

Moab Valley Fire Protection District Commission Meeting

45 South 100 East, Moab Utah 84532

October 15, 2024 - 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: Chief TJ Brewer, Battalion Chief Brandon McGuffee, Administrator Cathy Bonde
4. Others Present: Mike Kelso

B. General Business:

1. Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve the minutes from the September 16, 2024 meeting. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. A note was made that the date on the minutes was correct but the date on the line item on the agenda misstated the date as September 17.

2. Citizens to be Heard – None wishing to speak.

3. Approval of Bills – Commissioner Harrison said his only question was the bill from Solid Waste. Cathy stated Solid Waste has not charged us for service in the past. Chief Brewer added an agreement existed that Moab Fire would not be charged for service in exchange for our putting out dumpster fires. Cathy said she would hold off on sending payment for the invoice until the issue was cleared up.

Commissioner McGann asked about the invoice from Curtis for \$31,202.10. Cathy stated the bill is for some of the equipment for the new engine and added there is still some equipment outstanding. Commissioner McGann also asked about a charge for hose, and Chief Brewer said it is hose specific for the smooth bore nozzles.

Commissioner Harrison motioned to approve bills. Commissioner McGann seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Chief's Report

1. Chief Brewer reported 34 calls to service since the last regular commission meeting.
2. The department has 32 members on the roster.
3. Fire prevention is in full swing. Brandon, along with some help from staff and volunteers, is doing a great job. The school district said it did not have money in its budget to bring kids to the fire station, so we have been going to the schools. Commissioner Walker asked if we need to consider facilitating a way for kids to come to the station. Chief Brewer said he felt there was a value to them coming to the station. Brandon added it was similar last year with a combination of staff shortage and funding.

He said this year his understanding is it is based on lack of funds in the budget. Chief Brewer said we would look into it further.

4. Chief Brewer and Cathy have been busy with annexation and budget.
5. Both Engines 10 and 6-2 are up for sale. We are still deciding what we will do with the heavy.
6. We have switched over to the new 700 radios. This has been a huge undertaking from getting new mobiles in all the engines to programming all new mobiles and hand helds. We are still working through some minor issues. The department will do a radio training tomorrow for volunteers.
7. During the switch, edispatches went down. Brandon worked through the problem with Seamus Hannigan with Grand County Search & Rescur. The edispatches receiver was fried and needed to be replaced. We should receive a replacement soon. We did find out that edispatches does not work on holidays which delayed fixing the issue.
8. We are required by law to have a peer support mental health liason. Chief Brewer asked volunteer firefighter Andrea Noyes to provide this service, and she accepted. Chief Brewer is very excited to have her on board. Andrea has experience to draw from and is very responsive and professional. In answering questions from commissioners, Chief Brewer stated this is a volunteer position, and ideally we will offer her training opportunities to attend.
9. Chief Brewer addressed some comments made during our annexation public hearing. He said are capable of responding to areas that were in question. One property owner said they were currently taxed by Castle Valley Fire Protection District. She did let us know after checking her tax notice that she is not. Addressing concerns about an MOU with Green River, Chief Brewer said he looks forward to strengthening our relationship with Green River Fire Department and creating an agreeable MOU between agencies.
10. Big Red has been taken out of service due to aging tires and mechanical issues. We can choose to have the needed repairs done or drain it of fluids and keep it as a museum piece.
11. 6-3 is having motor issues. Commissioner Harrison advised to start with the oil cooler and if this doesn't fix this problem, it could mean we need to replace the motor. This is the same engine we had work done to earlier this year in Oklahoma.
12. Engine 466 is on assignment on the Verdure Creek Fire near Monticello. The fire is currently 157 acres. It was threatening structures in the Blue Mountain subdivision.
13. We are planning pie night and the banquet. Chief Brewer invited a commissioner to speak at the banquet. Commissioner Walker will speak.
14. Further discussion was had on our aging equipment and needs including a ladder truck and rescue truck.

D. Annexation Update and Discussion:

1. Cathy said annexation is on the Grand County commission's agenda for their meeting today. We expect they will vote on the asset agreement. We have seen a draft from mid-September. The draft did not include the list of assets or the monetary need. The document was not included with the Grand County commission meeting posting, and we have not seen a final draft of the document.

