

ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING
P.O. Box 159
Springdale, UT 84767
December 30, 2014
Rockville Community Center

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Acting Chair John Callahan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District Board present: Luci Francis, Chuck Passek and Louise Excell. District Clerk Elaine Harris recording.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Louise Excell moved the agenda be approved as presented. Luci Francis seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voting in favor of the motion.
3. **ACTION ON A RESOLUTION TO OPEN AND AMEND THE 2014 BUDGET OF THE ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT** – Luci Francis reviewed the changes that had been made since the approval of the Tentative Budget which were added expenditures for actual costs instead of estimated. Those changes resulted in a change in the projected amount to be appropriated to our fund balance. Louise Excell moved to adopt Resolution No. 14-1230-1, *A Resolution to Open and Amend the 2014 Budget of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District*. Chuck Passek seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

4. **ACTION ON A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE FINAL 2015 BUDGET FOR THE ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT** – Louise Excell asked regarding the ambulance collection costs under bad debt – was that actually bad debt or an administrative cost. Clerk Harris responded that it is actually our administrative costs towards collecting bad debt. Luci explained the attempt was to place expenses in the category where it made the most sense.

Chuck Passek asked for clarification that the \$9,000 indicated as bad debt is money that used to show up in the past as revenue for ambulance service. Clerk Harris responded it is projected what we will be having to write off in bad debt. It was not indicated as revenue because we don't carry any accounts receivable for ambulance revenues; that is kept by our billing agent. Chuck also asked when the loan for the ambulance will retire and Luci responded July of 2018.

Chuck Passek proposed the Board adopt Resolution No. 14-1230-2, *A Resolution to Approve the Final 2015 Budget of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District*. Louise Excell seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

5. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSAL FROM THE HURRICANE VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT** – Chair Callahan stated everyone has been discussing the pros and cons of having Hurricane Valley Fire District take over our operations, and from day one the position of the current Board members at the time this was proposed, plus the ones who have joined the Board since, has been that it would be a bad idea for Hurricane Valley to take over our operation.

Since moving to Springdale, Chuck Passek has been attending the District's meeting and has been interested in this topic since hearing the comments during the Standby Fee hearings as to whether the service can be done differently and be more efficient. The categories Chuck has researched are:

- As a resident of Springdale, he feels it takes away the local control of what the Board has and what services are offered in Rockville and Springdale. At this time, the towns have input into the board membership because two of the members are appointed by these

municipalities. Two of the five members are directly representing their respective towns. The residents can have input into the mayors and they, in turn, have input into the board. The other three members are elected by the voters of the District. We have a small community that has maybe the most input into any governing body that exists in this area. We are really representative of the people and then people can tell the board what they want to have happen.

Presently, the City of Hurricane is considering joining into the Hurricane Valley District. The Hurricane Valley District is made up of a five-member board and the members are appointed; they are all the mayors of the cities. There is no direct citizen input. If we were to join that, it is unknown whether we would have one of our mayors, or both on the board. The local control of the board of these services we all rely on will go from 100% input to possibly, at best, 20% input. Hurricane, Virgin, Toquerville and LaVerkin will have more say over what happens in the District. The citizens and towns will lose control over what happens and we may find ourselves absorbing costs, service changes or direction that we may not want because we are now a part of a bigger pool.

This seems to be an irreversible thing; once we dissolve and join them and surrender all our assets, we go away. If, at some point in time, the local citizenry wanted to re-establish, it will be fairly impossible to do. This step is not good for local representation of what happens and it is a fairly hard step take away once it happens.

- There will be a reduced level of services. Chuck has seen the department go from, when he lived here before, strictly volunteer where there was no one at the station to the present when we are staffing 24/hr. Paramedics and 24/hr. firefighters. He sees that as a really good thing. Our past and present Chief's informed opinion is that is something that we need to have. Springdale no longer has the volunteer base that can be paged and have the result be ten people show up in five minutes to respond to the incident. If we don't have people stationed at the firehouse, then we have to consider the possibility that we will have to wait for someone to come from Hurricane, LaVerkin, etc. From Chuck's experience with emergency services, if people don't arrive within five minutes or so, you have issues; you can't wait 30 minutes for a fire truck or Paramedics.

