

FRONT RANGE FIRE RESCUE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 18:00

Director Rutt calls the Pension BoDs Zoom Meeting to order at 18:12. Roll call: Darrin Rutt, Greg Freehling, Reid Hobler, Blair Howe, and Jim Young. Chief Covillo, Chief West, Captain Kronholm, Cindy Heesemann, and Christine Champlin, and Vanessa Thorpe are in attendance as well. Robert Burns and Kurt Nakata are in attendance on the public platform.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Done previously at Pension Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

2020 ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS: Young moves to direct the BoDs to elect and maintain the same positions as they held the previous year. Howe seconds. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Hobler, yes; Howe, yes; Young, yes. Motion passes.

RECOGNITION:

- Chief Drage: Chief West wanted to publicly recognize that becoming a credentialed Fire Marshal is a big deal! On May 5th, Chief Drage was granted Fire Marshal designation by the Commission on Professional Credentialing, a branch of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He is now one of less than 170 professionals in the world to hold this designation, attesting to his technical abilities and plans for continuous self-improvement. BoDs congratulate Drage!
- Vanessa Thorpe: Chief West thanks Vanessa for her service and states FRFR has a certificate and pin for 20 Years of Service. Rutt and other BoDs congratulate Vanessa for 20 Years of Service. Rutt states it is a long time to be with an agency!

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- April 14th FRFR BoD Minutes
- Approval/Additions/Modifications to Agenda
- April Bills

Freehling moves to approve the Consent Agenda. Howe seconds. Roll call: All “aye.” Motion passes.

STAFF REPORTS:

Administration:

Financial Summary: Attached in the Google File is a property tax chart, comparing 2019 receipts to 2020. We are currently on trend for 100% of our budgeted revenue forecast. We have been conservative with expenditures and remain on target at 30.76% of budgeted expenses in the general fund. This month’s YTD update includes pension and debt fund numbers.

May 5, 2020 Election: The May 5th election for board members is complete and the official results have been filed with DOLA. In addition, the Oaths have also been filed with Weld District Court.

Congratulations to Directors Freehling, Rutt, and Young!

Financial Audit: We are in the final stages of wrapping up the 2019 Financial Audit, please plan on the auditor’s presentation to the board at July 14th meeting.

LIFE SAFETY:

Code Adoption and Impact Fees: We are still working with Milliken to get the 2018 IFC in place. We had a work session with the Town Board on 04-22-2020. No serious concerns were raised, so we are now waiting to hear when this will formally go on an agenda for implementation. We hope to see the ordinance adopting the 2018 IFC on their regular agenda on May 27th.

The Town Board approved the municipal code to implement impact fees at their regular meeting on 04-22-2020. The impact fee collection will begin on July 1st. We’ve given the Town an informational document that they can share with contractors and also post to their website to provide information and clarification on impact fees.

Fire Hydrant Updates: Water Department personnel from both Towns have been given access to the Hydrants module in Emergency Reporting. Inspector Nakata is working with them to ensure they have the training necessary to use this database.

Pre-Plan and Inspection Programs: We have continued to maintain a reduced presence in our community due to the social distance requirements of COVID-19. We completed all necessary new construction inspections to keep these projects moving forward.

Inspector Nakata and Chief Drage completed all final inspections for the Johnstown YMCA on May 1st with zero deficiencies identified. Testing and evaluation of all life safety systems in the building went very smoothly. Thanks to Adolfsen and Petersen Construction, and all of their life safety subcontractors, for such great attention to detail. The Town is working to identify a date for the grand opening based on current restrictions for social distancing. Inspector Nakata also assisted the Dreams and Dragonflies Events Center on CR 50 with their final inspections so they can move closer to getting their certificate of occupancy from Weld County and begin operating. Inspector Nakata also reviewed and inspected a small office remodel project in Milliken, reviewed an application to install a 12,000 gallon above-ground fuel storage tank, and delivered one hazmat permit at the request of the operator. Inspector Nakata is working on phase-in plan to reintroduce inspections and company level pre-plans when it is deemed appropriate. We will begin with the critical facilities and highest risk buildings. We continue to re-evaluate the ongoing circumstances regularly and will re-initiate these programs when data tells us it is safe to do so. We're also working on implementing a self-inspection program, with a plan for maintaining this program into the future. Health and Wellness Program: The Operations Division continues to be on the front lines in terms of maintaining their health and wellness in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's interesting to note that FRFR has only had one member test positive for the infection, subsequent to a non-work-related exposure. That member has been back to work for several weeks now. Our Peer Support Team has continued to have regular reach-outs to all members to ensure they are holding up. Chief Long from Mountain View Fire Rescue performed decontamination at both stations and all apparatus. We are now researching the opportunity to purchase a similar device through grant funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief Drage is currently working on a member survey to gauge the current status of our various programs and to help us identify opportunities for improvement.

