

ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 159

Springdale, UT 84767

January 22, 2014

Firehouse

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Chair Bob Orton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District Board present: Michael Plyler and Barry Rhodes. Also present was Chief Joe Barker. Elaine Harris recording.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Michael Plyler moved the agenda be approved. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS** – Adrian Player asked regarding the other two members of the Board. He was informed Linda Brinkley's term had ended December 31 and, since no one filed for the election, it has been advertised and the Board will make the appointment. Nancy Sanchez's appointed term with Rockville had expired and Rockville will be going through the process to appoint another member.
4. **ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR THE YEAR 2014** – Michael Plyler nominated Bob Orton for Chair and Barry Rhodes seconded the motion. Bob Orton nominated Barry Rhodes for Vice-Chair. Barry Rhodes declined. Bob stated that traditionally it has been an elected position, and Michael Plyler has been appointed by the Town of Springdale. Barry Rhodes suggested Michael Plyler be the Vice-Chair and Bob stated he would second the motion if Michael would accept, which he was willing to do. After discussion, it was decided it may be best to elect the two positions after we have a full board.

Barry Rhodes moved the current officers remain in place until such time as there is a full board. Michael Plyler seconded the motion and all those present voted in favor of the motion.
5. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING AUDIT PROCEDURES FOR THE YEAR 2013**
– The State offers, in lieu of an audit, the process of Agreed Upon Procedures for revenues and expenditures under \$500,000. We are under \$500,000 for 2013, which puts us close to the requirement of an audit and we will definitely be over \$500,000 for 2014. Barry Rhodes moved the Board proceed with an audit for 2013. Michael Plyler seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
6. **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – FIRE SERVICE**
 - a. **Report on fire activity since the last Board meeting** – Chief Barker reported that since the Board's last meeting, there had been one call which was actually three separate incidents.
 - b. **Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the Fire service** – Chief Barker presented Tom Green as an applicant for the fire service. Tom has served with the department off and on for approximately 15 years. Michael Plyler moved Tom Green be accepted for the fire service. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indication all those present voted in favor of the motion.
 - c. **Training update** – Since the last meeting, Fire I and II Certification classes have commenced. There have been five trainings, all associated with the certifications and are going well. If everything stays on track, they will be done by May.

- d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – No budgeted expenditures were requested.
7. **FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT** – There is no new business. Joe would like to pursue the plan reviewer and he is working with the Clerk regarding some of the logistics for that to work.
 8. **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – AMBULANCE SERVICE**
 - a. Report on EMS activity since the last board meeting – Chief Barker reported there were seven calls, three of which were the same calls as the fire department. Four of the total were transports.
 - b. Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the EMS service – Chief Barker presented two applicants. The service has lost two or three of our current EMTs. The two applicants are Torry Brown, who is currently an Advanced EMT, and Jay McKeen, who is a Paramedic. Both applicants were recommended by Chief Barker and Captain Wood.

Michael Plyler moved the applicants be accepted for the EMS service. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
 - c. Training update – There have been two trainings since the last meeting. The first was training on the new reporting system and the second was a CPR refresher class.
 - d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – Chief Barker reported that the suction device kept on the ambulance no longer operates when it is unplugged so can only be utilized on a patient that is inside the ambulance. The cost is \$1,500, the funds of which will come from the ambulance equipment budget item.

Michael Plyler moved to approve the expenditure for this item. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
 9. **STANDBY FEE BILLING REPORT TO INCLUDE UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS** – As of the end of December, there was \$7,376.84 which was 120 days past due, a decrease of \$3,423.93. The decrease is largely due to the collections from the Washington County property tax liens.
 10. **CLERK'S REPORT**
 - a. Account balances – There were no questions.
 - b. Ambulance accounts receivable report to include action on any requests for an adjustment in charges – As of the end of December, the accounts receivable was \$66,913.61, an increase of \$8,946.70.
 - c. Approval of expenditures for December 2013 – Barry Rhodes moved the expenditures for the month of December be approved. Michael Plyler seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

11. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2013 PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING AND THE DECEMBER 30, 2013 SPECIAL MEETING** – Michael Plyler moved the minutes for the December 18, 2013 public hearing and regular meeting and the December 30, 2013 special meeting be approved. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
12. **GENERAL BOARD DISCUSSION** – Chair Orton reported that Michael Plyler has been working with Adrian Player and others with the Town of Springdale with some ideas. The Board is working on preparing for revenues for the 2015 budget.

Michael Plyler reported the board has been looking at is a way to justify certain increases in standby fees, especially on a residential basis. For example: currently a residence with up to two acres of ground is an annual charge of \$168. That doesn't take into account any accessory buildings. Additional structures are separate risks, from a firefighter standpoint, especially if it was being utilized as a workshop or similar use. If a casita exists, there is a separate, residential charge for that structure.

The motel assessment is an annual fee \$352 plus \$21 per room. Utilizing the new Hampton Inn as an example, their annual assessment is approximately \$2,200.

