

# **Moab Valley Fire Protection District Commission Meeting**

**45 South 100 East, Moab Utah 84532**

**November 21, 2023 - 4:00 p.m.**

## **A. Call to Order:**

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Archie Walker at 4:05 p.m.
2. Commissioners Present: Chairman Archie Walker, Commissioner Jim McGann, Commissioner Charlie Harrison
3. Staff Present: Chief TJ Brewer, Administrator Cathy Bonde, Operations Coordinator Ryan Burraston, Firefighter Traedyn Brewer
4. Arriving Later: Saina Carey

## **B. General Business:**

1. Approval of Minutes: October 16, 2023 – Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of October 16, 2023. Chair Walker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
2. Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2023 – Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve the minutes from the budget workshop of November 9, 2023. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
3. Citizens to be Heard – None were present at this time.
4. Approval of Bills - Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve bills. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **C. Chief's Report**

1. The District responded to 47 calls since the last Commission meeting.
2. Noteworthy meetings include staff and administrative meetings that take place every Tuesday, radio task force meeting, Chief's meetings, Certification Council, Joint Chief's meeting, and UCA Stakeholder meeting.
3. Chief Brewer and Cathy continue to meet to work on the budgets.

4. Pie Night was a success, and we are now preparing for the banquet. Chief Brewer asked Commissioners if one would like to volunteer to speak at the banquet. No decision was made.
5. Station 1 and 2 currently have only one tenant in each. Discussion was had on Station 2's roof and building integrity. The roof was previously replaced after discovering water damage. Chief Brewer stated he is in no hurry to fill the vacancies at the Stations.
6. A volunteer onboarding committee consisting of Ryan, Traedyn, Mark Marcum, and Cathy has been created. The committee will formalize the process for volunteers joining the department, ensuring constancy in the process and in expectations.
7. Chief Brewer and Ryan met with the State Fire Marshall's office to discuss the hazmat team. They said we are not alone in the struggle to keep a hazmat team going. They are pursuing different avenues of funding and asked Chief Brewer to speak at the emergency response committee meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup> about the struggles and needs in forming and keep a functioning team. After the meeting with the State Fire Marshall's office, Ryan spent some time diving into the hazmat needs of the Department. For us to become a type 3 team we need to spend approximately \$150,000.00. Chief Brewer stated he is not making a funding request but simply informing Commissioners of the basic costs to have an equipped Hazmat team. Commissioner Harrison asked about the maintenance that would follow. Chief Brewer stated that it is not so much maintenance as acquiring functioning equipment. After 2001, the Federal government opened up opportunities that allowed us to get dive team and hazmat equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and now that equipment has become dated.
8. Fire prevention month is over. Chief Brewer will get numbers of students served this year from Brandon McGuffee.
9. Chief Brewer spoke with the officer corps about cancer screening. They were thankful that the Department is providing the service. One question that came out of the meeting is what happens if they test positive and does the Department have any funding set aside for that.
10. Next week is Traedyn's last week for the season.
11. There was a bad car crash this morning, and it was a good opportunity to remind volunteers of the Cordico app. Feedback is that the app is being utilized and is a good resource. The crash involved extensive extrication, and the firefighters performed exceptionally. Chief Brewer said he was very impressed with the extrication. Chair Walker asked how the tools performed. Chief Brewer stated we are still using older tools and the batteries can be an issue. Donnie McCandless is rotating batteries weekly to insure they operate to the best of their ability when needed. Chief Brewer stated we need new tools, and they are \$1,700.00 apiece.

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#### **E. Old Business:**

1. Annexation – Nothing new to report.
2. Job Descriptions – Chief Brewer stated this process continues to be ongoing. Commissioner McGann reiterated that he would like to see minimum and maximum compensation for each position. Chief Brewer said we continue to look at old policy in relation to compensation, and that the Department cannot afford to keep that policy in

place. Commissioner Harrison asked how we could set a cap when the economy keeps changing, and Commissioner McGann stated that is what the COLAs are for. Commissioner McGann said that if we annex and need to add employees, a pay scale with minimum and maximum for each position will be a valuable tool. Chief Brewer added that we have nine very different positions currently on staff.