The staffing scheme for Hurricane works for them and the valley they serve with two firefighter/Paramedic cross-trained people. They can do either fire or medical, but only one thing at a time. Granted, we have a low level of call volume, but if they were to revert to that level of staffing for our area, when the ambulance is on a call (which is 80% of our calls) they can be gone for approximately three hours and during that time there is nobody here. If there were to be a structural fire call at the same time, cross-trained people will have to make a decision as they can't do both.

To run a code on a cardiac patient, the logistics of adequately taking care of the situation requires more than two people. There can be up to five people needed in order to be efficient. If there were to be a traffic accident with a gas leak, you need fire personnel to perform and protect the Paramedics in order for them to address the patient(s). There is also the possibility for a need for extrication. The intermediate level of medicals is something two people can deal with; the more advanced things require more. Even though the firefighters may not be EMS trained, they are gophers, crowd/traffic control, assistants with moving the patient, etc.

In Chuck's mind, he can justify the level of staffing we presently have. Two people works for Hurricane because when they have a fire they have other stations they can call on for assistance and a volunteer base in their communities to obtain assistance in five minutes.

If we go with Hurricane Valley we lose local control, we get a staffing scheme that doesn't work and, if they were to staff it the same as us then it would possibly cost them more than it costs us when you take into consideration what they pay, even taking into consideration they are cross-trained. They pay their cross-trained people \$15.45/hr. which is almost what we pay for a Paramedic and firefighter. If they were to staff four people to be able to respond to dual incidents, it would be far more than our staffing of four at our rate of pay.

Chuck sees no efficiencies in the proposal; he sees a lot of down sides. He feels we have done our due diligence, we have looked at the ramifications of doing this, and his personal opinion is that it is something we no longer need to look at. It isn't going to be better for us and it isn't going to be better for the community.

Chair Callahan stated that he and Luci Brantley came on the Board at about the same time and they have been watching this process progress/regress and it is something that we have fought against. He feels the Board is in a better position than anyone, no matter who they are, to run our District as efficiently and as economically feasible as possible. He feels the argument is moot; we by far can do a better job than anybody else.

Luci stated that in going through the minutes from a year ago when it was first proposed that the Board should maybe pursue this, in terms of value, Michael Plyler and other members of the Board have stressed the fact that, as a board, they never wanted to pursue it because it never seemed feasible. The only way they can shave costs was if they provided us with less services and they had never, in the initial discussion, agreed to shave costs; they had agreed to utilizing our proposed budget. There was the question of what would happen with the other funds. When you look at value, there really is no guarantee that, even if they could lower the costs, that the citizens would get a reduction in fees or taxes. In speaking with Dean Cox back in August at the Washington County Commissioner's Office, he stated if Hurricane Valley incorporated Rockville/Springdale, they would not need to have an election to levy taxes on Rockville and Springdale. The citizens here could find themselves taxed, and having a larger population base from which to draw revenues does not necessarily lead to a lowering of fees and taxes. There are many other considerations as far as the dissolution of the District. You cannot have any outstanding loans or contracts, which we do have. Our contract for ambulance services through the Town of Springdale would have to be renegotiated and the Town of Springdale is not obligated to offer any TRT monies to Hurricane Valley for their ambulance, so there could be a potential loss of revenue of \$114,000 which now Hurricane Valley would have to make up by taxing us. There are a lot of unknowns, a lot of questions, and it sounds like a lot of risk. The Board feels we have taken a new direction with the hiring of a chief and we have gone ahead and raised standby fees. Since she has been on the Board and reviewed everything that has been said and looking at public comment, the majority of comments that she has seen in letters of support from Cindy Purcell at ZNP and talking to people, the majority of the people have expressed the desire to keep our local district, to keep local control and to maintain the level of service people have come to expect.

Chuck added that you do hear a lot of "the visitors are an expense for the District" and the TRT is the one way that the visitors pay for that. Otherwise, everything else is strictly from the residents and nothing from the visitors. If that went away, the concern is that then there would not be any cost to the visitors for these services, it would all be borne by the local residents and businesses.

