

## Albany County Fire District #1 Board Meeting Minutes June 21, 2023

This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance as well as through Zoom. (Formal action taken by the Board is indicated via italics.)

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. Board members present were Luke Hawkins, Matt Burkhardt and Brett Wadsworth. Amendment to the agenda remove 7a image trend update from State Fire Marshalls office. Added action item – county road language proposal by Planning Division to be discussed and voted on. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve the agenda amendments. Motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth and approved unanimously.*
2. Minutes from the 5/17/2023 Board Meeting: *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhardt and approved unanimously.*
3. Comments from the public: None
4. Report – Outside Agencies:
  - a. LFD – No report.
  - b. EMA – Kate is waiting to hear back from Bearcom on the radios and waiting on ARPA funds for the portables. Please get her a radio list. Upcoming trainings – Storm Spotter, Evac and Re-Entry is not virtual.
  - c. LARC – No report.
  - d. County Fire Warden – Slowest start to fire season since he has been involved in fire.
  - e. District Coordinator – Peer support team meet and greet, SWOT Analysis, working with Tracy Fletcher on unmitigated impact funds/mil levy funding and looking at different funding options. Looking at policies.
  - f. Training Coordinator – There was an ATV training with the Forest Service and CDL training with State Fire Marshalls office, as well as the Marshall Fire case study. Thank you to Logan Barnes for hosting the case study. The training center is open the first weekend of every month and dedicated to volunteer departments. Peer support team meet and greet.
  - g. Wildland Coordinator – Slow season, AZ and NM are starting to dry out. Working with Jeremy, FS FMO on the Pole Mountain prescribed burn, they are still planning on it, just need warm weather and right winds to drop fire on the ground.
  - h. Peer Support Team – Discussed goals for the program.
5. Financial Report:
  - a. Bills to be paid – *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve the June Financial Report as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhardt and approved unanimously.*
  - b. PA Approvals –
    - i. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve BLVFD's request for two Minitor VI pagers in the amount of \$890, 100% dept funds (PA403). Motion was*

*seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth and approved unanimously. Secretary Burkhart abstained.*

- ii. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve VVFD's request of \$8000 for Vedauwoo sign, 100% dept funds. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart for purposes of discussion. Discussion – VVFD was quoted between \$5000 and \$25000 to replace the sign along the I-80. It would be bigger than the current sign and lighted, so they would run electricity from a pole and that is included in the cost. Confirm it's on District property. Call for vote – Chairman Hawkins in favor, Secretary Burkhart opposed, Treasurer Wadsworth abstained. Motion fails.*
- iii. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve VVFD's request for a topper for VV6 in the amount of \$2500, 100% dept funds (PA404). Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart and approved unanimously. Treasurer Wadsworth abstained.*
- iv. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve VVFD's request for wildland PPE in the amount of \$4400, 100% dept funds (PA405). Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart and approved unanimously. Treasurer Wadsworth abstained.*

6. Action Items:

- a. FY 2024 Budget Draft following discussion under Board Topics.
- b. WYCO Type 6 – WYCO 9 is a 1998 Ford, 6x, standard transmission, has older radio, is WyoLink compatible, would come with fire package, new diesel pump, hose reel. It is a District apparatus purchased with District funds. Could be a spare engine for the District. Has been completely serviced in 2021 after Mullen, has new tires as of April 2019 with about 2000 miles on them. Could house it at Central North. Would cost \$87.79/year to insure. Probably valued at around \$15,000. Treasurer Wadsworth does not want it, he does not want to bring on another truck. This engine could help on the north end of the county. Requested a month to put together a proposal and bring back to the board. Treasurer Wadsworth agreed to a month to put together justification. *Chairman Hawkins moved to push out one month and revisit after written proposal. Motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth and approved unanimously.*
- c. Checking account for coordinators – Treasurer Wadsworth suggested delaying this topic until and contingent upon budget draft vote under Board Topics.
- d. Windmill impact funds account – Would like to keep these funds separate from other revenues and open a second account to keep everything clean and isolated. *Treasurer Wadsworth moved to open another account at ANB to hold all future impact funds. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion – Secretary Burkhart questioned why ANB Bank and not another bank. Treasurer Wadsworth responded that we had most accounts at First Interstate Bank but they were not paying interest on any accounts. ANB Bank would pay interest on accounts, its cleaner and one stop shopping. Secretary Burkhart asked how do we know First Interstate Bank is not paying interest now? Treasurer Wadsworth is willing to shop around, however he doesn't want everything to be spread all over.*