Fire Investigation: C-shift responded to a reported residential structure fire on April 7th. No humans or pets were injured. The fire was quickly contained to the room of origin, with minor smoke damage throughout the residence. Inspector Nakata also assisted Lt Jennings with a technical review of her NFIRS report and making suggestions for improved documentation.

Emergency Management: Chief Drage continues to spend every Tuesday in the Weld County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), filling the role of the Emergency Services Branch Director. We plan on maintaining our presence until the EOC staffing is reduced or discontinued, based on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the County.

Public Outreach: Operations personnel have responded to numerous requests for drive-by birthday parades for citizens throughout the district. These have been very popular across the state and the honorees have been very excited to see our apparatus and personnel make a special appearance just for them. Thank you to everyone in Operations for finding new ways to provide outreach during these strange times.

As a result of the school closures, we were not able to lead the Strap and Snap helmet safety classes to our local third graders this year. Inspector Nakata had the brilliant idea of continuing to promote helmet safety through social media posts. We are also purchasing several gift certificates for a free ice cream cone from Goobers and The Lunch Box. We will be providing these to our personnel so, if we are out in the community and see children riding bikes, scooters, etc. while wearing their helmet correctly, we can stop and reward/thank them with a free ice cream cone. We truly appreciate the contributions from Goobers and The Lunch Box for helping us make this program a reality!

Staff News: On May 5th, Chief Drage was granted Fire Marshal designation by the Commission on Professional Credentialing, a branch of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He is now one of less than 170 professionals in the world to hold this designation, attesting to his technical abilities and plans for continuous self-improvement.

Health and Wellness: Drage did a department wide survey for health and wellness. 32 surveys were completed. Drage is stunned with the survey feedback and is thankful as this will help with the direction FRFR will go.

Young asked about the IGA with Milliken with where it is at. West states it was almost a perfect storm for timing. The Town had to vote as a board to approve the IGA and had to vote as a board for our collection of impact fees. Additionally, in order for us to collect these fees, they had to pass an ordinance for this to be done. Because of COVID-19...we got placed on the back burner for a bit. The Town Trustees believed because so much time had passed, they wanted to give ample time to the developers/contractors. The Town Trustees decided to have the start date of July 1st for the ordinance. West states everything has passed and is a go regarding the IGA. Young thanks West for the information.

Howe asked if Evans had a tracking system for the maintenance of their fire hydrants. Drage states he cannot speak to that right now as he is not sure if we are going to get a whole lot of out of it as we do not have a lot of tracking mechanisms. West states he can reach out to the City of Greeley and see if they have any records of this. At some point we will be up for an ISO evaluation. Howe just wants to know who maintains the Evans hydrants. West will look into it and get back with Howe on this.

Young asked about the hydrants for 25/34 and the developments for Thompson River Ranch. Drage states we have all of those hydrants in the system currently.

OPERATIONS:

Apparatus & Facilities:

- The new Type 6 Engine went into service on Tuesday, May 5th. We have moved the Dodge Type 6 to Station 2 and put the 2008 Ford into reserve status as 2934. The cooler weather has slowed the agricultural burns.
- Tender 3 (1991 GMC) has left the building. A small volunteer fire department in Tennessee purchased the truck to replace theirs, which was totaled in an accident. We sold the apparatus for \$16,000.00, and once consignment fees were paid, we cleared \$14,400.00.
- The remodel is ongoing. Covillo was hoping that we would be much further along as he is crafting his report. Covillo anticipated we would be in the offices and living quarters by the end of the month. Both spaces are looking great, and our crews will enjoy getting back to normal.
- The design of Station 4 is in the final conceptual review by FRFR crews. If there are no changes, we will press pause on the process. We are setting this station up for the future of FRFR. The station will be able to house two four person companies and a medic crew. The drawing is small and you will need to zoom in to get a better view in the Google File. When we are all back together, Covillo will get the BoDs a half size drawing.
- We have not heard back from Metco, so there is no agreement in place to allow them to park on our property.

