

Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday June 11, 2024

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

Those in Attendance:

Council Member Mark Nelson

Council member Erik Rowland

Council member Steve Farrell

Council Member Spencer Park

Council member Kendall Crittenden

Council member Luke Searle

Council member Karl McMillan – Excused

Chief Eric Hales

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan

Dustin Grabau

Council member Steve Farrell: Welcome to the Wasatch County Fire district directors meeting for June 11th - we have entire board here except for Karl McMillan. Our First item on the agenda is the minutes of May 14th, 2024. Has everyone had the chance to review the minutes?

Council Member Mark Nelson made a motion to approve the June minutes. The motion was second by Council member Luke Searle and the motion passed all in favor.

Council member Steve Farrell: We have warrants in the amount of \$1,383,515.77 chief is there anything that stands out other than the construction of the new station.

Chief Eric Hales: No there is not. There is one correction that you'll actually see in next month's warrants, there were seven checks that didn't get put on this warrant list. Six of them are those wildland WUI bonds that we just repaid and then one was for the permit fees for accessory building to Heber city. They are in the check pile, they will be on next month's warrants, and we'll just point those out, they are not included in that total, the total for those checks is \$37,656.00. But other than that, that's the only discrepancy if there is any.

Council member Steve Farrell: have we drawn on any of the CIB money yet?

Chief Eric Hales: yes, we have. We try to keep up on that as best as we can.

Council member Steve Farrell: any questions on the warrants.

A motion was made by Council Member Spencer Park. to approve the warrants in the amount of 1,383,515.77. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kendall Crittenden and the motion passed all in favor.

Chief Eric Hales: Retirement contribution resolution. Basically, that resolution is with the tier two public and safety employees and it's basically 100% pickup. It's something that we as a fire district has have done, we have budgeted for but it's just going through and making the resolution to make a Utah retirement system. To do that annually, with that there is there is one caveat to it picks up all our tier two public safety employees, however we have 4 employees that are public employees but for some reason it doesn't pick up. I know the State Chiefs Association on a legislative level are looking into that. We should at least have the option to pick that up as a district, whereas right now we are unable to do that. I know possibly this next legislative session the state chiefs will probably bring it up again.

Council member Steve Farrell: is it classification of employee?

Chief Eric Hales: Yes, it is a specific classification of just basically not public safety but public employee with the Tier 2 hybrid system it's just very specific on that. I would like to move forward with that.

Council member Steve Farrell: Entertain a motion to approve resolution 24-02 on the retirement contribution for the public safety employees.

Council Member Mark Nelson: so, made.

Council member Steve Farrell: we have a motion by Council Member Mark Nelson do we have a second.

Council Member Spencer Park: Second

Council member Steve Farrell: second by **Council Member Spencer Park** all in favor, any opposed, Motion Passes.

Chief Eric Hales: We are waiting for squire, lets got to our Wildland Battalion Chief and Fire Warden Chief Troy Morgan,

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: Good afternoon gentlemen thanks for giving me a time to come and talk to you about kind of what our 2024 wildland fire season looks like, it's already started we've had two brush fires already in the last week we had a half-acre fire caused by mylar balloon. It hit the power line caught the grass on fire below the power pole and then we also had a four acre fire just on the above Oak Hill lane in Wallsburg, due to a controlled burn that I think got some ambers into a wood pile sat and smolder for a few days and then once the wind kind of picked up, it took off went through smoke brush and some sagebrush. I passed out the Great Basin outlook just a few things I want to touch on the last two years with the amount of moisture and snowpack is pretty much taken in the state of Utah out of drought status, which is a good thing but with that it's kind of left us with a pretty significant grass crop.

Council member Erik Rowland: is that like in quote or is it pretty well seeded into that status as far as an outlook.

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: yes. There aren't any areas within Utah that are classified drought areas right. Which is good the problem of the last meeting that I had last week is that all the models are kind of lining up that we may not get the monsoonal moisture like we've had the last few years, which could cause us some dry lightning, could cause us you know a little bit of fire issue. But for the most part I still think we're pretty green our lot of fuel moisture is up high so

anything of concern is going to be a lower elevation that you know 5500 to 6500 feet you know that oak brush sage brush component.

