

Albany County Fire District #1 Board Meeting Minutes January 17, 2024

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 at Central North, a hybrid meeting of in-person and virtual attendance via Google Meet. Board members present were Luke Hawkins and Matt Burkhart. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to amend the agenda by removing item 6.c. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous.*
2. Minutes from the December 13, 2023, Board Meeting: *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous.*
3. Comments from the public: No public comment.
4. Report – Outside Agencies:
 - a. LFD – No report
 - b. EMA – The ARPA ordered radios are at Bearcom for programming and are 1-2 weeks out. If you have more radio/pager requests, please get those to Kate. The Communication Specialist position has reopened. There will be an all-County livestock extrication training.
 - c. LARC – Steve retired in December. Send issues to District Coordinator Farber and he will get them to LARC.
 - d. County Fire Warden – He has submitted the last of the fire to the State. The State ran out of expense authority on the 537 account so he will have to wait longer for the checks to come in. Submitted the voucher for us to be paid for the Mason Lane fire.
 - e. District Coordinator – Had a meeting scheduled with Legal but had to postpone that meeting. Met with DCI regarding background checks and alternatives for covering those costs as they do not see the SHSP grant as a viable option, they do not interpret that it can be utilized for background checks, awaiting specific language from the grant to rule that out. Job descriptions final drafts were sent out. WARM insurance claim in the process for BLVFD and Central. Active alert is up to date with the requests he has received, we hit the threshold for subscriptions so old accounts were deleted.

Onboarding packets with HR are in the process. Image Trend is still on the horizon, will need to discuss FDID numbers in February and determine how to onboard Image Trend, separately or consolidate as a district, which would streamline things. The Chief's report was converted into a google form and is ready to send out next month. Training Coordinator – Upcoming trainings have been updated on the calendar. Receiving a lot of requests for wildland. Send training requests to her. Wildland Coordinator – Has been pretty slow, and starting to work on summer plans, communicating with people and starting to coordinate who wants to dispatch out this fire season and when. The Midwest is looking at the fire season to potentially start in March. For Casper area local

dispatch, you can go to their website and there is link with 4-5 questions that you need to fill out. For local they want to know the trainees available in the area and when available. A couple of our people have already completed it. WYCO has been on the board since the first of December and looking at putting another truck on the board March 1.

f. Peer Support – Presentation at VVFD last week and Central's is tomorrow. CVVFD and BLVFD are in February. Have brochures that list information that will go out to departments, magnets are coming. There is a legislative bill on the floor this spring for funding for peer support, looking at mental health statewide for responders.

5. Financial Report:

- a. Bills to be paid – VVFD received a firerecovery.com reimbursement of \$1668. Deposit for impact funds are in holding. Treasurer Wadsworth statement was read from email. *Chairmans Hawkins motioned to approve financial report as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous.*
- b. PA Approvals -
 - i. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve VVFD's LMTV Brush Truck request in the amount up to \$10,000, 100% Dept Funds. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. This replaces the current truck, will have to be repainted and swap everything over. The vote was unanimous. PA 219.*
 - ii. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve VVFD's training request in the amount of \$4,000, 100% Dept Funds. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous. PA 220.*
 - iii. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve VVFD's request for renewal of online fire & EMS training modules in the amount of \$942.45, 100% Dept Funds. Training can be reimbursed through the Fire Chief's Association and ACFD1 will cover the renewal cost for the district. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous. PA 221.*
 - iv. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve VVFD's request for a used water tender in the amount of \$6,000, 100% Dept Funds. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. This is an 1800-gallon tender and would replace the 4000-gallon tender. Is VVFD still planning on getting another one? With the MOU they have LCFD10's tender down the road and believe they have adequate support for water. Good front-line tender for them. Still working on leads on their two. The 4000-gallon is not being sold in this transaction. They are still looking at purchasing another tender with a larger tank. VVFD will maintain this tender. The vote was unanimous. PA 222.*
 - v. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approved BLVFD's engine 2 repair and maintenance in the amount of \$3800, 100% Dept funds. The motion was*

seconded by Secretary Burkhart as the explanation is straight forward and he has no bias regarding it. The vote was unanimous. PA 223.

- vi. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approved BLVFD's request for BK radios and trash pumps in the amount of \$14,000, 100% Dept funds. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart, and he has no bias regarding it. This is through the VFA grant with a 50% reimbursement, so you have to spend it and then get reimbursed. These radios do not qualify through EMA as they have tried to put in for BK's before and have been denied. The vote was unanimous. PA 224.*
- vii. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approved BLVFD's request for hurst combination extrication tool, 100% Dept funds. The motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart, and he has no bias regarding it. Purchase of this replaces the non-functional capability they already have, not an additional capability. The hydraulic pump on their current tool was repaired this past spring but will not stay running. Their auxiliary is covering 50%. The vote was unanimous. PA 225.*

