

Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday August 8th, 2023

Meeting held at the Wasatch County Administration Building located at 25 N Main, Heber City.

Those in Attendance:

Eric Rowland

Steve Farrell

Spencer Parks

Kendall Crittenden

Luke Searle

Karl McMillan

Chief Eric Hales

Deputy Chief Clint Neerings

Kierstan Smith

Dustin Grabau

The minutes of the July 11th board meeting were presented to the board for their review and approval.

A motion was made by Councilman Parks to approve the minutes of the July 11th fire board meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman McMillan and the motion passed all in favor.

Warrants

Farrell: Now onto warrants, we have warrants in the amount of \$780,978.43. Chief, is there anything in the warrants that stands out or is unusual?

Chief: Other than the big number...I do want to point out that about \$252,000 of this, is all expenses to the new station. And as I mentioned last month, this is going to become the "norm" so where they do stand out now, this will probably be a little light.

Farrell: We'll get use to them.

Chief: Unfortunately. You will as...

Farrell: You show them as expenses, but we are reimbursed for them right?

Chief: Well, yes. We pay for them and then obviously we have to go through our reimbursement process through CIB. Obviously, some of the cash is that we have to put out ourselves first. These are expenses not only with the closing but also with the culvert and some impact fees, expenses for gear for the

Heber Light & Power, so we had quite a few expenses. That is really the only thing that stands out of the ordinary.

Farrell: Any questions for the Chief on the warrants? We will now entertain a motion.

A motion was made by Councilman McMillan to approve the warrants as presented in the amount of \$780,978.43. The motion was seconded by Councilman Crittenden and the motion passed all in favor.

Chief report

Farrell: Okay Chief, 2023 year to date.

Chief: Well, as you have been accustomed too, we are trying to just give you a snap shot month to month about where we are with call volume. Last month, in June when we showed you, we were a little below our standard but again, we ramped up in July.

We do want to acknowledge the passing of Grant Kooler, who was a long-time member of the EMS and Search & Rescue. And provided a great deal of service to this community.

Throughout the month of July, we participated in the City's 4th of July events and there were a few notable fires. We did have a house fire, a suspicious fire at Walmart that is under investigation, and then a lightning strike in Wallsburg that caused a fire. So that is kind of the snapshot of 2023. I would like to turn a little time over to Kierstan to give the financial report.

Kierstan: A couple of things we need to talk about today. #1- is the operating reserve. The policy of the district is we bring this to the board every year to discuss the reserve and the funding of the reserve. So, we look at this based on...we are talking about 2022 at the moment, we are talking about at the end of the year, an audit is completed, we have those audited numbers, we use those to determine what is the normal/average operating cost of the District. We take that as our base line and we want 3 months of that in our operating reserve. So using this calculations for 2022, our 3 month reserve would be 1.5 million, as of the end of December there is just over \$500,000 in there. We are proposing to allocate \$400,000 to that for this last year. That was actually in our amended budget to allocate that money over so we have the cash to be able to do that and are proposing to move forward on that as we had anticipated. So that would bring us to, at this point, about a \$600,000 deficit which over time will get funded. Most likely within the next 2 years because we won't do it all at once.

For our 2nd quarter of 2023, in your packet you have the quarterly financial statement with some notes, and I'm not going to regurgitate everything you have in there because that would just take too long and be boring. So, let me just highlight a couple things that when you are looking at this, may stand out to you. In the operating revenues, you'll notice with property taxes that we are only like 1% of where we are. That has to do with the period of availability, everything we receive within January/February time frame, gets pulled back into the prior year so the property taxes that we are budgeting for 2023 will actually be received mostly in December and then January-February of 2024 will get pulled back in.

Something else, that kind of gives you're a forecast or projection of what is happening within the District. If you look at the processing fees, this is the \$100 fee that is charged for the landscaping deposits, so when someone comes in, are not ready to put in there landscaping and they pay a deposit until that gets done. But it kind of gives you an idea because we are a 143% of budget, that you have a

lot more growth and building going on than we had anticipated at the end of 2022. Which is a good sign for the district.

Another thing to look at is your interest income. We are at 144% of budgeted and that just shows you what is happening with the interest rates going up the way that they are and cash we have on hand, we have actually increased our interest projections significantly which is beneficial for the district.