Springdale has indicated that two motel rooms historically in Springdale consume as much water as one residence. If that template were to be used and state that two motel rooms equal one residence, and applied that equation to the standby fee, two motel rooms should be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$75/ea., instead of \$21/ea.

Utilizing the Hampton again as an example, at the rate they are now paying (\$2,200) they would be able to pay their standby fee in one night of a 30% occupancy. They charge approximately \$160/night.

Even if the District left the base rate the same and quadrupled the per room rate to \$80/rm., (that would be \$160 for two rooms, eight dollars less than the base assessment for a residence) they can still pay their standby fee with one night of occupancy at 60%. 60% of one night they would owe to the District and the other 364 days and 40% is theirs.

Commercial structures pay higher electric rates than residential structures, just based on the notion that they can pass the higher rate on to the people who are patronizing that business.

Michael will be meeting with Springdale Town Manager Rick Wixom and Councilmembers Bill Weyher and Adrian Player the following day to discuss these options and possibly others.

Chair Orton stated that we now have firefighters on call, something we have not had in the past. This year we have had to utilize our reserve money to get through the 2014 budget. We won't be able to do that in 2015 because our reserves will be pretty depleted. Then the committee that originally set up the standby fee did so, it appears as though they were pretty equal in some ways and not equal in others. We could make it very simple or a process of by the square foot and buildings; this would take a lot of work, time and expense. So far, Springdale has been very cooperative and have some ideas. We have to try and come up with a solution for this within the next three months.

Adrian Player felt the District should not be utilizing their reserves to cover 2014; that is a bad concept. The District certainly has equipment that needs to be upgraded and firefighters that need to be paid. It is time to step up and talk about increasing the standby fees across the board for everybody in a logical fashion. The Town of Springdale has asked Adrian to come as a town councilman and offer their help in trying to figure out how this can be approached. To Adrian, it is very simple – if people want to have ambulance service and fire protection, they can dial 911 and wait for somebody from Hurricane, the Park, or wherever. Or, if they want to have immediate service, they pay for it.

It isn't a question of what people want and what they like, it's a question of what can we provide and what can we afford. If the people can't afford it because of an increase, they will have to be told that they have to call 911 to get an ambulance and it's going to come out of Hurricane or St. George.

The Springdale Town Manager is going to create some "what if" scenarios, how we can figure out what needs to be done to help the District to sell it to the citizens of this town. If you want the service, you have to pay for what you are going to get.

Michael stated that there is an assessment on your property tax bill for fire protection. Michael's total property tax bill is approximately \$2,100 of which \$55 goes to Washington County to be given to the District. He pays on top of that his standby fee.

Joe Barker lives in Hurricane and pays \$252 as his portion of fire protection on his Washington County tax bill. If Michael pays \$55 plus the standby fee of \$168, that is \$223. But Hurricane is collecting from a population of 12,000 and we are only collecting from 800. They have two fire stations; we have one. Their income pool is approximately 15 times ours. Their assessment is higher than ours, but they have 12,000 people, less children, etc.

The other concept that needs to be taken into consideration is that, if you live in St. George and you call 911 for an ambulance, it is a private ambulance service that responds. It is a private ambulance company because they have looked at that market and they know they can make a profit by running an ambulance service there. That same company will not come into Hurricane, Virgin, Springdale or Rockville because it isn't profitable. It isn't profitable to the District that we are owed \$66,000 from people who have utilized our ambulance service and have not paid their bill. Many of those are out of town, or out of country, visitors and they know that it is difficult for us to collect, so they stiff us. As citizens, we are paying for that, too. It not fair, equitable or just, but it is the reality of the situation. But that same ambulance, when a tourists faints, has a heart attack, etc. will respond to a citizen in a timely manner and transport them to St. George.

If anyone will look at our budget, they can see the District is very frugal with upkeep and maintenance.

Barry Rhodes clarified that the reason we went into reserves was because the Board has been trying to find a way to fund everything without raising rates. We no longer have that luxury and that is why we are looking at a rate increase; we have done everything possible to keep from charging more. Once we decide what we are going to do, it will be brought before the public in a public hearing and see what the public wants to do.

Chief Barker reported he had a discussion with Springdale Manager Rick Wixom regarding at what level Springdale is willing to help. Just for clarification, he wanted Chief Barker to convey that they

are willing to help in the form, at least, if we have something the District would like to include in their monthly newsletter, that is an option as well as their website. Rick is also willing to help with crunching the numbers for the budget.

Chair Orton stated it was important to remember why we are doing this; and that is that we no longer have the young firefighter base living in Springdale. If we have personnel that don't live here, but work in the canyon, a good number of them are available during that time. But all the other times we have to have at least two on standby.

13. **IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR FUTURE AGENDAS** – There will be the continuing updates on the standby fees; an engagement letter from our auditor, a decision on at least one new board appointment.
14. **ADJOURN** – Barry Rhodes moved the meeting be adjourned. Michael Plyler seconded the motion. A roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes typed by:

Elaine M. Harris
District Clerk

APPROVED:

Robert W. Orton
Robert W. Orton, Chairman