As Chuck did, Louise came late to the Board. Much of this discussion began as a Board prior to her being a member. She had to go back and review the minutes to see what had been discussed in the past and try to gather from the discussions what their initial feelings were. She read the initial proposal from Hurricane Valley which, in a rough form, outlined what they could do and what they could do it for. She concurred; she felt we have the best possible district we could have and is optimistic that going forward, especially with what has been happening with training and the support from both the communities, there is a pretty good looking future for the District.

Luci stated it is not to say the Board may not find ways in reducing fees in the future; we just don't know. A new chief may be able to recruit volunteers, we may end up with a combination volunteer/part-time/full-time firefighter staff. We don't know what kind of ideas someone that is working full time for us may bring with the experience they come with. She is also optimistic that our district has the resources and means to find our own ways of reaching our own economies and our own efficiencies and whether it is by continuing to negotiate with Springdale, which they seem to be willing to do; they are receptive. The fact that they did give us \$60,000 in a donation this year points to that we may be able to continue to negotiate with them and working with them and the Park as partners. We don't need to dissolve and have someone else that is not familiar with our community and the resources that are here.

John asked the public if they had any comments and Mike Alltucker from Springdale stated that he is a supporter of local control and he does not know if the decision the Board is considering making is a good one or not, but he does know that back in August the current board pledged to the community, and there was a large crowd, that they would explore other paradigms of delivery, Hurricane as an example, through a public process; getting public input into that process. As far as he can tell, that has not happened and is a concern. He would ask the Board table whatever action they would take, and involve some public comment. He felt the Board had support, but without that comment ability, it is cloaked in darkness and some light needs to be shed on what the Board is doing. No one knows what the proposal is.

Luci stated what had initially been discussed back in January of 2014, at a meeting that took place with Chief Kuhlman from Hurricane, their Board Chair Bruce Densley, Bob Orton, then Interim Chief Joe Barker and Clerk Harris. The proposal as indicated in the minutes of the February 19, 2014 meeting which followed the initial proposal, was that they had proposed, as stated by Tom Kuhlman, they could take over our service for the budget we have for 2014 which would include the increase in the Standby Fee, they would provide two cross-trained personnel to be on call at the firehouse, they planned on utilizing our total budget for income purposes. What happens to the revenues if there are no expenditures? In other words, Hurricane Valley could do it under our current budget, but they would be saving \$100,000/yr., plus there would be the elimination of our chief, the captains and the clerk. If they plan on utilizing our total budget, what happens to all that money if the expenses are cut? Chief Barker suggested it would most likely go into their general fund for utilization as seen fit for their district. Many comments were made as to why the proposal wasn't good. We don't have the volunteer pool available locally to fill in. Every chief and interim chief that has ever been here as well as firefighters have given their opinion that there needs to be at least four persons on call. At that time, the Board was in agreement that they did not want Mr. Kuhlman to prepare a presentation. It came up again in July when the Standby Fee increase was being discussed – is there a way to do it cheaper. Chair Plyler stated the District is not going to dissolve itself; the citizens would have to petition the County. We never pursued anything in writing because their initial offer was not very attractive. In August it was again reviewed and that is when Luci obtained information from the Washington County Commission Office what it would take to dissolve the District, whether it was even possible. The County frowns on the dissolution of

a viable, functioning district. If it is working, they don't like to interfere. If it's not functioning, then they can step in and dissolve. Ours is functioning.

Chair Plyler then wrote a letter to Chief Kuhlman indicating the Board was interested in pursuing a formal proposal comparing apples to apples; what would it cost Hurricane Valley Special District to give us what we want, which is four staff at the station 24/7. Two months later, at the end of November, the Board received a letter back from Hurricane Valley and they didn't give us the numbers requested. They basically stated that what they would need to do was do a three-month long, potentially costly study. At that point, the Board questioned whether they really wanted to go forward. The problem with apples to apples is they are not going to give us the apples we want. Once they take over, their current model, which they have stated several times, is that they would run this station with two, cross-trained personnel. That was what made Luci feel this is not worth pursuing a proposal that is going to be so costly and time consuming for something the Board never wanted in the first place or what the citizens said they wanted.

Louise stated Hurricane estimated the cost of the study could be from \$30,000 to \$50,000 for them to tell us what they could do for us and they did not indicate they would pay for it. Mike Alltucker questioned why we would pay them to give us a proposal. Chuck felt it was because it was our request.