Just something on the expense side, you'll notice there are some few line items that have budgeted amounts but have no entries to it, and the reasoning for that is at the end of the year, we converted the district to a department based general ledger accounting system. So there are things on here for like prevention, and public education actually has its own department, so under that these are expense to supplies and services; same with EMS. And no longer is it under these two lines of ambulance expense and ambulance vehicle expense, now they all have their own operating supplies, vehicle costs, etc. And vehicles is actually its own department, they all will get melted down into one financial statement which your seeing which is why line items appear blank on here.

And then with capital outlay, we had budgeted for about \$7.6 Million of capital outlay this year which most of it is for the new fire station of course. That is going to shift slightly, because we are not starting construction as quickly as we anticipated at the end of the year, so instead of it being \$7 million that will get spent this year, that'll probably be a lower number and get pushed into this next year so just keep that in mind.

Are there any questions as you look through it that I can answer for you?

Farrell: So in essence were not broke?

Kierstan: You are not broke at this point in time, no. I'm not going to not tell you to spend wisely though. So spend wisely but you are not broke, no.

Farrell: Any questions? If not, we will entertain a motion to accept the financial review as presented.

A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to accept the financial review as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Parks. The motion was passed all in favor.

Farrell: Okay Chief, Station 56.

Chief: Yes, talking about spending wisely, lets look at Station 56. There was a proposal we brought it up last board meeting, of the possibility of putting in a temporary facility in conjunction with Hideout Public Works building to provide some Fire & EMS coverage on that side of the lake. Throughout this past month, I have researched and not so much got bids but looked at the cost of what buying a single wide trailer would be. I looked at everything from a modified connex box to a single wide trailer which is about 15x60 trailer, that had two bedrooms, a kitchen and all the other facilities. We, myself and Chief Neerings, had a opportunity to meet with Hideout Town, with their town engineer and Epic Engineering. They were talking about where we could locate this on the property, what site work would need to be done in order to accommodate a temporary facility like this. Those talks are going well and we are getting some site plans drawn up to see what that would be. Hideout Town is on board with that and are looking at ways to help fund portions of this, especially the infrastructures which include asphalt and grading, site prep, etc. There is a few things we would look such as connections to utilities and things like that, that we would need to try to budget for. So what I have researched is, we can get a two

bedroom-single wide, it is one that is rated for our climate and snow load, for about \$125,000. The reason I want to go with the single-wide is that, once we are done and have a physical location in Hideout, we can actually relocate it to another place in the county that is experiencing exponential growth and do this all over again. And I guess, in my mind, this is an “out of the box way” to provide coverage as we try to keep up and catch up to growth. So with that-#1: I would like to see if the board is okay with us moving forward and pursuing that, what it would take is that we do have money in our capital project fund, those would obviously have to be approved and then the budget would be amended towards the end. But in checking with Kierstan, we do have the funds to do that. Along with that, I would like to purchase a used fire apparatus, a small mini pumper and they range anywhere from \$200,000 to \$350,000 and you know they have a 500 gallon/minute pump to 1500 gallon/minute pump. So it provides us with what we need for that area, for EMS first response and well as initial fire attack. Essentially the big ask, is transferring about \$600,000 from that Capital fund to our Operating fund and pursuing these. The only thing we are working against is time, with site prep, asphalt and getting this trailer even built; they are about 2 months out so we are looking at the first of October to get that delivered.

Crittenden: But we can get everything else done while it's built.

Chief: Yes, if we had the site prep done, asphalt in, and utilities then we could have it just be placed.

Crittenden: And you would just put a 2or 3-man team there?

Chief: Our plan is two people, I think we do that with our current staffing. Obviously, we will be up staffing in preparation for the new station but our current staffing model, we could rearrange people to at least have two people over there. That will help with our response in the basin as well as whether it is over to the MITA project as well as to the east side of the Lake and the Hideout area.

Farrell: It'll be a big benefit to the property owners out there with the ISO rating.

