

## Albany County Fire District #1 Board Meeting Minutes November 15, 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 4:00 pm at Pence and MacMillan LLC. Board members present were Brett Wadsworth and Luke Hawkins. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to go into executive session pursuant to Wyoming Statute §16-4-405(a)(vii). The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous.*
2. At 5:00 pm, *Chairman Hawkins motioned to adjourn from executive session. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous, and the Board adjourned from executive session. At 5:01 pm, Chairman Hawkins motioned to recess the regular meeting of ACFD1 until 5:30 pm at Central North. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous.*
3. The regular meeting of the ACFD1 Board was reconvened at 5:33 pm at Central North, a hybrid meeting of in-person and virtual attendance via Google Meet. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to propose two amendments to the agenda 1) 6.f. Investment Policy; and 2) 7.c. Food for fires. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous.*
4. Minutes from the October 18, 2023, Board Meeting: *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve the minutes as presented with Michele to double check the number of calls for VVFD. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous.*
5. Comments from the public: Currently 25 personnel and 12 apparatus are on the Mason Lane fire incident, with one structure threatened.
6. Report – Outside Agencies:
  - a. LFD – Been in discussion with dispatch and have a good plan moving forward with the City and the County addressed in the proposal. District Coordinator Farber will look into policy changes within the District to reflect the verbiage. LFD is making an official request to move forward with this policy for communication operations within the County. LFD has moved to the current policy and is requesting the District to adopt this as well. This will be a big change for everyone, and people will make mistakes and do it wrong, it is not on purpose, so it will require some grace. LFD would like to adopt by the first of the year.
  - b. EMA – Radios are headed to Bearcom for programming. The Sheriff’s Office donated some XTS mobiles, if interested let Kate know. The County communication specialist position is now open and they are accepting applications. It is full time benefitted, flexible schedule, and will be responsible for all County programming/ordering/repairs on any communications, handheld,

apparatus, sirens, full description is on their website, starting at \$50,000 – 60,000 DOE.

- c. LARC – As new dispatch plans roll out, please be patient, it is a work in progress.
- d. County Fire Warden – Will be attending the rural fire meeting. This meeting makes changes/amendments to the Wyoming Mini-mob and Fire Warden Dinges is a voting member for that. He would like clarification for his office about who has what expense authority for the District. With regard to wildland expenses incurred when you order a hand crew, dozer, helicopter (not the state helicopter) there will be expenses, these are not free and if District personnel order, then the District is responsible for paying. He would like to know who can spend money and who can give the green light to spend money, and how much money can they spend. When we order dozers/hand crews/helicopters, they have costs. He needs to know who's paying and who's approved to say who's ordering that. Who can authorize those types of expenses and is there a line item in the budget for it. Basically, who has purchase authority? Can the wildland firefighters purchase, can the District, should it be a Chief, and does there need to be Board approval? This can pertain to meals as well. With regard to EFSA there is an \$8500 floor cost to open the EFSA account. With regard to requesting meals, EMA does not have the budget to provide meals for the District. EMA can coordinate and purchase, but EMA would need to be reimbursed that expense. The County (County Fire Warden) covered the last request, but that money is suppression money. Treasurer Wadsworth suggested that initial limits would be important. As for EFSA usually board personnel, County Fire Warden and land management agency are involved (ie. Forest Service, BLM, etc). For the current fire the Board is responsible for the suppression costs because it is on private land within the boundaries of the District. Typically, an Initial Attack (IA) isn't crazy with ordering of dozers, hand crews, other non-mutual aid engines, but when you start placing order through Casper Dispatch those resources are going to cost money. Treasurer Wadsworth suggested a line item of \$1000 for feeding firefighters during an IA and anything bigger than that such as aircraft, bigger equipment, etc, will need agency administrator approval. With the change to the organizational structure of the District need to determine where the District Coordinator and the Wildland Coordinator fit and what level of authority they could be given.
- e. District Coordinator – Several meetings over the last month. Has worked with Secretary Burkhart on Active Alert and the RFP. Worked with HR for onboarding planning. Worked with LARC and training for FF1 taskbooks. Is working on standardizing the Chiefs report and prepping for onboarding of image trend.
- f. Training Coordinator – Critical Communications and Organization at LFD training facility, VVFD Structure (FF1) training. Requests for training facility need to go through Training Coordinator not LFD. Burn Out training on December 12<sup>th</sup> (two-hour class). EVOC training, FF1 training, FF2 training. SE Fire Academy is Feb 1-4, 2024. Check the training calendar on the website.
- g. Wildland Coordinator – Not present, on the Mason Lane fire.

