

# **CARBONDALE & RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **CARBONDALE FIRE HEADQUARTERS**

**AUGUST 12, 2015**

The Board of Directors of the Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District met for their regular meeting on August 12, 2015 at the Carbondale Fire Headquarters/Training Building.

Vice-President Mike Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Directors present were Louis Eller, Bob Emerson and Carl Smith. Also present were Jenny Cutright, Ron Leach, Bill Gavette, Eric Gross, Mark Chain, Leslie Lamont, Chris Wurtsmith, Mike Wagner, Michael Hassig, Jeff Wadley, Tom Flynn, Joanne Teeple, Lynn Burton, Vickie Smith, Hank van Berlo, and Ray Sauvey. President Gene Schilling was absent.

### **CHANGES TO AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The items on the consent agenda were: Approve the Minutes of July 7, 2015 Regular Meeting, Approve the Minutes of July 29, 2015 Special Meeting, Approve Current Bills and Balances.

**MOTION:** made to approve the consent agenda. Jenny Cutright noted that checks that are being approved for payment include the list distributed. She said that these bills were received after the Board packet went out. Bob Emerson noted that he is abstaining on the minutes of July 7, 2015 as he was not in attendance. Louis Eller questioned the Mark Chain Consulting invoice. Mark Chain said it was not final as the town hall meetings have not been done. Carl Smith asked to add to the July 29, 2015 minutes, page 2, bullet 7, "He made a brief comment similar to what was listed on page 126 of the master plan". Carl Smith added that the District is using some third party SCBA bottles and questioned if they were in NIOSH compliance. Ron Leach said that he would research the issue and report back. It carried and passed unanimously, with Bob Emerson abstaining on the July 7, 2015 minutes only.

### **PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA**

No members of the public had any comments.

### **ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Email Policy Eric Gross reviewed a sample email policy from the Special District Association's attorney. He said that this sample policy is more extensive than what is in the current bylaws. He added that this policy deals with the email system for the entire district, including a section particular for elected officials. Eric Gross reviewed the sample policy.

Eric Gross said the best practice is not to have any policy discussion by email. He said if a board member wants to share information for other board members, it should be in the board packet, not via email. Discussion followed. Eric Gross noted that an exception is an emergency but then

that item needs to be in the next board packet. He also said that if the board is communicating about scheduling a meeting that it is not considered a meeting.

The Board of Directors unanimously agreed to table the issue until the September regular Board of Directors meeting.

Agenda Policy Eric Gross said there is an agenda policy in the bylaws. He said that he was unable to find any sample agenda policies. He suggested using the Changes to the Agenda for items that need to come off of that agenda or changing the order of the agenda, not adding items that the public has not had a chance to see. He said an emergency item is an exception.

Discussion regarding adding items to the agenda followed. Ron Leach noted that John Colson from the Sopris Sun has requested that the Board packet be published on the Tuesday of the week before the board meeting. Ron Leach noted that the staff spends Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the week before the board meeting preparing the board packet. Further discussion followed.

MOTION: made to state agenda items must be submitted at least eight days before the Board of Directors meeting, it is not necessary for the President of the Board of Directors to approve the agenda and not to change the timing of when to send the Board packets. It carried and passed unanimously.

#### **DISCUSSION REGARDING ACCEPTANCE OF MASTER PLAN**

Mark Chain said that the master plan distributed is not complete. He said that it needs to add the steering committee minutes from August 5, 2015 and two comments from steering committee members. Mark Chain said that the board may want to add or change the master plan as time goes on. Mark Chain said that master plans are exhaustive processes. He said that the district has tightened its belt and a temporary mill levy increase in 2011. He said that there was a failed election in 2013 and a citizen's advisory committee who recommended having a master plan done and not going to an election in 2014. He said both recommendations have been followed.

Mark Chain said that Almont Associates did the technical portion of the master plan and Mark Chain, Leslie Lamont, RRC and Footsteps Marketing did the public outreach portion. He reviewed the outreach that occurred. Mark Chain provided an overview of the master plan.

He said that Almont Associates says that Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection District is doing a very good job covering services with the limited resources available. He said that Almont Associates portion of the master plan has 75 recommendations.

Mark Chain said that during the public outreach portion they created an environment where people could talk about whatever they wanted. He said that people did not have critical comments about the district or the administration. They did hear people say that the district provides a valuable service but needs to 'advertise' themselves. Mark Chain said that the deficit spending cannot continue. He suggested a 2.0 mill increase with a sunset of 5-6 years to get staffing levels back to prerecession levels and purchase capital items. He also recommended the district keep \$2 million in reserves. Mark Chain suggested hiring a public information officer to continue the public outreach.

