

South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District
Regular Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2022

Present:	Jim Albee, Chair	Bob Baker, Fire Chief
	Renee Anderson, Vice Chair	Mike Dell'Orfano, Chief Govt. Affairs Officer
	William Shriver, Treasurer	John Curtis, Deputy Chief – Emergency Services
	Sue Roche, Secretary	Jon Adams, Deputy Chief - Internal Services
	Cindy Hathaway	Kristin Eckmann, Deputy Chief – Community Services
	Kevin Leung	Dillon Miskimins, CFO Business Services
	Rich Sokol	Camie Chapman, CHRO Employee Services
		Bob Cole, Legal Counsel

Others Present: SMFR Staff Members

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chair Albee called the Regular Meeting of the South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District to order at 6:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

All of the Board members were present in person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

PRESENTATION

Staff Academy Overview – Deputy Chief Eckmann explained that the department created a staff academy last year to allow staff to experience what line personnel experience. It was very well received by the participants, so another Academy has been scheduled for this fall along with four subsequent sessions each quarter of next year. The quarterly sessions will be held on Saturdays. The schedule should be finalized soon & would love to have one or two Board Members participate. Hope to make this is an annual event.

CONSENT AGENDA

September 12, 2022 South Metro Fire Rescue Fire Protection District Regular Board Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Renee Anderson and seconded by Sue Roche to approve the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

Chief Dell'Orfano requested that the two action items be switched. The Board approved the request.

SMFR Resolution No. 2022-08 Proclaiming the Week of October 9-15, 2022 as Fire Prevention Week – Deputy Chief Eckmann reported October is designated as Fire Prevention Month and that according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the devastating 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed

more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres. In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first national fire prevention day proclamation, and since 1922, the NFPA has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. This is the longest-running public health and safety observance in our country. The President of the United States has signed a proclamation proclaiming a national observance during the week every year since 1925.

Risk Reduction Specialists Kim Spuhler and Colleen Potton informed that their team works within the SMFR community to ensure that residents learn how to become safer at home, work, and at play. In connection with Fire Prevention Month, they have worked closely with Strategic Services Manager Kim McAndrews and the GIS Team to determine the number one cause of house fires within the district, the result was cooking fires at 47%. The Team has been working with the Scream Advertising Agency, Be Seen – Be Heard – Be Good to create a campaign called 1 Second Can Make A Difference. The October campaign will include a vinyl billboard at the southeast corner of Parker and Iliff & two digital billboards on the northwest corner of Iliff and Quebec. As a second part of the campaign, they are working with Altitude Sports for informational spots during Avalanche and Colorado Rapids games during the month of October. Additionally, during the Open House at Station 20 this Saturday, they will be conducting a Fire Prevention Tour, using a reserve engine to visit a location in each of the five battalions to talk to the community about fire safety. Finally, they will be using geofencing to send tailored ads to the district's zip codes, focusing on 25-35 year olds, who will get a pop up that can be clicked to find out additional information. The campaign kick-off is with the Board tonight and everyone else tomorrow.

The Board thanked them for their work and are interested in finding out how well the campaign works.

Director Anderson read the resolution.

A motion was made by Sue Roche and seconded by Cindy Hathaway to approve SMFR Resolution No. 2022-08 Proclaiming the Week of October 9-15, 2022 as Fire Prevention Week. All were in favor and the motion carried.

August 2022 Financial Statements – CFO Miskimins reviewed the financial statements, highlighting:

