

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Special Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
August 16, 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 (Excused Absence)	Kevin Milan, Assistant Chief
Cindy Hathaway (Excused Absence)	Jon Adams, Assistant Chief
Alison Rausch	Kristin Eckman, Chief Communications Officer(absent)
Sue Roche	Camie Chapman, Human Resources Director
	Dillon Miskimins, Chief Financial Officer
	Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Albee called the special meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:14 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting which was held at Station 41.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Board Members Albee, Anderson, Shriver, Rausch and Roche were present in person.

ACTION ITEMS

N/A

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Station Tour – Station Officer Rob Page & BC Aaron Goedecker provided the Board with a tour of Station 41.

Wildfire Response Methodology - Administrative Battalion Chief Scott Richardson provided an overview the Wildland Firefighting Team, highlighting the organizational structure, staffing, training, a review of the 2020 deployments and response plan. BC Richardson also provided an overview of the Technical Rescue Teams organizational structure, staffing, training, response plan and provided a tour of the new Collapse Trailer, which is anticipated to go into service in October.

Auto Aid Overview – Chief Dell'Orfano opened with reminding that the Board has given Staff the authority to sign agreements, keeping the Board informed of any major changes. Chief Adams provided a definition of auto vs. mutual aid; auto aid is assistance that is dispatched automatically by a contractual agreement between two entities versus mutual aid which is dispatched upon request by the primary responding department. Chief Adams reviewed the surrounding area departments that currently have Auto Aid Agreements with SMFR and ones that have changed recently or are in re-negotiation, including decreasing the amount of aid given to Denver Health.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Adams reassured that on large incidents, there is not a political divide. The changes made to the agreements are about equalizing the assistance provided. Chief Kirschke added that sometimes the changes are advantageous to other departments because their boards/councils need to expand the resources necessary to cover their jurisdiction.

At Director Shriver's request, Chief Adams reported that some of the departments are growing and building additional stations but many are restricted by lack of funds and struggle to retain employees, especially when SMFR and other large districts open their hiring process for career emergency responders.

CAD-to-CAD Update – As a follow-up from the last meeting, Chief Adams provided an update on the status of CAD-to-CAD systems for local agencies. Chief Adams advised that Arapahoe County's system is in place; Aurora wants to have a system but it has been delayed due to changes in their dispatch center and fire liaison; JeffCom's is about to start up; Douglas County is ready to move forward once JeffCom is completed as they are both part of Central Square. Once that hub complex is complete, it will cut down on response times, but we will also need to find ways to filter through the mass amount of information entered into the system.

Effective Response Force Overview – Chief Dell'Orfano introduced GIS Manager Kim McAndrews who assists with our data analytics & re-introduced Accreditation Manager Scot Swindall. Chief Dell'Orfano stated an ERF is defined as the minimum number of firefighters and equipment that must reach a specific emergency incident location within a maximum prescribed travel time. This is one of many standards that are constantly changing to improve service. The accreditation review process also provides opportunities for improvement. In the most-recent review process, it was identified that our urban and rural ERF times were not within an acceptable range for one of the accreditation commissioners. Staff took a deep dive into the ERF requirements, clarified benchmark vs. baseline, reviewed and corrected the old numbers, which vastly improved the ERF, and identified areas for future improvement.

Director Anderson stated that it is really refreshing to have data available to evaluate, assess and make decisions and at her request, Chief Dell'Orfano informed that Accreditation Manager Swindall sits on the Rocky Mountain Accreditation & Professional Credentialing Consortium (RMAPCC) board, where he will be presenting our findings. Chief Dell'Orfano also informed that several years ago it was determined there was a problem with the turnout time standard, and it wasn't until agencies starting analyzing actual performance that the standards started to change. Chief Kirschke reminded that amongst the chaos, there is a level of human error in processes that helps collect the data. Chief Adams added, and Chief Dell'Orfano confirmed, that context needs to be included with the data and will be a part of the review of future ERF data. Chief Baker noted that out of 30,000 fire departments in the US, only 225 are accredited and we should be proud of that.

At Director Shriver's request, Chief Dell'Orfano clarified that, in the past, the benchmarks we set for ourselves have worked very well; however, now that we are much bigger and geographically diverse, some of the urban areas are difficult to respond to within the standard. Chief Dell'Orfano also informed that there is current discussion around additional identifiers to measure performance such as the time to get water on the fire. Chief Kirschke reminded that these reports are fire-based and that is not what makes up the majority of our calls.

At Chair Albee's request, Chief Dell'Orfano confirmed that all of the data is being reviewed and constantly evolving ways to analyze it. Chief Dell'Orfano & Accreditation Manager Swindall stated that the updated data would not affect the first due urban and rural response numbers but will verify.

Station 20 Performance – Chief Dell'Orfano reviewed the 2019 – 2020 Station 20 call statistics and how GIS Manager McAndrews and her team are pulling together the data and working with Staff to review performance and determine if the response plan is the correct one. Currently, what they are seeing is that the addition of Station 20 is decreasing response times. Staff will be producing a quarterly report to track the trends throughout the district.

Firearm Regulation – Chief Dell'Orfano opened the discussion noting that Senate Bill 21-256 was signed into law and allows local governments, including special districts, to enact regulations that prohibit the carrying of concealed handguns in a building or area under direct control of the District. SMFR's existing Violence-Free Workplace Policy already attempts to prohibit the open or concealed carry of weapons, although the applicability to public areas such as the board room has not been clear prior to the passage of SB 21-256. In order to maintain the current policy and be in compliance with the new law, the Board will need to adopt a resolution specifying the prohibition and penalties. Staff would like to hear the Board's thoughts on the topic and check alignment with current policy.