6. Action Items:

- a. Ratification of extended incident food guideline – Suggested to change language from “food” to possibly “nutrition supplies”. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart for discussion purposes.* They will likely be on scene for more than four hours, but a request for three hours is a start and exceptions can be reviewed as they arise. This is a written ratification of the intent that was passed two months ago. EMA would like clear guidelines on what is expected from departments regarding what they can ask for, how many meals, when, and for how long when in IA. Multi-operational periods would require going to the board and requesting more. This is a general guideline, not a policy, which is stating the District will pay for meals after three hours with the cultural understanding that engines/apparatus have water/snacks/mre's on them and firefighters can initially sustain themselves, but those will run out and we need to feed firefighters. *Secretary Burkhart would like this guideline to be clearer.* Chairman Hawkins stated this was already verbally approved and any wordsmithing would just need a further ratification, but in the meantime, there would be written approval of the guideline.
Chairman Hawkins approves. Secretary Burkhart opposes. Motion fails. It was requested the Secretary of the Board rewrite for approval and ratification at the February Board Meeting. County Fire Warden Dinges, clarification that the Board has agreed to pay for meals during an IA, with details and clarity of the guideline to follow.
- b. Job Descriptions and Job Description Policy – We are on the third or fourth draft and have had multiple work sessions to review with good turnout from the Chiefs. Members who made the requests were not present at the work session.

Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve the job descriptions as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart for discussion purposes. Secretary Burkhart is not in favor of the job descriptions, they are too complex for a volunteer district, they are written for a paid department. Why don't we just adopt the standards (NWCG for Wildland)? He feels there is a lot of responsibility pushed back on the departments and really heavy on discipline, and if we are worried about recruitment and retention this isn't going to get us there. There are a number of firefighters in the district that don't understand what they are supposed to do, not do, and if they can respond anymore. Chairman Hawkins pointed out we have been working on these for four months and Secretary Burkhart has not shown up to work session to give feedback. The chiefs were in favor of the wording during the last work session, changing words like required to using words like preferably, preferred, as needed – optional language. Firefighters should be able to find one that fits the best for them. Still concern about language that would limit on the job training on an actual fire event. The point was never to exclude volunteers, but to enable them to pursue what they want and give a clear path to training and enable them to perform at the level they would like to. From the last work session language was included to make these dynamic with the ability for any person in a supervisory role to assign any person to do anything given the supervisory person thinks it is a good idea. What about one for firefighters? Except me have more than one discipline and there is not a singular training standard to allow for only one that would cover all the differences in the district. Discussion regarding training, refining, tracking etc. The purpose of job descriptions is for responsibility, accountability, liability insurance purposes. These do not restrict the volunteers from doing their duties within their departments. They all can do great work, but you can do duties more readily if there is a standard that you are looking at. Language can include "other duties as assigned". Any supervisor has the ability to keep their people dynamic with the ability to be assigned to do anything. Secretary Burkhart would like to see one page and certified to industry minimum standard. A starting point outlines core competencies and then the training coordinator has a place to work from. Discussion about industry standards for wildland. In reading Chairman Hawkins does not include discipline or restrict them from performing their duties but provides a pathway and guideline for training. Secretary Burkhart stated if you pass these then half the people can no longer respond. Chairman Hawkins disagrees, it is up to interpretation. Hundreds of hours have been spent on the drafts. *Chairman Hawkins retracts motion to approve as a whole. Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve one at a time.* Secretary Burkhart would like another work session and an opportunity to review one last time. Questions about liability. State Statute covers volunteer liability. Wildland Coordinator Turner stated that as an engine boss he is liable

for his crew, he signed up for that. If you don't want the liability, then you have to step down. Same with IC or task force leaders – you put yourself in that position of liability and if you don't want the liability then step away. You have job descriptions to give guidance on how to get where they want to go, they now have a path on how to get where they want to be. This is helping them grow as a firefighter and if they don't want to do all of that, then maybe it's not for them. Secretary Burkhart asked the Chairman to respect the differing opinions of the Board and either have a discussion or vote on all of them. One thing to remember, if we have a large incident in our area and the Forest Service or BLM step in and take over, there is not gray area in their world. If you aren't red carded arduous you are going home. Discussion regarding the AOP and local standards and NWCG standards. Language to include preferred, recommended, encouraged. Another option is to pass job descriptions and get rid of certifications. This would put the district in a bad spot. Need a pathway that is supported, encouraged and preferred, all required wording was removed. Language could include ability to obtain, possession of. January 31 work session for Chiefs who would like to discuss further and make sure all language is worded correctly and bring back again in February. As for the policy wording, it is such that Board can refuse to give dept funds if they don't adhere to policy (this echoes ACFD1 bylaws which state the same thing). Again, look at wording, make words abundantly clear. Discussion regarding federal dispatch versus local, wildland policy, NWCG standards. *Chairman Hawkins retracted the motion.*

Chief Essley stated whether you agree or not, we need to recognize all the hard work District Coordinator Farber has put into this and the participation of the members over the last four months who gave input over email, and hours invested. Thank you, all your efforts are appreciated.

