

FRONT RANGE FIRE RESCUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
101 S. Irene Ave. Milliken, CO 80543  
Tuesday, August 11, 2020 Immediately following FRFR Pension Meeting at 6:00 PM

Due to COVID-19, the Board meeting will be held both virtually and in person; instructions to join the meeting can be received by emailing [info@frfr.co](mailto:info@frfr.co). Individuals who wish to make comments regarding items scheduled on the agenda or wish to address the FRFR Board during public comment on items not specifically scheduled on the agenda will use the Q&A option in the Virtual Meeting and a moderator will deliver the comments to the Board, or individuals may send public comment to [info@frfr.co](mailto:info@frfr.co) prior to the meeting. Those attending the meeting in person will be required to maintain social distancing guidelines and wear a face mask.

Director Rutt calls the FRFR BoDs Meeting to order immediately after the FRFR Pension Meeting at 18:25. Roll call: Darrin Rutt, Jim Young, Greg Freehling, Blair Howe, and Reid Hobler. Also, in attendance are Chief West, Chief Covillo, Chief Drage, Captain Kronholm, Kurt Nakata, Christine Champlin, and Vanessa Thorpe.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Said at FRFR Pension Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- July 14, 2020 Minutes
- Approval / Additions / Modifications to Agenda
- July bills

Director Howe pointed out that his name was misspelled in the July 14<sup>th</sup> BoD Minutes. This was noted and will be corrected.

Freehling moves to approve the Consent Agenda. Young seconds with correction of Howe's name spelling. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Young, yes; Hobler, yes; and Howe, yes. Motion passes.

STAFF REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCIAL:

Financial Summary:

- YTD Financials
- Property Tax Revenue 2019 vs 2020

The above items are attached in the Google Folder/BoDs Packet. The property tax chart compares to what was received in 2019 receipts to what we have received in 2020. We are sitting at 72% of budget year to date. We are expecting a catch-up payment to be made to us in October, as businesses have been given an extended date of 9/29/2020 to pay their taxes. We have been conservative with expenditures and sitting over the half-way point in the year, expenses remain on target at 57% of budgeted expenses in the general fund.

New COVID-19 Executive Order Signed: We are aware of the executive order suspending employee Social Security tax collection. The order is effective on September 1 and requires the Department of Treasury to determine how employers should implement the requirement. Once we have more information, we will communicate the next steps to members. This order will only affect board members and the admin staff.

2020 AUDIT FILED July 31, 2020: Cathy From, our accountant filed the Audit with the State of Colorado on July 31st .

LIFE SAFETY:

While we are continuing to operate in Phase 2 of our re-opening plan, there was increased activity in the fire prevention areas because of resuming fire safety inspections and Engine Company pre-plans. Our health and wellness programs saw a tremendous addition for our staff, with the new Member Assistance Program being provided by Mines and Associates.

Code Adoption and Impact Fees: The 2018 International Fire Code went into effect in the Town of Milliken on August 1st. We now have a consistent fire code in place throughout all portions of our district. We've also started to see a few impact fees come in for new single-family homes being permitted in Milliken. Columbine Apartments: This property is owned and operated by the Johnstown Housing Authority. In January of this year, Inspector Nakata received a citizen complaint from one of the residents in the complex regarding some safety concerns. One of their complaints was regarding placement of the dumpsters that was blocking access and use of the handicap parking spaces. While this was not a fire code issue, Inspector Nakata was able to help facility maintenance personnel develop an improved plan for dumpster placement that allowed full access to all handicap parking spaces. The other issue he identified was that the fire alarm system in the buildings was not being monitored. This was a cause for concern because the buildings are generally occupied by a higher risk population. The Housing Authority is actively working to get fire alarm system monitoring in place.

Health and Wellness Programs: Our new Member Assistance Program (MAP) officially went into effect on August 1st; however, the program was actually made available to the membership towards the end of July. The MAP will provide a wide range of services to our members and their families. We will continue to see changes to the behavioral health programs with two new clinicians providing valuable training to our members. All supervisors will be receiving additional training to improve their leadership in this area. The Peer Support Team members are now serving as subject matter experts to evaluate on-going changes to the behavioral health programs.

The Peer Fitness Team is beginning to see some changes, with three members pursuing new certifications, and a new fitness room at Station 2. Firefighters Olig and Boor, along with Inspector Nakata, are in the process of obtaining certification as Peer Fitness Trainers.

The savings we will have from cancelling the FRTC contract will allow us pay for the additional services being added.