Chuck made some comparison:

- We are paying our Paramedics \$10/hr. and our firefighters \$7.50/hr. Hurricane Valley is paying their Paramedic/firefighters \$15.45/hr. Four of their people at \$15.45/hr. is definitely going to cost more than our costs. He can't see for an apples to apples comparison that they could run the department less expensive than we do. The only way is to staff us less and then be able to broaden their tax base to include us in order to finance their larger things.
- The economy of scale is for Hurricane, LaVerkin, where they are close to each other, where they can share fire stations, where they can share equipment, where personnel can respond to each other. For us, he sees no economies of scale. You don't get a cheaper price every ten years when you buy SCBAs by buying 15 instead of 10. You don't save buying five cases of cleaning gauze vs. buying one case. Chuck sees no reason, with so many uncertainties, to do a three-month study that costs money in order to come up with a number that he knows will be more expensive, or it is going to be less expensive because they will be providing us with less service. The level of service we are providing is appropriate for Springdale and the department is currently doing it at the most economical way they can. The fact that we could staff a firefighter and paramedic at the same for maybe \$2/hr. more than they staff one shows that we are being fairly efficient.

Mr. Alltucker didn't feel that having a notification of a decision was the problem. The problem was nobody knows what the proposal is. He came away from the August meeting understanding the Board would explore other delivery options and if this is exploring other options, it just needs to be clear so everyone knows the reasons. There needs to be more light shown on the issue. The proposal, as such, has never been put out to the public.

Adrian Player from Springdale stated that what the Board is doing this evening is not transparent and if he were a voting board member, he would say what he is going to say. The Board is not letting the citizens of the towns of Springdale and Rockville weigh in because they have no clue what they Hurricane Valley Fire District is going to submit, and the Board is in a hurry to hire a fire chief and Chuck is saying he can't imagine how they can provide a cheaper service. First of all,

they won't be paying \$80,000, or \$75,000, or \$65,000, whatever it is, for a fire chief. The Board is trying to hire a fire chief and bring them on board to the detriment of whoever you are going to bring aboard if your district disappears, and if it has to be brought before a public vote, because you decide tonight on an agenda item that went out originally as just a discussion and then magically changed to a discussion and action item. That is why there is no public present. You are not being transparent. Your theory is faulty. You said "I feel" – every one of you want this Board to continue and you want to hire a fire chief but you're not willing to wait for the Hurricane Valley Fire District to come in with their offer. It is not costing you anything; it is not going to cost you \$30,000 or \$50,000. It is not going to cost a thing except that you are going to be without a fire chief for however long it takes them to come forward. You, as a board, agreed when you raised the Standby Fees that you would look at it and you are not looking at it. You are making arguments that are unfounded and they are personal biased arguments for arguments based on what was submitted before. So, Adrian would like the Board to be professional and as a citizen he is not seeing transparency and the original agenda that went out was for discussion and now it is an action item, so the Board has every right to vote. As a citizen, he feels they shouldn't do it; it is wrong. The people are expecting the Board to listen to what offer comes as they said they would do.

Judith Schraut from Springdale agreed with Adrian regarding transparency. It would be nice to be able to see the proposal from Hurricane and she has always wanted to see a report of how many calls we go on and who they are to each year, which has never been made public. Louise Excell stated we have that report given at every meeting. Judith stated it has never been given in the meetings she has attended. Louise stated they wouldn't be given in a public hearing, but they are at every regular monthly meeting and they are a part of the minutes. Judith felt it would be beneficial to have information as to how many ambulance calls are tourist and how many local.

Discussion took place regarding the fact that Judith felt the fees being paid by the residents were disproportionate to those being paid by the businesses for the tourists. Luci reported that the businesses were paying the heaviest burden with approximately 70% of the Standby Fees.

The possibility of posting some of the ambulance call information on the District's section of Springdale's website will be researched.

Judith referenced the fact that Hurricane works with the other municipalities in their area and asked why we weren't working in conjunction with Zion National Park. Louise responded that we do have an interlocal agreement with the Park for fire, but they have an obligation first to the Park and they would only respond secondarily. Relative to ambulance service, Chuck Passek added that the Park's staffing is such that they do not have staff scheduled for emergency services. Their staff are rangers and respond as needed and available. For EMS, the Park service standard is the National Registry, which is good on Federal lands, but once they come out of their boundary and are basically in the State of Utah, the State of Utah does not recognize their ability to treat at that level and they are not certified as Paramedics with the State of Utah. Therefore, they cannot legally treat patients outside of the Park.