Staffing:

- We are excited to have Ryan Boor return from serving our country. He is on C Shift at Station 1. Welcome back Ryan.
- Bryan Leto's last day was on May 4th with FRFR. Bryan has made a lateral move to Westminster Fire Department. As always, it is sad to see our members leave, although we celebrated his six years with FRFR, and will welcome him back at any time.
- We had a shift bid process to allow the five existing Engineers the opportunity to move shifts since there is an opening on A Shift at Station 2. All five elected to stay on their current shift. We asked FF Geisick if he would be willing to take a temporary assignment on A Shift for the next month.
- We will be conducting an Engineer Promotional process in June to fill the one vacancy.
- We are well underway with our Firefighter hiring process. We are happy to announce that we had 105 applicants that showed interest in FRFR. Chief Kronholm and Christine worked to narrow the list down to 50 candidates. These candidates will move on to the next phase of a three-phase process. Throughout the process we will narrow the list down until we get the top candidates. Now with Bryan departure we will be hiring two Firefighters in August.
- Lt. Linder was involved in a paramotor accident a few weeks ago. He sustained some significant injuries although nothing life threatening. We anticipate him being off for the next couple of months. We will certainly keep the Board informed on his condition. Chief John Davis is keeping up to date on his situation/recovery.
- Covillo is working three days in the office, and the other days he is working from home.

Operations:

- Covillo mentioned last month with the addition of 2923; we see an increase in the overall call volume. We are beginning to capture this data and see a valid number of calls for our agency. We are still working on getting the right quantity of requests for 2020 as we go back and clean up past reports.
- Line Staff morale is maintaining on the positive side. They all are staying busy with various projects and training.
- Covillo has been attending various online demonstrations of potential CAD, RMS, and JMS systems for Weld County.

Training:

- BC Kronholm is working from home. Chief Kronholm is ensuring quality to all of the members.
- We are doing decentralized training as much as possible. We are using Zoom to connect the crews virtually for classroom instruction.
- Next week we will be meeting with LFRA, WSFR, and BFPD regarding shared training in 2021.

Young asked if anybody is covering for Lt. Linder. Brian Unrein is covering Linder's position and others have been bumped up to cover positions. Covillo gives the whole scheme of how things are working. FRFR will be hiring two additional firefighters in August. Young asked if we are shorthanded now. Covillo states we are sitting really well. We are running 7 on A-Shift, 7 on B-shift, and 8 on C-shift.

Rutt states Kate's crew handled Linder's care. Rutt feels they handled it very well. Rutt states it does affect them because it is one of their own brothers/sisters. He thanks the crews for exceptional care.

West states we are looking at various staffing models based on age of firefighters, seniority, amount of paid time off they receive—looking at some of these matters. It is a mathematical formula. We multiply it with certain formulations. We are setting at about 3.45 which in Wests' experience, we are in a good staffing position. We have younger crews, less vacation time. We are standing in a good position right now. It is important to fill the two spots, but we do not need to rush it.

West states regarding COVID-19, we are looking at moving into Stage 2 possibly on June 1st. Our district responses have been down, but are starting to creep back up as people are starting to get out more now. We want to be a step or two behind and do not want to be on the cutting edge of this decision. We are progressing carefully. We have in-phased too with BoD meetings as normal and also do zoom as an option for different situations.

Related to COVID-19, we have a perfect financial storm. The pandemic and businesses are closed and my not reopen. Approximately 50% to 100 recession and impact it has on property values, vacancy rates, medical calls go down and fires go down. We get a whole set of different characteristics. States reduce 7.1 to 5.8% on residential property which is a big chunk of our tax revenue. If we de-Gallagherize, this should not affect us. However, it could affect our neighbors. We may find ourselves offering more automatic aid, which takes us back to the importance of hiring discussion. We are in good shape and we will stay on course with this.

Oil is not being produced; however, oil has been on a huge upswing the past two weeks. CEOs are looking at duration before hiring oil employees back. The oil side of it is his concern on how long it lasts. We have not seen the oil down-swing with a global pandemic and how long it will last. We are talking about conservative measures. We have started reaching out with grants and started borrowing equipment to disinfect for COVID. The Grant for the SCBA has been put on hold because of the government being shut down. Administration is out there looking and are not resting. We are watching numbers carefully and a plan is in place and we are optimistically optimistic about this.