*Do we also need to move individual departments accounts to spread to other banks around town? Having all in one place just makes doing business easier. Chairman Hawkins and Treasurer Wadsworth in favor of the motion, Secretary Burkhart is opposed. Motion passes to open an account for the windmill impact funds.*

- e. District Coordinators to follow District PA and Expenditure Policy – Allow board and potentially coordinators to spend if they get a budget and would follow district spending policies. *Treasurer Wadsworth moved to approve that coordinators can spend according to district expenditure policies if they receive a budget. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion from Secretary Burkhart that this would be applicable if they receive a budget. Motion was approved unanimously.*
- f. Hotel expenditure for Peer Support Trainers – *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve that Administrative Assistant Turner make hotel reservations for Peer Support Trainers using the District credit card. Motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. Discussion – How do we handle the reimbursements? We need to submit invoices to the County for reimbursement. Try to get the GSA rate. Motion was approved unanimously.*
- g. District/Department Credit Cards – Handy and make transactions easy. Loss of control over cards. Some departments have acquired district cards that the treasurer cannot see. Need to pull those back and reissue new ones and draft a policy addressing the credit card issue. Credit cards are critical for fire dispatching. Board needs to know the minimum number of credit cards and the credit limits needed. Ask departments to look at non-essential credit cards and turn those into Treasurer Wadsworth. *Treasurer Wadsworth moves that over the next several months treasurer’s engage with First Interstate Bank credit cards to determine the number needed that is sufficient to do business based on department feedback; provide our financial information to First Interstate Bank for them to approve final credit limit and result in some number of credit cards to allow the district to continue to function as we always have but with better oversight and control over cards associated with district accounts. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion – Define unnecessary – if you have three or more that is probably unnecessary and there is one you could return. Need/necessity evidenced by dispatching or needing to fix trucks without another way to pay the bill. One card could be for dispatching and current policy states one department cannot dispatch two engines at the same time. What about single resources? Maybe, if they are using a department issued vehicle that is bringing money back into the district. How many departments need three cards: CVVFD, Central. Motion was approved unanimously. Need numbers and limits by the next meeting.*
- h. County Road Language – Amended agenda item regarding road construction in county sub-divisions and having two separate points of access to public streets. Attorney Goetz is working on an amendment to redraft a section. From preliminary to final the intent is roads shall be completed prior to subdivision lot

sales, how is that enforced? County commissioners will vote at July meeting. *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve subject to the amendments requested by our legal to county planner. Motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. Discussion – Where did the 20-lot standard come from? Albany County split the difference. Is there any other county regulations that determine egress requirements, how wide, etc. There are NFPA standards for road width and turn-arounds. The roads need to be in before selling lots. Albany County had a comprehensive plan that addresses road sizing. Motion is approved unanimously.*

7. Board Topics:

- a. Image Trend update – removed from agenda
- b. Final Draft Budget plan – The budget is assembled from many different pieces and it makes it complicated. We actually received \$712,204 last fiscal year. Departments submitted their budgets and those are included. WARM insurance will be pulled out of department accounts if approved tonight and therefore department budgets were increased to accommodate that. Coordinators submitted a line item as well. Department requests were most likely more than what you will receive from the District and that can be covered by savings, auxiliary, grants, and truck pay. We are looking at the division of tax proceeds only with this budget. Last year we started with \$635,000. To date we have received \$712,204 a difference of \$77,204. Treasurer Wadsworth would like to split that in half, keeping half for district and adding to tender line to help with tender repair costs and the other half to departments at the same percentages they were allocated at. *Treasurer Wadsworth moves to accept \$712,204 for last fiscal year that is \$77,204 in excess of budgeted amount and determine what to do with those funds a later date. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins and approved unanimously.* Suggestions for tender line, have a little over \$20,000 in tender line and propose to add to it at \$1660/month due to known repairs that need to be done. For EFSA is \$9400 the premium or the floor costs? \$9394 is the annual premium. If we have a fire you have a floor costs, that could be possibly \$10,000. What do we do with the \$77,204 difference. Help with tenders, we are looking at \$16,000 for each pump and then if/when the tanks start leaking. District holds burden for maintenance on tenders, which hits the budget hard. Suggestion to dump all excess into tender line for maintenance. Another idea that the Board could release tenders back to departments and then allow them to send out on fires to recoup costs. *Treasurer Wadsworth moved to move excess funds to tender line. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhardt. Discussion – Chief's get a quote on tank replacement. Motion was approved unanimously.* Expect \$764,515 which is the County estimate. We have budgeted conservatively in the past. Treasurer Wadsworth suggest starting \$750,000, Chairman Hawkins would like to start at \$770,000. *Treasurer Wadsworth moves to use \$750,000, motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhardt. Discussion - \$750,000 is a conservative number. Could potentially amend the budget in*