In the absence of an itemized proposal from Hurricane Valley Fire Special District, Chuck Passek presented some costs he developed as to the minimum staffing Hurricane Valley could provide:

Hurricane Valley pays their firefighter/Paramedics \$15.45/hr. so without benefits for one Paramedic/firefighter 24/7 is \$135,000. They staff a full-time firefighter/Paramedic and a part-time so throw in some benefits for the full-time person – 14 – 12/hr. shifts/wk. – They would have to cover seven shifts a week. They would need, theoretically, to bring on three more permanent

firefighter/Paramedics to staff Springdale, adding \$13,000/yr. for benefits for retirement and health insurance for those full-time personnel. So, for one full-time Paramedic/firefighter and one part-time Paramedic/firefighter 24/7 365 days/yr. would cost them about \$311,000. That is for two people. That doesn't take into any account for possible overtime.

The Rockville/Springdale District for one Paramedic was \$184,000/yr., one firefighter was \$73,000/yr. with two Paramedics and two firefighters per shift. That equals \$312,000/yr. Chief salary and benefits - \$69,600/yr. Part-time clerk - \$18,000. Roughly the personnel costs for the current 2015 budget is \$402,000. What is costs Hurricane Valley for minimum staffing is roughly \$90,000 less/yr. for half the staffing. This assumes that they would not charge for any overhead costs associated with management or administration.

If they staff two of their full-time firefighter/Paramedics here and then they find firefighters and pay them the same rate we do, which may or may not be practical, if you add that one firefighter at \$72,000/yr. now the difference is less than \$20,000 from what we are offering. Then it comes down to local control and staffing. We have a fire chief that resides here and not in Hurricane. If there is a concern about the operation of the fire district and need information, you don't have to go down to Hurricane to see the Chief, you can stop at the station here. You know who the Chief is, you see him every day. If they were to staff it the same with two firefighters, that makes it \$144,000 extra. Now it costs them more money. Now it is costing them \$50,000/yr. more to run the Springdale department than we do with a Chief, with a clerk.

With an apples to apples comparison, why would they do this; why would we want them to do it? There are going to charge us \$50,000/yr. more to provide the same service that we are providing now and we don't have the local control. Personnel is where the economy to scale comes in; where else do we save? We can't get rid of the fire station, we can't combine this station here with the station in Hurricane so they can't close this down and save the costs of maintaining it; they still need to outfit all the volunteers that we have here, if we have any, so all the SCBAs, turnouts, etc. expenses are still the same; there is no savings in that unless we aren't going have them and rely on everybody else besides who is on call at the station to come out of LaVerkin or Hurricane.

The economy to scale and the staffing method they use makes complete sense in an area like they currently have.

Louise stated that we would have to find out if Springdale is willing to continue to give \$114,000 of the TRT tax to Hurricane. And if that doesn't happen, Louise doesn't think Hurricane can be cheaper.

Chuck stated that even with the lower staffing at that level, it costs them more if they lose \$114,000. Chuck had basically looked at "boots on the ground" and what it is going to cost to do this.

Adrian Player stated the Town of Springdale has no right to not give us the TRT tax because we are under a contract, so that is irrelevant as an argument. We are under a contract. When the contract expires, it may be renegotiated, so that is irrelevant. The Town of Springdale can't stop giving the District, no matter who runs it, the money. The Board's analysis of dollars sounds like it makes sense but you haven't received the input from the Hurricane Valley Fire District as to what they are willing to absorb because they have a lot of money and a lot of employees and a lot of people.

Adrian stated that all he was doing, as a citizen, is saying he had an agenda given to him on Monday that didn't consider what is being discussed tonight as an action item and then saw the amended agenda including the action item within the 24/hr. noticing time, but that is not transparent to the

citizens, and if he were sitting there (referencing at the table with the board), he would be saying the same thing.

