS World – EMS and Ketamine: Does it have a place? – a roundtable of experts discusses its application, safety and recent news reports, was included in the Board packet.
- A thank you email was received from Byers Fire Chief Mike Disher thanking Emergency Dispatch for the amazing job they did correcting a discrepancy in location of a patient that was having difficulty breathing, without which may have had a negative outcome.
- A thank you letter was received from the Orchard Valley at Cherry Creek Park HOA thanking Community Risk Reduction Specialists Kim Spuhler and Claudia Mead, as well as SMFR, for putting together a plan, scheduling it, gathering the necessary equipment for implementation to help mitigate concerns about dead trees and brush growth along Piney Creek.
- A thank you letter was received from Metro Midwifery Lead Midwife Gina Gerboth to share their appreciation for the kind, professional and efficient care one of their patients received from M16, E19 & E16.

Director Anderson stated that the Highlands Ranch Metro District BOD and Staff thanked SMFR for the tour of Station 20 last week.

Director Eng reported that he was part of the team that helped locate the plane that crashed about 20 miles south of Conifer on Saturday evening and recounted the difficulties that the Civil Air Patrol and other members of the rescue operations experienced trying to reach the plane wreckage, a crash that killed the pilot, the only person on board.

Director Hathaway reported that the Littleton Elks Lodge changed their Firefighter of the Year Award to the Troy Jackson Award and Lori Jackson presented the award to Lieutenant Taylor Stephens, who accepted on behalf of SMFR. Lori Jackson presented a second award to Lieutenant Stephens and his wife Shauna for the help they provided to Troy and the family. Chief Baker added that the Elks were very gracious, the venue was great, he looks forward to attending next year & CCO Eckmann will be helping put together information about the awards that were given out and their uplifting stories.

Chief Baker informed that the Colorado State Fire Chiefs & Metro Denver Fire Chiefs Association are addressing about 20 legislations that impact Fire and EMS; particularly HB 21-1251 outlining the use of Ketamine and Alopurinol; and SB 21-182 concerning school discipline. Neither of the bills are supported on both sides of the isle and CSFC, MDFCA and SDA are working to be sure our voice is heard in regard to this legislation and how dangerous they are for first responders. Local 2086 Representative Scully added that the Colorado Professional Firefighters Association has a lobbying arm that could also provide support.

CCO Eckmann reported that the Citizen Academy started last week with 18 participants, out of about 75 applicants, and the Staff Academy starts soon with a Board Academy planned for the future.

Chief Adams thanked the Board for their support of SMFR Resolution 2021-04 Recognizing Dispatchers as First Responders.

Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that the Board will be touring the TJTC Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. to give them a better sense of our facilities in preparation for further discussion at their next meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)**

N/A

**NEXT MEETING**

The South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' will tour of the Troy Jackson Training Center on April 12, 2021 at 4:30 p.m., 2301 W. Chenango Avenue, Littleton, CO.

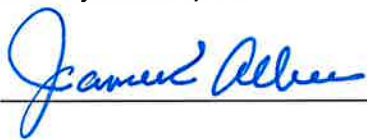
The next Special South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on April 19, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at Joint Training Facility, 17801 E. Plaza Drive, Parker, CO.

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on May 3, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board of Trustees' Meeting will take place on May 3, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Albee at 7:38 pm.

Attested by: 

Date: May 3, 2021