

# ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 159

Springdale, UT 84767

October 22, 2014

Rockville Community Center

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Chair Michael Plyler called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District Board present: John Callahan, Luci Francis, Louise Excell and Barry Rhodes. Also present was Chief Joe Barker and EMS Captain Vince Wood. Elaine Harris recording.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Louise Excell moved the amended agenda be approved. John Callahan seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS** – Mike Marriott from Springdale asked if there has been any contemplation relative to having a more highly trained firefighting crew that has both emergency medical or paramedic skills as well as firefighting skills. If they are going to be paying such high rates, wouldn't it be feasible to have more highly trained people. Chair Plyler responded that the vast majority of the increase is in wages. Presently, we are paying people to stand by where this was done for free in the past by Ryan Ballard. When Ryan left, to cover those off hours, The District starting paying two standby firefighters \$7.50/hr. which is the lowest wage in the County for a paid firefighter position. Our emergency medical people are also the lowest hourly wage in the County. These individuals are paid for being at the firehouse. If they were at home, that delays the response time as they would have to go to the firehouse to get their gear and get on the apparatus.

During business hours, Monday thru Friday, we have just two emergency medical people on call in the firehouse. There is 24 hour coverage, seven days a week emergency medical. From 5 pm to 8 am, Monday thru Friday, and 24 hours on Saturday and Sunday, we have also two firefighters on call. During business hours during the week, there are enough firefighters working in Springdale and/or Rockville that could respond to the fire station if there was a call. Those individuals are not paid. Most of the firefighters do not live in Rockville or Springdale so if we call them after hours they would have to come from Hurricane or Toquerville, which is a 20-30 minute delay in response time. It was important to the Board to have a response time that was such that we could actually make a difference in a fire situation.

Regarding cross-training, if you have personnel that are cross-trained for both EMS and fire, they cannot serve shifts at the same time for two different services. If they were to go on a medical call and then there is a fire, there is no one to respond except for possibly Hurricane, Toquerville, etc. If there was a vehicle accident and the medical people are called, you would also need fire personnel for a possible fire or extrication. The medical personnel would not have access to the patients if the car was already on fire.

In the 2014 budget, we are spending \$205,000 in reserves to pay the wages that resulted in these necessary changes as the Standby Fees were not increased in 2013.

In response to Mr. Marriott's question as to how many of the limited calls the District incurs resulted in an overlap of services that would make cross-training disadvantageous, the Chair responded that no, there haven't been a lot of calls like that. But, as Springdale continues to grow and the commercial development load continues to grow, the likelihood that scenario could happen increases. As an approach to the philosophy of manning a fire protection district, you are planning for as many worse-case scenarios that can envision rather than just decide to hope the worse-case scenario doesn't happen.

In response to Mr. Marriott's question as to the difficulty in staffing, Chair Plyler responded we have done relatively well thus far. We currently have 11 firefighters going through the Firefighter I and II training and, assuming they would all pass that training, we will now have 11 people on the department who will have fire certification.

Joe Hirschi from Rockville asked for an understanding on his property tax assessment which shows a minimal fee. The Standby Fee is separate and they are paying a lump sum. What is the reason that our Standby Fee can't be added to the tax assessment so the cost can be spread out through the year? Chair Plyler responded that the Standby Fee is not considered a property tax, it is a fee for service. We do not have the authority to add our fee to the property tax assessment.

Mr. Hirschi asked what the property tax assessment was for and Chair Plyler responded that is set by the Certified Tax Rate and the money collected comes directly to the District for its operation.

4. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATIVE TO EXPENDITURES TO BE UTILIZED FOR THE SPRINGDALE DONATION** – Chief Barker was previously briefed on the donation money that Springdale has given the District and what the two previous chiefs had outlined what they wanted to do with that money. Regarding the thermal imaging camera and other items, the argument can be made for each individual item as to why that would be a good choice for the District. Chair Barker presented other recommendations.