Chair Callahan reminded Adrian that this was the third time we have heard this. Adrian encouraged the Board not to vote in favor of ignoring the Hurricane Valley Fire District submission, whenever it comes forward, because they said as a board that they would consider their submission; they have no idea what their submission is and so, he is saying, as a citizen, please don't vote in favor of ignoring it because that is where he thinks the Board is wrong.

Louise asked Luci, for clarification, that in order for Springdale to renegotiate contracts with the Hurricane Valley Service District, we would have to dissolve this district. Luci replied she believed that was correct by what she learned from Dean Cox. Louise stated that in that case, there is no \$114,000 coming to the RSFPD, because it ceases to exist. Luci responded that Springdale would have to renegotiate with the new district (HVFSSD).

Chair Callahan asked the Board what their thoughts were as far as tabling this issue so that we can in essence do what both of us are saying – we need to do apples to apples. If it is to be apples to apples, we need to meet with Hurricane's Fire Board looking together at apples to apples to discuss the pros and cons.

Louise referenced the letter that was received from Hurricane in November which essentially roughly outlined what they could do for us and what it would cost. A detailed proposal was three months in the making and would be very expensive, if she remembers correctly. The rough outline of the service they could provide and the costs were enough to stop her at that point. She has enough information to say that this is not a viable way for this district run.

The Clerk reminded those in attendance that the TRT money is specific to the ambulance; it isn't to the Fire District.

Chair Callahan believes that the Board agrees that we do not want to be dissolved. Louise clarified that it is not the Board that we don't want dissolved, it is the District. Chair Callahan stated that we have created a crossroad that we are going to have to deal with.

Louise felt that being the case, we never should have pursued hiring a Chief; that was premature. We have no guarantees that job will last more than the three months it takes Hurricane to come up with a proposal that the citizens choose to take. Luci stated that all we are saying, speaking for herself, as a board is it has never been our intent to dissolve and the only reason we even thought about pursuing a proposal was to appease a few people that had complained about the increase in Standby Fees. It was never our intent to dissolve.

Discussion concerning the position we are in with two applicants being considered for the Fire Chief position.

Luci wondered if it would be beneficial to have another informal meeting where we sat down with the two District chairmen and put it on the table again because unless the Board has an intent to dissolve, unless we feel that is the direction we want to go, she doesn't want to go through the process of a three-month analysis and the costs. Luci wasn't sure their original proposal would be any different this year.

Chuck agreed. There was a statement by the then Chair that we would revisit the Hurricane idea with an apples to apples comparison. Our feeling was that they could not staff at our level less

expensively or more efficiently than how we do. Chuck does not believe they will come back with numbers that are less. His suggestion was to use the approach that we aren't asking for an entire survey; we aren't asking you to survey the citizens of Springdale, the business owners, etc. What we are looking at is to have a cost. The concern is not that we're providing inept service. He believes the people are satisfied with the service that is being provided; the question people have is can they get what they're getting now for less money. There is a thought process out there that this is some economy of scale that would make things cheaper.

Chuck would suggest that we don't want Hurricane to evaluate how they would staff Springdale; we want to know what would it cost them to staff at what we are staffing. We want to be able to respond to a fire and EMS incident at the same time, we want the ability to respond to any type of incident that requires both of those skill levels and what it would cost to do that. They could come back and say they can't tell us that because we haven't done an estimation, but that is something they should be able to tell us straight off. If they say the staffing level they have utilized there for years and years is this and that is what we are going to do up here, then the question is not cost, the question is services. We should contact the chief indicating we have received your letter indicating you are wanting this in-depth survey, but what we want is sort of a shorter answer from you to see whether we should go forward with this in-depth survey. The driving question is: Can Hurricane provide the same service that the RSFD provides for less. We are doing this to answer a question of the public; not because we feel it would ever be a good idea or beneficial to the communities.

John wasn't sure that would satisfy the business people of Springdale. If we sit down with Fire Chief A and Fire Chief B, the boards and the powers to be and say "OK, we want to know specifically if John Doe, the motel keeper, is going to be satisfied with those figures when we bring back what Hurricane said."

