

Moab Valley Fire Protection District Commission Meeting

45 South 100 East, Moab Utah 84532

October 16th, 2023 - 4:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order:

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Archie Walker at 4:00 p.m.
2. Commissioners Present: Chairman Archie Walker, Commissioner Jim McGann, Commissioner Charlie Harrison
3. Staff Present: Administrator Cathy Bonde, Operations Coordinator Ryan Burraston, Firefighter Traedyn Brewer
4. Also Present: Ryan Rasmussen of Smuin Rich & Marsing

B. 2022 Audit:

1. Ryan Rasmussen presented the highlights of the 2022 fiscal year audit. He stated the District had a clean audit and there were no findings. Mr. Rasmussen went over the financial highlights and the District's position as of the end of 2022, including how the Local Building Authority played into the audit. One of the changes in the audit due to the LBA is a Schedule 4 which separates out the LBA debit service from the rest of the District's debit service.

Cathy stated Smuin Rich & Marsing have been great to work with and are always available to answer questions. She asked Commissioners if they had any questions for Mr. Rasmussen in relation to the new audit contract which would be discussed later in the meeting. Chairman Walker asked about the timing for submitting the signed contract, and Mr. Rasmussen stated the would like it completed by the end of the year.

C. General Business:

1. Approval of Minutes – Approval of minutes was postponed until later in the meeting, allowing Commissioners time to further review them.
2. Citizens to be Heard – None were present

3. Approval of Bills - Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve bills. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. District Report –Reported by Cathy Bonde

1. Cathy stated the District has responded to 57 calls since the last Commission meeting. Three were major events including an airplane crash, brush fire with structures threatened on Shumway Lane, and a structure fire at Grand Oasis. 18 calls were from outside our District in greater Grand County. This equates to 32% of the calls.
2. We submitted our request to the County in exchange for services for 2024. The request was sent to Mallory who then submitted it to the County's budget committee. We have not heard anything back at this point.
3. We launched the Cordico app which has been discussed at previous meetings. It is a wellness app that can be utilized by our firefighters. Chair Walker asked how the app has been received, and Cathy stated that she has not gotten feedback on that yet. She shared the experience EMS had with a program they launched prior to the Cordico app, and that it took over a year for people to actually start utilizing the services. Considering their experience, we may find it takes time for our firefighters to start utilizing the services. We will continue to regularly let volunteers know the Cordico app is available. Cathy stated the Cordico app is being paid for by a grant. If we want to continue making it available after grant funds run out, the cost may be about \$2,000.00 per year. Chair Walker asked if there is a way to track its use, and Cathy stated that use is anonymous, but the company is able to provide us with statistics on use.
4. A number of our firefighters participated in a day long peer support training in relation to our wellness program. The certification from the training indemnifies them legally so that the support or counseling they provide to peers can remain private.
5. Our staff has been operating the chipper for an ongoing fuels mitigation project along the creek. We are working in conjunction with the Utah Conservation Corp who are here until Thanksgiving. Also involved are Rim to Rim Restoration and State Forestry. This is a project for which we can be reimbursed through a contract with the state negotiated by Clark Maughan. The contract allows for reimbursement up to \$16,576.00. Reimbursement begins once our PC is met, our PC has been met for 2023.
6. A number of meetings and trainings have taken place, and there are a number scheduled.
 - a. Ryan Burraston, Shea Walker and Carter Lloyd attended a two day urban wildland interface training sponsored by the BLM.
 - b. Clark Maughn and Mark Marcum attended the annual MIFC fall meeting in Green River.
 - c. Cathy attended a regional procurement roundtable put on by the state procurement office. The Department can use the state website to obtain multiple quotes for purchases when necessary. In addition, we will be applying to have access to the state's system for surplus federal and state fire equipment. Ideally this will allow us to purchase surplus equipment at discounted prices.
 - d. Chief, Brandon McGuffee and Commissioner Harrison went to Pierce Manufacturing in Wisconsin to work out final details for our engine.

Commissioner Harrison stated that a decision was made to decrease the size of the tank in order to get the weight down on the engine. Some other aspects such as ladders were moved around to improve function. There will be no additional cost for the changes made. We hope to have the engine in February.

e. Brandon McGuffee and Cathy Bonde will be attending a Fire Administrator's conference in St. George October 26th and 27th.

f. Staff met to discuss and prioritize equipment needs as a base of focus for grant applications.

g. Shea Walker and Cathy Bonde will be attending the mandatory CDBG how to apply workshop on Tuesday, October 24th. There has been discussion of using this grant opportunity to obtain a new rescue truck.

h. Multiple meetings have taken place in preparation to apply for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWOG) which is due October 17th. Clark Maughn along with Kara Dohrenwend from Rim to Rim Restoration have spearheaded this collaborative effort, and Shea Walker has also been a key player from the Department. The grant application is for \$5.1 million over 5 years and involves multiple agencies including the city and county. Kara Dohrenwend of Rim to Rim will administer the grant as the reporting requirements could require as much as a half-time position. Grant awards will be announced in February.

i. On Wednesday, staff and volunteers will be training on the new Paratech rescue tools. These tools were purchased last year and are reflected in our 2022 financials, but they were only received about a week ago.

7. We continue to be active in the schools with fire prevention and fire drills.
8. We have had requests to participate numerous Community activities including Zion's 150th anniversary celebration, the Lights On event sponsored by Beacon after School on October 24th, the WabiSabi Fall Festival on October 28th, and Trunk or Treat on October 31st. We try to participate in these events when available.
9. Repairs to 466 are mostly complete at McCandless in Grand Junction. Through inspection, they also discovered issues with the horn and a broken mirror switch. We are getting quotes on fixing those items as well as replacing the front grill. The engine can be retrieved if needed prior to the additional items being addressed.