One of the most basic of essentials for the fire department are turnouts and SCBAs. We currently have a pretty good handle on turnouts. SCBAs are something that during the history of the District has struggled with in having up-to-date, compliant equipment. Last week there was a meeting with a representative from MSA (the manufacturer) from Weidener Fire (the dealer for SCBAs). The packs we have are the 1997 model and, basically, the National Fire Protection Agency, issues a new standard every five years. Our packs are four releases behind and over the years we have done a good job, as we can afford it, replacing, repairing and upgrading those packs.

Chief Barker proposed that since we have never had an opportunity in the past to upgrade and/or replace our SCBAs as a whole, it seems this should be considered for the donation.

Louise commented that industry standards change regularly and what that means for a district like ours is that we have to essentially get rid of air packs and turnout gear that has never been used and replace it with a more industry-approved version, whether we can afford it or not. Chief Barker responded to a certain extent, yes. We are not required to do that and we have done a really good job at doctoring that. The packs, over the last 20 years since they were originally purchased, have been added on, retrofitted and upgraded and brought closer to what should be the standard. The problem that we have been able to dodge so far is the regulator that fits to the mask which was discontinued being manufactured in 2007. They have to maintain a certain amount of time up to seven years where they are legally bound to still produce parts for discontinued models. That ended the first of 2014. Parts we need for repair would still be available until they run out. That could take a year, could take five years.

Where it is known we need to replace them as a whole in the near future, it seems only prudent to utilize this windfall of money for replacement of the packs for \$46,145. The Chief gave a description of the various parts of the SCBA, their purpose and their maintenance schedules.

There is a possibility we could sell our old SCBAs to a smaller department that is basically worse off than we are. They would take the risk of having parts available.

The Chair commented that the positive aspect about upgrading now is then we are completely compatible with the Park. In the past, we have always been compatible with the Park; last year they upgraded so our masks are not longer compatible; the tanks are.

The question arose that if we buy all new now, what happens in ten or twenty years if we have to replace them all again. The answer to that is to start putting money aside for this replacement by budgeting the cost of one replacement per year.

For the remainder of the Springdale donation, Chief Barker proposed purchasing four additional sets of turnouts for approximately \$13,000.

Chair Plyler stated, with the costs proposed, we would be over the Springdale donation as we have already spent \$1,020 on radios. The Chief said the approximate \$13,000 figure would be less because there would be some components of the turnouts that we would not be purchasing, but he does not have the breakdown at this time.

Louise felt this proposal was the most sensible and useful for necessary equipment. Louise moved the District request from our Springdale benefactors \$46,145 for 11 new air packs and request an additional \$13,000 for four sets of turnout gear, one already having been approved, and ask this request be applied to the existing year contribution. Luci Francis seconded the motion.

John Callahan commented that when our budget process began we made a wish list. These items were on that list, but are they the most important things on the list. Chair Plyler responded the thermal imaging camera was on that list and is a great tool, especially for a small department, but we have gone 22 years without one, so if we waited another year it probably would not be the end of the world. We would be better served having air packs than a thermal imaging camera.

Barry Rhodes had a problem because we had already approved a purchase, said we were going to do it, and now we are changing our mind. He also has a problem with buying all the air packs at the same time, which has always been a problem for the last 25 years. Chief Barker commented the reason is there has never been money allocated for equipment replacement; it has always been "get by". Barry responded that there has always been money set aside for equipment replacement for trucks which has been utilized to make up for budget shortfalls. It is ludicrous to think there will be replacement funds in 20 years to replace the air packs.

A roll call vote indicated:

Louise Excell – Aye  
John Callahan – Nay  
Luci Francis – Aye  
Michael Plyler – Aye  
Barry Rhodes - Nay

- 5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATIVE TO MOVING FORWARD WITH HIRING A PERMANENT, FULL-TIME CHIEF** – Louise provided the draft of the job description and job qualifications which was a result of the all the input that had been received from the Board and Assistant Chief Tyler Ames. There was also a draft of the position announcement. Louise felt the position announcement could be done as soon as a decision is made on the job description and qualifications. The position announcement would refer the applicants to the website where the job description and qualifications will be posted.

Louise's goal was to post the position announcement in early November and put a deadline for submission by December 1 and begin considering applicants to make a decision by the first of January.