Legal Counsel Cole provided an overview of the state of concealed carry handgun regulation that existed prior to SB 21-256 and advice provided to SMFR Staff in the creation of the District's Violence-Free Workplace Policy, summarizing that under SB 21-256 the SMFR Board should consider whether it wishes to prohibit properly concealed handguns in SMFR public buildings and facilities, and if so, adopt the necessary regulation, post signage, and provide for enforcement of a prohibition, if adopted. Legal Counsel Cole added that previously you had to have a metal screening system, which is too expensive for some agencies; now the district can enforce through a temporary screening process, if desired, which is much less expensive.

At the Board's request, Legal Counsel Cole confirmed that there is an option to scan everyone, only scan in certain circumstances, or not at all but that needs to be outlined in a resolution or policy approved by the Board for enforcement. Legal Counsel Cole added that the Board needs to decide when revising the policy to remove the restrictions on the public or approve a resolution to enforce the restrictions for all of the district's public areas in stations and other facilities. Options for removal of someone breaking the rules are to ask the person to leave, fine someone for the violation, or implement a screening system. Chief Dell'Orfano elaborated that per a discussion with the Executive Team, once you cross the doors into locked areas of SMFR facilities, the recommendation would be to prohibit weapons. For areas such as the board room, community rooms, public spaces, etc., Staff would like Board's input.

Staff will bring back this subject for further discussion and direction from the Board.

Shift Schedules – Board Member Discussion – Chief Dell'Orfano reminded that Staff has provided a lot of information to the board regarding options and costs. Now it really comes down to risk benefit, feelings about the recommendations, is more information needed, and are there any major questions.

Chair Albee shared his analysis of the information provided regarding scheduled hours versus hours worked and how the hours worked changes between the schedules and can be used as a metric to assist with making a decision. Chair Albee also provided his analysis of off days; first days; and unrestricted sleep nights.

Director Anderson stated that Chair Albee's information further goes against justifying the hybrid schedule, and she believe that any changes that have been presented are not convincing enough to think it will solve what we are trying to solve; is the various schedules result in less freedom to have 4,5,6,7 day off in a row; are there other options that will accommodate recovery time; and she is concerned about the cost but is in favor of anything that is an improvement.

Director Rausch stated that she has concerns about the cost also. She was not a Board Member at the time but has received information that there was a lot of discussion prior to the mergers that we would not need to change the mill levy and does not have a problem going to the taxpayers if needed but worries it is so soon after making promises; she also has questions about whether the proposed changes would solve what we are trying to solve.

Chair Albee reminded that they are still working two days in a row, which is the main concern. He has heard that moving to the 48/96 was to get away from some of the concerns that we may re-inject if we go to a different schedule.

Director Shriver stated there are some other options that could be tried before completely changing the schedule and suggested approaching it piecemeal, such as a later start time even though that does not resolve the first day commute issue, and stated he does not think that we would lose a lot of ground if we work on things before 2024.

Director Roche stated that she appreciates the data and agrees that we may need to look at some other options but does not want to discount that the majority of the Line were in favor of a schedule change & wonders if a change in start time or other options would be as appealing.

Chair Albee stated that in discussions with the other two board members, he believes they would be in agreement with the things discussed tonight. His read of the seven board members is that there is not support of a shift schedule change that has a financial impact with the belief that a change may make it better for everyone but not sure it will

make it good for everyone. And not sure what it would take to have the second question on the flow chart presented previously to be a yes, that we are willing to pay an amount that requires a tax increase.

Chief Baker interjected that he agrees that some of the items discussed are really good and the ETeam & Local will be working on a number of the items; regardless, he is excited because it will make things better. He likes that the Board is open to additional vacation time, in conjunction with the other leave policies that have been recently implemented, even if the schedule stays the same. Chief Baker posed the question to the Board about their comfort level with supporting a schedule that includes the risks of working 48-hr shifts that can't be completely addressed with other mitigation strategies.

Chair Albee stated that he would like to hear from the Local.

Local President Joel Heineman stated that there are a ton of variables and the Board had addressed some of them. There is still a concern about the 48-hour shift. The department moved to the 48/96 schedule on a 56-hour workweek for the reasons of commute time and more time with family. The discussion then moved to working fewer hours so they started looking at different schedules and the Seattle schedule was very attractive and hit some of the marks. There are things that can be done to address sleep deprivation but the only way to reduce exposure is to reduce the time that they are at work for better mental and physical wellness. It will be difficult to explain to the membership if the Board goes another direction.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Chief Dell'Orfano provided a preview for the September Board Meeting to include the following:
 - September meetings will be ramping up for budget
 - At the September 20th meeting, staff will be going over the general gist of the budget in preparation for the initial draft in October.
 - Feedback on abatements, new personal property tax law, and additional information will be provided and discussed.
- Chief Baker noted he was interviewed by Firehouse Magazine and the article, *Nuturing a Culture*, is in the July 2021 edition. The article is about working "...to ensure department members are provided with what they need to serve a varied response district and be healthy and safe".

EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)

N/A

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Board of Directors' meeting to be held on September 13, 2021, 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO

The next Special Board of Directors' meeting to be held on September 20, 2021, 6:00 p.m. at location TBD.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Albee adjourned the meeting at 10:14 p.m.

Attested by:  Date: SEP 13, 2021