

**Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday December 10, 2019**

**Meeting held at the Wasatch County Administration Building located at 25 N Main, Heber City.**

**Those in Attendance:**

Spencer Park

Jeff Wade

Steve Farrell

Marilyn Crittenden

Kendall Crittenden Excused

Danny Goode

Mark Nelson Excused

Chief Ernie Giles

BC Gary Sessions

BC Jason Provost

BC Ben Fitzgerald

Fire Marshal Clint Neerings

Fire Warden Troy Morgan

EMS Director Clair Provost

Financial Officer Kierstan Smith

Items of Business to address:

**Minutes**

**A motion was made by Councilman Parks to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2019 fire board meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wade and the motion passed all in favor. Councilman Nelson and Councilman Goode abstained.**

**Warrants**

The listing of warrants totaled \$374,962.07. This total included the added warrants and the payroll transmittals.

**A motion was made by Councilman Wade to approve the warrants as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Goode and the motion passed all in favor.**

### Chief report

Chief Ernie Giles would like to discuss information on warrants. The district ordered a truck chassis. I am going to have Kierstan Smith, my CPA, present the preliminary 2020 budget and the 2019 budget. She has been with the district for over 10 years.

Kierstan Smith- I will focus on the general fund and other interest in the capital fund. We have had additional revenues come in from things like the hazmat responses, wildland, etc. which has increased our revenue which is allowing us to do a few things on the expense side. Your significant changes are towards the bottom of the revenue section 1-39980, it shows your operating transfer \$555,600.00. The money is transferred to your capital projects fund which you have approved in a prior meeting to pay for the apparatus. In addition, there is a special revenue fund that is being closed. It was set up in 2013 for assessment in the Jordanelle basin. It was for a 5 year term and that time is up. The cash that we have been holding on to will now transfer to the general fund.

Councilman Farrell- how much money is in that fund?

Kierstan- On the budget it reads about \$335,700 that will be transferred over. About \$9,000 is being held for tax liens. That money is being held in cash held in a checking account. There is a residual balance due to the fact the end of that term we stopped accounting for expenses over the special fund. Are there any more questions on the transfer?

Councilman Farrell- How will that effect the 2019 budget?

Kierstan- On the special revenue fund you have an expenditure going out in the amount of \$335,700.00 that is transferred out as an expense and put into the general fund as income. It then becomes fund balance in the federal fund.

Councilman Farrell- Where is the other \$230,000 to make \$555,000?

Kierstan- That is out of capital project funds. That was the money transferred for apparatus replacement.

Councilman Farrell- Do we have a breakdown of the capital projects fund?

Kierstan- Yes. Interest income is really the only activity. It then just depends on if you will be using money in the general fund for trucks, equipment, or buildings.

Councilman Farrell- So the funding for the capital projects fund comes out of the general fund?

Kierstan – It depends on what you do with it. You set money aside for it. It has built up over time including building interest and some has been transferred out to purchase. At any time you could choose to transfer more money into that project fund for future buildings or truck purchases.

Councilman Farrell- So if I'm reading this right at the end of 2019 we will have 219,900 in the capital project fund?

Kierstan- This is revenues, not fund balances. The total fund balance is about 1.5 million.

Councilman Farrell- The \$219,900 is what is going into that fund balance for 2019, correct?

Kierstan- For 2019, you have \$22,900.00 in interest.

Councilman Farrell- Do we have a breakdown showing the fund balance?

Kierstan- Yes, you are able to access that in the financial statements that you receive monthly. On the expenditure side of the general fund we are making changes. We are moving between categories, (extra in supplies and moved it to tools, extra in liability insurance and moved to utilities etc...). The most significant change is apparatus replacement. We just increased the budget there towards the bottom under 1-711000 you will see we went from \$309,800 to \$676,900. That is where your significant change on the expense side.

Councilman Farrell- Do we have to have a public hearing on this?

Kierstan- Yes, because you are a government entity and because you adopted it that way.

Councilman Farrell- I have no more questions. Lets move to the 2020 budget.

Kierstan- Closing the special revenue fund will only leave us with 2 funds for 2020. The first is the profitable projects fund, which is budgeted for \$20,800. The only activity that we are budgeting for currently. During the year if there are other things that come up, we will come to the board for approval to transfer. On the general fund, we have significant changes because of the merger with EMS. We will have additional tax revenue. We will have 6 additional employees as well as additional costs with utilities, radios, supplies, etc....

Councilman Farrell- On the property tax for revenue side, is \$400,000 based on the tax increase?

Chief Ernie Giles- It is based on the new growth and the tax increase. If you look at the ambulance revenue that is a portion of it. Then \$900,000 from EMS revenues. There is about 1.7 in there that is going to be part of the 1.4 in 2021.