#### **F. New Business:**

1. Fuels Mitigation – Chief Brewer presented a PowerPoint created by Clark Maughn of the fuels mitigation work along the creek that the District has been doing in collaboration with the State, Rim to Rim Restoration, and UCC. The presentation showed before and after pictures as well as the progression of the project. Chief Brewer said he is very proud of the work that is being done, and this is work our firefighters are doing. Pictures included work on the Robb property and Cross Creek Park. Commissioner Harrison asked what was being done with the fuels, and Chief Brewer said some fuels are being chipped and others are being piled with the intention to burn if the City gives permission along with the property owners and the health department. Commissioner Harrison asked about the rest of fuels mitigation that needs to be done through the valley. Chief Brewer said we have maps of what we did with Team Rubicon along Murphy Lane last year. He also stated that if we are awarded the multi-million dollar grant we applied for, it will allow us to perform much more fuels mitigation work in the valley. Ryan Burraston and Chief Brewer stated the project work takes into consideration multiple aspects including use, flood mitigation, promoting native species, and encouraging fire resistant vegetation.
2. Draft Budgets – Cathy went over changes to the 2023 amended budget since the budget workshop. There were only a couple of changes. One of the most dominant changes was an increase in income in the State of Utah (Wildland) line item. The other change was a decrease in the Contributions to Other Gvts. line item which is contributions to our LBA. This expense line item was decreased based on estimates for public noticing. Moab Times-Independent rates for publishing notices has increased since the Salt Lake Tribune took over, but it is believed costs incurred will still come in within the decreased budget amount. This decreased amount is also represented in the 2023 amended LBA budget as well as the 2024 budgets for each entity. With the proposed 2023 Moab Fire amended budget, the \$400.00 decrease is added to the Contribution to Fund Balance line item, and in the proposed 2024 Moab Fire Budget, the \$400.00 has been moved to the Nonwage Compensation expense line item. Discussion was had on requirements for public noticing. Several expense line items were discussed on the proposed amended 2023 budget.

In reviewing the proposed 2024 Moab Fire budget, the only change was to the Contribution to Other Gvts. line item as mentioned previously.

In relation to the \$200,000.00 from Grand County, Cathy presented Commissioners with a spreadsheet calculating out of District Grand County calls based on fee schedule. The cost of calls as a service to Grand County in 2023 amounts to \$270,008.75, which is above the fee for service requested from Grand County for 2024. This means the District is subsidizing the cost of calls in Greater Grand County outside of our District. Cathy also

presented an update of percentage of calls year to date reflecting those to greater Grand County out of District. Out of 425 year to date calls, 72 were in the Grand County out of District area which calculates to just under 17 % of our calls. Applying the percentage to total expenses from our 2023 proposed amended budget equates to just shy of \$290,000.00, and applying that same percentage to total expenses in our proposed 2024 budget, the cost is just shy of \$315,000.00. All of these calculations are well above the \$200,000.00 quoted to Grand County for fiscal year 2024.

Cathy presented a document to Commissioners representing percentage of income generated from sources other than tax revenue or fee to Grand County for services. The document represents funds the District has generated that are not property tax funds from 2015 to date. Cathy stated that the document clearly shows how the wild land program has benefited the District and taxpayers.

Cathy stated employee compensation in the proposed 2024 budget reflects a COLA of 3.7% which was the inflationary rate in October. Cathy noted that as a comparison EMS has proposed a 4% COLA as well as an additional pay increase of 5% for a number of their employees. Commissioner McGann stated the County is considering a COLA of 3.2%. Chair Walker stated that inflation is projected to increase at a larger percentage than the 3.7% proposed. Cathy added we are not doing pay adjustments as EMS is proposing, or as Grand County is proposing for some of their positions. Cathy stated that it seems as if every time we try to catch up with what other agencies are paying, we end up falling further behind because the other agencies make larger pay increases. Discussion was had on staffing and which positions are benefited. The Overtime/Part-Time expense line item was also discussed.

The wild land program was further discussed. Commissioner McGann voiced concern in reaching the budgeted \$276,000.00. Cathy stated that a third deployment this year would have brought us very close to that budgeted amount. Chief Brewer added that if we can get this program established, there are ways other than wildland deployments in contributing funds to the State of Utah income line item. He referenced the fact that a number of our volunteers are going through an ADO class and with that certification, we can respond to natural disasters and receive income from those events. We are looking at ways to expand our season in relation to reimbursements from the State. The new contract with the State for fuels mitigation will also contribute to this income line item.

Cathy presented the proposed 2023 amended and proposed 2024 Capital Projects budgets. The proposed 2023 amended Capital Projects budget reflects changes made after our 2022 audit. This involved moving both revenue and expenses from our General budget into our Capital Projects budget. The 2023 Capital Projects budget was also amended to include the purchase of the Ford F-150 and the light package for that vehicle.

**3. Public Hearing for Budgets** – Commissioner Harrison motioned to hold budget public hearings on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

4. Fraud Risk Assessment – Cathy went over the 2023 Fraud Risk Assessment and informed Commissioners that the District's score has increased due to adding a fraud hotline. Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve the 2023 Fraud Risk Assessment. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Cathy will upload the signed document to the State Auditor's website and the Utah Local Government Trust website as required.
5. Smuin Rich & Marsing Auditing Contract – Cathy informed Commissioners she contacted Larson by phone since they did not respond to an earlier inquiry. She is waiting for a call back from one of their auditors. Chair Walker made a motion to move forward with the Smuin Rich & Marsing contract, and Commissioner Harrison seconded. After some discussion, Commissioners decided to wait until the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to hold the vote on the auditing contract. Chair Walker rescinded his motion.
6. Draft Amended Fee Schedule – There was nothing new to present.
7. Approved Meeting Schedule for 2024-Commissioners agreed to keep the same meeting schedule as in 2023.

**H. Adjourn:**

1. Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Archie Walker, Chair**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cathy Bonde, Clerk**