- c. EMS Proposal – Months ago the Board voted to pursue EMS. As per the proposal we have three options. Option 1 – enter into an agreement with Align Providers of Wyoming. They carry liability malpractice insurance. Everything needs to be recorded, who is doing that? Dr. Waters rides with LFD. Not practical from our standpoint. There are some questions that will need to be checked. However, if Dr. Waters leaves, we wouldn't have to search for a new person again. Option 2 – enter into an agreement with Dr. Waters. He would be the carrier of liability malpractice, but if he moves back to square one. Option 3 – do nothing.

Chairman Hawkins would like to pursue the costs on option 1 versus option 2. This would be BLS only, we would not be a transport agency. We want EMT's to be covered, have protocols to follow and oversight on training. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to consider the options. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart for purposes of discussion.* There is an Albany County EMS group. Option 1 was urged to look into to provide continuity for having someone to step into that role should Dr. Waters leave. Need a venue for continuing education

certifications. Option 1 would buy us access to a group that had medical direction in a variety of states. Discussion regarding Wyoming or national certifications. In favor of exploring the costs associated with Option 1 and what their requirements are for persons to be covered under them and provide medical direction, along with recordkeeping or trainings, reports, etc. This would hopefully get rid of the gray area and EMT's and firefighters could provide a medical response because of the medical direction. *Looking into Option 1 was voted on and approved unanimously.* We need to work as quickly as possible. EMT's would be comfortable reviewing what would be expected and what reporting requirements would change for them. Need to know all of this as we head into the budget season. Also, good to know what they are looking for as far as RN's, advanced providers, nurse practitioners, who are willing to volunteer within dept, would they provide a basic scope of practice with some standing orders, as RNs are fuzzy outside of facility. What about mil levy for EMS services. County Commissioners and State officials are pursuing and there are a lot of unanswered questions. We are trying to get rid of gray area and move forward.

7. Board Topics:

- a. Bathroom RFP updates – District Coordinator Farber's meeting with legal was canceled. Has someone reached out regarding the pending award contract? Chairman Hawkins has secured funding through December. Awarded to JC Construction and Design.
8. Chiefs Report: They did not meet, except through email. Wondering about grant awards, grant requests, and grant pursuits. We have multiple; ARPA for peer support and bathrooms, VFA grants were submitted, the AFG grant, and Bailey is looking at grants for us with the list of items submitted to her that departments would like. She is contracted for payment. Eric Gregory asked about the north wind farm money and it being on hold or the county receiving some of the mitigation funds. Can we spend that money, or will they ask for it back? Albany County has frozen their funds, waiting to see what happens. Who has our funds and who is earning the interest on those funds, the County or us?
9. Department Reports:
 - a. Central – Have 19 members but can always use more. They are looking at getting rid of some apparatus because they have too many, specifically AC13 back to the state and the cat tender.
 - b. VVFD – 11 full members, all apparatus in service except tender 3. They are focused on fortifying what they have, making it more dependable, well maintained and equipped and not expanding. Structure fires, assisting Central.
 - c. CVVFD – No change in membership, apparatus is operational. Working through problems on the brush truck in Albany. Ski areas calls and structure fires.
 - d. BLVFD – 18 members. Waiting on electrical for washer/extractor installation and they have to move the fill station to drop the 240 for electrical. Hoping to get a

water installed, waiting on a bid for that. Foam that needs to be ordered needs to be done on Michele's card and delivered straight to the station. Apparatus are in good working order with some small issues under warranty. Engine 2 has some repairs and there are aging issues with the command vehicle, so they are looking to replace it.

- e. WYCO – 14 members, three are in the area, apparatus are ready. Have been battling snow and trying to dig out. Some members headed to training in Cheyenne. Thank you to VVFD for the pumper, BL2 is now with WYCO and can deliver 57,000-gallons of water with apparatus and stored water. Moving forward with final AGF purchase. Would like to request training on Active Alert when members get back since we are transitioning away from Who's Responding. Asked about the status of the MOU with North Park/Jackson County. Need to determine what they would like from WYCO; water delivery as they are close to some of their residential and state wildlands.
- f. TSVFD – 8 members, they are closed for the season, but all apparatus are serviceable. They can assist with their new vehicle crash assist 54.

10. New Business: AC6 had a blow out and needed emergency repair that needs to be ratified. Chief Isborn paid for the repairs personally and has the invoice for that repair. Treasurer Wadsworth will field the question about tying a savings account to a regular account. Please submit request in writing regarding this. Question about EMT reimbursement after they have stayed within the District for a year after training completion. How do they get reimbursed for class expenses? Email addresses have been created for each department and each department chief and now have access to Google suite, and district calendar. The district is paying for this, and it's capped at \$1500. Will need to revisit expense and ensure it's providing value for the depts. Update website. Legislative bills in February to watch ranged from recruitment and retention, state health insurance, mental health peer support funding, several that deal with taxation and property taxes that if passed will affect our funding in the future as they will change how our mil levy is calculated, changing residential from 9.5 to 7.5 which could reduce our funding by quite a bit.

11. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to adjourn at 8:17 pm. Motion was seconded by Secretary Burkhart. The vote was unanimous.* Work Session 1/31/24 – job descriptions; Board Meeting 2/21/24.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michele Turner, ACFD#1 Administrative Assistant