E. Old Business:

1. Annexation – Castle Valley wants to go forward with the Castleton annexation. There may not be enough time to complete that this year.
2. MOU- Castle Valley Fire Protection District – Castle Valley Fire reviewed the MOU and made some minor edits. They were clarifying changes and none were substantive. Commissioners went over the edits. Chair Archie Walker made a motion to accept the MOU with the edits made by Castle Valley Fire. Commissioner Harrison seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
3. Job Descriptions – Cathy asked Commissioners if they had any questions or feedback on the compensation comparisons she handed out at the last meeting. Commissioner McGann

reiterated that he would like to see minimum and maximum compensation for each position.

5. Equipment Purchases – Chair Walker asked if there was any follow up in relation to the discussion of a tractor purchase at the previous meeting and if the CWDG grant would be an opportunity to fund a tractor. Cathy stated that it was decided the grant was not an opportunity for this particular piece of equipment. Chair Walker stated his opinion was that the piece of equipment presented at the last meeting is too small for the uses suggested, and he encouraged Ryan Burraston to pursue a different piece of equipment that would allow for more attachments and versatility. Ryan stated that he has been looking at other options in equipment and that he has found one grant source that may apply to this type of purchase. He will research further.

Commissioners asked questions of Ryan Burraston and Traedyn Brewer in relation to the new Paratech struts that staff and volunteers will be training on. Commissioners also asked questions in relation to the airplane crash incident.

G. New Business:

1. Smuin Rich & Marsing Auditing Contract – Chairman Walker asked if it would be worthwhile to get an audit quote from Larson & Company. Cathy stated she is very happy with Smuin Rich & Marsing but will get a quote to compare.
2. Draft Budgets – Discussion began with the 2023 amended budget. Changes from the previous meeting and justifications for amounts in certain line items were discussed. The biggest change was to put subscriptions into one expense line item. Subscriptions were moved from office expense, specialty rescue and other professional services into the new line item.

Chairman Walker asked to see a break out of the wildland program with revenue and expenses. Discussion was had on wildland staffing as to full time, part time, and seasonal. Cathy said she would do a breakdown of financials in relation to the wildland program and email it to Commissioners to they have a chance to go over it prior to the next meeting.

Cathy presented the current draft of the 2024 budget, which included an additional engine boss and one additional seasonal firefighter. Revenues and expenditures have been adjusted to reflect this second wildland crew. As to revenue, sending each crew out on two deployments nearly covers the State of Utah revenue line item that is related to the wildland program. In 2023, approximately \$28,000.00 in revenue was from out of District regional fires, not the larger deployments. On average, one two week deployment brought in \$69,000.00 in revenue. Commissioners discussed the value of the wildland program, and Chairman Walker stated the Commission should have a budget workshop. Cathy added that one way of looking at the wildland program is in terms of the need for employees. If the District decides it has a need for additional staffing, the wildland program is a way to subsidize that cost. Commissioner McGann asked if it was worth sending resources out of town to subsidize the cost of employees and questioned what the taxpayers would think of that. Cathy stated that if we need these employees, the program supplements our revenue so that we may not need to go for a tax raise in order to cover the

cost. Commissioners discussed the 2024 request of the County for providing fire protection services in the County outside of a fire protection district including the reason for the request amount and options the County has or does not have for where to draw those funds from. Cathy stated that if we get the \$5.1 million grant, we will need staff to perform fuels mitigation, and the grant will pay for those people. The new positions proposed would be doing that fuels mitigation work. Commissioner McGann suggested the possibility of waiting to find out if we receive that grant in February, and then deciding to bring on new staff. Commissioner Harrison stated that it takes time to build a wildland program, and discussion was had on the program to date. Chair Walker then stated the wildland program should be part of a budget workshop. Commissioner McGann asked about the Overtime/Part-Time expense line item, and Cathy explained what constitutes those expenses in addition to the wildland program and stated she would include wildland overtime in the breakdown of the program she will be providing to Commissioners.

Commissioners agreed to a budget workshop on Thursday, November 9th at 4:00 p.m.

3. Fraud Risk Assessment – This issue was tabled as only Commissioner Harrison has completed the open and public meeting training for 2023.
4. Public Hearing for Budgets – Commissioner Harrison motioned to hold budget public hearings on Thursday, December 7th at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Discussion was had on the LBA and holding its budget public hearing. Cathy stated the LBA budget is simple as it is a pass through entity for the CIB loan. That budget will be its own public hearing on the same evening. The amended 2023 budget and the 2024 budget public hearings will be held jointly for both the Department and the LBA.
5. Approval of Minutes - Referring to the draft minutes, Commissioner McGann asked about the value of calls in San Juan County as a percentage of budget. Cathy stated the amount in the minutes is correct. Commissioner Harrison then made a motion to approve the minutes from September 12th, 2023. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Smuin Rich & Marsing Auditing Contract – This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting.
7. Draft Amended Fee Schedule – Cathy presented a working draft of the amended fee schedule and stated more research is being done in relation to some of the line items. She went over the proposed changes. Commissioners discussed mileage fees and how best to calculate them. Cathy stated that once Commissioners approve the fee schedule it will need to go to public hearing. Staff will continue to refine the draft amended fee schedule and will present it to Commissioners again as changes are made.

H. Adjourn:

1. Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

_____ **Date** _____

Archie Walker, Chair

Attest: _____

Cathy Bonde, Clerk