Chief Ernie Giles- One more thing... as you look through the resolutions 19-03 is the one to close the special revenue fund that was created in the Jordanelle basin we must do that by resolution. Also, I will need a closed session for personnel.

### **Fire Marshal Report**

Fire Marshal Neerings- For the impact fee we have been meeting with the building departments within the Cities and Town trying to have everything approved. My city inspector is on the list. Everything is moving through to merge everything together. This will help ensure everything is being approved in the county. We have been working hard with Heber City with the annexations on the north end of town.

### **Fire Warden Report**

Fire Warden Morgan – Last month I reported on our total fire acreage. We had another fire in the middle of November that totaled another 190 acres. It was an abandoned campfire and wind driven. Other than that we are talking year end stuff.

Councilwoman Crittenden – With the fire, were you able to identify anyone who started it?

Fire Warden Morgan- It's still under investigation. Jason Curry with the state is the investigator.

Councilman Nelson- In Wasatch County are there burn days and no burn days that are enforced?

Fire Warden Morgan- Yes, closed fire season is from June 1<sup>st</sup> to Oct 31<sup>st</sup>. If you plan to burn within those dates you need to obtain a burn permit. There are certain guidelines which include wind, fuel moistures, clearing index, etc. From November 1st to May 31st it is open burning if the air quality issue is met. Also, there is the guideline of 500 ft of clearing index. The dispatchers pull it up and let the citizens know when they call.

Councilwoman Crittenden- What if people don't call?

Fire Warden Morgan – Typically if we see it and know it's not a burn day we will go and explain our burn policy and have them distinguish it.

Nelson- I had some citizens contact on one of those inversion things in Charleston. Is there some kind of process for the citizens to call in with their concerns?

Fire Warden Morgan – Yes, they can call dispatch. Dispatch will then get ahold of me and I can go check on it. There are still guidelines including that they can only burn natural vegetation. This time of year, that 500 ft is hard to come by. A lot of the people don't understand when we tell them there is not 500 ft of clearing.

Councilman Farrell- Are there any agricultural exemptions?

Fire Warden Morgan- Yes, fence lines, ditch banks, and if it's on a farm. Once it is piled it becomes a controlled burn.

Councilman Nelson- Are there any industrial limitations? What if someone is heating a commercial building with wood?

Fire Warden Morgan- If it is heat, there is no recognition. Which is an issue we have in Charleston.

Chief Ernie Giles- The lumberyard on the south end of town, they had permits to burn. Before this clearance thing came out. It was a big incinerator they would run it. Euclid is usually pretty good.

Fire Warden Morgan- We try to keep it under control because we don't want to live in a smoggy mess. People think there's snow on the ground and it's a good time to burn. Which it is so there won't be any wildland fires, but for pollution it is not always a good time.

Councilman Parks- I would like Clair to do a brief presentation.

EMS Director Clair Provost- Spencer said he had received some calls with concerns in Wallsburg thinking that we would be taking the ambulance out of Wallsburg and would no longer have a service over there. That is not the case. I want to give you an overview of what our thoughts are and what has happened in

the past leading up to this time. As years gone by, we used to have 24 hour coverage 7 days a week in Wallsburg. We paid \$1.00 an hour for on call coverage to carry a pager and then if they went out they got an hourly wage. As our call volume started to increase, we needed to shift gears and do something different. At the time fire compensated their people with a stipend. One of the councilman made a motion to do that across the board for fire and EMS employees, which is what we did. It became difficult for the EMS in Wallsburg to be there 24/7 and they couldn't staff the ambulance during the daytime. When we started a full-time service in the county, we had Wallsburg cover from 6pm-6am. They continued to get their stipend plus an hourly rate when they went out on the ambulance. Our call volume continued to increase so we had Wallsburg take the first transfer of the night. Wallsburg took the first call out. The thing that was nice for them is they took the transfer and then was usually done for the night but still received the rest of their stipend. Our call volume in Wallsburg has decreased, the accident volume has decreased on 189 with the highway improvements. Sometimes we ask them to cover Heber when Heber was too busy. What we decided to do in talking with the chief, moving forward the stipend is not going to work anymore. We are paying out a lot of money in stipends. This has been a difficult decision; we are dealing with people, but we also have a business to run and a community to serve. Moving forward we have spent a lot of time and research with different departments. We met with all of our people (this is a fire time stipend as well that is being affected) so the dynamics are changing, and we have to change with it. We called all the employees together and said we would do away with the stipend and go to an hourly rate when someone goes out on a call. The chief and I thought that as we put more Full-Time employees on, they are there to take these calls. We still need these parts time people to help us. We are also talking about the Part time people in Heber as well. We decided we will pay them \$50/hr. When you divide up the stipend and the hourly rate. It is only about half of what we are currently paying. We also raised our event pay to \$50.00/hour. That sounds like a lot, but the events pay for those fees, so it is not coming out of our budget. Those who are part time people were also offered to cover Full Time fire shifts (24 - 48 hour shifts). The difference is that now they will have to respond on the backup calls and extra shifts to make up some of the income that they will lose with their stipend. We feel like this is a good fit. Wallsburg is concerned that they will not have coverage. To date, we have only had 2 of our people that have not signed up for to be a part of the fire district and one of them quit a couple of months ago. I told Spencer that these people are our family, we work with them and rely on them. If you don't work often and train often, their skills aren't as proficient as they could be. We are working on ways to make their skills more proficient. We also pay them for that training. Those are the things that we are working on. The ambulance and fire truck will not go away in Wallsburg. On the 17<sup>th</sup> we are going to the Wallsburg town council to address this issue with them. Even though Wallsburg has an ambulance, there are a lot of outlying agencies such as Timberlakes that does not have ambulances.