*December if we receive more than budgeted. Secretary Burkhardt and Treasurer Wadsworth in favor of the \$750,000. Chairman Hawkins opposes, motion passes.*

Variable expenses gone over by each item. Chairman Hawkins feels we need PIO and HR and we need to start budgeting for it to improve communication issues within the district and externally and using social media for recruitment. It is irresponsible not to invest in media/PIO/Instagram. Suggest \$10,000 for PIO and social media and \$15,000 for Human Resources contracting especially with incoming Impact Assistance funds, and also invest and reduce exposures and liabilities and head off legal expenses and could provide needed trainings (these trainings could provide a discount on Workers Comp). EMA office or volunteer could possibly help with PIO/social media? Treasurer Wadsworth is reluctant to expand too far. Secretary Burkhardt is opposed to any more overhead. He would like to take the money back from the coordinator positions, put it back in the departments and start paying the chiefs for their efforts. He stated we are overhead heavy and he is not seeing any benefit from it. Treasurer Wadsworth does see the need for HR. What about cutting PIO/media to \$5000. Could pass on to someone we already have in place, want to pay them so they are accountable in doing the job. Secretary Burkhardt does not want overhead to go any higher. There may be savings in Teri Jo's line for HR. Secretary Burkhardt would like to outfit firefighters with PPE and find a grant for HR/PIO.

*Chairman Hawkins moved to budget \$15,000 for HR contracting/consultation. Motion seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. Treasurer Wadsworth and Chairman Hawkins in favor, Secretary Burkhardt opposed, motion passes.*

*Chairman Hawkins moved to budget \$5,000 towards PIO/media person, he will draft the job description. There is no second, motion fails.*

*Secretary Burkhardt moved to remove \$50,000 from the coordinator positions and reassign to departments in proportion to the distribution shown here. There is no second, motion fails.*

*Secretary Burkhardt moved to remove \$15,000 from budget for HR. No second, motion fails.*

*Treasurer Wadsworth moved to put \$10,000 in for the coordinator budget line item this year. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion – Secretary Burkhardt wants to know what they are going to do with \$10,000. Refer to budget request. Secretary Burkhardt feels the departments can put that money to better use. Comment from the audience that the amount of trainings that have come through Jasmine has been worth the expense. Secretary Burkhardt feels we are giving the departments too little, we need to give them more money, Treasurer Wadsworth asked if he want to limit them? Secretary Burkhardt wants it to be unlimited because the district has too much in overhead and he wants to see it go back to the departments and let them save up money.*

*Secretary Burkhardt moved to pay the Chief's \$250 a month for each month of the fiscal year. Heated discussion followed. Chairman Hawkins thinks it's a great idea but with compensation comes a job description with expectations. This issue*

*has been discussed in previous work sessions and the Chief's jobs are variable. Are chiefs in favor of it? Secretary Burkhart wants to recognize people who put hundreds of hours in management of departments/firefighters. Right now they get nothing for that. Chairman Hawkins seconded for discussion and would like to hear from the Chief's if they are in favor. Chief Rinehart spoke that the Board has much deeper issues than just paying the Chief's. The Board is trying to build up a district, visions of building into great big district, always manned somewhere with full-time personnel, but we aren't there yet, we are a volunteer district, we are still small. The Board has to decide with Chief's input, but maybe not to move towards a paid department until there are more funds available, we a part-time, not there yet. Good ideas are coming from the coordinators, but we are getting bigger, more burdensome and more overhead. Need to decide where we are headed and create a vision plan of where we want to go. Take tax revenue and build up funds and set aside uncommitted funds on their own line.*

