

**Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday August 10, 2021**

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

**Those in Attendance:**

Danny Goode

Spencer Park

Mark Nelson

Kendall Crittenden

Marilyn Crittenden

Chief Giles

Dustin Grabau

Dennis Goudy

Murl Rawlins

EMS BC Provost

Fire Marshal Neerings

Fire Warden Morgan

BC Fitzgerald

BC Sessions

BC Provost

Kierstan Smith

**Minutes**

**A motion was made by Councilwoman Crittenden to approve the minutes of July 15, 2021 fire board meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.**

**Warrants**

**A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to approve the warrants as presented in the amount of \$190,619.02. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nelson. The motion passed all in favor.**

**Chiefs Report**

**Selection of Architectural Firm for New Station**

Chief Giles: To bring everyone up to speed of where the commission has been, we sent out RFP to architects. 7 of them have responded and we interviewed them about a month ago. We selected 3 and interviewed a week ago today. There are 2 that are top runners. It's tough to select and was a unanimous vote of the commission. I am bringing it to you today to see what your thoughts are. I guess for me the deciding factor is the percentage of what they charge us. That's the reason I voted for AJC. Blalock was the other candidate.

Councilman Crittenden: Those are the 2?

Chief Giles: Yes, AJC and Blalock. Blalock is at 6% if its under 8 million and 5.5% if it's over 8 million. AJC was less than that.

Councilwoman Crittenden: How much were they?

Chief Giles: They were 5%. Just for quick math if it's a 10-million-dollar structure that's \$100,000. Both of them had great points. I guess my decision was just finance wise both of them would be great, I think. I think both of them had great negotiation and representation between the general contractor and the owner as the district on any discrepancy. I would ask Dennis or Dustin to speak to as they were both there. They are going with its all up to you to make the decision, but I wanted to see what your thoughts were before we decide this. This is a huge thing and like I say either one of them would do an awesome job. I would be really satisfied with either one of them.

Councilman Crittenden: I don't know AJC. I know Blalock was one of the ones involved with Heber Light and Power on their new building. I was impressed with their process and what they did. To save that 1% cost difference if there both equal that way would be a big decider I guess.

Councilwoman Crittenden: So I am taking it that this is a typical thing to do a percentage of the cost of the building rather than just doing a price for a job.

Chief Giles: Yes, that is generally how most of these architects and engineers do it.

Councilman Nelson: Do you have anything to add Dustin?

Dustin Grabau: We had a rigorous process. We brought back those 3 and I agree with Chief. I think those 2 firms would be an excellent job. There was a little disagreement on the top 2 firms, but I think we would be well served by either.

Councilman Nelson: Thank you

Dennis Goudy: I would just say exactly what they are saying focus on customer service and interaction with contractors. Again, I think both of them would do a good job.

Councilman Park: Does the contract have any provisions? We just witnessed this with JSSD/Twin Creek. We had to hold off on a bid because it was double. If it was this year we probably wouldn't build the building. In your interviews, nothing came up to lead us to believe that we can hold off a year. We ran into this with JSSD. We said we were going to try this next year.

Chief Giles: Actually, all of them spoke to that an building costs. All of them were together on thinking costs are going down. Best case April we will break ground, maybe May. The architects are going to take

this for the next couple of months and probably bid it in January or February. That was the schedule that was thrown out. You had a good point Spencer and yes all of them spoke to that.

Councilwoman Crittenden: They are not even starting the architects until spring or are you talking breaking ground in the spring?

Chief Giles: Breaking ground in the spring.

Councilwoman Crittenden: And you would build even if the costs were still high?

Chief Giles: These fire stations are a specialty. Not every architect or firm can do them. It is a pretty limited group that does these. AJC is doing 3-5 stations for unified fire currently. They are all in different stages. Some are being built and some are still being designed. What they look at is the square foot price and all of them brought a square foot price to us. Blalock was a little lower, I think they were at \$395. Looking at some of the unified stations that are being built, Layton was actually about \$380 it was a guaranteed bid. I can't think of the correct term but it was not able to exceed. There's a lot of factors and it's a pretty tight window with what these architects do. I think we are pretty comfortable with where we are at. Even with prices going up we will at least need the architect done. This is literally just the one step. That's where we are at. I was hoping I had a decision made. I personally think the money part outweighs. Both have great experience. It's a tough decision, they were both great and would do a great job.

Councilman Park: Dennis do you have any experience with either of them?

