

ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
PO Box 159
Springdale, UT 84767
February 20, 2018

Roll Call and Call to Order – Chairman Aton called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

The following members of the Rockville Springdale Fire Protection District were present. Chuck Passek, Randy Aton, Jeff Carlson, Bob Ford. Chief Ballard present and Megan Ewell recording.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda – Jeff Carlson made a motion to approve the agenda. Bob Ford seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor.

Public Comment –

Darcy Carlson from the Town of Springdale stated Katy Brown from the Town of Springdale is currently in the process of beginning the renewal of business licenses which requires a fire inspection and wanted clarification on how they should proceed going forward.

Shirley Ballard from Rockville – wanted to state her opinion that the board is appointed and elected by the citizens to oversee the emergency services and remind the Board that this is not a business, this is a service that the community has paid for and does not feel this is a viable solution.

Becky Barker from Springdale – stated she doesn't believe the entire community is aware of the possible changes and doesn't want to lose the current department, response times, or services. She later stated the Fire Department do an annual training at the school to teach children safety. She personally had a student who cut off their finger and cannot say enough about the instant response of the emergency services.

Paul Malo from Springdale– stated he is in disbelief anyone is considering taking these actions as Hurricane Valley Fire is too far away and foresees major issues, including traffic.

Rebecca McKown from Springdale – wanted to raise the question of changing the current amount of personnel from 4 to 2, and how this change could possibly be beneficial for the community?

Dan Maddott from Springdale – owns 4 residential lots and understands the costs associated with being in a special service district and appreciates the service provided. He believes that there should be some type of compensation from the tourists and doesn't believe this revenue stream has been research or emphasized enough.

Bonnie Suerig from Springdale – stated she was on the original council when the fire district was formed and served as the Town of Springdale representative and knows that the ambulance service is too important to lose. She stated she came to the meeting to hear firsthand what the Board had to say versus the rumors in town.

Chairman Aton stated the Washington County Commissioners and have ultimate authority over the fire district. At the end of 2017 the 2018 proposed budget increase received opposition outcry from both residents and businesses. At that time the Washington County Commissioners took over budgetary control stated they did not feel the Board was being fiscally responsible. The Washington County Commissioners then approached Hurricane Valley Fire and requested they submit a budget proposal within the parameters. Hurricane Valley Fire did as request and Chief Kuhlmann presented on February 12, 2018 with details of said budget.

Chuck Passek stated there are several years of minutes that show issues with low paying wages. This has been a driving factor for last 4 years and has resulted in raised standby fee rates to try and be comparable. Chief Ballard came to the Board in August 2017 and requested a wage increase for emergency personnel to retain/recruit personnel. At that time the Board raised wages from \$7.50-9 to \$13.00 per hour and used reserves to accomplish. When 2018 budget was addressed a wage increase to \$16 along with an additional 5th person caused a budget increase of approximately \$500,000 to district. This increase resulted in needing additional funding source and an increase was requested between property taxes and standby fees. Property tax increases must be approved by the Washington County Commissioners. They attended the public hearing for budget and heard all the public comment which was mostly negative. Because of the negative response the Board lost the right to budgetary control.

Shirley Ballard from Rockville asked the Chairman Aton why the Town of Springdale is not giving the TRT tax fully to the Fire District, as this was the reason it was initially established when Springdale was running the ambulance, prior to handing over the Fire District.

Jeff Carlson responded the Board is involved with the Mayor or Springdale and the tourism to the county. Funding from tourism is tightly regulated by the State of Utah.

Chairman Aton also responded that he has read through the minutes for the application of TRT and believes the allotted amount has been given to support the ambulance portion of District, even though it was originally the goal that the District would obtain its own funding to continue to support.

Shirley Ballard from Rockville – reminded all those present the Town of Springdale gave up the ambulance as it wasn't a money maker and they no longer wanted the burden. The fire department doesn't just do fire, they do search and rescue, extrication, haul outs, etc. and are a great asset to the community.