District Coordinator Farber – great perspectives in the room and agrees with a lot of what Secretary Burkhart stated – there are no more valuable people in any first responder organization than the people doing/delivering the service, firefighter to Chief, there is no more valuable service that can be recognized than operations. The Board made a decision as a majority, and as these coordinator roles take place he feels it is hard to represent value as a coordinator as he is discovering this job. And if you want to equate that value to someone who is going out on 911 calls and actually delivering the service; he will never be able to represent that value. His end goal as a coordinator is to foster a relationship with the operational side, the Chiefs. As well as making sure Jasmine and Bill are successful in their duties, as well as fulfilling the requests of the board. That is where the value representation is not straight to the customer but to the three members sitting in the front of the room. He is there to help fill in the gaps such as attending meetings, but this will not be a value equal to anything to the Chiefs value. Continue to address and see how each of the three coordinators can be not only be operationally helpful but administratively helpful. That relationship will need to go both ways. If you're looking for value to be represented on the admin side he needs a board that gives him the opportunity up front and forward to represent value as they see it, with equal value from all three board members with different perspectives. He looks forward to continuing to build a relationship with all the departments and the Chiefs. The District is changing, multi million dollars are going to come in and we are going to need help with our increasing liability. Intent is to take some load off. As for the \$250, Chief Rinehart would donate it back, Chief Whitmer would rather see it go to the firefighters, Chief Bowers would give it to the department. Chief Davis stated that they volunteer for these positions. Treasurer Wadsworth asked if the Chiefs want the board to distribute the \$32,000 remaining back to the departments in monthly distributions, or start setting aside for some future ability to hire firefighters? Stated to set aside in a strategic objective. The Board appreciates of

all the work the Chiefs do. *Secretary Burkhart withdraws the motion with the given acknowledgement.*

*Treasurer Wadsworth moved to set aside \$32,427 under Strategic Objective C. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins and approved unanimously.*

Budget hearing will be July 1 for public comment on proposed budget draft.

Immediately following will be a special board meeting to adjust and approve the proposed budget. Adopted budget draft is then sent to County for County Commissioners review and then to the State.

*Treasurer Wadsworth moved to accept the budget draft as amended by the current series of motions from this meeting. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion – Secretary Burkhart would like to reiterate that our overhead is too high and he'd like to see an increase in distribution to the departments and maybe an additional hearing on that first. Treasurer Wadsworth and Chairman Hawkins in favor, Secretary Burkhart opposed, motion passes.*

- c. Line of Credit update – The interest rate is 8.25% plus \$250 fee to start and also document prep fees, so for the first month it would cost over \$4000 with the origination fees. Something like this would help with Mullen 2.0 and being able to pay firefighters at 90% upon return from a fire, however Treasurer Wadsworth is hesitant. Departments would help with interest for firefighters that dispatch out, the district would cover interest for a Mullen 2.0 situation should it arise. Treasurer Wadsworth thinks we will be fine this year and could go back if we get in a bad spot.
- d. Bathroom RFP Status – Ready to go on bidding, needs board approval to create an agency account for bidding and for public purchase. *Secretary Burkhart moved to create an account on public purchase as a government entity in which to advertise these RFP's. Chairman Hawkins seconded. Discussion – need to get going on this immediately. Is it at all feasible to get this done before November at this point? Bathrooms done by December. Motion approved unanimously.*
- e. ACFD1 emails have been created for coordinators, administration and three board members. Charges include an annual fee which include google drive, hangout for meetings and can create email groups. Billing is on Administrative Assistant's credit card. Board are the administrators on the account.
- f. State Budget Training – Due June 1, 2024. This came from a special district board chairman who created legislation that all special districts must go through a state district online training program. It is required for all board members and district bookkeeper. This training has to be done through Attorney Goetz, as she is the one who is trained to do it.

Checking account for coordinators – *Treasurer Wadsworth proposed to open checking accounts at ANB Bank for the coordinators. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Discussion – Secretary Burkhart is opposed to this because it is a draft budget that might not carry through. Treasurer Wadsworth moved to amend the motion to open a checking account for coordinators pending final approval of the FY 24 budget. Motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins.*

*Treasurer Wadsworth and Chairman Hawkins are in favor, Secretary Burkhart opposed, motion passes.*