Councilman Parks- Is there just a fire truck at Timberlakes?

EMS Director Clair Provost- We have had an ambulance but pulled it out due to the ceiling that was leaking. We have a group of people that are unpaid, and they first respond up there. Our community is a difficult dynamic. We cover 1176 square miles. We are trying to figure out how to provide the best service most efficiently, physically with tax dollars, and still take care of our employees. That has always been our goal. I would just ask if you have questions?

Councilman Parks- I just wanted to bring it up in a public meeting. I had over half of the town board call me this week.

Councilman Goode- Celeni talked to me at the gingerbread house.

Councilman Parks – I think you guys are on top of it. Do you still need to do the transfer thing to ensure those individuals are getting enough hours?

EMS Director Clair Provost- One of the things we said is that this is not set in stone it's going to be a work in progress. We have great people in Wallsburg and Heber. The last point I would like to make is our full-time guys don't make a lot of money and our part time people are making more per hour than our full time and we need to make adjustments.

Councilman Farrell- Next Tuesday at 7 when Ernie meets with the town board it would be a good opportunity for Marylin, Myself and Spencer to meet with the town board to talk about their concerns for the county.

Councilwoman Crittenden- I will be unable to attend.

Chief Ernie Giles – This resolution to close the special revenue fund I do need a motion resolution 19-03

**A Motion was made by Councilman Nelson to close the special revenue fund, the motion was seconded by Councilman Goode. The motion passed all in favor.**

Councilman Farrell- Are we going to have people from the Jordanelle basin?

Chief Ernie Giles- I realize the number and a lot of it is past due. We are still running a full-time crew up there and it won't cost them as much. They wanted us to close this fund.

**A Motion was made by Councilman Goode to go into closed session put regular meeting on hold, the motion was seconded by Councilman Parks. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A Motion was made by Councilman Farrell to open the hearing, The motion was seconded by Councilman Wade. The motion passed all in favor.**

Chief Ernie Giles- I'm going to hand it over Kierstan.

Kierstan – The 2019 budget closure of the special revenue fund and operating transfer into the general fund. In addition, earlier in the year money was transferred from the capital fund over to the general fund for the apparatus. Additional revenues will come in from hazmat and wildland fires. For 2020 the majority of the changes are from the merger between fire and EMS. Also, there will be additional costs for supplies, radios, utilities, etc.

Councilman Farrell- Chief can you go over new equipment that the district has purchased.

Chief Ernie Giles- The district purchased 3 apparatus' this year. First is a cab and chassis for JE1. Second is a structure pumper that we set money aside for several years ago. Lastly, we purchased a used apparatus from Park City and a support vehicle. Next year we are hoping to order another pumper and get a bid for fast attacks.

Public comment – Gentleman noticed that his taxes was being raised and questioned if it was because of the merge.

Councilman Farrell: Part of the EMS will come out of the general fund.

**A Motion was made by Councilman Goode to approve resolution 19-04 and amending the 2019 budget, the motion was seconded by Councilman Wade . The motion passed all in favor.**

**A Motion was made by Councilman Wade to approve resolution 19-05 and Adopt the proposed 2020 budget, the motion was seconded by Councilman Goode. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A Motion was made by Councilman Goode to approve resolution 19-07 approve the tax increase, the motion was seconded by Councilman Wade. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A Motion was made by Councilman Goode to approve 19-06 to set the date and hearing dates, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Marylin. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A Motion was made by Councilman Goode to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Councilman. Wade The motion passed all in favor.**