Council member: fireworks?

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: Fireworks, I mean they're fireworks in July, we typically usually have as you know a few fires, I don't see any concern. Talking with Chief Hales and Assistant Chief Neerings, just basically shutting fireworks down in our normal WUI areas you know mountains community stuff like that. but no, I think it's going to be fireworks as usual. Just wanted to give you the outlook kind of what we're expecting. If we do have some bigger fires, I think we're going to be later in the season August, September type of deal. Do you have questions or concerns?

Council member Steve Farrell: Yes. Does rock mountains Power coordinate with you on the replacement light poles or power poles going up pine canyon.

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: I have not spoken with Rocky Mountain power about.

Council member Steve Farrell: they're replacing all the wooden poles to metal poles.

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: going up Pine Canyon Road

Council member Steve Farrell: after October they will go through the golf course on down.

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: I Can reach out to them. We have a state representative that deals with all the power companies. I'll make contact.

Council member Steve Farrell: how's the fire prevention with some of the homeowners.

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: good, I'm scheduled to meet with Swiss mountain next weekend, we did a big community day up 40 damn acres a few weeks ago assisted them with burn piles. Are outreach is good, we're putting together a kind of a standard standardized list on what we want to bring to the HOA's and try to get them to help us enforce the WUI code the problem with the WUI code is that we go in there we do the inspection make sure everything's in compliance the day we leave people can just go in and plant trees you know where they're not supposed to. If we can get the HOA's on board to kind of help facilitate that levy fines and put that in their CC&R's and ours I think it's going to help our cause a lot.

Council member Steve Farrell: sometimes in some of these interface areas we require landscaping plan, now that we've been doing those seven or eight years, have you seen many modifications to the plan by the homeowners?

Batt Chief/Fire Warden Troy Morgan: No. There are a few when we go and inspect the property on Monday everything's within code 2-3 weeks later, we drive by and then there's trees next to the house, it's very seldom, but it does happen. It is a maintenance code, but I don't know how far we could push that go in there you know make them move the tree. HOA's can levy fines we cannot, that might be the best way especially with those ones that are proactive and want to become a fire wise community. It's on our agenda to get that pushed out this.

Council member Steve Farrell: any other questions for Troy.

Chief Eric Hales: Matt from Squire is on so we will turn the time over to him to give the report on our annual audit and then we'll go from that point.

Matt from Squire: as you know we've been engaged to perform and audit of the financial statements of Wasatch County Fire Protection special services district. Our primary responsibility is to issue an opinion on those financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared by the district, by the district team and we come in and audit the balances and the activities for the year ended December 31st, 2023.

Just to highlight a few items that I got pulled up here, the first with the square letter head is ultimately the opinion we issue on the financial statements that opinion is an unmodified opinion or sometimes referred to as a clean opinion.

The financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the district. What that really means in non-auditor languages as a board as management as bonding entities utilize the financial statements rather users utilize the financial statements, they can reasonably rely on the information presented to make decisions.

Skipping down there's a section of management discussion and analysis which if you had limited time this is the area in which management has outlined what happened during the year and it compares what happened this year to the other items in prior years and explains the differences and what caused those differences.

Just to highlight a couple items here within the financial statements, on your statement of net position sometimes individuals refer to this as a presentation similar to a for profit business where it ultimately shows long term assets and long-term liabilities. You can see your total assets at the end of 2023 we're just under 44,000,000 total liabilities just under 17.2 million. Ultimately get to net position 27 it is over 27.2 million. As you can see some of that, as you know, is invested in capital assets and so is not available for spending there's some amounts that are restricted and the remaining amount there just under 15.3 is the amount available to meet ongoing obligations.

As you know you also have several funds and so there's the presentation a couple pages later to show the breakdown between the general fund and the capital projects fund, you'll notice in the general fund there remaining net position is just over ten \$10 million.

The following sections of the notes to the financial statements which prevent additional information as you have questions on the financial statements you refer to the notes to provide additional detail.