- g. Fire Chiefs Association Update – Discussed improving recruitment and retention across fire service, career and volunteer as it's a huge problem for every fire department across the state nation. 1 – eligible for state health insurance plan, meet requirements; intent is to provide for volunteers who aren't eligible for health insurance through employers. Who pays premium? 2 – allowing state employees 24 hours' time off to volunteer as first responder. Already in place, just not enforced/leveraged. 3 – directing State Fire Marshalls Office workforce services to coordinate with fire chiefs' recruitment marketing campaign at a state level. 4 – designated hunting week but requires different citizenship which is most likely improbable. 5 – same tax exemption that is offered to veterans, on property tax. If you don't own property then tax exemption would roll to vehicle registration. Again, different issue like citizenship. 6 – rehire firefighter who is retired - career firefighters in Plan B system. Recruit and hire, career numbers low as well, would incorporate retention. Retire at 50 but continue to work, slow that need by enabling retention. Money out there for Safer grant for training through fire chiefs association. Training at State Fire Academy in Cody is reimbursable, travel included (hotel, \$50 per diem no alcohol), but not fuel. District paid for all chiefs to have a membership. Safer grant also covers firefighter physicals, reimbursable. Image trend update - a working group has been formed for that. Coordinator Farber would like to be on that working group. NFPA doing EV training for free, log in, register, get a credit, then take training on NFPA.
- 8. Chiefs Report – Chiefs did not meet.
- 9. Department Reports:
  - a. TSVFD – New truck Brush 55 is operational and they are putting TS57 up for bid.
  - b. Central – Waiting on AC5 at advance automotive, waiting on T31, maintenance on type 3 with WSF – adjustment to clutch, new x6 lettering done and new tires. Close to in service radio install and license plate on new x6. Fire 1 Academy is this year in July/August. Have several people that need red card class; Jasmine is hoping to have one in the next month or so.
  - c. VVFD – Pump testing needs done, is Patrick going to do that or use someone else. Coordinator Farber will reach out to his contacts and UL pump test too. 2.5 ton is down with coolant leak and being fixed by WSF. AC12 is now service with VVFD as Rescue 12.
  - d. CVVFD – Only medical calls lately. ACFD firefighters cannot be paged for medical, because then firefighters aren't covered as far as liability. Must be a fire assist only. A fire assist means you are protected under volunteer immunity for the fire assist. Let Coordinator Farber know if getting paged for medical, should only be MVA assist or fire assist, emergent service call, non-emergent service call. Fundraiser on Saturday. Truck still on board trying to go out.



- e. BLVFD –Burger bash on July 15 and gun raffle \$20/ticket or 6 for \$100. Working on the approach in front of the new station on how it meets Deer Road as it is really steep in and out. Justin Hood out of Green River does pump testing.
  - f. WYCO – Dispatch truck was out. UTV rollover that result in a death. Chief has checked with responders and will be monitoring them. They have a new secretary. Signature cards need to be done. They do a lot of automated bill pay.
10. New Business – Chairman Hawkins will email a reminder on bylaws, driving policy, members in good standing, wildland firefighter and structure firefighter policies in place. Board requested chiefs get red cards/credentials to Administrative Assistant. As for the trucks on the board for dispatch, the names of who to contact are all different depending on department. Technically now the call should go to the wildland coordinator, however each engine has its own various names that can be called. Need to follow district policy on four engines out at one time and one tender can dispatch out locally. Make sure Chief’s are relaying this information to Wildland Coordinator Turner. Wildland Coordinator Turner met with Casper Dispatch and IROC does not track who has been on the board the longest with the new software. Its just whoever get pulled by the dispatcher. This can inflame some emotions within the district especially if you have a truck that has been waiting to go out for awhile but then is not who is called. If you get a call contact Wildland Coordinator Turner so he can monitor who is on the board and how long they have been on there. This is going to take some time to fix the issue with IROC and Casper Dispatch. Will start sending a weekly email out to communicate with the Chiefs. Anyone who violates not sending the above listed information and deliberately doesn’t communicate that, the Board would push for a policy that would then penalize the department another 10% on their truck funds. Copy of current red cards need to be in by next Wednesday. If there is no red card in place, then that firefighter is not a member in good standing. If the red card is not completed, then they can’t jump on a truck and do local stuff. Board wants IQS card for all, want everyone appropriately trained, and also wants to know appropriate pay level. How does that work if not arduous.
11. Adjourn – *Chairman Hawkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm. Motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth and approved unanimously.* Budget hearing 7/1/2023 at 3:00, special meeting to follow at 3:30; next work session 7/12/2023.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michele Turner, ACFD#1 Administrative Assistant