West states they have red shirts for Red Shirt Fridays for the BoDs as well as hard copy of “The Way”. West also wants to recognize members and others who have served our Country. It is easy to forget during a time like this.

West states all of our policies are outdated. The four members of our leadership team have met with our software team/company to update these by the end of June, beginning of July. All of the policies will be updated from sexual harassment to uniforms, to appeals, disciplinary—top to bottom every single policy. It is the manual for HR Procedures. It is our ability to take care of our firefighters fairly and legally. West wants to make sure all of our policies have been through the lens of our culture and how we want to treat our members.

West states this is important to keep these up especially regarding new hires, and in regards to a long-term plan with a new station. West states we cannot sustain a professional fire district that is reliant on folklore and passed down from generation to generation. It is not fair. It is going to take a while—probably all the way through his year. A representative will be helping us.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

April continued to be highlighted by our response to COVID-19. Fortunately, responses in our District in general, as well as specific to the pandemic, have leveled off and on many fronts have gone down. It has reminded me of how the world looked after 9-11. With the Stay at Home and Safer at home criteria, many people have had fewer opportunities to become injured in car accidents, etc. We anticipate the incident numbers to return, and possibly at an increased level once the State starts to enter the next reopening phase.

One of the ongoing concerns is the financial impacts both short and long term for the communities and FRFR. As you likely know, there are some significant implications of the perfect storm that seems to be occurring. The interplay between the pandemic, a recession, the Gallagher amendment, and the impact of the oil war are all converging at the same time. To our benefit is the continued diversification of properties, and it appears that commercial growth is still probable in the District. Additionally, our reserves and the fact the District de-Gallagherized has left us in the fortuitous position of being on the solid financial ground for the near term. Just the same, as we start the budget cycle of 2021, we are considering what an absolute necessity is, and what we can do creatively and for fewer costs. Resting on the District’s past conservative spending is excellent, and we will continue to be conservative in our approach.

Beyond all of that, we had begun to evaluate our programs related to member wellness in the last six months. Again, it’s been very timely with the off-duty injury to a member, the stress and strain of all of our home and work life, and how best to incorporate “The Way” into our programs. As we look into enhancing, revamping, and creating programs in the future, we feel that we can better take care of our people, while maintaining sound financial stewardship.

Highlights

- One engineer resigned to take a position in the Metro area. This has opened a second spot to hire for our fall academy. This process is taking place now, and we received 105 applications for the openings. Additionally, we will be holding a promotional process for the position of engineer in June.
- Initial work on the FRFR Policy manual continues. We are starting to learn the web-based platform and have begun to work on the wording of the new policies. Again, we anticipate taking all year to finish our work on this.
- We are finalizing a draft of updates to the FRFR job descriptions. Included in this plan is a significant roadmap for succession planning in our District.
- West attended a multitude of video meetings related to the pandemic.
- We have continued a policy of 50% home-work time for non-line staff per the State’s directive. We have firmly established our benchmarks for reopening the District to regular business soon, once we have enough data to show that it’s time.

- We have continued three weekly video meetings with the senior leadership team. These meetings have been focused on COVID-19 and ancillary issues related to this and operational matters in general.
- We implemented RED (Remember Everyone Deployed) shirt Fridays. This is symbolic of our appreciation of the soldiers who protect our great country. It can be easy to forget about them during our current crisis, and we feel this will assure that we never forget their sacrifices.
- West participated in two memorial services as a bagpiper. One for a Windsor resident who drowned in Water Valley. One for Trooper Groves, who died last year during the blizzard in March. As the State begins to open up, West anticipate that memorial services that have been postponed will be rescheduled. As always, West appreciates your support in allowing me to honor the fallen.
- The Town of Milliken approved its ordinance to start collecting impact fees for FRFR. This finalizes this process, our IGAs, and the great work of solidifying our relationship with the Town.

OLD BUSINESS:

Board Adoption of the Professional Standards Document: As we have discussed since July of 2019, our members feel that the Front Range Fire Rescue culture is unique and exceptionally healthy. It is our culture that has drawn and kept so many great professionals within the organization. We set out to codify the culture to create a document that could be given to future members, the public, or anyone who tried to understand what we stand for and what we believe. We have created that in the first edition of the FRFR Professional Standards Manual. The manual is in your packet for review.