Chair Plyler asked about the qualification "Must be able to obtain Utah State Firefighter I and II". Michael would assume a chief would already have those certifications when they apply. Barry felt that this may imply that, if they were not from Utah, they would have to qualify for the Utah Certification Board.

Luci felt the way the qualifications are worded, the Board can consider an applicant that has a combination of various things, whether it be experience, certifications, a degree in Fire Science, etc. Luci was concerned with hiring by January 1, the incoming chief would not be able to have any time with our current chief, but we can't hire a new chief until the budget is in place.

Chair Plyler commented that under Louise's proposed timeline, it just may be that if the person is coming from Utah, they may have to sell a house, etc. They might not be able to start until February 1, 2015. If we construct a budget on the assumption we are going to pay a full year's salary for 2015 but they don't show up until February 1, one month of their salary would not be committed to them and we could utilize it to pay Joe part-time to help with the transition or whatever is needed to accomplish that. As of this date, it would be difficult to project we could have someone ready to start on January 1.

John asked if on Item 5 the EMS was left out intentionally. No, EMS will be added so it will read fire personnel/EMS. There are other places where this will apply. Barry clarified that the EMS are under the direction of the Captain, but, as Joe indicated, under the direct supervision of the Chief. The Chief would not necessarily be required to evaluate the individual EMS personnel. The paragraph can be reworded to reflect the exact intent.

Barry suggested under the qualifications there be the change to "at least ten years".

Barry felt that since we already have the captain positions established and Louise has already addressed that, we should probably leave it that way. It should read "oversee the fire department and EMS captain and Fire Marshal, where applicable.

The following was clarified – "The Chief will serve as the District's liaison with surrounding municipalities and government agencies to coordinate mutual emergency management plans."

John Callahan moved to approve the draft presented with the resulting changes made as a working document. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Louise will amend the document and submit by email for further review and approval.

The position advertisement was distributed for discussion. This document will refer applicants to the website for the complete job description and qualifications. Chair Plyler suggested a salary range be included. The Board will submit their input to Louise.

If the applications are received by December 1, there is ample time for review and interviews before January 1.

In response to the question by Captain Woods if the qualifications for the chief are going to include that they be required to be a certified EMT, Louise stated qualified candidates must have extensive knowledge in the following areas, which includes emergency medical practices and procedures, emergency management and procedures. It doesn't state they have to be certified.

Vince felt that with the number of medical calls the District experiences, it would be a benefit for better management of the department. Even if the requirement was that they obtain certification within one year that would be good. Most fire chiefs have some medical certification.

It was felt it would be difficult to have that requirement for the amount of salary we are offering. The possibility does exist that some applicants may have EMS certification and that can be weighed when considering the applications.

6. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATIVE TO JOINING THE UTAH ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS** – The fee to join this organization is based on the budget. In our case, the annual membership would be \$911. The question for the Board is do we feel we will benefit from our investment in this organization. Chair Plyler received advice from them when we were deciding by what criteria we would charge the Standby Fee and they were very helpful. He felt it would be beneficial to have the ability to consult with them when needed.

The Chairman of the Association would be available to do a presentation on November 12. It was decided to have Luci speak with the him and a meeting will be arranged by email. A decision will be made after the presentation whether we feel the District should join.

7. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATIVE TO PAYING PERSONNEL FOR ATTENDANCE AT FF I AND FF II TRAINING** – Chief Barker presented the cost of this proposal and an explanation had been sent out previously by email. There had been a miscommunication regarding whether or not the firefighters were to be paid for this extra training. When this training had first been scheduled last year, Joe had informed Michael that the firefighters had been paid the last time we had this certification training, but they were only being done on the regular training night of every Tuesday, there were no other extra days during the week.

We have had only one pay period since this training started. Joe reviewed the training dates thus far and proposed the firefighters receive payment retroactive to October 1. (\$1,200) For the remaining classes (assuming 100% attendance) there would be an additional cost of \$3,510. Chair Plyler asked if there were other line items in the current budget where funds can be drawn, if necessary. The answer was yes.

Barry felt it created two issues. 1) Where we have multiple trainings in the pay period and there are only two columns for the hours; it needs to be modified. 2) We have EMS training established that is required training and then there are other specialized trainings they go to for certifications, etc. He does not see the FF I and FF II being any different. Barry felt we need to identify a larger training budget in the future for the fire department.

