

Castle Valley Fire Protection District
Castle Valley Fire Commission
June REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, June 11, 2026 6:00 pm
2 E Castle Valley Dr, Castle Valley, UT 84532

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86889421313?pwd=lrElfzDJwJANgkl0nrutlAhaASQxdT.1>

Attending:

Mitch Stock

Maggie Peikon

Ron Drake

Mike Wakeley (Virtually)

Carol Drake (Virtually)

9 Community members present

Regular Meeting:

Call to Order: 6:00PM

1. Public Comment:

- a. Pam Hackley wants to speak about the cell tower proposal from Verizon, and is opposed to us putting a cell tower anywhere in Castle Valley Watershed. Noted that over 30-40 people are also opposed to the cell tower. Pam has written up notes, including land use code issues and special citing requirements for Grand County. Pam wants us to be aware of that process, and a cost associated with that as well (though believes Verizon will be responsible for that). Thought area around Station 1, CVFD is for emergency use (search and rescue, etc.) and is concerned about the cell phone tower proximity for those needs. Has worked hard to get cell service that works well in the Upper 80, sees other options outside of having the cell tower as valuable to mitigate communication issues. Understands the leasing incoming being attractive to help sustain the department's finances but thinks there are other options — TRT Money, relook at how taxing for fire districts are done. Pam notes that our district gets the short end of the stick, we don't get enough to accommodate what we need. Hopes that we will make the decision to veto.

- b. Bob Lippman has submitted his third letter in writing opposing the tower. Everything Bob has looked at indicates that there is no benefit to the fire district and fire department from the proposal. Thinks there is more financial opportunity outside of the cell phone tower and believes that the community could come together to meet the same amount that Verizon would be paying for the lease. Bob notes that no further due diligence is required in this process, or even going to a public meeting — if it went further it would have to go further to public involvement, and permitting, which is a long tough process. Those requirements are much more than what the Verizon representative seems to indicate about setbacks. Bob notes that this proposal will invite litigation, and the commission needs to know that as it can be very costly and very divisive to the community. This is not the place for a cell tower for so many reasons. Notes other alternatives again, community commitment, tax, redistricting to get Castle Valley's 'area' back that Moab FD is receiving funding for, grant sources, state and county programs (cash & in-kind benefit), talking to our county commissioners. Keep the community intact about its values and the integrity of our general plan. Bob has sent materials about the health impacts and cancer cluster studies done (and other chronic disease and neurological syndromes) that occur in proximity to a cell tower. The height of the tower raises helicopter risk and creates a lot of liability. Bob notes not the fire district's role or mission to provide this type of amenity to the public, and there is no reason at this time to go to a public meeting because there are no reasons that he sees to support any benefit for this tower. Understands the concern of Verizon going elsewhere, and the same arguments will be presented to them (Academy & BLM). Reduction in property values — one resident on Shafer already said he would put his house up for sale if the tower was approved and built. Residents that Bob has spoken with have expressed a strong commitment not only to pursue all legal, political, and economical ways to prevent the cell phone tower but also to support the Fire Department. Donations will not happen if the tower goes in — Bob notes, the district will only gain money if turning this down rather than losing money by not having the lease income.
- c. Another community member speaks in support of the cell phone tower. She notes medical emergencies in the aging community that were not able to get help, or get cell phone service to call for help. From a health and safety perspective it's actually the person that falls on the far side of their property that falls and can't get up and has no WiFi to get help in this heat. 1,500ft is the distance from cell phone towers required for schools, specifically, to be deemed safe (for children, especially). Would be a distance that needs to be checked to

ensure the cell phone tower meets that distance. Notes that in our last service there was a 70% interest in improving communication in the Valley (wanting cell service).