Chuck stated personnel costs are the driving factor with the budget. Once you do that number, it really tells you where you are at. If it turns out they come back and say we will staff at the exact same personnel costs but we can save some money because we can buy EMS supplies at bulk rates or some other savings, then that answers the question. It is for the Board to decide where that cost benefit is if we were to accept the reduced staffing and all the loss of local control, etc. It costs Chuck, with a 2,000 sq. ft. house, 15 cents a day to have local control, more staffing, a Fire Chief he can have contact with and his decision, based on his personal situation, would be yes, that's a good deal, money well spent.

Once we sit down with them, their figures may be different than the ones Chuck prepared. We would just like them to tell us how much it is going to cost if they were to run the District; what would be their staffing version up here. If they were to staff the station with four people, 24/7, what would it cost?

Louise stated that in the process of dismantling the RSFPD, all of the standby fees and all of the property tax assessment goes away too, and it starts all over again with a new process with a new district, right? Luci responded that is the way we understand it. In the meantime, what happens and how long does it take and how do we know that the new property tax assessment or standby fee are going to be less? We don't. It would be difficult for them to even project that in a proposal. They would be levying a tax on the citizens that the citizens would have no recourse against. There would be no election or discussion.

Louise felt the downsides hugely outweigh the upsides of even entertaining a serious proposal from the Hurricane Valley Fire District. She received the impression that someone who spoke from the

audience thought that there might be other things that we could pursue for cost saving, and she was not sure what those are.

Luci had a concern that even if Hurricane came back and gave us a comparison of what it would cost with four full-time staff, if we decided to dissolve and Hurricane took over, there is no obligation to provide those services. Once they take over, it will be up to them to determine how to man the station. They could say they want our budget and we will give you your four people, this is what it is going to cost, but then they get in and they decide they really don't want to do that because they don't think the call volume justifies it. That is what they said before relative to the call volume. It works in Hurricane because they have a huge pool of volunteers to draw from a huge population in the Hurricane Valley. We can't do that.

John stated that from a legal standpoint, he thinks their talk of dissolving our district is totally out of whack. We are not going to dissolve ourselves, the citizenry of these two towns won't let us. It takes them to make that determination; they have to start it, and they are not going to let that happen. In the meantime, we're stuck with trying to get figures to justify to them who could give us the best service for the cheapest price. We need to compare apples to apples; we need to sit down with them and say "what will you give us this four-hour span for?" JOHN: I AM UNSURE WHAT YOU MEANT BY THIS STATEMENT.

Louise would support tabling the action to something else, and would also, if somebody were to make a motion to the contrary, that is to not entertain the dissolution of the District at this time and continue as we are, she would second it.

Judith Schraut stated she would listen to a sales pitch from the Hurricane Fire Chief and hear what he has to offer with our questions and see if it was better for us if they are more efficient in the long run. She would be open to hearing that.

In response to Chuck's question to Judith that it is a dollars and cents thing; it is not a local control issue, Judith responded, not really. It is a dollars and cents and she believes we live in a pretty remote place and should expect to not get to the hospital in time enough to save a stroke patient – that damage is done in the amount of time it takes to get from Springdale to the hospital. If we feel we have to get service that fast, we should move to a town where there is a hospital, in her opinion. We choose to live here and have a reason for living in a remote place and take those risks rather than living in a city.

Luci suggested we could ask for another informal proposal, but, in her opinion, she feels like as a board we have met our obligations as far as what then-Chairman Plyler stated we would do. We have done a lot of researching minutes, speaking with people, and running numbers. For us, it is a qualitative thing. When you consider value, yes, there is value to the citizens, there is a bottom line, and there is definitely a point where it would cost too much money. When she thinks about value, she, as a board member, needs to consider the quality – the kind of service that we have been getting, the kind of service the majority of the people say that they want. She has listened hard to what the firefighting professionals have said to the Board again and again over the years about this community and what it takes to provide the kind of response we are getting. To her, it is about a lot more than just dollars and cents, it is about life, and we're in a different kind of business and it is up to us to look at more than just the dollars and cents. That is what we are doing, and if even if Hurricane came back and said "We could do it for this much money, and no, we won't raise your taxes, and it's going to cost this much", she doesn't know where she would stand. She thinks she would still feel the same way she does right now as far as the quality, because she is convinced we need to have the staff on call that we have and we have come a long way as a board to get 24/7

firefighter coverage. That has been asked for by chiefs in the past – to provide that kind of coverage. She doesn't want to lose that. She is not willing to go through a three-month proposal at a cost of however many thousands of dollars it is, when it isn't even our intent to do this in the first place. At the most she would be willing to do as a board member is to make a phone call, potentially have a meeting with these staff personnel and get another informal proposal based on the current position. She doesn't want to carry this on; she believes we have gone down a different road already and it is a good road. From her point of view from what she has heard and knows so far, it is the course of action that she thinks serves the public the best in the interest of safety.

