

## NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PUBLIC COMMENTS – RANCHERS-LARGE PROPERTIES MAY 19

5 Property Owners or their representatives; Gene Schilling and Carl Smith, Board members; Rob Goodwin, staff;

Mark made the presentation then opened the floor for discussion:

- I think you guys do a hell of a job.
- You provide really good service and take good care of me but when the bill shows up – whoa it seems very expensive but I do not know the ins and outs.
- The one time I needed an ambulance in my field 2 miles away, it seemed that the response was too long.
- It is hard for me to understand your finances.
- This might be just gossip but I've heard that if you volunteer for 20 years then you get a stipend for life, is this an unfunded benefit? **Carl** responded that is 20 years of service and reaching the age of 50. There are also options for 10 years of service, but the pension for that level is 50% of the 20 year. There is a Fire/Police pension actuary who figures out the benefit and how to pay and keep it all funded. **Gene** said the state and district covered the cost on a 50/50 basis
- Where is that in the budget? Personnel or Miscellaneous? **Gene or Carl** said that a volunteer has to have 36 hours training and we used to require that they respond to X calls per month and X training hours per month but we did away with those requirements. Therefore, the standard is 36 hours of training for the time being. However, we are thinking of implementing some of this again.
- I was surprised that personnel costs are higher than equipment costs. Most ranchers will not pay themselves so they can keep the equipment tuned up. **Gene** said that they can only cut personnel so much and then have to cut equipment. Right now we have cut so much that we are into deferred maintenance. **Carl** said we have 2 mechanics to keep equipment up to standards.
- Where is equipment replacement in the budget? **Mark** responded in capital expenditures.
- Where is significant equipment purchase? **Mark** pointed out that in the expenditure slide of the presentation although that slide is not the whole picture – it is not boiled down to details. Significant expenditures are usually noted in the Capital Fund, not the General Fund. This presentation focuses on the General Fund – the day to day operations. Where does the money come from for capital/equipment? **Mark** said the Reserves and the 2004 bond election; funds are transferred to the capital fund for capital items. Some revenues also come from development impact fees – which are related to land use approvals.
- What do you do with a surplus? **Carl** said it is put into the Reserve but they have not done that in the last two years.

- In response to a question about the valuation increase, Gene said they have been advised to plan for a 28% increase but it will take over 5 years to get back up to where they were before the values dropped. **Carl** reviewed what he has heard in Pitkin and Garfield Counties: those that went down the most have come back up the most. But the valuations and revenues are still lower than pre-recession levels.
- Is there a plan to continue fire mitigation like up on Panorama? On BLM? Private Land? **Rob** said yes and still looking at pile burning, etc. but no plans on private property. **Carl** said that we have heard that this is a service that folks are interested in keeping. **Rob** said that as part of summer wildland fire mitigation we will do consultations and pass along information. They are happy to work with private property owners on mitigation.
- **Gene** said that the budget is on the website and is broken down line item by line item.
- This meeting seems to ask the community to try and decide on the budget but it is hard to present the budget to the people and the more you can inform the folk the better.
- Since capital expenditure has been deferred will you get hit up big time to catch up? **Gene** said that at some point capital items will have to be replaced.
- It seems to me that folks are going to get hit with a value increase and perhaps a mil levy increase might be too much. **Gene** said we are looking at choices, maybe no paramedic vs. EMT. If we get \$450K we are still short without going into reserves. It is my opinion, but I will want to consider a tax increase with a sunset of 5 years to see if values come back and if they don't then we reevaluate service levels.
- **Mark** commented that we heard that some folks expect slower services by the virtue of choosing to live in the rural area.
- I would think if you choose to live in a rural area the budget should not have to increase for your "choice"
- Another thing – this building and old truck...if I was on the Board I would not have been convinced that this building was a worthwhile expense of the fire districts money. So you need to educate us on why the Cadillac when there are budgetary constraints? We need more information.
- It changes people's perception. Is this a lean and frugal organization or profligate spending?
- **Carl** stated that the Steering Committee has been very clear that this effort is not for a tax increase. It is a Master Plan but the plan will include a no tax increase scenario.
- Just having the information on what and how equipment is to be replaced will be helpful. **Rob** said the oldest engine, 1984 will need to be replaced. The 1992 bond helped build stations 4 & 5 and equipment is ready to be replaced.

- I would be surprised if folks want to pull back on ambulance. Although I don't live on Missouri heights, I would say let the fire burn because it is better for the land.
- What's your reserve now? And what investment does it return? **Gene** said \$1.8-\$1.9 million. Nothing that is the law.