Dennis Goudy: I do actually. Both firms will do that correct? My experience is working with people in Salt Lake City. The type of system they use in working with the contractors. We believe both firms will do that. That is the experience I got. We went out and got references on them and some of them were tied to our peers. My peers, Salt Lake City, really likes Blalock. Like chief just said, UFA has 5 stations either in progress or going to be built. I just met with the deputy chief of operations of UFA the other day. They said they are very happy with the work that AJC is doing right now. You can kind of see why have almost an equal decision. When it comes to the money that may be the other part.

Dustin Grabau: Kristen, did AJC conform with you that we can use that

Chief Giles: I think is a great idea and it could save us some money in the long run. We need to verify the percentage.

Dustin Grabau: I think that addresses Spencer's concern to. We are part of the design process so there are things we can tweak. We will have the crews give their input.

Dennis Goudy: Actually, both firms talked about preordering if they know the shortages. They would work aggressively with the contractor once the word go is applied. They have a team that looks at shortages and their job is to identify what the shortage is so we can order it now. I was impressed with that attitude. Like the chief said, it's not like any other building. Fire Stations have some extreme things. A fire station is so different.

Councilman Crittenden: Do you need a motion?

Chief Giles: Yes, if you want to make a decision.

Councilman Crittenden: Isn't that why you brought it to us?

Chief Giles: Well, I brought it for discussion because it honestly boils down to the flip of a coin. I guess the deciding factor for me personally was finance. If its 5 million, \$50,000 on a project you don't think that's much but that would probably buy a lot of interior products.

Councilman Nelson: What is the architectural firm design building at?

Chief Giles: I have some background with Spencer's help to, I think we can keep it somewhat in check.

Councilman Park: We don't want them to design it and then try to circle out of it.

Councilwoman Crittenden: There are some things when the design them that cost more so their cost may be less up front but if you have looked there design over I would second the motion.

Chief Giles: If the commission has anything to say now is the time to speak. I mean usually there is one that shines a little brighter but both of them brought their A game I thought.

Councilman Park: Is there any further discussion on the motion?

**A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to select AJC as the architect. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.**

#### **New Firefighter Hires**

Chief Giles: So you should have a list in your packet. The hiring committee done a similar process as we did with the architects. They narrowed some down by application. We interviewed roughly 23, I wasn't part of the committee. They narrowed it down and then we wanted the crews to have some say. We had the top 6-8 picks do ride alongs with the crews. The crew then rated them on what they did, did they stay busy, were they on the phone, etc. All sorts of comments were made and that helped narrow it down to the top 5. They did a 12 hour shift in midway and a 12 hour shift at Jordanelle.

Kristen Richardson: We did 13 ride alongs.

Councilman Nelson: Is there a residency requirement?

Chief Giles: Good question. This is probably one of the first hires besides the last hiring that we hired a few outside. They use to come up through the volunteer side but we have exhausted that. We have exhausted the local folks to. There are some firefighters that live here that work go to Salt Lake or Park City and surrounding areas but they want a lateral shift pay wise. I just don't think at this time I want to tackle that just to have someone new come and make more than someone who has worked here. It's kind of a balance. There is one that lives in midway if I am not mistaken. I think the rest of them are from out of town. Actually 2 out of the 5 live here. What happens when we need these guys like the volunteers, if they are in Salt Lake or Provo they won't be able to respond. That was always a real strong point back in the day. Back when I tried to get on you had to live inside the city limits. That is when it was Heber Valley. That's when they went to the district so they could go outside of the limits. Anyway those are the names. I just bring them for you to see. The budget was set to hire these 5. We was thinking about doing a 12 hour shift in the day. But just with the interaction we have actually had 2 firefighters leave. There was a total of 3 when I budgeted but 2 have left.

Councilman Nelson: These are full time permanent employees right?

Chief Giles: Yes.

Councilwoman Crittenden: EMS and Fire trained?

Chief Giles: Yes.

Dennis Goudy: One of the really big savings for the county is if we take an applicant off the street with no real ems/fire background and we run them through a fire academy which is generally about a 16-week program. You're going to spend roughly \$50,000 putting them through training. Now Utah Valley University has the recruitment academy for fire. It's one of the best in the nation. I am not trying to advertise I am just saying that as a fact. These kids go and pay for that out of pocket and then come to this department. It was amazing. They are well trained and have their initial certifications. They are at minimum a basic emt. That just saved the county \$50,000 on each of those 5. That's \$250,000 and they can hit the ground running. A lot of departments are looking at that. Unified fire and Salt Lake City still have their own academies but now they are really struggling because they are spending \$50,000 to recruit. Then they get a better job offer that pays better at another department they leave and they start over. So they are now rethinking the process. We as a county need to look strong and aggressive at a recruitment and retention program for firefighters in Wasatch County that would involve a significant pay raise to bring those firefighters to levels that they can afford to live here and to raise a family here. We don't want a firefighter to look at the McDonalds sign where they are making \$15/hour. A firefighter's thought is they don't want to go save a life for \$13/hour. Somethings wrong with this, in other words you can make more and McDonald's cooking hamburgers than you can as a firefighter. So we need to be aggressive. When I say aggressive, I mean as a commission and as a fire board we need to look at the realities of the future. This isn't our design this is just the way it's going. Chief at USA said he is going to put together a raised package together that keeps firefighters there. That is going to cause a ripple effect in the State of Utah.