Fire Investigations: Inspector Nakata assisted 2901 with an illegal outdoor burn on South Parish Avenue.

#### OPERATIONS:

##### Apparatus & Facilities:

###### Apparatus:

- All apparatus with pumps has completed the annual service test. There are no notable problems.
- The Battalion Chiefs are working on designing a new BC vehicle. We are looking at replacing 2960 the 2013 Chevy Suburban in 2021.

###### Facilities:

- We are coming to the end of the remodel. The past 11 months have been challenging for our crews and a learning experience for Lt. West, BC Davis, and me. We are ready for the next remodel or new build. We will be working to determine how we best improve Station 1.
- After the BOD meeting, Covillo would encourage all to tour the renovated Station 2.
- The access control is working well at both stations. We are working to include an access system into the 2021 budget for Station 3.

###### Staffing:

Firefighter Hiring Process: Our three new family members will begin on August 17th and will have a week of orientation with the Senior Leadership Team and BC Kronholm. The first day of the academy will be August 24th. We are excited to have them a part of the FRFR Family.

###### Operations:

- Call volume has returned to a somewhat average level. We did respond to two mutual aid requests for significant fires in Platteville Gilcrest Districts and Hudson.
- Governor Polis put into effect the mask order in August. We at FRFR to an approach that our members would don their masks when they are in the areas that they would encounter the public. We, however, are allowing members to not wear masks inside of apparatus, living quarters, and office spaces. When the members are outside of the station, they will be wearing masks in public.
- Many of you know Dave Jacoby from his time with Weld County Paramedics, Banner Paramedics, and UCH-EMS. Dave has retired from and is moving to Florida. He has a long-dedicated service to Weld County and will miss seeing his smiling face.

###### Training:

- BC Kronholm has been busy with the onboarding process of the new Firefighters. Covillo cannot thank Chief Kronholm for all of the work he has done. Creating a process from scratch has been challenging and also rewarding. Covillo is proud and thankful for all of his work.
- We will have an opportunity to have some of our current members participate in the upcoming FRFC as instructors. This opportunity will once again showcase our agency.
- Chief West and Covillo were instructors in the Fire Officer II class this past week in Loveland.

Young asks questions about replacing the BC's vehicle. Covillo states we need to get a good backup vehicle that is more economical. Covillo states we did have an engine issue with it. The 2013 Suburban will be the backup for the BC's. We will keep the Explorer and decommission it somewhat as more of a staff vehicle. The other vehicle we are looking at replacing in 2021 is the 2004 truck that Nakata drives. We will get something more economical. Young supports what is trying to be done, but accumulating vehicles that have to sit out in the weather—Young just questions if it is the time to do it. This will be looked at and planned to be in the 2021 Budget.

Covillo reports that some of the brush trucks around being moved around so we can have an extra bay. We will also have a backup vehicle. Covillo states they are looking into an F150 EcoBoost Crew Cab Half-ton.

###### FIRE CHIEF:

Chief West presented Vanessa Thorpe's 20-year Certificate and pin. Vanessa thanked Chief West.

The breakneck pace of the last few months continued in July and there is little change in sight. At the top of the list is that we have completed the hiring process for our three newest members. They will be starting next week with orientation and uniform delivery. The following week, they start the Front Range Fire Consortium (FRFC) academy. This is an exciting time for FRFR and marks one of the largest changes to how we hire and train our newest members.

Last month West reported that we had not received our grant for a disinfecting machine, but had applied for a second grant process. We successfully secured a grant for the machine and also to reimburse FRFR for our COVID PPE expenses to date.

Our new Member Assistance Program (MAP) has started. Those who have shared that they have visited the website have been impressed with the amount of resources that we have available to us. As a reminder, you as board members have access to the program as do members of your household. See Chief Drage or Christine for help in checking it out.

We have received informal and unofficial numbers from Weld county that our oil and gas revenues will be less than expected in 2021. While we are disappointed by this news, we have maintained that our reserves are for these periodic dips in the economy and feel prepared to weather any such storm. West will present some of our thoughts during the budget presentation.

#### Highlights:

- New matrix and job descriptions are now in effect. These changes will help us navigate succession planning for FRFR's future. With the current plan, we will have at least a half dozen potential internal candidates for the position of fire chief. For an organization our size this is a huge step towards professionalism.
- West participated in one memorial service as a bagpiper. This was for retired Milliken Board member "Doc" Flack. The family was appreciative of FRFR's support. We also sent an engine and several members.
- West has had several conversations related to the Gateway property. Tonight, West has an update for our executive session.