John asked of the 11 who originally began the training, how many are we actually going to employ as regular firefighters and Chief Barker responded hopefully all of them. The whole idea is that once they either obtain the experience, or in this case the certification, that gives them the opportunity to participate in the on-call shifts. Currently we are training 11 potential crew members.

Barry pointed out that the Board has discussed a number of things as far as incentives to stay with the department once they receive this certification. They can take the training and get paid but can then leave. Joe indicated that in Hurricane, if they pay to put you through EMS school, they have to stay on and do six months to a year service. Barry stated this is the reason he voted against purchasing the turnouts because we discussed giving them new turnouts when they received their certification and now it is evident that is not going to be done. He doesn't feel we need to give incentives unless they are willing to stay on their own accord. They could complete the training and then go to work for Hurricane at double the pay.

Chief Barker responded that at the level of commitment someone has to have to sit through this training, they have to have an end game in their head already. Where they have already been on the department, he is assuming that they have every interest in continuing their employment here. Chief Barker stated there are some guys that work with us that have been trained by Hurricane and we are benefitting, so it works both ways.

Chair Plyler pointed out that, in a perfect world, if all 11 trainees received certification, Hurricane is not going to have positions for all of them and also whichever ones stay, now we have firefighters that are certified which is a big plus. Chief Barker pointed out that we have firefighters that are not taking the training because they have already become certified through Hurricane.

John Callahan moved the firefighters be paid for their training. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and all those present voted in favor of the motion excepting Luci who recused herself as her son is in the training.

**8. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – FIRE SERVICE**

- a. Report on fire activity since the last Board meeting – During the last month there were 25 calls for the department, six of which were fire. Two were motor vehicle accidents, two were false alarms and one was a porch fire. There have been 33 total fire incidents so far this year.
- b. Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the Fire service – There were no new applicants but we have lost two firefighters – Berlin and Jones.
- c. Training update – The class is going on schedule. There were a few problems with the extrication and hazmat portions but they have been resolved. There are extra requirements to complete the hazmat portion which will add another 48 hours to the training.
- d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – There were no requests other than what was covered previously.

**9. FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT** – There was a citizen's complaint relative to an ongoing fire code issue that, to the best of Marshal Barker's knowledge, has been resolved.

**10. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – AMBULANCE SERVICE** – Report was given by EMS Captain Vince Wood.

- a. Report on EMS activity since the last board meeting – Captain Wood reported there have been 19 calls, 13 of which were transports. In response to Chair Plyler's question as to how many calls there have been to date this year, there have been 96 medical incidents, 57 were

transports. Chief Barker offered that there have been nine calls this year that have overlapped with fire and EMS services, which was 6.98% of the total call volume. That would be where both services were needed and also where EMS was on a call and another call came in.

- b. Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the EMS service – Captain Wood presented an application from James Evans, Advanced EMT, who worked for us a few years ago. Barry Rhodes moved the application from James Evans be approved. Luci Francis seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
- c. Training update – During the last trainings, personal safety/equipment were reviewed and information reviewed relative to the Ebola virus.
- d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – Captain Wood felt we needed to look at the possibility of purchasing a second defibrillator. He presented a quote from DXE Medical who provided our current one. This would be a refurbished unit for \$7,850. The cost of a new one would start at approximately \$17,000. We have a service contract on our current one and it is a great thing to have, but the problem he sees is as soon as an issue is discovered, they ship a loaner and we have to transfer all the cords and cables to that loaner and ship ours back. If we had an issue where the unit was unusable, there would be no backup.

Chief Barker reported that as of September 30 there was roughly \$23,300 left in the budget.

Louise Excell moved the purchase of the monitor be authorized. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and all those present voted in favor of the motion.

11. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – Chair Plyler announced his formal statement that he will not be requesting to be re-appointed as the Springdale representative after the end of the year. Chuck Passek agreed to have Michael offer his name to the Springdale Mayor as his replacement.