1. Fund balance decreased by \$8.9M compared to the prior month bringing the fund balance to a total of \$105.9M.
2. Through August, the District has collected \$124.6M in property taxes and \$6.5M in specific ownership tax revenue, which reflects 99.08% collection vs. 99.10% at this time last year for property taxes, and 60.48% vs. 73.20% for specific ownership taxes. A total of \$739,101 of property taxes have been diverted to TIF in 2022.
3. In August, the District collected \$992K in specific ownership taxes, which is the highest collection month this year. Although August was a high collections month, most of this year, specific ownership tax collection as a percentage of property taxes has been lower than prior year. If this trend continues, we anticipate specific ownership tax revenue will come in \$990K under budget.
4. As of August 31st, the District has expended \$97M in the General Fund related to operations or 63.07% of the annual budget not including Capital Project transfers.
5. Ambulance transports have exceeded 2022 budget expectations by 1,313 transports, for a total number of transports of 14,939 through August. The District's net revenue is \$695K over the year-to-date budgeted amount and \$970K more than the same period last year. Total bad debt has increased in 2022 as compared to 2021. Through August this year, bad debt as a % of net revenue is at 23.4% as compared to 21.3% in 2021. Collections received as % of bad debt is at 10% through August this year as compared to 12% in 2021. Due to the increase in bad debt, we are projecting to end this year close to the total budget for ambulance revenue. The increase in net sales collection is being offset by the increase in bad debt.
6. Through August, the District has recorded \$433K in earned interest income and \$1.1M in unrealized market loss from investments, noting that the \$1.1M is a paper transaction that virtually represents if we were to sell our complete bond portfolio.
7. Through August, the District has expended \$685K in fuel or 97.33% of the total budgeted amount. With the increased prices of fuel, the District is expected to come in \$320K over budget this year.
8. Through August, the District has billed \$1.7M in Plan Review Fees or 91.88% of the total budgeted amount.
9. Through August, the District has expended \$3.6 million or 26.69% of our total budgeted expenditures in the Capital Project Fund.

At Director Anderson's request, CFO Miskimins stated that the interest rate is slightly higher and contributed to the \$433K in earned interest income.

At Director Shriver's request, CFO Miskimins stated that as of August, our balance in CSIP across all funds was \$62.7M. Of that we have \$25M that is invested, yielding 2.82% and will mature on November 4th. The remaining \$37.7M is completely liquid and earned 2.29% on average during the month of August.

Director Sokol noted that he and CFO Miskimins had a short conversation earlier this evening about how in the old days the Board was able to view the overall variance but now that we are using different software that is not an option. He always found it very helpful and asked if a column could be added to the Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance – Budget to Actual sheet to compare the percentage of the current budget expenditures to the annual budget. CFO Miskimins noted that most of the expenditures are not linear, but he will have the percentage added to see if that is what is desired. Director Leung stated that he does not believe it will be a fair comparison since there will be a variety of spending levels throughout the year. Director Anderson asked if once this is added an overview would be provided on how it will be a helpful tool. Chair Albee noted that it is not a request for additional information but if the percentage makes it more palatable, it's a valid request. CFO Miskimins reminded if there are questions regarding the percentages for the year-to-date variance it will likely be a matter of timing.

A motion was made by William Shriver and seconded by Rich Sokol to accept the August 2022 Financial Statements as presented. All were in favor and the motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2023 Budget Overview – CFO Miskimins reminded that Staff is required to present the board with a draft of the budget by October 15th. Tonight's presentation is a fairly high-level review of the 2023 draft budget and more detail will be provided at the Public Hearing during the November 7th meeting.

CFO Miskimins provided an overview, highlighting:

- Property Taxes
- Ambulance Transport Fees
- Other Income
- Salaries
- Benefits
 - Stop Loss / Dental
 - The Board was good with switching to Self-Funded for the Delta Dental Plan
 - Increasing our aggregate stop loss corridor to 125% from 120%
 - The Board was good with the increase to 125%
- Overtime
- Operating Fund
 - At Chair Albee's request, Deputy Chief Eckmann reported that her Staff is working on website compliance and that it seems like it will not likely be a big budget item in 2023 but probably in 2024.
 - CFO Miskimins stated staff will check on compliance with other associated websites & the District's insurance vendor to see if any coverage provided.
 - At Director Anderson's request, Deputy Chief Eckmann stated that Staff has not reached out to other area agencies but is a member of a forum where this is a major discussion because it is a large undertaking.
- Capital Fund
- AV Economic Indicators
- Reserve Balance – Current Long-Term Plan
- Reserve Balance – No Growth (2026)
- Reserve Balance – 5% Decrease (2026)

Chair Albee stated that the last two slides of the presentation represent the successful and unsuccessful challenges, so even if we are right or wrong with where AV's are going, it is important to consider the possibilities. The budget hearing is on November 7th, five weeks away, so if there are other things that the Board needs or wants to see in the budget or in the budget details, please let him or CFO Miskimins before the budget hearing.

At Director Sokol's request, CFO Miskimins stated that it was the Board's direction to include the abatements in the budget, it is roughly \$1M & if we lobbied that off, we would see a dip below the 23% reserve threshold in the 2024 budget. CFO Miskimins will verify that the abatement funds are in the 2022 budget, which should be about \$1.5M.