Mark Chain said that the master plan steering committee has completed their work. He reviewed the memo he prepared with the master plan steering committee final comments, the minority report by Ray Sauvey and added the committee requested a different response time map from Almont Associates. Mark Chain said that each master plan steering committee member was asked if there was an election what amount should be requested, when should it occur and should there be a sunset clause. A summary of answers is included in the master plan.

Mark Chain said that he reviewed his financial scenarios at the July 29, 2015 special meeting. He said that scenario 2 is a budget with no revenue enhancements. Leslie Lamont said that their recommendation of a \$2 million reserve balance ties in with Almont Associates recommendation of adopting a reserve fund policy.

Mike Kennedy said that he feels that the fire department should present the master plan to the public. He said it is the district's plan and the district needs to implement. He said that the board and staff have sat back and offered the public many opportunities to comment. He said that the district needs to tell its own story.

Ron Leach said that he agrees with Mike Kennedy. He said the master plan is the district's future and the board and staff need to present the plan to the public. He said there needs to be many meetings, not just the five in the contract. Ron Leach proposed having a town hall style meeting monthly to discuss the master plan with citizens. Ron Leach said there is a lot of work ahead and the staff is anxious to begin. He added that the intent of the town hall meetings was to receive input before the plan was completed. He said it is the fire departments job to present the plan to the community.

Ron Leach said that he spoke with Almont Associates about the map the master plan steering committee requested. He said that Almont Associates will make the map if it is requested by the Board of Directors. Discussion regarding the map followed.

Ron Leach said that he would make a presentation about the response time. He said it takes an hour to drive from Marble to the western part of the District. He said that response time is more complex than a map.

Bob Emerson suggested adding the response time map, Ron Leach's response time presentation and other items noted above as an addendum to the master plan with the understanding the board may have not seen the document but that they have been discussed. He said that the district has a good document and the board will look at implementing parts as the district studies the plan and is able.

Carl Smith said there are three items that were not addressed satisfactorily in the master plan: a training center, a maintenance facility and the Redstone engine. He said that there is only a brief sentence about a training facility and that should be part of the planning. He said that there is a large fleet of apparatus and a maintenance facility is needed, that the maintenance department is working out of a garage, not a maintenance facility. Carl Smith noted that a maintenance facility was part of the 2004 master plan. He said that the master plan doesn't call for replacing the Redstone engine until 2020. He said that the NFPA standard for apparatus is 12-15 years.

Bob Emerson said that the Board of Directors should consider those items when sufficient funds are available. Ron Leach noted that those items were on the capital replacement list submitted to

the Board of Directors. Bob Emerson suggested adding the capital projects replacement list to the addendum.

**MOTION:** made to accept the draft master plan with the addendum and additional items discussed. Leslie Lamont said that she thinks it is a great suggestion to have the Board and Staff deliver the master plan presentations to the public. She said that she worked hard to limit staff involvement in the public outreach process. She said that she feels it was a good move. She said that they gave the community every opportunity to speak their minds. She added that 95% of what they heard was positive and constructive. Leslie Lamont said that was the goal setting up the community process, and no one can say the process was skewed. She said that they provided the opportunity for people to speak. She added that the make-up of the master plan steering committee represented a myriad of opinions. She said that the committee came together with a solid recommendation to endorse the plan. General discussion regarding the outstanding portion of the contract followed. No action was taken on that item. It carried and passed unanimously.

Tom Flynn said that the new website is very helpful. He encouraged the board to continue to use the website and Facebook. He said encouraged the board to use the marketing company to get the message out. Ron Leach said that the website and Facebook presence is very good. He said that Jenny Cutright is the reason the website and Facebook looks good. He said that she has created all of the content on both sites and that Footsteps Marketing took care of the technical portion.

## **2016 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Review Proposed 2016 Budget Ron Leach said that there have been many budgets presented with the master planning process. He said that Mark Chain's scenario 2 shows budget without any tax revenue increase. He said that the district needs to prepare a budget with no additional revenue increase. He said at the end of 2016, the reserve balance would be \$880,000 if there are no changes, including the current staffing level. Ron Leach said that the board has historically and informally agreed on a \$1 million minimum reserve balance. He noted that the reserves continue to trend down after 2016. He said that there is also no capital replacement spending budget. He said that both items are deficiencies in the proposed budget.

Ron Leach said that the district must replace and repair equipment. He said that a certain amount of hose failed the hose test and was taken out of service. He said that \$10,000 is needed to replace hose. He said that equipment needs to be replaced before there is a problem. Ron Leach said the air bottles are another example of the need. Ron Leach said the trend of not replacing worn put equipment must be reversed.