- h. Peer Support Team – Want to do a Let’s Talk About It brown bag lunch training. The team would like to attend each department meeting to introduce themselves. We need more members; you can sign up to be a Peer Champion then attend the training in the spring. The EAP letter is on the website, it pays the full counselor rate up to \$150/session, open to firefighters, spouses, children and is confidential. Will start having other members of the Peer Support Team present the monthly report.
7. Financial Report:
- a. Bills to be Paid - Online banking has changed and the new online access crashed impairing online access to QBO until a few days ago. This is a financial update, not a report because of that. *Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to propose paying 100% of the 2021 truck funds (\$35,341), 100% of the 2022 truck funds (\$27,626), and hopeful to pay 70% of the 2023 truck funds (\$201,519) to departments. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins for discussion. The last three federal fires have been vouchered and payment should be received shortly. They will delay payment of 2023 truck funds until the Board receives the last payment for federal fires, at which point they will pay the firefighters at 100% and then decide in December how/amount to pay on the 2023 truck funds. The vote was unanimous. Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to pay all the variable and regular expenses this month. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. The vote was unanimous.*
  - b. PA Approvals –
    - i. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve Central’s request for battery operated extrication equipment in the amount of \$45,000, 100% Impact funds. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth for discussion. This would use impact funds. During the work session the Rock Creek impact funds were set by priority type with CVVFD type 3 engine being their number one and Central’s number one priority was a fill system. Is there a change in the request for spending the impact funds? There is also a miscommunication on the PA. The PA should have requested 15% of the \$45,000 as a deposit to lock in the price for six months, that total is \$6750. Impact funds are impacted by litigation and if the litigation carries on for a long time, are we subject to losing those funds? In the past PA’s have been kicked back due to requests being inaccurate or late. Chairman Hawkins is not willing to approve the motion due to how the PA was presented. Treasurer Wadsworth wants to know how long they are willing to hold the equipment for. *Motion does not pass. Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to approve Central paying the deposit of \$6750, 100% department funds pending further information is provided on how long they the “hold” is valid for, if it is refundable, and Central is not to spend any money regarding this until they get that information back to the Board. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. The vote was unanimous. PA 414**

- ii. TSVFD is requesting preapproval to purchase a truck, however no amount was given as they haven't found one yet. They are willing to spend up to \$30,000 of their department funds. There is no dollar amount on the PA, however there is a verbal from Chief Essley of up to \$30,000. *Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to approve TSVFD up to \$30,000 for a command/service truck as mentioned in the PA. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins for discussion.* If the Rail Tie impact funds come through TSVFD would use those funds or apply for a grant. They are willing to spend \$30,000 of their own funds. Chairman Hawkins requested an amended PA request to include all of this information from Chief Essley but is willing to vote tonight based on what Chief Essley has stated. *The vote was unanimous. PA 415*
- iii. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve VVFD's repair of Engine VV2 in the amount of \$3,500, 100% dept funds. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous. PA416*

8. Action Items:

- a. Grants – Need further information from District Coordinator.
- b. Water tenders – There is a request to take action on the water tenders due to their poor design and construction (not firefighting) chassis. Three professionals suggested to stop putting money into a bad system and use money from the sale of them to buy correct system. A couple construction/excavation folks in Laramie, are verbally interested in it at around the \$50,000/apparatus mark. Looking at selling Central's (no pump) and VVFD's (with holes). Fair market value is between \$30,000 and \$60,000 depending on if you have to remove the tank at a cost of \$20,000. Could sell at auction but that comes with a commission rate. The goal is to move forward, we need to be able to haul and pump water. If you sold, you could use the majority of the funds for a newer one. Impact funds could help with the purchase of one for Central. Better off getting rid of them and focusing on the resources we have and carefully moving forward with one replacement. VVFD needs water up there. Central has one that is operational, and they have hydrants, so they are fine with deferring to VVFD. *Treasurer Wadsworth motioned that if Chief Isborn is willing to engage with and work District Coordinator Farber to sell the tenders for a minimum of \$50,000/each to move forward. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins for discussion.* Intent is to authorize Chief Isborn to follow the vehicle sales procedures to get a minimum of \$50,000 piece, then use those funds to purchase one tender, with the knowledge that you do not have to sell either tender, there are options. *The vote was unanimous.*
- c. Job Descriptions – Chairman Hawkins would like to set a date for a special session to approve the job descriptions and policies. Michele questioned if they are going to hold a special meeting and approve in that same meeting, does that offer time for suggestions on possible changes. The Board needs to be able to accept comments so they can review. Please respond with any comments to the board email address (which Michele will find if we have one in place).

- d. Policies/SOG's – Table this to the special session as well. The Board would make a request for November 27<sup>th</sup> or November 28<sup>th</sup>; however, they need a quorum to be able to take action.
- e. Meeting Schedule – The meeting schedule includes two meetings per month. The work sessions are frustrating because the board cannot take action. With two board meetings the board/departments do not have to wait 30 days for action. Chief Isborn asked if legal would be at all executive sessions and meetings, thus doubling legal's bill for each month. The Board doesn't always have an Executive Session, if they don't need one, they don't have it. But they have to have time set aside in case they do need it. They are under budget for legal for the year. They don't expect it to double, even if they went to two full meetings per month.