At Director Anderson's request, Chief Dell'Orfano stated that Staff is working with Douglas County, like we did with Arapahoe County to see if the ARPA Funds could be spread amongst the departments for radio replacements. The Sheriff's Office is the hub for the radio replacement so hoping something can be put together for partial funding or a grant. He believes that unfortunately the money is going away quickly. Director Anderson requested that the Counties be publicly asked and force them to provide a yes or no answer and explain why & stated that she is happy to sit in the audience.

CFO Miskimins thanked Budget Manager Brittany Segner and Budget Analyst Ryan Baudoin for their work in putting together the information presented tonight.

A break was taken at 8:10 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:24 p.m.

Fire Station Cell Site – Chief Dell'Orfano informed that SMFR's legacy organizations have contracted with cell service providers since 1997 to install cell sites at fire stations. These cell sites have provided service to residents, businesses, and travelers within SMFR's boundaries and cell service providers are interested in continuing the use of those fire station locations in order to maintain or enhance that service. However, the presence of cell sites at fire stations has been controversial, with many fire service policy statements in opposition due to concerns with the potential health effects on firefighters. Some of the contracts between SMFR and cell service providers are close to expiring so our organization needs to decide whether or not to renew those contracts. Chief Dell'Orfano referred to the board packet which contains a brief summary of the impact of cell sites, statements in favor opposition, and recommended policies and options. Considering all of the information provided, Staff offered two options – contract termination or contract renewal.

At Chair Albee's request, Chief Dell'Orfano reviewed the chart of providers, locations & dates.

Director Anderson stated that for ten years there has been plans for studies regarding the health hazards of cell towers but she is finding it difficult to see this issue as more important to the fight against cancer than other variables such as the use of high fructose corn syrup, microwaves, etc. Adding that at some point we have to look at the benefits and how people are taking their own risk in thousands of ways. She is okay with taking away the cell tower but what are we giving up.

Director Shriver stated that since the contracts were signed at the stations, hundreds and hundreds of towers have been constructed and loss of the towers at the stations would not be detrimental to the coverage but would be interested to find out the revenue from the sites.

At Director Roche's request, Legal Counsel Cole stated that the cell providers are coming to public facilities because the zoning is already approved or easier to obtain than large residential areas. Chief Baker added that the revenue is about \$150,000 but the concern is that the place where our cell towers are located are in neighborhoods. There's not enough research and data to show the hazard because they are only studying the thermal effect and the concern, founded or unfounded, from the folks that live in those facilities is that they are connecting forms of cancer to cell towers in the area. The IAFF has done substantial research and makes it difficult for us to have continuity in our cancer message by saying that we are 100% committed to reducing Firefighter cancer but will allow cell towers on the station property.

Director Leung stated that if it is a choice between business revenue and an employee's health, he will always choose the employee's health & that the revenue received from these towers does not outweigh the benefit to the employees if they were removed. Director Shriver stated that he agrees that the risk is not worth it & the providers can find another cell tower to lease.

At Director Sokol's request, Chief Dell'Orfano and Legal Counsel Cole confirmed that each of the towers bring in about \$25,000 - \$30,000 per year. Director Sokol stated that we are being hypocritical if we have the towers and we are not mandating that they not be using their cell phones when it's much more of a risk. Chief Baker replied that the difference between a cell phone receiving a frequency and a tower, is that the tower is sending messages 14,000 times a day. Director Roche stated that individuals have a choice to use a cell phone. If we remove a cell tower and we find out something down the road that there is no risk that's okay, but if we find out 20-30 years from now that there was a risk she does not want to be the one to have to explain it to their families.

Director Anderson suggested a policy be created that states we will not have any towers at our stations, sleeping under a cell tower 48/96 is not healthy and whatever rationale why we are doing it and state them in the policy.

Director Hathaway reported that every time the contract came up for renewal for the tower at Station 14, there was a lot of discussion because the studies kept coming back and stating it wasn't a huge risk & she recalls the Board actually increased the monthly amount to the maximum. She would side with not having them in close proximity to the firefighter's bedrooms.

Chair Albee stated that he is not strongly situated on either side, but the data provided does not paint a fair picture. Most of the things state they are not a huge risk but whisper of something that will be found at some point. The graph indicates that the most dangerous items are holding a cell phone to your head and a push to talk walkie talkie. Everyone made good points, there are risks everywhere and just think if you measured the stuff in your house that is risky, there are thousands of things that we can do that are bad for us and we can control this and the benefit to us is measurable and its real. It not big numbers but if we can help make it 999 versus 1000 things that are bad for us, then we should not renew the contracts as they come up.