Councilman Crittenden: That is an issue with our police department to. It is a reality

Dennis Goudy: It is a reality, and we just need to keep that in our heads. The most important things we can do right now is hire a training people to save us money and then work almost simultaneously in what the future brings. There are a lot of predictions that this will be another Lehi. That is up to you folks.

Chief Giles: With that I don't think we need a motion it was more for information.

### **Mill Levy Discussion**

Chief Giles: I know we have been at this for a while. The reason this discussion is on there is to keep our mill levy were it's at every other year. This is every other year. I know I have had some discussion with Mary and what we are going to do with that money. To raise it from I think .000684 to .000710. That's where I would like to go. It's going to generate about \$200,000 to our budget. Just to give you an idea of what that money is. I would like to use some of that money to add to some of these wages like Dennis brought up. He's not far off. I think they are starting wages at \$15. If you think about it our guys, see what soldiers see. I'll tell you it's devastating sometimes. You don't think about it, but I will tell you when we go pick up these people and extricate them you don't forget them. I can tell you the first crash I went on. It's a tough job. But that is where I would slate some of the money towards. As Dennis has

indicated try to enhance some of these wages a little bit so we don't end up losing some. When one starts it it's a chain reaction. It's not just the firefighters its everything in this valley. Just think about it.

Councilman Goode: I am completely in favor for it. This is the plan that we put out to everyone a several years ago and every other year we will hold the mill levy steady. We had some research to support it. We knew we were underfunded at the time. If we don't support this, we will fall further and further behind. I am completely in favor for this. I just wanted to say how grateful I am for the advisory board that has now evolved into the commission. Thank you for sticking with us. We had some tough times. In my idea I think our goal should be on January 1<sup>st</sup> maybe we can modify that into or evolve that into a governing control board. If that is to soon evolution needs to take it a little slower, I am okay with that. For me I would like to set a goal as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of next year.

Councilman Crittenden: What is the time line for this? If we were to choose to do this what is the process?

Chief Giles: We have to make notice to the state and to the county. That's why I wanted to visit with you to see if you're in favor or not before I start down that road. We will have to have a hearing in December. If we do this the district won't receive the money until December 2022. It would be a year out. We are literally 3 out from where we started as Danny said. The notice is still there. Kristen and I have been on it. I know we have visited with the state several times and Joey here. I wanted to see what your thoughts were before we pushed it down the road further.

Councilman Crittenden: Have you done any research or anything else to see what it would raise a \$300,000 to X amount? Has that analysis been done?

Chief Giles: No, but \$200,000 is spread county wide. It's going to be small. I was actually surprised it only raised it \$200,000. I am pretty sure that is the amount he told us.

Councilman Crittenden: What we are at now is .000678? Is that what you said?

Chief Giles: Yes, I believe. We could get with them but as you may know I can't remember what the county value is. \$200,000 out of that is probably going to be fairly small. Regardless of how small it is. It is coming out of taxpayers' pockets, and I want them to understand where this money is going to. It isn't just because it has been 3 years, it's because the need is there. Some of the guys at work its apart of their volunteer. They can't afford to come and work. It's something that really needs to be addressed. We have been lucky so far.

Councilman Crittenden: Can we look at those numbers next month?

Chief Giles: Yes, I can bring them to you. I can bring an average in. I would imagine the average is a lot more than \$300,000.

Councilman Park: I also think we need to look at all of the payroll if we are going to raise the wage.

Chief Giles: We can do that at budget time to and see where it is at. I will bring that to you.

