

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
COLORADO RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MAY 12, 2020**

**STATION 41, 1850 RAILROAD AVENUE, RIFLE, CO 81650**

The regular scheduled meeting, which was conducted via an audio/video platform accessible to the public, was called to order by Chairperson Lambert at 6:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, and a moment of silence was given.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Board Members Present:**

Alan Lambert, President/Chairperson  
Matt Weisbrod, Vice President  
Paige Haderlie, Treasurer  
Addy Marantino, Secretary  
Levy Burris, Director

**Others Present:**

Randy Callahan, Fire Chief  
Leif Sackett, Operations Division Chief  
Zach Pigati, Wildland/Training Division Chief  
Scott Van Slyke, EMS Battalion Chief  
Orrin Moon, Prevention Division Chief  
John Gredig, IT Director  
P.J. Tillman, Administrative Director  
Dino Ross, Legal Counsel for the District

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

None.

**ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE FOR LEVY BURRIS, ALAN LAMBERT, AND MATT WEISBROD:**

Administrative Director Tillman, who is a notary public, administered the Oath of Office to Levy E. Burris Jr, Alan M. Lambert, and Matthew Weisbrod.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Secretary Marantino made a motion to continue the current slate of officers with Alan Lambert as President, Matthew Weisbrod as Vice President, Paige Haderlie as

Treasurer, and Addy Marantino as Secretary. Treasurer Haderlie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Secretary Marantino made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Vice President Weisbrod seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE:**

Attorney Ross stated that legal counsel and Chief Staff primarily worked on matters pertaining to COVID-19 and the May, 2020 mill levy election. He stated that Chief Staff, the Board, and the District worked very hard on the mill levy election and he is sad to see that the mill levy measure failed.

Attorney Ross stated that JoAnn Groff, who is the head of the State Property Tax Division, testified before the State Joint Budget Committee on May 12, 2020. Ms. Groff testified that, based on currently available information, the Property Tax Division anticipates that its preliminary report to the Colorado Legislature at the end of 2020 could recommend a reduction in the residential assessment rate (RAR) from 7.15 to 5.88. Attorney Ross commented that the financial impact COVID-19 has had on the State is billions of dollars and the effects will trickle down to local governments.

Attorney Ross stated that the Governor and the State Board of Examiners pushed back the date by which County Assessors must certify their preliminary assessed valuations to October 13, 2020, which is only two days before Chief Staff must submit the draft 2020 Budget the Board.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Fire Chief Callahan reviewed his report with the Board. He stated that in the Board packet, the New Business items include a revised Stryker Maintenance Contract and a review of the District's Wildland Division funding strategy. He stated that Old Business consists of an update on the May 2020 election.

Fire Chief Callahan informed the Board that the mill levy increase ballot did not pass and that the lack of a mill levy increase will create significant challenges for the District. Fire Chief Callahan stated that Chief Staff did not meet their goal of financial stability. Fire Chief Callahan stated that, although the District will continue to serve and strive for prosperity, it will take longer for the District to respond, it will be harder on the District's

first responders, and everyone will be effected by this outcome. Essentially, at a time when service demands are increasing, service levels will decrease due to associated shift-level reductions.

Fire Chief Callahan reiterated that the District is engaged on two parallel paths: one is focused on the District's vision, values, and mission, and the other is focused on financial stability. Fire Chief Callahan stated that the District is here to serve and will continue to do so with budget cuts.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that Chief Staff will take this outcome as an opportunity and will submit a balanced budget to the Board.

President Lambert stated that it is unfortunate that the District's communities did not vote in favor of a mill levy increase because the District's first responders put their lives on the line to save others and really needed it.

Vice President Weisbrod asked Attorney Ross how long the District must wait before pursuing another mill levy increase. Attorney Ross stated that the District could submit the ballot again in the November 2020 general election.

President Lambert stated that he believes pursing a mill levy increase in November would upset the citizens of the District.

Attorney Ross discussed different approaches other special districts have taken when a proposed mill levy increase ballot was not approved by the voters.

Vice President Weisbrod asked if the Board was no longer subject to the Fair Campaign Practices Act now that the May 2020 election was conducted and, if so, can the Board educate and communicate with the public on the effects of the election.

Attorney Ross stated that the Fair Campaign Practices Act no longer applied, and the Board can educate and communicate with the public on the effects of the election.

Vice President Weisbrod suggested that the District send a clear message to the communities that financial stability is a serious need and cuts are going to be made as a result of the vote against the mill levy increase.

Fire Chief Callahan stated he has a meeting for a newspaper article tomorrow and can reiterate that message.