#### Front Range Fire Rescue Budget 2021 - First look 2021

Per our guidelines, we will hold our first look at the 2021 budget. Because of changes to the counties reporting dates, we do not have firm first looks at our AV. Because of that, we are unable to provide you with solid projections. That said, we will be sharing our concerns, positives, and our take on the 2021 priorities. While we anticipate a reduction in revenue in 2021, we feel that this is an opportunity to assure that our current programs and projects are the most effective and efficient that they can be for FRFR.

*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.* — Søren Kierkegaard

#### Concerns

We expect Oil and Gas to negatively affect our total revenue for 2021 and 2022

- While it's too early to guarantee, 2023 does appear to have some promise of positive gas and oil numbers

Tax revenue in 2020 is still low, although it is looking like we will be at or near 100% by October.

The possibility of another round of COVID impacts continue to loom

- Any additional catastrophic economic issue is always possible

Commercial property changes in philosophy and demand

#### Positives:

We are getting ever nearer to paying off the Milliken Bond

We have been given good news regarding 2021 Health and Dental insurance pricing (+1.9%, -3%)

Our change from peer support to MAP has saved 50% (\$7500)

The current core inflation rate is 1.2% (Cost of Living)

Although our tax revenue stream has been delayed, we continue to maintain reserves.

Residential growth continues and an impressive rate – West states there are changes in commercial office suites, change of area growth I-25/Centerra, some changes with usage and density that will affect us long-term in regards to smaller buildings which means less impact fees, which potentially leads to lower cost building and lower tax. We are doing tremendously well with residential.

#### 2021 Projects:

Maintain our salary philosophy- (Long term consequences)

- Add in nominal tuition reimbursement (reduce COD line)
- Add 2 additional holidays (FRFR is currently at 6, Colorado/Weld is at 10+)(2300)
- Switch our admin staff to FPPA (\$4000/year -2015)

Evaluate replacement hiring (3.75 is our goal and is now met, 3.5 is still healthy, 3.3 appears to be FRFR bottom)

- Look at alternative staffing programs (P/T members, sharing with other agencies)

Develop a comprehensive capital replacement and renovation schedule

- Station 1- remodel
- Station 3- clean up

Find ways of sharing logistics services

- Fleet, logistics, PPE purchasing for example

To do – October:

Begin work on hard numbers for 2021

- Meeting DOLA requirements with the expected delay in county reporting

Evaluate our volunteer pension contribution requirements for 2021

- Actuarial to evaluate possibilities to get closer to .25mils

Evaluate the sale of unneeded capital assets and work with our MA partners to be more efficient.

- 1:4 reserve apparatus

Work with our UC Health partners regarding the future purchase of ambulances (savings?)

Continue to evaluate the need to sell any excess property

Update our fee structures to be in-line with the area departments

Young asks West about his conversation with John R, about getting a building into place. West states he is not right now. Residential is high and commercial has slowed. Rooftops and single family dwellings generate incidences. There has to be 2,500 homes to generate enough calls for operating/staffing costs. West states he is very supportive and driven on data reporting analysis. Chief Drage is on this planning committee. We need data analysis on when to build this.

West wants to say as loud and clear as he can that he is concerned, especially regarding the oil and gas. We need to do due diligence at looking at crude oil futures. West fees the experts are correct right now. The oil and gas will come back in 2023. We have saved money for a rain y day and we need to maintain 80%. We are at 100% right now. We may need to dip into reserves. We are being good stewards of the tax payers money. We have collected more than we have needed and now we are going to spend some of it. It makes us look like better stewards.

Young feels there are a lot of other organizations that are in worse shape than we are. West agrees. Chief West states Bateman was ahead of the curve with the de-Gallagherizing and the BoDs being proactive and putting money in the reserves. Again, West states he is concerned but not petrified.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update Financial Policy RESOLUTION 2020-06:

We have worked on the Financial Policy to ensure we are following the Government Accounting (GASB) and Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) guidelines and best practices for local government finance.

At the July 14, 2020 Board meeting we discussed using FNB's Paymaker accounting software to continue paying bills electronically which is the preferred method of payment suggested by GFOA.