Ron Leach said that the steering committee agreed that the fire department needs a mill levy increase. He said that the district needs to get some additional funding. Ron Leach said that the preliminary budget will have 18 paid employees with a 2.8% raise. Ron Leach said that the assumption is a 25.5% property tax revenue increase, due to the new assessed valuations. Ron Leach noted that an employee recently resigned and is moving, so there is a vacant shift position. Ron Leach said that the personnel budget is on target for 2015. He added that he plans to fill the vacant position in the near future with a full time employee. He said that the District needs three people on a shift to answer the calls.

Louis Eller said that the 2016 revenues do not arrive January 1 and funds are needed on January 1. He said that no less than four months of expenditures are needed to fund the fire department until the property taxes are received. He said that after deducting the restricted amount and the four months of operating expenditures the balance is near zero. Ron Leach added that the reserve fund is also the sinking fund for equipment. Ron Leach said that a \$2 million reserve, as recommended by Mark Chain, is a good idea. Louis Eller agreed.

Carl Smith said that the Alpine lease purchase can be converted to a loan if needed so the district can access that money if necessary. Discussion regarding the process if the district needed the funds followed.

2014 Audit Discussion Carl Smith said in 2014, Ron Leach gave a report on the 2013 audit. He requested an audit report. Discussion followed. It was decided to have the audit committee prepare a report for the board before the end 2015.

### **DISCUSSION OF TIMELINE FOR NOVEMBER BALLOT**

Ron Leach said that when the master plan process began, the boards asked about the timeline for a November election as there are statutory deadlines. He said that the board wanted the opportunity to discuss putting a question on the ballot. Ron Leach said if the board wants to participate in the November 2015 an intergovernmental agreement must be signed with each county by August 25. Ron Leach said there is an opportunity and the board has seen the recommendations from the steering committee.

Bob Emerson the reason a special meeting on August 19, was set was to make a decision if the board wants to participate in the November 2015 election. Bob Emerson said the board is aware of the tight timeline. He suggested discussing this issue at the special meeting so President Gene Schilling is in attendance.

Discussion regarding the positives and negatives about moving forward with a November election followed. Mike Kennedy noted that the longer the district waits to ask the voters for an increase, there are more funds that are needed.

Carl Smith said that Almont Associates report has 11 strategies, three financial scenarios with alternates and Mark Chain's financial report has six fiscal scenarios. He said the master plan is not a road map. He said that he feels that if there is going to be a mill levy increase, then there needs to be a specific plan, including the cost. Carl Smith reviewed ideas for open house meetings to discuss the master plan. He said that the board needs to wait to go an election.

Mike Kennedy said that the district needs a stop gap measure so the reserves are not being spent down, while the master plan is being studied and a plan developed. Louis Eller said that there are plenty of reasons to move forward with a mill levy increase and plenty of reasons not to. He said this needs to be thoroughly discussed.

Bob Emerson asked the other board members to be prepared to discuss the issue at the special board meeting on August 19, 2015.

Mike Kennedy thanked Mark Chain, Leslie Lamont and the master plan steering committee for their work on the master plan.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Other Carl Smith asked what the wildfire wages line item was for. Jenny Cutright said it was for wildfire assignments that wages will be reimbursed. Carl Smith asked where the donations go. Ron Leach said that they go in to the general fund. He said there are times that there are larger donations that may be used to purchase a piece of equipment in honor of someone.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### Discussion of Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control Communications Grant

Ron Leach said that the district applied for a \$2000 matching grant in 2014 from the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control for King radios. He said that the radios were purchased in 2014. He said that the grant was awarded and the district should receive \$2,000 soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Reappointment to SEMTAC Carl Smith said that he was reappointed by the governor to the state emergency medical and trauma advisory committee. He said that he is on the public finance committee and the state trauma advisory committee. He said that he is the public representative for rural Colorado. He added that he can't be a resource to the department in some ways with state grants.

Information on Sunshine Laws and Ethics from Governor's Office Carl Smith distributed copies of a Guide to Colorado Open Meetings and Records Law and Colorado Independent Ethics Commission for Boards and Employees to the board and staff.

Oregon Wildland Assignment Louis Eller asked if the District sent out a press release about the Oregon wildland assignment. Jenny Cutright will send one out.

**MOTION:** made to adjourn the Board of Directors meeting at 7:45 p.m. It carried and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jenny Cutright, Recording Secretary

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Mike Kennedy, Vice-President