President Lambert asked when the District would need to begin the process for a potential mill levy increase ballot in the November election, if that is something the Board decides to pursue.

Attorney Ross stated that the District will need to notify the County Clerk and Recorder sometime in July that it is considering a potential ballot issue for the November 2020 election. The Board will not need to make a final decision until late August, as it must certify the form and content of the ballot to the County in September.

Board discussion ensued regarding the District's options, especially from what it has learned during the May 2020 election process.

The consensus of the Board was to discuss this matter more thoroughly during the July Board meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM REQUESTS:**

**a. Fire Chief/Operations: Review and Consider Updated Stryker Maintenance Contract**

Fire Chief Callahan stated that pursuant to the Board's direction at the last meeting, Attorney Ross provided Chief Staff with the proposed non-appropriation provision, which has been incorporated into the contract with Stryker Medical.

Secretary Marantino made a motion to approve the maintenance contract with Stryker Medical. Vice President Weisbrod seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Fire Chief/Wildland: Review of Wildland Division Hiring**

Fire Chief Callahan stated that Chief Staff is seeking guidance from the Board on the direction of the wildland division given the voters did not approve the proposed mill levy increase.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that the original intent was to fund the wildland division from the mill levy increase and use the revenues from the wildland season for capital expenditures. However, with the mill levy ballot not passing, Chief Staff is seeking guidance from the Board on the future of the wildland division.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that Chief Staff may need five years of data to compare the average cost savings to income of the wildland division. Fire Chief Callahan stated that wildland fires are one of the top risks to the communities of the District. In addition, the wildland division brings a great amount of experience and training to the membership and strengthens the District's ability to minimize the threat of a catastrophic wildland fire.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that during a typical wildland season, wildland personnel are deployed forty to sixty percent of the time. Even though the wildland

season was slow last year, wildland personnel were in District majority of the time, which helped with staffing issues.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that Chief Staff is planning a hiring process for the wildland division and is seeking affirmation from the Board on this matter. Fire Chief Callahan stated that he feels the progression of the wildland division is a reasonable financial risk.

Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati stated that over the last two years, the wildland division has made 1.4 million dollars in revenue. With the salaries paid for the wildland personnel and two wildland engines paid off, there is a still a positive revenue of \$220,063.00. He stated that Chief Staff needs five years of data to generate an average. Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati stated that if the wildland division continues, depending on summer fire conditions, the District can hold the crews back from deployments to increase staffing.

President Lambert stated that the District's 851 square miles has a substantial amount of wildland, so having a wildland division is important.

Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati discussed the complexities of running a large camp with the safety measures and setbacks of COVID-19 exposure.

Treasurer Haderlie discussed the trends in the real estate market, which included a projected influx of interest in western areas. She stated that this trend may also have an impact with wildland fires.

Vice President Weisbrod stated that having a wildland division is valuable to the District and to the communities of the District because of mitigation and other safety measures offered. He agrees with having a five to even ten-year time frame to generate enough data to decide whether having a wildland division is feasible for the District.

Director Burriss stated that with current staffing and the budget, he would like to start looking at 2021. He stated that he was aware of four wildland fires county-wide that could have transitioned to dangerous fires. Considering the projections from Treasurer Haderlie, with more people moving from the east and from other states, Director Burriss stated that there could be a higher chance of people starting wildland fires. He stated that he is in support of the wildland division, but would like the District to review all programs and fine tune areas to meet budgetary constraints.

**OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM REQUESTS:**

a. **Fire Chief/Administration: May 2020 Election Update**

Administrative Director Tillman stated that she and Operations Division Chief Sackett will be going to the County Clerk on Thursday to finalize the report on the May 2020 election.

President Lambert thanked Administrative Director Tillman for running the election internally, as it saved the District a substantial amount of money.

Fire Chief Callahan stated that there was great quality and integrity of work involved. He stated that although the mill levy increase did not pass, the District did not lose.

Director Burris stated that the public wants accountability from the District. He stated that the District should look at November of 2020 for a mill levy increase because it may be too much for the District to wait eighteen months.

**DIVISION INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM:**

**Operations Division Chief Sackett:**

Operations Division Chief Sackett gave an update on the Federal Mineral Lease District SCBA Compressor Grant. He stated that the Scott Air Compressors have been discontinued and so he is working with Facilities Manager Kelly to get three new bids on SCBA compressors for Stations 41 and 61.

Operations Division Chief Sackett stated that the grant is still awarded, but Chief Staff must obtain a different type of compressor due to manufacturing setbacks.