Director Leung suggested drafting a resolution that defines the parameters and give the Chief authority to determine the best course of action. Chief Dell'Orfano liked the idea of putting something in writing and that a resolution might be the best because it can capture the Board's intent. Director Sokol added that he thinks it should be on a case-by-case basis as technology changes. Director Anderson stated that the resolution could contain verbiage about technology changes.

Local President Dzengelewski reminded that Chief Dell'Orfano mentioned in his presentation that the Local discussed this at the last meet and confer, and it was also discussed at their last board meeting, where it was decided to draft a position paper supporting the removal of the cell towers. Adding that his membership is already at a higher risk for cancer so why would we maintain something that potentially increases that risk. He will provide a copy of the position paper to be included, along with the IAFF statement, with the resolution, if so desired.

The Board directed staff to draft a resolution for presentation at the November meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS

IGA Packet Update – Chief Dell'Orfano reported that there were no updates this month.

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

- Deputy Chief Eckmann congratulated Chief Valdez for being selected as the Fire Marshal of the Year. Individuals chosen for this award have proven accomplishments and acted both on and off duty as a model for other fire

prevention officers to emulate. He was nominated by members of the SMFR Fire Marshal's office. The award will be presented at the annual Colorado State Fire Chief's Fire Leadership Conference.

- Chief Adams introduced Chief Powell who has been assigned as the Emergency Training Division Chief. Chief Richardson has been assigned as the Line Support Division Chief. A big thank you to Chief Mayhew for the great job he did serving as the Training Division Chief for the past couple of years.
- A thank you note was received from Retired Engineer Steve Allen's family expressing gratitude for sending a fire crew and truck to his Celebration of Life Ceremony.
- Chief Curtis provided the following Operations update:
 - Captain Brian Delasantos has been deployed to respond to assist with damage incurred by Hurricane Ian.
 - Battalion Chief Ted Christopoulos has been deployed to assist with a wildland fire near North Platte, Nebraska.
 - Expressed appreciation for Chief Christopoulos' assistance with wildland interagency drills with Douglas County.
 - Learned this morning that Aurora City Council is considering a ban on use of chemical sedatives by emergency responders as a fallout from the McClain case. Legal Counsel Cole outlined the various levels of SMFR's liability when responding into Aurora depending on the type of ban that is pursued.
 - Received a nice letter for the crew at Station 18 who responded to a child who had gone into anaphylactic shock.
- A thank you letter was received from an appreciative citizen regarding the leadership and professionalism displayed with the Engine and Medic 13, B Shift when they responded to help with replacing an oxygen concentrator.
- A thank you note was received from a permanently disabled senior citizen to Medic 16 and Engine 11, B Shift, expressing gratitude for their assistance when he became overheated after his vehicle became disabled.
- The KPI Dispatch statistical report for September was included in the Board packet
- Local 2086 President Dzengelewski reported:
 - VP Roxi Ligrani should have reported it at the last meeting, but the Board attended the Fallen Firefighter Memorial in CSP. Thanks to everyone who attended and apparatus, Honor Guard that were there. It was very meaningful day to all and especially the Jackson family.
 - Retiree Luncheon last week, Lt. Paul Scrabeck of Station 17 has been hosting this for the last several years and really enjoys seeing the retirees enjoying a healthy retirement, which was not always the case. A lot of very dignified and proud retirees. Thanks to the Chiefs who attended.
 - Retired Captain Dave Hoff passed away last week. The funeral is scheduled for October 14th in Amarillo, Texas.
 - The Denver Chili Cookoff was a great success, despite the weather, which was held at the McGregor center. Firefighter Andrew Becker won second place for his red chili. Really exciting to see everyone out participating with all the other state fire departments.
- Director Anderson stated she is looking forward to the Station 20 open house this weekend.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (UPON MOTION)

N/A

NEXT MEETING

The next Special South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on October 17, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at Station 21, 2250 South Emporia Street, Denver, CO.

The next Regular South Metro Fire Rescue District Board of Directors' meeting will take place on November 7, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at 9195 East Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Albee at 9:36 pm.

Attested by: James Allen

Date: Nov 7, 2021