

Moab Valley Fire Protection District Commission Meeting

45 South 100 East, Moab Utah 84532

July 25th, 2023 - 4:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order:

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Archie Walker at 4:20 p.m.
2. Commissioners Present: Chairman Archie Walker, Commissioner Jim McGann, Commissioner Charlie Harrison
3. Staff Present: Chief T.J. Brewer, Battalion Chief Brandon McGuffee, Administrator Cathy Bonde

B. General Business:

1. Ryan Rasmussen was not present for the 2022 Audit presentation. Cathy Bonde stated that there were no findings.
2. Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve minutes from the regular Commission meeting on May 16th, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McGann, and it passed unanimously.
3. Citizens to be Heard – None were present.
4. Commissioner McGann asked about the bill for radios and the bill from Hayes Godfrey Bell. Cathy Bonde stated the radios are to be partially reimbursed by a grant. Chief Brewer continued that the remaining balance can be covered by in-kind work. In relation to the second bill, Cathy Bonde informed Commissioners that it was for legal work related to the annexation and would be reimbursed by Grand County. Commissioner Harrison then motioned to approve bills. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Chief's Report

1. Chief Brewer stated the Department has been extremely busy with training, public relations, meeting and other activities. He reported 115 total calls to service since the last Commission meeting, emphasizing that number is extremely impressive

considering the Department has had 300-400 total calls in each of the last couple of years.

2. Moab Fire Department received an award from Utah Fire and Rescue Academy in recognition of the hard work our volunteers are putting into training and certifications.
3. Our wild land team was deployed to Southern California for a couple of weeks. We had some serious mechanical issues with the Engine 466. They were mitigated, but there were more mechanical issues once the Engine returned from California. Those issues have also been taken care of.
4. Many meetings have transpired including those with MIFC, Grand County and annexation, and San Juan County and our MOU. We meet with Grand County in relation to annexation again on Thursday. Chief Brewer encouraged input from the Commissioners on annexation.
5. The Department is in conversation with EMS as to the future of the Emergency Coordinator position.
6. The annual picnic is on Wednesday, July 26th.
7. Chair Walker asked for further information about Engine 466. Chief Brewer informed the Commissioners on issues with the new engine installed last year by McCandless International and some rear end issues. Other general issues with the Department's aging fleet were also discussed.

E. Old Business:

1. Annexation – Chair Walker presented a review of the meeting with the Grand County Committee appointed to work on annexation and fire suppression responsibilities of the County. Discussion was then had on the Fire District's requests of the County in relation to annexation including a three year financial commitment, improvements needed to the Thompson Springs Fire Station, and other items. Chief Brewer stated that he felt our requests of the County are bare-bones after removing some expenses including personnel and equipment from the budget. The base of the request is the funding of two positions along with associated costs, and equipment needs for specialty rescue including hazmat which is legislatively the responsibility of the County.

In relation to these annexation needs, Chief Brewer stated the need for a second rescue truck and new extrication equipment as some of the older equipment is not performing as needed and is worn out. Technology of vehicles and tools has advanced, and some of our equipment is becoming antiquated.

Commissioners also discussed the District's options and needs once the requested three years of support from the County expire. Funding options include the possibility of a SAFER grant to cover payroll costs associated with personnel covered by temporary County funding as well as the possibility of the need for a tax increase which would then be shared by all tax payers in the expanded District. The District's taxing rate decreases every year, and a tax increase may mean bringing the rate back up to the current rate after several years of continual drop. New growth, initiating impact fees, and other grant resources could also help offset costs.

Commissioners returned to the discussion of the need for equipment for specialty rescue, and Cathy Bonde pointed out that some of those needs are covered in the annexation budgets with the line item being \$100,000.00 in year one and dropping to \$25,000.00 in year two. In year three, the specialty rescue budget is the same as year two but includes a small percentage increase for inflation.