#### **OTHER**

#### **Financial Presentation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter & WCF Financial Statements**

Kierstan Smith: So at the end of your financial statements there are a lot more notes than what I will go in to. I am just going to hit the highlights, but I will follow up with any questions that you have run into. We are just going to focus on revenues and expenses. When I scan to the bottom you will see our revenues in our general fund are about 37.3% at the end of the second quarter. It is going to be low because if we go back up here to the top you will see that our tax revenues, we of course have not received them yet. We won't until December, January, or February. We will then put them back into this year within that 60-day period. We have a couple of other things that are actually a little high. Your event standby fees. I actually look at this as a huge plus. It means that covid did not have as big of an impact on your events as it did last year when we were budgeting. That is not just a positive outlook for the Fire District but for the county as a whole.

Councilman Crittenden: What is that event standby? Like when you are there at the derby or rodeo.

Kierstan Smith: Basically, anything they do to have you come in to have medical or fire on standby. Down here in the bottom you will see this transfer from other funds. What this is is the impact fees are over in the capital projects fund so as we transfer impact fees from the capital projects fund over to the general fund. So as we transfer the impact fees from capital projects fund to the general fund you will see they transfer here. We have completely reimbursed the general fund for the funds that were used as part of the land purchase. We are in the process of reimbursing the capital projects fund outside of impact fees that \$950,000 that we transferred to begin with on the land purchase. There is about \$600,000 left to reimburse that money back into that PTIF account but we are getting really close. On the expense side of things you will see that we are at 60% of the expenses and about 50% through the year. It is a little high because there are some things that are front loaded like your insurance. Some of these I have highlighted. Utilities are also going to be higher than when we budgeted before because partway through we are now taking over utilities for the midway station and the heber station which weren't in our original budget. We were not planning on that but we have taken the over from the county?

Councilman Crittenden: So, we will need to do an adjustment for that?

Kierstan Smith: Yes, we will need to do an adjustment there. Down on our debt service principle and interest we will have another adjustment because we paid off that debt. On the capital projects side of things this is where we record all of our impact fees. You will see that our impact fees have will have an adjustment. We budgeted at \$450,000 impact fees to come in and we are already over a million. This just shows you what growth is happening here in the valley. We are using it to reimburse general fund which is what we have been doing. We are slowly paying back the PTIF and capital projects fund. It is looking really good. We are maintaining the budget and staying within what we can. Like I said, at the very end you will have all of those notes. Other than that unless you have specific questions you would like me to address I'd be happy to.

Councilman Nelson: What is the MIDA impact on that?

Chief Giles: We probably need to go into executive session.

Councilman Park: Have you been involved with our new MIDA coordinator?

Chief Giles: I have met him. Clair and I briefly visited with him. If you look at the resolution with MIDA. We can create a special assessment area to generate money in the area. Mike has said a lot of that work

has been done. Each parcel has to be identified that is in that project. A lot of that has been done already because of the tax purpose. I want to see how it all shakes out. We have done an assessment before. They are a 5 year deal. Every 5 years you have to redo them. I know Kendall has been through one. We have been sued over both of them that we created. Luckily enough if there are any winners in a fight we won. That is something we can look at Spencer. I'm glad those properties have been identified because I know it cost the district a lot of money back when Liz was here. I know she sent me a bill because they had to attached every single one. So if that answers your question, yes I have been in contact.

Councilman Crittenden: Well our intention I think was to have him involved in all aspects of MIDA.

Chief Giles: Yes, and he will be a big help there.

Councilman Goode: I think our biggest chance for success there is going to be to have the MIDA coordinator meet with Ernie and the commissioners. I think you will have the greatest amount of success there.

Councilwoman Crittenden: I also think that any information you have with MIDA needs to be shared. He will be our coordinator so he will need to have all of the information.

Chief Giles: Yes, he will be my go to.

Councilman Goode: If you keep communication as much as possible, It will be much easier to make sure everything is communicated clearly.

Chief Giles: I will now turn it over to Dustin

Dustin Grabau: Council, thank you for hearing from the fire advisory commission. In lieu of holding a regular meeting this month because of the many things going on including some of the fire activities that chief has already described, we did not have that regular meeting. What we did do is meet with the architects twice. We did meet to discuss the deputy chief applications and those are advancing as well. We feel that there are strong candidates in that pool that we think we will have good options. I think that the process for the architect has been very robust. We brought them and spent a good amount of time with them. We appreciate your insights on them. The other things that we are hoping to be able to do this next month is address more of our normal items than what was reviewed in the previous meeting. There are a few things that we will add to that list as we ramp up. Probably including the truth and taxation process we will probably talk about as a fire advisory commission so that we can provide that recommendation to you. Can we answer any questions you have?

Chief Giles: We just need a closed session for a minute. I think Rob will be on.

**A motion was made by councilman Crittenden for potential litigation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nelson. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to end the closed session and to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nelson. The motion passed all in favor.**