The Chair requested if he and Captain Wood could compile a list of all budget expenditure items that we are required by State or Federal statute to incur. Examples were radios, the special needles for the EMS we purchased recently, the contract with Dr. Barnett, etc. In other words, things that are not discretionary.

There has been discussion relative to having a cloud backup for all the District's information. Luci Francis reported there is a Dixie State University accounting student who is in her second year and part of her requirements is to spend a number of hours on a community service project. She is particularly interested in non-profit organizations and wants to focus on that when she graduates.

As part of her project, she offered to make a proposal to the Fire District for various data base systems, one of which is Access. She has offered to enter all of our data into the data base and at the end of her time, we could choose to utilize it or not, depending on the District's determination relative to its usefulness.

Currently, our customer data base is entirely within QuickBooks. Access is an interface between the two systems. When we were trying to figure out how many homes were under 1,500 square feet – you ask the question and get the number. It is very powerful regarding the data that can be extracted.

It is Luci's opinion that it is a win-win situation as it gets this girl's homework done and it leaves the District with a proposal and a data base full of data that we can choose to use or not use. Access is far more secure than other typical cloud programs.

Access should be in our current version of Office 7. Her proposal would be the cost for the system and related costs to set up the security. It would also include the cost of the program, if we don't already have it. Chief Barker stated the District has a license for multiple computers and may be able to upgrade the one at the office from that license.

It was agreed that we will entertain a proposal to address at the next meeting.

12. **STANDBY FEE BILLING REPORT TO INCLUDE UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS** – As of the end of September, there was \$3,300.86 which was 120 days past due, a decrease of \$445.65. The Clerk also reported as of this date since the billing was sent, we have collected \$115,198.15 in Standby Fees. She has had quite a few phone calls, the majority of which were just clarifications. Those that were specific problems she has sent to Luci and Michael and she thinks they have all been satisfactorily taken care of. One note stated “Thank you for your quick response on 9/27 (there was apparently a flood from the rain storm) to assist with cleaning up in front of our property.”

13. **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 September, the accounts receivable was \$65,216.05, a decrease of \$5,662.66. Clerk Harris had requested of our billing agent a breakdown of the origin of the accounts receivable amount – Medicare, insurance and private pay. The report was provided with the understanding that these were expected revenues, but that doesn't mean the entire amounts will be received. Medicare (\$10,992.00) may have required write-offs, the same for private insurance (\$17,190.74). Private pay (\$37,033.31) isn't always collectible.

She presented a request for consideration of a write-off for an ambulance bill from a French tourist. Discussion took place regarding the fact that we have no avenue to collect charges out of the country. Louise Excell move to offer to write-off half of the bill to \$1,200 and allow four payments and interest free. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

- c. Approval of expenditures for September 2014 – Clerk Harris corrected the note that the BBQ propane was a double charge; it was actually two, separate charges. Louise Excell moved the expenditures for September be approved. Luci Francis seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

14. **GENERAL BOARD DISCUSSION** – Luci had previously distributed an email relative to the fact that we have an option with the Town of Springdale to access our web pages on their site so we can administer our own information. Up to this time, we have been relying on Rick Wixom to do this for us. Luci would be willing to take on this task. Luci felt it would be good if some time in the future the District was able to have its own web site. Louise suggested for the time being that a link be provided when the agendas are posted that will take them directly to our portion of Springdale's site. After discussion, it was decided the Chief's phone number will be removed from the site.

15. **IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR FUTURE AGENDAS** – There will need to be meetings relative to the 2015 budget. Luci has been meeting regularly with Chief Barker and by November there will be a Tentative Budget to be presented for approval.

It was clarified that November's meeting will be on the 19<sup>th</sup>, December 17 will be the Public Hearing for comments on the amended 2014 budget and the proposed 2015 budget (the amended 2014 can also be approved that night), December 30<sup>th</sup> will be a special meeting to approve the amended 2014 and final 2015 budgets, and the January meeting will be the fourth Wednesday. During the November meeting the meeting schedule for 2015 will need to be approved.

16. **ADJOURN** – Louise Excell moved the meeting be adjourned. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion. A roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes typed by:

Elaine M. Harris  
District Clerk

APPROVED:

Michael Plyler  
Michael Plyler, Chairman