In addition to the audit that we perform in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards because your government were required to perform the audit in accordance with government auditing standards, which requires that we evaluate your internal control for financial reporting clients and if we had identified significant deficiencies or material weaknesses or not our language things that should keep you awake at night we would be required to report these to you.

We have not identified any of these your controls that have been designed and implemented appropriately.

The last report that we issue is in accordance with the state compliance audit guide, the state auditor's office issues a guide which outlines specific client requirements that were required to look at, you can see those specific requirements highlighted here and issue an opinion on the compliance related to those items and are opinion is the district complied in all material respects

with the compliance requirements outlined in the state compliance auditing guide. So ultimately again a clean opinion or an unmodified opinion on compliance related to the state compliance audit guide. that was very quick I understand ultimately the district and the districts management and team they were all very responsive as we ask questions, they were able to gather the information that we needed it was timely it was orderly, and we were able to pull off relatively efficiently. any questions on any of that?

Council member Steve Farrell: no questions

Matt from Squire: thank you, we appreciate the opportunity to work with you.

Chief report

Chief Eric Hales: just a quick update as you could see from our year to date in May, we did have a significant incident at the beginning of this month and that involved a tanker truck entering deer Creek reservoir with that it did result in a fatality and so it became more of a body recovery and a hazardous materials incident.

Happy to report that aside from the fatality there were no other injuries associated with that, that events took a look approximately 24 hours to mitigate at least to get the vehicle out of the reservoir, as it entered the reservoir the tank was breached and it with propane which is heavier than air we were worried about it settling on the top of the water which prevented us from doing a little more proactive damming and diking until that actually bled off, we didn't want to get any boats too close to that to that product.

It did take a while; I am happy to report that we did have a great response. We established a unified command everywhere from Highway Patrol, Sheriff's Office, search and rescue, Central Utah Water, as well as some private contractors to help us remove that. It was very successful, it was time and labor intensive, but we were fortunate with the outcome of that.

Council member Kendall Crittenden: any new report on the cause of death, was that the cause of the accident or do you have anything on that,

Chief Eric Hales: with the individual? We did not hear any reports from the high patrol or the state examiner's office on the actual cause. where it was most likely leaning toward the traumatic injury there was a lot of traumas to that individual unfortunately inside the cab of that truck.

Quickly station update, we are obviously continuing to move forward with the construction, we are currently under a delay from the FAA, for some reason we were not informed that we needed a permit with the FAA to install our trusses and use a crane in that area. That was something Heber City did not share with us; I don't even know if they knew that they needed to do.

That occurred on May 14th and basically the FAA has 45 days to issue that permit, which brings us basically to June 28th, I think is that 45-day window.

Obviously, we have a lot we have all the steel on property, we just can't put the final large steel pieces and without a crane, they tried to do it with some forklifts yes, they could set up the beans, but you really can't get those plum as we need them without that crane. The good news is we were

able to pivot and bring in the excavator that's doing all the sitework, the parking lot. working on that 160 E, but we will be back charging Heber city for. We're moving the project forward but right now obviously we can't go any farther on the building itself.

Council member: How tall is your building?

Chief Eric Hales: the building is just under 40 feet, it meets all those requirements, but we need a crane at least close to 100 feet in the air.

Council member Steve Farrell: Just wondered if that letter will tell you have to have a flashing red light on the building.

Chief Eric Hales: On the building yes, but most likely on the crane. We are moving forward with that so with that slight FFA hold on that.

We are currently involved in a part-time EMS recruitment to up staff for the summer as well as replace some of our folks that are moving. We recruit typically folks from BYU and UVU college students that come to work for us during their school year and stuff which is a fantastic program some of those have graduated and are moving on so we're going to be in a constant recruiting kind of for that area, but that part time program really works well for us. You probably saw a job flyer in there as well. in that job flyer we're accepting applications until June 21st and then we will start the hiring process.