Chief Brewer stated a more timely need for new extrication tools and presented options he has researched including used tools and two sources for new tools. Used equipment is approximately \$27,000.00. New equipment without technology for reporting equipment performance is just under \$40,000.00. With the technology, equipment is just over \$40,000.00. New tools would include warranty. Chief Brewer would like to purchase tools now as the performance of tools on Engine 10 are concerning. He has negotiated prices on the tools and stated that each year sees an increase in price of 10%, so waiting will be an increased expense. Commissioners suggested purchasing the new equipment, and Commissioner McGann stated the cost could come out of our Capital Projects Fund.

Discussion returned to annexation and the financial request of the County for three years of support during the transition. Concerns were raised as to whether or not the County would approve the request. The District is also requesting other terms for annexation including improvements to Thompson, options for surplus property, coming to agreement for the Lower Valley contract, and agreement on Fire Warden/State obligations.

Cathy Bonde presented a timeline for annexation as well as a draft resolution required to start the process. The resolution needs a map that the County is working on producing. Commissioners may need to meet in special session prior to the next scheduled meeting to consider approving the resolution. Passing the resolution is the first step in the annexation process, and the District still has the option to not annex after the resolution is passed. Commissioners would like a firmer commitment from the County as to their participation before moving forward.

2. Job Descriptions – This is ongoing. With annexation and other issues, staff has not had time to focus on job descriptions.

3. Utah Local Government Trust, Insurance and Fraud Risk – Cathy Bonde informed Commissioners the Trust has suspended the high Fraud Risk score in order to be insured. They have asked that entities continue to strive to reach that goal as requirements are being reassessed.

4. Internal Audit Policy – Cathy Bonde spoke with Cody Deeter in relation to being an internal auditor for the Department. He stated the cost would be similar to that of the County, but there may be some room to bring that down with a lessor version of audit. He did state the information produced would be of lessor value also. Chief Brewer stated the internal audit could be done as an exchange with another entity, but that would place more burden on staff.

G. New Business:

1. 2022 Post Audit Financials – Cathy Bonde presented post audit financials for 2022. Auditors suggested moving some revenue as well as some expenses to the Capital Projects Fund. This was done leaving a net income of \$50,619.19 in the general budget and a

balance of \$380,035.99 in the Capital Projects Fund. The reserve fund from 2018-2022 then has a balance of \$300,857.01.

2. Certified Tax Rate – Cathy Bonde presented a resolution certifying the 2023 tax rate. The tax rate fell from .000543 in 2022 to .000423 in 2023; a decrease of 22.10%. If a similar decrease happens in 2024, the District's tax rate will fall below the level it was prior to our tax increase for 2022. Commissioner McGann motioned to approve the resolution certifying the 2023 tax rate. Commission Harrison seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

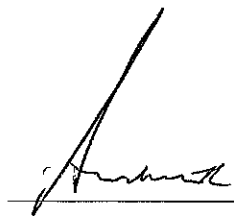
3. MOU- Castle Valley Fire Protection District – Commissioners discussed Castle Valley Fire's suggestions for points to be included in an MOU. Commissioners were of general consensus that we should have a mutual aid agreement without financial reimbursement for either party.

4. Mid-America Pipeline Settlement – Cathy Bonde informed Commissioners of the District's obligation to refund some tax revenue collected from Mid-America Pipeline due to a lawsuit they won that contested their tax valuation. The settlement is from 2016 and 2017 and includes interest. There is the possibility negotiations could result in no interest penalty if payment is made within a certain time frame. The tax refund due for 2016 and 2017 is 1790.97. Interest through July 31, 2023 adds \$187.51 to the total. Valuations beyond 2017 are also being contested but there is no settlement yet on those years.

5. Equipment Purchases – This was primarily discussed during the annexation agenda item. Chief Brewer informed the Commission that Moab Fire may have to pay for Dispatch in the future based on call volume. Of concern are calls that belong to another agency in which we are asked to assist.


H. Adjourn:

1. Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 5:39 p.m.



Date 15 August 2023

Archie Walker, Chair

Attest: 

Cathy Bonde, Clerk