

ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

PO Box 159
Springdale, UT 84767
February 28, 2018

Roll Call and Call to Order – Chairman Aton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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.

A. Action Items - Administrative

1. Possible approval to engage Savage, Esplin, and Radmall for the 2017 audit – Jeff Carlson made motion to approve. Chuck Passek seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor.

B. Discussion/Information/Non-action Items

1. Fire Chief's Report – Fire and EMS
 - a) Report on fire and ambulance activity since prior Board meeting – 15 calls since last meeting. 9 ems 6 fire with 7 transports.
 - b) Training update – no update at this time
 - c) Other department activities including status of upcoming expenditures and/or revenues – none at this time
2. Review of potential go-forward RSFPD operating strategies and budgets – Chairman Aton stated at the last work meeting different scenario options were given as proposed by the Hurricane Valley Fire (HVF). Jeff Carlson asked the commissioners for an additional 3-6 months to continue to find funding solution, which was not granted, and the Washington County Commissioners requested the District to move forward with having HVF take over emergency services. Chairman Aton went to the Towns to request them to review the option of the Town(s) taking over. He met with both town mayors and Springdale manager regarding cost, the pros and cons, and addressed the major obstacle being cost. The District currently funded through a small portion of property tax and assessment of standby fees. If the Town of Springdale were to take over emergency services they would have to collect all funds through property tax resulting in an increase of almost double to all property owners, therefore the town of Springdale does not feel it is feasible to take over the emergency services at this time. Therefore, the Board feels that they must accept the proposal from HVF as approved by the Washington County Commissioners
Bob Ford wanted to point out that the HVF proposal is also not sustainable and therefore will have to increase these costs to the community.

COMMISSIONER VICTOR IVERSON: Stated the Washington County Commissioners intent is to provide quality emergency services that are sustainable with funding currently available. They are not folding the RSFPD into HVF at this time, rather HVF is being contracted out. This will last possibly 2-3 years, and at that time if alternative funding has been secured, it will be reevaluated.

Bob Ford asked how the Board will operate without any responsibility and/or authority. Commissioner Iverson stated it will be the job of the Board to have oversight to ensure quality care is being provided as the Board will be left intact.

Chairman Aton requested a realistic timeframe this will occur. Chairman Iverson responded in his opinion it should be no more than 60 days to reduce limbo for all involved. The Board cannot currently fund the budget and have no come up with alternative options.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Shirley Ballard of Rockville – Went over history of inception of RSFPD by commissioners and need for quality care as she was on original board and does not feel that the Washington County Commissioners have helped find a solution, rather a punishment.

Richard Madsen of Springdale – stated he served as Captain mostly volunteer at that time yet understands that things have changed. However, the communities do not want HVF to take over emergency services. Knows with combined effort of District, Towns, and the County they could make this work to find a solution. Believes Chief Ballard is best man for the job.

Michael Plyler of Springdale – former fire fighter and also former Board Chair. He was the Board Chair at the time of biggest increase in standby fees in District history, and while not liked, the justification was supported. Brought up examples of community development and major increases and need for emergency services. Also addressed the HVF budget taken from their website and the drastic differences and how much lower the RSFPD budget is. He also stated in the early 1990s fire and EMS were separate, with the EMS being handled by the Town of Springdale who created a special tax exclusively for the ambulance (TRT). However, now the Town will not response as to why all of those funds are not going to the District.

Michael Cody Cole – wanted to publicly thank the Chief, the Board, and Luci for their dedication. As a member of the Fire Department he doesn't see how HVF will provide adequate emergency services with only 2 personnel. A major ER with rapid response (asthma, heart attack, critical or coding patient) must have a minimum of 4 people present. A patient transport round trip takes approximately 3 hours to get back into service which further shows the need to have at least 3-4 on shift personnel.

Public and the Commissioners commentary as group

Chief Kuhlmann of HVF – stated that 2 people with critical patient was all that could be budgeted with parameters driven. He does this for all manned fire stations throughout the Hurricane Valley Fire District boundaries which covers approximately 6 fire stations, 35,000-45,000 people and 60 square miles.

Michael Plyer asked Chief Kuhlmann if all 6 stations are manned?

Chief Kuhlmann responded that as of now only 3 stations are manned due to funding

Megan Orton of Rockville – stated that the tourism needs to help supplement any shortage of funds. This is a State issue and State should help.