Below is the highlighted list of changes in the attached financial policy:

1. Under Budget Preparation, the monthly time line has been updated to be in line with the DOLA requirements: The Chief prepares and prints the preliminary budget document using initial Board direction, budget policies, and staff input. In September of each year the Board is presented with a projected budget information.
2. Under Expenditure Policy, purchasing policies: Budget expenses up to \$2,500.00 (this was 1,000.00) can be made by the program manager or their designee, all items shall be accounted for on an "explanation of purchase" form by the person who made the purchase.
3. FINANCIAL REPORTING POLICY, Internal Controls were updated to reflect the electronic payment process: Purchase Orders/ Explanation of Expenses must have 3 approvals before payment can be issued; Purchaser, Battalion Chief, Operations Chief, All payments require a two-part process after the above approval., Director of Admin monitors with monthly reporting and conducting all bank reconciliations., Checks are maintained in a locked file., The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that governments use electronic payments to improve efficiency, security, and tracking., All vendors work directly with FNB PayMaker to create their account and maintain their security.
4. DUAL SIGNATURES REQUIRED was removed on the last page.

The leadership staff has worked together to update the 2020 Financial Policy, see attached. We are asking the Board to pass resolution 2020-06 to update out current policy.

Hobler moves to adopt RESOLUTION 2020-06, updating our Financial Policy. Freehling seconds. Discussion: Howe relays information of past budgets and is understanding of it being a huge task. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Young, yes; Hobler, yes; and Howe, yes. Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS:

PLAN REVIEW & PERMIT FEE STUDY:

Drage handed out fee comparisons using the different fire districts and towns. He presented this showing the comparisons.

Drage feels that adjuring our fee schedule as recommended. It will allow fees to more accurately account for staff time and will increase the District's incoming revenue.

The Life Safety Bureau charges fees for new construction plan review and permitting. The last time we updated our fee schedule was July 2018. We have reviewed fees assessed by several neighboring fire departments to develop a proposal for updating our fee schedule.

Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-1-1002(1)(e) authorizes fire protection districts "to fix and from time to time increase or decrease fees and charges as follows, and the board may pledge such revenue for the payment of any indebtedness of the district." It is staff's intent that any fees we charge would be reasonable and appropriate, and comparable to our neighboring fire districts. The FRFR membership has asked the Senior Leadership Team to use the following fire districts as reasonable comparisons when it comes to personnel salaries: Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, Greeley Fire Department, Poudre Fire Authority, Windsor Severance Fire Rescue, Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District, and Platteville-Gilcrest Fire Protection District. We have used the adopted fee schedules of these same districts, plus our two towns, to provide comparison data for plan review and permit fees. Information is attached to show comparisons between the current FRFR fee schedule, the comparison fee schedules, and the recommended changes for a new FRFR fee schedule. Drage will also plan on reviewing impact fees charged by these comparison departments to determine if changes to our impact fees are needed.

Adjusting our fee schedule as recommended by staff will allow fees to more accurately account for staff time and will increase the District's incoming revenue.

Staff requests the Board review the fee comparisons provided, as well as the changes/updates recommended by staff. It is staff's intention to present a Board Resolution for discussion and consideration at the September Board of Director's meeting, for fee changes to take effect on January 1, 2021.

Hobler asks if this affects commercial buildings. West and Drage state we get new build residential fees, not existing residential and commercial fees. Hobler asks if the BoDs vote to change this, do the towns have any say in this. Drage states it is just ours by right for Colorado Statues. It has to be duly adopted in a public meeting by resolution.

West states we would delay the implementation of this until January 2021 to be good stewards. Rutt asks if anybody is going to have any heartburn over this. Drage states there should not be.

Postpone Regular FRFR BoD Meeting at 19:47.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Hobler moves to go in to Executive Session to discuss the purchase, lease, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest. Authorized by Colorado Statue 24-6-402 4A," as well as a personnel matter regarding Chief West. Authorized by Colorado Statue 24-6-402 4F at 19:47. Young seconds. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Young, yes; Hobler, yes; and Howe, yes. Motion passes. BoDs enter into Executive Session.

Hobler moves to adjourn the Executive session at 20:38. Roll call: Rutt, yes; Freehling, yes; Young, yes; Hobler, yes; and Howe, yes. Motion passes. Executive Session adjourned at 20:38.

FRFR Regular BoD Meeting back into session at 20:38. No action was taken in the Executive Session.

BOARD REPORTS: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Correspondence is in the Google Folder.

Howe thanks staff for attending the funeral of Doc Flack.

Young and the rest of the BoDs publicly thank the crews for the Nacho and Kika's for dinner tonight. THANK YOU!

ADJOURNMENT: Freehling moves to adjourn at 20:42. Hobler seconds. Roll call: All "aye." Meeting adjourned at 20:42.