- d. Jazmine noted that the Fire Department may not be the answer to communication issues, but it's important to consider all options. Our Emergency System did *not* deliver to everyone, it did fail, so there are some gaps. Satellite technology is helpful and great to have, but it's not accessible to everyone (old phones don't have the technology to support satellite communication).
 - e. Pam supports those in objection to the cell phone tower.
 - f. Bob wants to add respect to the need for connection in emergency situations. Notes that cell phone towers will be obsolete with the growth of satellite communications.
 - g. Mitch thanks everyone for sharing their thoughts and research and reiterates that we're trying to get a meeting with the Verizon team.
 - h. Chris and Robin Steinman fully support Pam Hackley's rationale and are strongly opposed to the cell tower. Sometimes being near the tower doesn't even help if you don't have the specific service (i.e. Verizon)
- 2. Approval of Minutes from May: Approved
 - 3. Administration Issues:
 - 4. Chief's Report: Ron Drake
 - a. No fires since our last meeting. One EMS call. Picked up Engine 37 and brought it back - put equipment back on it during FD training meeting and filled it with water, got the monitor set up. Maggie put information in to get our grant money back. Grant was for 2 handheld radios, about \$4,000 each. Received radios from Sheriff — there's some we can use, some we can't, in the process of getting them sorted out. We are officially into fire seasons, signs are out to say 'no fires'. Pack tests over the last month and have 7 volunteers who have done their pack test and paperwork has been submitted and accepted so will get their red cards. New Certified Wildland Firefighter, Gerry Viola.
 - 5. Treasurer's Report: Carol Drake, Mike Wakeley
 - a. Mike shared we are 18.4% ahead of last year. Revenue is mostly from interset and property tax, no donations. Engine maintenance \$5,968 (engine 37 mostly). We did spend 9,066 on radios, have a grant coming in to offset hopefully all or part of that. Insurance came due at \$9,812. Income deficit \$23,624. Over budget on engine maintenance for the year, mainly from the engine maintenance on 37.
 - i. Discussion and Possible Action: Radios from the Sheriff — If reported as an in-kind donation, what value should be assigned to them?

1. Carol says we should put this on the books as an in-kind donation, and poses the question to Ron/Mitch as to what the fair value would be for those. Ron noted there wasn't a value given to him at time of receipt, but can ask them.
 - ii. Discussion and Possible Action: Does CVFD have, or needs to adopt, a formal long-range plan for a capital projects fund?
 1. Carol notes that it is recommended that we have a plan that designates a portion of what we have accumulated towards capital projects. (There are guidelines for this offered). Carol thinks \$250,000 towards capital projects may be reasonable. We did at one point have an account set aside for capital projects, but Carol suggested we make this an official account for such things.
 - a. Mitch notes we may want to put more in, especially as the need for a new water tender exists.
 - b. General fund = 1 year's budget + property tax amount. (\$197,000)
 - c. Mitch asks what we need to do in order to make these changes happen and Carol shares it's a reporting, not a separate filing. Mitch suggests increasing the capital projects to \$350,000, taking \$170,000 from our general fund. That would leave us with \$70,000 in the general fund.
 - d. Group votes to move \$100,000 from general fund to capital fund so we have a little more left in general fund should we need to pull from it.
6. Discussion and Possible Action: Updates on Cell Tower
- a. We're trying to get information from Dan, and we don't want to keep dragging it out if we aren't going to have the cell phone tower on the fire department property.
 - b. Mike wanted to speak up that whichever way it falls is the way it falls, but it hasn't gone out officially to the public yet or for public comment. Mike believes we would be remiss to let 7% of the Valley make the decision for the valley when it hasn't been put out for public comment. Mike believes we should hear from a wider sampler of the Valley.
 - c. Mitch's view is that it's going to be coming to the Valley either way, but its impact to the Fire Department is strong — and doesn't want to lose volunteers who may not want to sit near/beneath that tower during training. Opposed to the view of it.

- d. Maggie motions to reject the proposal for the cell phone tower, Mitch seconds, Mike abstains (neither for or against). Ron will reach out to Dan to let him know.
- 7. Discussion and Possible Action: 4th of July party
 - a. A thank you to everyone for the support during the Christmas Fundraiser
 - b. Expanded menu, lots of games, prizes, and a little parade hopefully with Engine 37 in it. Should come out under budget. No raffle this year.
 - c. 9am-12pm
 - d. FD get there around 8am to help set up
- 8. Discussion and Possible Action: Creating a friends of CV fire 501-3c
 - a. Carol shares that donations to the fire department are automatically deductible by the donor, they qualify as a charitable contribution. We should add the appropriate verbiage to the thank you notes — Carol has noted she can create an insert to include with these thank yous.
- 9. Discussion and Possible Action: Adding donation button to CVFD website
 - a. We can say we are accepting donations, and offer the information necessary to submit a donation, but likely will not go through the website/PayPal/etc.
- 10. Discussion and Possible Action: Review of current Fire Department needs (equipment, operational) for potential grant funding opportunities
 - a. Depends on the type of grant. State grant only wants to do wildland equipment — we basically need everything. If Tana finds a grant, get in touch with us and we will help disperse that information.
 - b. Mitch noted we are always looking for grants that if anyone comes across an opportunity to please bring it to the fire department.
- 11. Discussion and possible action on long term planning, fire dept. needs, priorities, vision and policies: development of standard operating guidelines, policies and procedures.
- 12. Closed Session (if necessary): personnel matters, awards; recognition program, etc.

Adjourn: 7:19pm