Last thing, I just wanted to touch base with you and maybe get your thoughts on , currently the fire district is contracting with a company called executech for their IT services and they are not fitting our bill they rarely meet the appointments meet their obligations that we have set out, we are considering the possibility we're putting together staff put together an RFP to seek services. but also, something we would like to even have you guys think about is that possibly contracting with the county to help us with those services, right now we are so integrated on the dispatch side of things with our stations and our alerting systems and with our fire permitting and GIS services we already use the county, I don't know if the board would entertain us working with Dustin and the county IT staff and coming up with something like that. We have a formal RFP would we have to go to a complete RFP process with that and have the county compete with that or is that something we can just work with Dustin and staff.

Council member Steve Farrell: it would probably help the county more than it would help the fire district get more involvement.

Council member Spencer Park: probably like ½ a new employee or something I would assume.

County Manager Dustin Grabau: depends on your purchasing policies.

Chief Eric Hales: I personally think we have enough flexibility with as integrated as we currently are, but that's something that maybe you and I could sit down with at the board's OK with.

Council member Steve Farrell: the transition would we have to buy new equipment to match what the county has.

Chief Eric Hales: I don't think so.

County Manager Dustin Grabau: what are the services being provided, how much Support from IT out of house versus in the house. Are they operating by county department or just getting some support those are some questions.

Council member Spencer Park: I think very much like volleyball.

Chief Eric Hales: I'm sure we can if that's the direction you'd like us to go ball you two could figure this out.

Council member Steve Farrell: I think we'd like to try that.

Council member Erik Rowland: I agree I've used executech the past I know exactly where you are.

Chief Eric Hales: Do you.

Council member Erik Rowland: yes, they were also fired so anything I think we could do to simplify by consolidating I'm all for.

Chief Eric Hales: This is a recorded line, so I really don't want to go into the details.

Council member Erik Rowland: I Understand

Chief Eric Hales: We have put together some documentation and put together some RFP language as far as the services we're looking for, I guess Dustin and I could work through that, and we would let you know where we end up. That's all I have unless you have questions for me.

Council Member Mark Nelson: Chief I didn't want to tattle on anyone but, I saw some of your guys out laying on the grass I know it's just like messing around and stuff, loafing around.

Chief Eric Hales: They were just sitting there.

Council member Spencer Park: kissing each other.

Chief Eric Hales: That was great, we couldn't afford the fee at the rec center we just.

Council Member Mark Nelson: Too soon

Council member Spencer Park: Besides I hear anybody can play volleyball.

Council member Steve Farrell: To make up for that comment Chief, I was over to Central Utah meeting last week and they couldn't say enough about the organization of that emergency event.

Council member Spencer Park: I found out in an ATV I can get from the gun club in my house in 40 minutes but anyway again that was a great collaborative effort and for not having trained.

Chief Eric Hales: Again, that was a great collaborative effort and for not having trained together a lot, which was a wonderful exercise.

Council member Kendall Crittenden: I'm glad you don't live in Driggs ID, or work in Jackson hole.

Council Member: Yeah, that's true

Chief Eric Hales: Anyway

Council Member: Yah, good job you guys

Council member Steve Farrell: Do we have anything from the advisory board?

County Manager Dustin Grabau: We meet last week and toured the new facility and it was good to I think its good to see, it's one thing to see it on paper and then see it in person, and so I'm sure the Chief would be willing to accommodate any of you to see it on sight, it was good to see the progress being made and the layout and the new efficacy's that we will be getting coming.(purpose built facility).

Chief Eric Hales: We are just finishing with the CMU.

Council member Steve Farrell: Do you feel your own schedule?

Chief Eric Hales: We are still, honestly depending on how soon you can get that FAA get the crews back on there.

Council member Steve Farrell: Who brought that to your attention Heber City or FFA.

Chief Eric Hales: It was a pilot.

Council Member: Was a crane actually in progress?

Chief Eric Hales: There was a crane progress ----- I will say for city's credit and their Airport Manager Travis did come over and talk to the Big D folks, and he was going to actually sit there with a radio and kind of talk people through that, but it escalated so far already to the FAA that that was no longer an option. So, he personally was willing to help us navigate this but once it got to the abyss of the Federal Government, we were toast.

Council member Steve Farrell: Thank you Chief anything else for the board meeting tonight?

Council Member Crittenden made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Luke Searle seconded the motion. The motion passed all in favor.