E. Old Business:

1. Salary Survey – Cathy stated there was a plan to have a conference call with Mike Swallow, but we were unable to make it happen. We intend to have the conference call soon.
2. Procurement Policy – No further update.

F. New Business:

1. Resolution 2024-002 – Cancel Election – Cathy stated that Mike Kelso decided to withdraw from the election. Paperwork was submitted to the election officer in time to have the election removed from ballots that went overseas. The commission does need to vote on this resolution that cancels the election as well as elects Archie Walker and Jim McGann to the open seats with terms expiring in 2028. Once the resolution is approved, it needs to run in the paper for two weeks.

Commissioner McGann motioned to approve Resolution 2024-002, cancelling the 2024 election. Commissioner Walker seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Equipment Loan- Cathy addressed the loan option documents in commissioners' packets in relation to the BME engine. She stated that she currently didn't think we could afford the 10 year loan, but we could afford the 15 year loan with \$150,000.00 down. The amount in the draft 2025 budget is in the range of the 15 year loan options. Discussion was had on the BME engine. Commissioner Harrison asked about the interest rate on the loan. Cathy stated the loan is from Zions Bank, and the rate was much better than what the manufacturer offered. Commissioner Walker asked if there was a reason to not put down \$150,000.00, and Cathy responded that depends if we annex or not. She said that can be further discuss that when we go over the draft budgets. Commissioner Harrison asked when the engine would be ready, and it was conveyed the manufacturer is still saying November or December.

3. Fraud Risk Assessment – Cathy included a draft of the fraud risk assessment in the packet, but it is not ready to be approved because commissioners still need to take the annual open and public meetings training. She said the draft is basically the same as last year's assessment, and we are in the low risk category.

G. Draft Budgets:

1. Draft Amended 2024 Budgets – Cathy pointed out there are two different proposed amended 2024 budgets; one with annexation and one without. One of the differences has to do with the financial contribution from Grand County if we annex. With annexation, the contribution is an additional \$140,000.00. With annexation, the amount in the black would allow us to put \$150,000.00 down on the BME engine. The budget without annexation has \$100,000.00 down, but even with the lower down, the budget runs in the red. Cathy's recommendation in this case would be to pull from our fund balance for part of the BME down payment. This would be a one-time need and the first time we have pulled from our fund balance.

Cathy went over some of the expense budget line items, including funds available in small tools and equipment and capital equipment, and how those funds will be spent. In income, she pointed to State of Utah wildlands and the fact that we will surpass the originally

budgeted amount after the current deployment is over. Chief Brewer stated that the Federal and State agencies are laying off their seasonals, and there is still fire activity, so it is possible a crew will go out again.

2. Draft 2025 Budgets – Cathy stated not much has changed since the last time commissioners looked at drafts of the 2025 budget. A non-annexation version of the budget has been added to the draft. Looking at the bottom line on each version of the budget, with annexation we are a little in the black although there are line items that could use more funds, and without annexation the budget is approximately \$43,000.00 in the red. If we don't annex, we will probably be looking at the 7th year of trying to fund a deputy chief position and not being able to. Cathy stated another concern in 2025 is having enough resources to meet the needs of the CWDG grant. Discussion was had on the mechanics of the grant and meeting grant goals.

3. Budget Requests and Future Needs – Cathy presented a spreadsheet of budget requests from staff as well as other foreseeable needs, ranking items in priority of high, medium and low. The spreadsheet is a living document that allows staff to add items to the bottom of the list and the administrative team then categorizes. Chief Brewer provided information on some of the items on the spreadsheet; particularly PPE and the stations.

4. Employee Compensation – Cathy stated the COLA for 2025 is 2.5%. For the most part, that is all regular staff will see as increased compensation for 2025. With seasonals, our policy has been to increase their wage by \$1.00 per hour if they are a return employee.

5. Chief Brewer said he appreciates any feedback and input from commissioners. He welcomed them to walk into the war room and look at the work that is being done in addressing multiple issues the department has been working through. The walls are covered in sheets of paper exploring many issues such as seasonal vs. part-time employees, annexation, CWDG, wildland, staffing, schedule, and apparatus. These are in-depth conversations that are taking place. Chief Brewer said that after the decision on annexation is made, we can better focus on 5 and 10 year plans.

H. Adjourn:

1. Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

 Date 19 November 2024

Archie Walker, Chair

Attest: 

Cathy Bonde, Clerk