Jared Barker Fire Captain for the Fire District - wanted it made clear that all the personnel are part of the District, regardless of where they live. The current personnel need and want to be retained as they are dedicated to their current leadership.

Paul Malo from Springdale – apologies for earlier response due to misinformation but believes the Washington County Commissioners do not have the best reputation. There is difference to paying for quality protection than to get a discount by a subcontractor who don't have the right loyalties.

Rebecca McKown – requested information regard the Hurricane Valley Fire budget amount they came up with as it appears to be the same budget amount? Chairman Aton responded the Washington County Commissioners gave them a dollar figure to stay under.

Chief Ballard wanted on the record to be clear that the fire department has not failed. The personnel have not failed. They are all highly qualified and dedicated, and while most do not live within the District, they have been with the District long enough that it feels like their home. They have continuously shown up for shifts for less pay because they enjoy what they do and where they do it. It has been stated the Hurricane Valley Fire will not retain any current personnel and does not feel that should be acceptable by anyone, including the Washington County Commissioners who have taken over control. The politicians have failed the fire department and community and continue to do so.

RA appreciates questions and comments. Another meeting 2/28 more time for public comment and details. The purpose of this meeting is to look at proposal from hurricane valley fire.

MOTION: Chairman Aton made a motion to end public comment and move forward with agenda. Chuck Passek seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor.

A. Action Items – Administrative

1. Discussion and review of 2018 operating budget as approved by County Commissioners – No discussion
2. Discussion and review of Hurricane Valley Fire District proposal that was given by Chief Tom Kuhlman during a meeting on February 13 at the Springdale town office – Bob Ford questioned the authority of the Board.
Chairman Aton wanted to address the question regarding 2 full time crossed trained emergency personnel instead of 4. In the event of transport, Hurricane Valley Fire would then dispatch 2 more personnel to take over while the transport was taking place. He also stated the mutual aid agreement expires in 2019 and will be meeting with the Chief Ranger at ZNP before the next meeting to discuss their staffing and response needs.
Jeff Carlson requested the call data report for mutual aid given in 2017
Chief Ballard stated he has staffing concern as this goes both ways. If something major happens in Hurricane, the District could lose all resources to that issue. He feels it important to have a policy established to keep emergency resources in the District as much as possible.
Jeff Carlson stated this is the same model that Hurricane Valley Fire District uses for all their stations but wants to have multiple scenarios laid out to address those situations.
Bob Ford stated he don't expect them to be able to cover or understand this type of community and wants more time to have this addressed and analyzed.
Chairman Aton stated no Hurricane Valley Fire stations are fully manned since communities are not willing to pay for that type of coverage. Would like to look at having the towns to take over the emergency services and speak with legislature/State directly to find additional/funding and or support.
Chief Ballard stated this was previously addressed and the Town of Springdale shut it down due to the cost. The District cannot cut staffing lower than 4 as this is already not enough manpower. Employees

are cross trained it is a man power thing with trained people. Cutting staff will only save money, but it will result in degraded services and an inability to complete the job.

Chuck Passek requested the scenarios prior to the next meeting and suggested asking the Washington County Commissioners a transfer date for stability to the work force.

Bob Ford suggested a minimum of 180 days (90 for searching of alternate sources and 90 to implement. (end of July) This would enable the Board enough time to research the information from the towns, Zion National Park, etc. The Board needs to trust but verify and do this by asking for more time to gather information

Chairman Aton confirmed the Board needs commitment from the Washington County Commissioners and acknowledgement of the Board's power/ability to continue to plan and strategize.

3. Update on the Impact Fee Study – removed from agenda

B. CLOSED SESSION

1. Strategy session to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation –

MOTION: Jeff Carlson made a motion to go into a closed session. Chuck Passek seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor. Closed session started at 7:15 p.m.

MOTION: Jeff Carlson made a motion to end the closed session and resume public meeting. Chuck Passek seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor. Work meeting resumed at 7:43 p.m.

Adjourn:

MOTION: Bob Ford made a motion to adjourn. Chuck Passek seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.