Director Burris had a concern with the District's Engine 41 going to the Front Range for pump/valve work because the new service truck should have been able to complete the work in-house.

Fire Chief Callahan explained that the District's fleet mechanic resigned, thus the repair could not be completed in-house.

Operations Division Chief Sackett stated that the District has another fleet mechanic; however, there is limited work that can be done due to light-duty limitations. He stated that the pump/valve work on Engine 41 needed to be done.

**Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati:**

Vice President Weisbrod asked how the fire season looks this year.

Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati stated that, with the recent rain, the District should have a low potential for wildfires over the next week. However, once the rain stops, in the upcoming weeks, there should be a huge spike in wildfire potential. He discussed how the wildfire season is already starting in Arizona and in New Mexico. In addition, for Florida, it is typical for there to be fires in May. For Colorado, there is a projection of the wildfire season to start towards the end of May and into June. In addition, there is a forecast of the monsoon season starting late July and early August.

Wildland/Training Division Chief Pigati stated that there may be extreme drought climates west of Parachute and into the southwest region of the State. The trends will travel through Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon, and California towards the end of the year.

Director Burriss stated that the County has experienced more wildfires so far than it did for the wildland season last year.

**EMS Battalion Chief Van Slyke:**

Secretary Marantino stated that she noticed Dr. Knight was included in EMS Battalion Chief Van Slyke's report. She asked if Dr. Knight was the District's official medical director.

EMS Battalion Chief Van Slyke confirmed and stated that Dr. Knight was the District's official medical director beginning in January 2020.

**Prevention Division Chief Moon:**

Prevention Division Chief Moon stated that the birthday brigade program that has been going on for a month and a half has been going well. He thanked Community Risk Reduction Specialist Pina, along with the Police Department for collaborating on the birthday brigade program. He stated that the District is continuing the program and does not know when the District will stop doing the program.

President Lambert stated that he had the opportunity to join a birthday brigade with the Police Department. He stated that it is an amazing program that brings positivity to the communities of the District.

Prevention Division Chief Moon agreed with President Lambert's statement.

**IT Director Gredig:**

Director Burris asked IT Director Gredig on an update on the Kenwood radios.

IT Director Gredig stated that Kenwood has a great price on radios in comparison to Motorola. He then compared some of the pros and cons of Kenwood and Motorola radios. He stated that there are some positive aspects of Kenwood radios, but after some beta testing, he does not believe the District will go with the Kenwood radios.

**Administrative Director Tillman:**

Administrative Director Tillman stated that the auditors have completed their audit of the District's 2019 financial statements and there should be a draft audit report soon.

Operations Division Chief Sackett and Fire Chief Callahan thanked Administrative Director Tillman for her ongoing efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, the election, as well as the audit deadlines.

**GOOD NEWS & DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Fire Chief Callahan stated that, with everything going on, he is seeing that the community is recognizing the District as "CRFR".

Preventions Division Chief Moon stated that he would like to also thank the crews for their hard work, especially with the birthday brigades.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

Treasurer Haderlie thanked Chief Staff and those who helped with the election. She stated that she saw great professionalism on election day. She stated that she knows it is going to be a tough year, but she is up for the challenge and is excited to see what the District accomplishes.

Secretary Marantino agreed with Treasurer Haderlie's comment. She stated that she knows how hard the District is working and is very proud.

Vice President Weisbrod stated that the mill levy ballot not passing is an opportunity. He stated that no matter how many times the District goes for a mill levy increase, he knows the District will continue to learn and rise. He stated that the Board supports the District and he is very proud to be a part of the District.

Director Burris agreed with comments made by the Board. He stated that he is proud of Chief Staff and the crews for their continued efforts in face of the various

dilemmas and challenges. He stated that he is also proud of the Board for working as a team.

President Lambert thanked the District for having the opportunity to remain on the Board for the next three years. He stated that he knows the District has more challenges to face, but the District has overcome many great challenges. He stated that the Board will continue to discuss and provide more information in meetings to come.

President Lambert stated that the Board would take a five-minute break before going into Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Vice President Weisbrod made a motion to go into Executive Session to receive legal advice of legal counsel on the interim fire chief contract with Randy Callahan pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b). Secretary Marantino seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Attorney Ross certified for the record that the Executive Session will constitute an attorney-client communication and will not be recorded.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:11 pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:33 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no other business to come before the Board, Chairperson Lambert adjourned the meeting at 9:33 pm.

**APPROVAL:**

The foregoing Minutes, which has been approved by the affirmative majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Colorado River Fire Protection District, is a true and accurate record of the meeting held on the date state above.

Date: June 9, 2020



Date: June 20