9. Board Topics:

- a. Bathroom RFP Updates – no one present.
- i. Food for fires – County Fire Warden Dinges is a Logistics Section Chief and feeds firefighters for a living. Firefighters need to be 24 hours self-sufficient. Logistically it is hard to stand up and get a feeding/delivery operation in place and to feed before that time because it takes time to line out vendors/contractors/food/ etc. Before large vendors/contractors are on site, you have to rely on small local vendors to produce and they don't always have 60-70 meals waiting to be bought at a moment's notice. During COVID it was taking closer to 48 hours, and many are still leaning towards that 48 hours. You have to take into consideration the supply chain on the back side to get food to the vendor and then the vendor has to produce those meals. It is suggested to be 24 hours self sufficient for most wildland and extended structure. If you have 20-30 firefighters on a scene it's just going to take longer to spool that up. There is also a financial component and an expense incurred and where does the Board/District stand and what are they willing to provide for funding for that first operational period (your mutual aid period) for meals. Recently it was handled through EMA, and they can help facilitate logistics, however, in a short period of time that can be problematic due to supply issues and funding issues. EMA does not have the budget to provide food for the District without reimbursement from the District. Treasurer Wadsworth stated it sounds reasonable that as a District we should provide for the firefighters and not expect them to live out of truck/MRE's. EMA is willing to help with the logistics of picking up and delivering, but she doesn't have the finances to cover the expense for the District. She can swipe card as long as she can be reimbursed. We don't have a reasonable expectation of when to expect food, so we need to determine that. Also where does the money come from in the budget? The District can't continue to expect the County Fire Warden to use his suppression funds to provide food for District firefighters. However, District firefighters should have the ability to make it some number of hours prior to getting fed. The district has some money but who can authorize it (coordinators?). The coordinators have a budget of their own, but it does not include these kinds of things. EMA and the County need to be

reimbursed. MRE's are like hoses and should be on the truck, even if firefighters don't like them. When you start talking hot meals, this is a different discussion that falls under suppression costs, just like a helicopter would. It all costs money to put out fires and the Board is responsible for the suppression costs within the District. Need to know who is approved, at what level, and what funding amount to call vendors, request mutual aid, supply meals, pick up, pay for, and deliver those meals. Casper Dispatch can make that happen, but all of that comes back to us in one way or another financially. What about a \$2000 line item with one or some combination of coordinator being approved. Chief Isborn stated that firefighters need to be fed after they have been on an incident for three hours. County Fire Warden Dinges stated that for the current incident for 24 guys the daily GSA rate is \$1400/day for per diem. An operational guideline needs to be on the website. Currently we are putting a lot on EMA. EMA will do the legwork and Chad will do the paperwork. The timeline for providing food to district firefighters is three hours.

10. Chiefs Report – Has been difficult to get chiefs together, did not meet.

11. Department Reports:

- a. TSVFD – Three smoke reports, one MVA, one grass fire, one wildfire and one medical assist. All trucks are ready.
- b. Central – Jason Holloway wasn't given anything, reported what he knows. Responded to a lot of calls on the interstate. Status of Central Brush 12 so they can get it repaired. Bid is actually a rough estimate from the body shops. Body shops will only give an estimate to repair. Who do they need to take it to? Need one bid. Treasurer Wadsworth didn't understand where the PA came from because he didn't know anything was wrong with the truck. It was involved in an accident with another District apparatus. The District attorney stated these types of matters should be brought up to the District Coordinator and then addressed in Executive Session. These types of matters bring liability to the District and need to be discussed in advance. It is out of service, so it needs to move quickly. Need to have all the information for Executive Session, including how many bids are needed by WARM. District Coordinator Farber works with Michele or WARM to gather the necessary information.
- c. VVFD – Have an associate member helping with all kinds of things, this is a great membership level. Wyoming Apparatus is going to fix some seals on pumps. All in service, except tender. Two contractors looked at the bathroom. The auxiliary is in the process of putting in a kitchen upstairs. Selling trees starting the day after Thanksgiving. Open Friday/Saturday/Sunday and Wednesday across from Walmart. They have asked local businesses to donate a tree and give it to a family in need. Toyota Laramie said they would buy however many trees they can give away, and also want to help deliver them. They are a very supportive car dealership.
- d. CVVFD – No one present, on the Mason Lane fire.
- e. BLVFD – No one present, on the Mason Lane fire.
- f. WYCO – No one present.

12. New Business –

- a. Investment Policy – The State has a requirement that we have an investment policy that comes directly out of State Statute. *Treasurer Wadsworth read the policy and then motioned to accept the policy as read subject to any questions. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins.* It is legal and the State requires us to do it. *The vote was unanimous.* Michele to put it on the website.
  - b. Central's PA request – The company will hold the price and the tools until June 2024. If we send a check and cannot get funds, they will send the check back to us. The District Attorney stated to be mindful of advancing funds that could potentially not be returned. This PA is hanging in limbo. Central will get bid and get in writing that the money will be returned.
13. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to adjourn at 8:11 pm. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Wadsworth. The vote was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michele Turner, ACFD#1 Administrative Assistant