Chief: The fact that by doing this, it is not a small investment, but by making this investment the impact that it'll have on their insurance ratings will be exponential. We will be giving them a “fire station” within 5 miles of most of the homes. And it actually located only about three quarters of a mile from the proposed dedicated site in Hideout so we're still providing really good coverage on the Hideout side.

Crittenden: Where is that proposed site?

Clint Neerings: It is...you know on SR 248 where the “Klaim” development is or Soaring Hawk? Plaine is just north of Soaring Hawk and it is just kind of on that downhill, and little triangle piece that doesn't have a lot of other use.

Crittenden: But you couldn't place this there now? It is not usable as of now?

Chief: No, we need a garage and that is the benefit we are getting out of the public works, we are getting a heated space to put our apparatus. And we are just bringing in temporary living quarters.

Rowland: For the residents to realize these insurance savings, is that something that is automatically put into effect, or do they have to contact their insurance carriers?

Chief: I would assume they would have to contact their carrier. But one of the things we would reach out with social media and through Hideout town letting them know, that they now have responders

around their vicinity, where the new station will be going but that for now, we will have coverage coming out of the Public Works.

So basically, I will leave it up to you to determine how best to proceed.

Farrell: I think you go ahead and do it. This concept is a good thing for the entire county.

Parks: And it is not value reducing. We still have the unit that is probably sellable if we don't have another place for it to go after.

Chief: There is some place for it to go and the pumper is something we can use regardless.

Parks: So we aren't losing anything, we are getting stuff that we can use for a long time.

Chief: Yes, so we will proceed with that. Thank you and I will give you an update at the next board meeting on where we sit with all of that.

Then, I guess I put the EMS tax rate or sales tax on there just more for my knowledge. I realized in talking with Dustin today, that has already moved forward with the resolution of .5% to the state.

Farrell: We wanted it at 1% but we couldn't have that option so we got the .5% which what I think you had proposed.

Chief: Yeah, originally that is what we had put out there, one of the things I would like to do for next board meeting, is have Kierstan present what that looks like with the revenues that would be generated with that, how that effects our cash flows as well as how does that effect our property tax.

Crittenden: That's on the ballot, right? That's what we passed it to have it put on the ballot?

Chief: Yeah to put it on the ballot.

Crittenden: Yeah.

Chief: I know this Friday, Dustin and I, are meeting with Wasatch Wave and starting to have conversations on getting it out to the public and try to get...

Crittenden: Dustin, will be the only County item on the ballot? Or do we have anything else that'll be on the ballot?

Dustin: I don't think so.

Crittenden: So does that add to our cost to help with the election or does that make any difference?

Dustin: I will have to check with Joey. We have to administer the election anyway by state code even if it's just a municipal election, we may have to adjust the cost allocation though.

Crittenden: Because we got something on there too?

Searle: Well, we are sending it to all county residents, right?

Dustin: Yeah, correct. I just don't know if it will account for the incremental cost of Heber City and Midway City ballots that will have this provision on it in addition to the municipal elections. So I will talk with Joey on that.

Farrell: The money that comes in from Sale Tax, do we collect that monthly or quarterly?

Dustin: Sales tax are collected monthly but two months after the fact so anything we collect in January, we won't get until March.

Farrell: So, we will get an allocation per month?

Dustin: Yes. And because of the way the election works, if it passes, we submit that resolution to the state tax commission and then not at the immediate next quarter but the following quarter, so we will miss the first quarter of this next year in sales tax revenue but for the following three quarters; so the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters of next year, we will collect that sales tax.

Crittenden: And then on going.

Dustin: Yeah, and we should probably enter into an MOU with the fire district, to actually remit those funds on a regular basis just putting that out there.

Searle: I don't know if we put in on the Fire District website or not but I know that when the tax was put on the ballot, that there wasn't pro or against but just neutral information of what that money could be spent on or whatever else, but I don't know if that was the plan to put that on the website?

Chief: It definitely is the plan and one of the things we have been working on are bullet points and talking points of those questions. Again, neutral information of what the benefits, pros, and cons, etc. So, we will be putting that on our website. Thanks for the clarification on that.