Andy Green – believes with the urgency this could be used to push the State Legislature as there are legitimate concerns regarding response time and possible catastrophic results. If the TRT is not being allocated correctly to emergency services, or more is needed, then continue to operate in the red while this is resolved. Asked about ISO rate, average response time, and percentage of simultaneous calls, Chief Ballard responded ISO is 3, response time is less than 6 minutes, and average of simultaneous calls approximately 10%.

Chief Kuhlmann stated he is open to more personnel if it is determined that more are needed based on calls.

Chief Ballard stated that 26 personnel will be out of work. The HVF gave notice that the RSFPD personnel had less than 3 days to apply to HVF for “consideration”.

Public and the Commissioners commentary as group

Tyler Topham of Springdale – requested from the Commissioners what the tax increase will be down the road due to this take over. Commissioner Iverson responded they would increase to match what HVF taxes the resident in their boundaries.

Dan Fagergren Chief Ranger at Zion National Park – ZNP partnered with the Fire District over 30 years ago and is concerned about how the mutual aid will be affected with these changes. Operational concern is also an issue as the existing fire department has the same SCBA radio for communication and response is very integrated. He expressed concerns with safety in the event HVF takes over when responding to calls. Major concerns regarding incident command presence, jurisdiction, personnel experience, liability and legal ramifications. Since 2016 there have been 58 mutual aid calls from the Park to the Fire District, and 70 mutual aid calls from the Fire District to ZNP. On the verge of new tourist season which will be approximately 20% higher and has concerns of issues that this massive shift will cause. Highly recommends wait until fall or winter of this year once the tourist season has passed.

Joseph Baumhauer of Springdale– Has heard the issues due to using visitor funds, but if each tourist was taxed \$0.20 it would raise over \$900,000 and would cover the entire budget.

Luci Francis of Rockville – Feels that the municipalities can pull together to find funds and sustainable solution. Even with the back and forth the fire department, Chief, and personnel have remained. She wanted to give her thanks to them all and Chief Ballard directly.

Brian Sabbatino of Springdale – requested a clarification of possible tax increase coming from the view of a business owner. Doesn't believe trading what the District currently has for what is good enough down the hill is the same thing.

3. Discussion of Washington County Commissioners' decision to proceed with Hurricane Valley operating plan and budget for RSFPD operation

Chairman Aton thanked the public for coming and comment and asked the Washington County Commissioners to hear those comments and concerns and think of that and echo their sentiments to give the Board more time to find alternative funding, while using current reserves to maintain. Obviously, the budget is not sustainable at this time. but would like to continue to explore as the community is concerned about losing those services.

Commission Renstrom stated the meeting in December with no resolution and wants to know how the next 90 days will be different.

Commission Iverson stated this is obviously an emotional issue and is disruptive to people lives and could be in favor of postponing, but only if there is a viable reason and solution. The Washington County Commissioners is not committed to the contract with HVF, but a decision must be made.

Meeting break: Recording stopped at 9:21 p.m.

Meeting resumed at 9:32 p.m.

C. Consent Agenda

1. Applicants for Fire/EMS – not addressed
2. Prior month's expenses – no questions
3. Minutes: January 13th work meeting minutes and January 31 regular meeting minutes -

MOTION: Jeff Carlson made motion to approve the consent agenda minus item #1 regarding applicants. Bob Ford seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor.

D. Administrative Non-action items

1. Standby Fee Accounts Receivable Aging Report – financials reported
2. Ambulance accounts receivable report – financials reported
3. January YTD financial statements – no questions
4. General Board discussion – Chairman Aton stated while this was a long meeting he felt it was important to let the community speak and have the Washington County Commissioners present to hear from the community but was disappointed no businesses were present.
5. Identification of issues for future agendas – Jeff Carlson would like to revisit potential funding options, which the Board agreed. Chairman Aton sees the biggest issue is finding a long term sustainable solution and continued to discuss wages and benefits. CP stated the District needs new funding and needs to address with the State Legislature to increase sales tax, TRT, etc. Chairman Aton doesn't feel federal funds are a viable option due to budgetary cuts. Bob Ford expressed his desire to keep the District as is to get through the tourist season and review new options in October.
Jeff Carlson expressed desire to find alternate funding and considered asking the Town of Springdale even though they don't have high reserves, Chairman Aton will address with the Town of Springdale.

E. Adjourn

MOTION: Jeff Carlson made a motion to adjourn. Bob Ford seconded, and a roll call vote indicated all those present in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.