Chuck agreed with Luci. The Board at the time made a statement that we were getting apples to apples and even though we have asked Hurricane for apples to apples, that is not what they gave back to us. He agrees that we ask them again informing them that what we want is an apples to apples proposal, we want the same staffing. They may come back and tell us that they don't know what the answer is, they don't know what they can give us because they have to do this study. We aren't asking them for a study, we aren't asking them to evaluate the level of care for Springdale or Rockville should be, we're asking can they provide the current level of care at what price. We ask them, not formally, but we tell them that what we want is just a number. We aren't a mystery to them. What would they staff us with and how much would it cost and leave out all the other stuff – capital equipment, etc. These are things to be decided down the road.

Get that number and then come back and announce a meeting again, have a discussion, and possibly a decision and the public will have a better idea and they can come and comment if they want. Worse case is we get nothing back from them. If so, we've done our due diligence. We tried to answer the questions we said we would. We can't do it so we come up with some figures on our own and make a decision based on that. He agrees and doesn't see a need for us to, at this point in time, have a proposal as in depth as what they're asking. We just want to see if this is a feasible thing; we just want to be able to tell our subscribers what the possibility could be and then decide whether we want to proceed or not from that point. If it turns out that Hurricane says well we're not going to give you anything until we do this special survey that we outlined for you, then it is for the Board to decide whether is reasonable to wait or not or how much confidence do we have in the numbers that we can come up with.

John felt at that point, we are going to have to have another public hearing. Chuck added that this meeting would be with more notice and we will take whatever public comment we receive and go from there.

Louise Excell moved the item be tabled and we get the figures, once again. Ask them for new figures, or to confirm the figures they have already given us, and put it on the agenda for the next meeting or, if you prefer, a special meeting just for that. Chuck Passek seconded the motion.

Luci thought that we could make a call, get an update on the services we are asking for, not what they would think that we need, but ask them for the same level of service. Luci didn't feel we need a special meeting. January 21 is plenty of time to have an agenda out there that says that we will be taking action as a Board on whether or not we will want to pursue this. We would not need a public hearing, just allow for public comment.

Luci will call Bruce Densley and Tom Kuhlman and request that they basically answer the letter that Michael Plyler had originally written to them in September. If he asked what it would cost to do this, she can tell them that is what the Board would like to see; we just want to know if it is feasible. Chuck added that we would ask them if our current staffing two people that can respond to an EMS

incident with two Paramedics and to respond to a fire incident with two firefighters or we could respond to a complex incident that requires both. How would they want to staff that. They can only have firefighter/Paramedics or they can do as we do, have Paramedics and firefighters. We want to know what their staffing would be and their pay rate is.

All those present voted in favor of the motion.

6. **CLOSED MEETING FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE CHARACTER, PROFESSIONAL COMPENTENCE, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL** – Luci Francis moved the Board close the meeting. Chuck Passek seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion. Closed meeting commenced at 8:15 pm.

Members Present: Acting Chair John Callahan, Board Members Luci Francis and Chuck Passek, Adrian Player, as the appointed, but not yet sworn in, member of the Board from Springdale.

Upon a motion by Luci Francis to go back into open meeting and a second by Chuck Passek with an affirmative vote of all those present from the Board, the Board went back into open meeting at 9:35 p.m.

7. **ANY ACTION REQUIRED BY THE CLOSED MEETING DISCUSSION** – There was no action required.
8. **ADJOURN** – Luci Francis moved the meeting be adjourned. Chuck Passek seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Minutes typed by:

Elaine M. Harris
District Clerk

APPROVED:

Luci Francis
Chair

I hereby certify that at the above referenced closed session only items relevant to the agenda item were discussed.

Luci Francis
Chair