

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PUBLIC COMMENTS

MISSOURI HEIGHTS STATION 5 APRIL 28

17 citizen attendees, Carl Smith, Board member; Rob Goodwin, staff; Laura Van Dyne, Joe Enzer, and Tom Flynn, steering committee.

Mark presented the entire slide show and discussion began.

General Discussion Points:

1. How can someone be on call and respond to two calls at once? What do concurrent calls mean? Mark answered that concurrent calls are more than 1 call that occur at the same time. 2nd calls can be handled by remaining staff not responding to first call – but they often need help from administrative staff during regular business hours, volunteers who are manning or shift or a page that goes out to additional volunteers. Large calls usually require help from neighboring Fire Districts.
2. If EMT-I is removed what will replace this level? **Rob** responded that he doesn't know where it will go from here.
3. **Carl** stated that it is a cost effective process to provide Advanced Life Support services.
4. The division between basic and intermediate seems to be important. **Rob** explained the difference between EMT-I, basic and paramedic and said that Colorado tries to mix these together to get as much as we can. In the future we are going to have just EMT basic and paramedics and we are trying to figure out the costs. **Carl** said the issue Carbondale is facing is common throughout Colorado and not unique. Historically this was a way to provide a cost effective high level of emergency response.
5. **Rob** responded to a question about this station saying that a volunteer lives here but the station is not staffed 24/7.
6. Are hydrants throughout neighborhoods tested? **Rob** said that the District has 24 water systems and they work with ISO to evaluate the system. For the next evaluation the District will work with water system managers to flow test to avoid damage.
7. How does ISO rate dispatch? **Rob** said they look at number of calls, backup power, back up staff, etc.
8. Does ISO take into consideration other things? **Rob** said yes mutual aid, urban aid, etc.
9. How did you figure the cost per call? **Mark** said this is simply the number of total calls were divided by total expenditures. While this information does give a dollar benchmark, it can also be misleading because it does not get into the total complexity of a call (e.g. it does not track the difference between a simple fender/bender that the District responds to versus a complicated multiple vehicle accident with multiple patients).
10. Is the cost of the call related to medical services provided? **Mark** said it is not dependent on the type of call.

11. Perhaps more money should be spent on PR – about what you do.
12. What is the sequence of events to roll a truck out of here given that the person who lives here may not be here at the time of a call? **Rob** said that up here (Station 5) there is a thin staff/crew so when a 911 call is made Carbondale responds and volunteers head to the station so there might be a delay in getting the engine out of the station. **Joe** offered that this is the nature of a volunteer force – some delays as folks respond. But there is a place for everyone – they are always looking for volunteers.
13. What can I do to protect my property? **Mark** said create a defensible space. **Rob** said they would be happy to come out and guide in that planning. He also referred to several agencies that provide information. An audience member said we can all be more aware and get on the phone if you see something funky.

What do you think of present services? What services do you want in the future?

1. How do you feel you are doing? Do you feel underfunded? Do you have adequate equipment to meet the demand? Do you need more buildings? **Rob** said we are a combination staff and not unique to struggle. We (Fire Department) use every trick in the book. Adequate staffing – no but not complaining as this is typical of most fire districts with volunteers.
2. **Carl** said the reason for the meeting is to hear your opinions – are you satisfied and what are willing to pay for? \$1.3 million of reserves have been spent but Garfield County assessed evaluation will go up 27-28% on average. What kind of service/level of service do you want? The wildfire patrols are funded by a generous grant from some landowners but we only have enough money to fund for this summer.
3. Roving firemen seems to me to be a pretty effective form of prevention. How do we citizens support that? **Mark** said to reach out to the Board. **Carl** said to contact neighbors and tell neighbors about this important service.
4. **Tom** said that prior funding was \$60K and being carried over this summer because last summer was a wet summer.
5. Why does it cost \$60K? **Rob** commented that paid staff is doing this 10 hrs/day 7 days. We also meet with homeowners to education and address fire mitigation.
6. I would rather see my taxes go up than rely on someone to make a grant for the patrols for rural fire suppression.
7. Yes we need paramedic-level emergency services. The District's Board needs to educate landowners about the cost of services and how much of the District's reserves are spent on operations rather than held in reserve for a "big" fire event and equipment replacement.
8. *In answer to the question: in a rural area what level of risk & awareness of the risk & are you willing to pay for that risk?* I think it is safe to assume we know how long it takes for a response, the most threatening is major brush fires and that is the kind of service I want. Do you feel we have that ability? **Rob** responded that the District's mission is to keep small fires

- small and keep everyone alive. A big fire cannot be put out by this District alone; they rely on mutual aid (Help from other districts).
9. Do we have the technical expertise – it is a well oiled machine? We get the call but it takes a while to get up here. **Rob** said that the state of Colorado transitioned to Colorado division of control and has thrown more money into fire fighting – it is a better machine. **Carl** said that it is not free. One of the goals is to save a couple of million \$ in reserves so when a fire goes out they have the money to pay for the services. It is a tight rope, to increase taxes or decrease expenditure and 80% of the budget is personnel. The master plan is going to give us that direction.
 10. **Carl** asked the audience what they want. The general consensus was quality ambulance service, paramedics and roving firefighters/wildfire suppression (called IA team for initial attack). I
 11. We want people cruising around but we are now spending reserves and taxes may not go up. How do we change this? **Carl** said that the master plan will make recommendations for the Board to consider and part of this process is to seek input for the citizens.

Why Mil levy failed

1. I've heard we have too many high level people. Bad information?
2. Seems like the Fire District outreach was minimal on the ballot, not a whole lot of people were talking about it.
3. It was nothing more than the recession, and we are still in recovery, and people didn't want to raise their taxes. So many people didn't know where the economy was going.
4. Is the master plan process going to lead to another mil levy request? **Rob** commented that the master plan is not driving this. This is the direction the Board wanted to go to gather input. **Carl** commented that if values go up as predicted it will not equal previous levels and there may be a need to ask again.
5. Are you aiming for this fall? **Joe** replied no.
6. So what are the other opportunities to ask the voters? **Mark** replied, Nov. 2015, May 2016, and Nov. 2016. **Carl** said the Fire District is independent from other special districts.
7. After the meeting a comment was relayed: I also believe the mil levy was defeated because there was a presumptuousness on the part of the District that no one would question what they were asking for and since they had never been turned down why would that happen this time.

How do you get your information?

1. Newspaper, flyers, HOA communication.

Revenues

1. Have you talked with other districts and how they are funded? Can we "sponsor" a paramedic? Can we make contributions? **Rob** clarified that the Fire District cannot set up a 501 C3 but the citizens can.
2. Are you seeing other unique ideas from other districts? **Carl** said that Almont is helping identify those.
3. What percent of the budget is spent on education? Does the state educate us? It is clear to me that you need to fight fires and provide emergency service.