So, we do have two policies that we have presented to you. They really have to go off of last month when we adopted the new wage scale. We did have a previously approved policy 4-11 salary & wages but it didn't reference this specific scale, so we did make some adjustments. Last month I believed I discussed that we did need to add some language into this policy that talked about, basically, a red circle. There are those employees that are out of grade and out of range and we wanted to have in the policy, what we do with them. If they are within grade but way out of range, we needed to hold those individuals until the pay scale catches up to them. If they were in an appropriate grade but just a step or two above, they would still be eligible for the COLAs if granted but we wouldn't move them steps until their job performance actually catches up to where they are. So those are the things we needed to clarify.

Farrell: That's basically what the county has done.

Chief: And honestly, the language I had gotten for this was from David Rowley, just so we can keep it as consistent as possible on that. So that is the change with that. Also, within that salary & wages, it references how do you increase in those steps and one of the ways is by evaluation, so we wanted to make sure our performance evaluation policy was in place. So we did provide that language to you as well as the tools that we will be using to provide those evaluations. We have an evaluation for most of the employees and then we have a supervisor version. They are essentially the same, other than, with the supervisory of the officer evaluation, it incorporated a whole additional section of leadership in making sure they are meeting the criteria as well. So those were the two policies that we had put forth for you to review for approval.

Farrell: Why don't we go ahead with approval with changes to salary & wages policy.

A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to approve changes to Salary & Wages Policy 4-11 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rowland. The motion passed all in favor.

Farrell: Now we need a motion to approve the performance evaluation.

A motion was made by Councilman Parks to approve the employee performance evaluation policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Searle. The motion was passed all in favor.

Farrell: Let go to the fire chief salary adjustment.

Chief: Essentially this is the awkward part. Last month, we did the salary and wages, and obviously we can take of that for the entire department other than myself. But after last meeting, Dustin had sent over the resolution, essentially, the language that was used for the appointed and elected officials as well. So having our legal looking at this, we have drafted this under the same language, and I guess we are coming to you formally for the adjustment.

Farrell: Any questions on this?

A motion was made by Councilman Rowland to approve resolution 23-03, Fire Chief salary adjustment. The motion was seconded by Councilman Parks. The motion passed all in favor.

Chief: Lastly, the only thing we want to bring up is that we did receive all the applicate-well all but one-of the applications for the new make up of the advisory commission. And we would like to just submit those to you. You do have copies of what those applications are, and my recommendation would be that we retain Gil Rodriguez as a member, as a subject matter expert, to that board. We also retain Mary Duggin as an accumbent member of the board, representing the County at large and actually representing Daniel Town-which they did provide approval as a council last night for that. Also, would like to recommend-we received an application from Heber City for Mayor Franco and the council and mayor appointed her in that position to represent Heber City. And then Jonathan Gunn, a member of Hideout Town was put forward by their town council as well to be on that. I am still back and forth with Mayor Johnson, she has been under the weather a little bit and I understand that, but she did reach out and say there is a member of her council that will be putting in an application, but I did not receive it in time for this meeting. So with that, I would like to see if we can move forward with the appointment and reinstatement of two existing members of our board, Gil and Mary, and then adding the two additional members, Mayor Franco and Jonathan Gunn. And then we also do have two other positions, we have Kierstan, who is on the board appointed as our financial advisor, and then currently the County Manager, Dustin is on there and has been sitting as chair. But that will also be up to this board, if we want to retain Dustin or do we want to appoint another county staff member or county council member to be one that, that direction is what I am a little unsure on how you want to proceed on that.

Farrell: I would be fine with the County Manager continuing in that position.

Other board members: I agree

Farrell: Because I think a County Manager has a wide scope of experience in every aspect of the county.

Crittenden: Well and Kierstan is there to help with the financial side.

Chief: Absolutely. I appreciate that and we do...it'll be helpful as we have these new members, that don't have the experience, to have these existing members that can help on that.

A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to reappoint Mary Duggin, Gil Rodriguez to the Fire Advisory Commission; and to appoint Heidi Franco to represent Heber City, Jonathan Gunn to represent the Town of Hideout; and that we retain Dustin as the County Council representative and Kierstan as our advisory board member. The motion was seconded by Councilman Searle. The motion passed all in favor.

Farrell: Anything else Chief?

Chief: No, thank you.

A motion was made by Councilman Parks to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman McMillan. The motion passed all in favor.