We intend to make this a living document, and it will be reviewed and updated in even-numbered years. We are proud of the material and the input of every single member of the department who had a part in its creation. Its first test will be in the hiring of new firefighters this fall. We will be using it to formulate part of the selection process.

West states the members feel they have ownership and a set of standards and how they live up to these and demonstrate these values.

Howe asks how we promote individuals that demonstrate these values and principals. West states we can use the anniversary date of the employee and how do we encourage compassion, professionalism, etc. Supervisors will space it out to be much more thoughtful.

Howe hopes that learning/education is monitored and annual requirements are met. West states Captain Kronholm does a great job with this.

Freehling makes a motion that we adopt the 2020 version of the Front Range Fire Rescue Professional Standards as our expectation of mission, vision, values, and culture for the organization. Young seconds. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Hobler, yes; Howe, yes; and Young, yes. Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gateway Property Discussion: We were contacted by a real estate investor regarding the vacant property that we own in the Gateway development. As a reminder, the property we own there was purchased in 2012 for \$103,000. It is 0.991 acres of property. We were informed that the son of the original owner might be interested in repurchasing it. Chief Drage and Chief West meet with the Town of Johnstown often looking at the future growth and plans. Looking at current per square foot rates in the area, a price between \$5 and \$6 square foot seems an appropriate estimation of value, and that would lead to a sale price of about \$230,000. Of course, we would want to enlist the assistance of a commercial property real estate firm to assure that we sold the property for the highest possible return to the district.

Our Senior Leadership Team has discussed the pros and cons of this property and the implications of keeping it or possibly selling it. While owning property is never a bad investment, we believe that this piece's location would not make it the best for a future station. We feel that selling the property could add money to our capital reserve account to be used later for Station 4 or to acquire property in a better location to serve I-25 and Hwy 60.

We are requesting the Board discuss the pros and cons of holding or selling this property. Should the Board decide to move ahead with investigation of the sale, we would ask for a motion to direct staff to select a commercial real estate professional to help facilitate the research.

Young asked if this was the property that the people who were contacting us about taking care of the property. West states yes, but they have not responded to emails, so this has gone to the downside.

The BoDs feel it would be a good idea to investigate it and research it a little more.

Hobler makes a motion directing staff to further investigate the sale of the Gateway property for discussion at the June Board meeting. Howe seconds. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Hobler, yes; Howe, yes; and Young, yes. Motion passes.

Points West CD Discussion: We have two CDs that will be maturing June 10, 2020. We have spoken with PWC bank and at this time the CD rates are 1% for 3 years, 1.3 % for 5 years. We are still waiting to hear back from FNB; however, those appear to be in line with the current market rates. Regardless of which bank we choose; CDs are currently only returning between 1-1.3% yield over 3-5 years. If we cash out the CDs and move them into our Colotrust accounts they will remain liquid and we can purchase CDs at any time. The current daily rate at Colotrust has varied over the past few months between .285 and 1.3%.

The staff recommends cashing out the two CDs and putting the money into Colotrust until the market recovers and then possibly shop for CDs. We are asking the board to make a motion to close the CDs on June 10th and move the funds to Colotrust until the time comes to reinvest. We believe that having time to invest once we understand the full financial impact of the pandemic will put us in the best financial position.

Hobler asked if they have commercial accounts. Commercial accounts may give a little more return. Christine states we are considered a government account rather than commercial. We can explore options but have to make a decision by June 10th. West states we are wanting to looking into not locking up this money but roll into an account so we can move it around/in/out. We want to keep it liquid until we have a better option.

Hobler moves to direct staff to close CD 1092 and CD 1093 on June 10th and deposit those funds in our Colotrust accounts. Howe seconds. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Hobler, yes; Howe, yes; and Young, yes. Motion passes.

BOARD REPORTS: N/a.

CORRESPONDENCE: A Dispatcher in Milliken donated some masks to us. Rutt gives a big thank you.

Howe states there has been some vandalism on Watergates.

Rutt thanks everyone for their hardwork during these long, hard couple of months.

ADJOURNMENT: Howe moves to adjourn at 19:19. Roll call: All "aye." Meeting adjourned.