

Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday October 12, 2021

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

Those in Attendance:

Danny Goode

Mark Nelson

Kendall Crittenden

Marilyn Crittenden

Spencer Park

Steve Farrell

Jeff Wade

Chief Giles

Deputy Chief Hales

Assistant Deputy Chief Provost

Dustin Grabau

Dennis Goudy

EMS BC Provost

Fire Warden Morgan

BC Fitzgerald

BC Sessions

Kierstan Smith

Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Nelson to approve the minutes of October 12, 2021 fire board meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor, Councilman Park abstained.

Warrants

A motion was made by Councilman Park to approve the warrants as presented in the amount of \$264,703.92. The motion was seconded by Councilman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.

Chiefs Report

Chief: There are some extra people in the room today because we got the Cooperator of the Year award in 2020 but with Covid, that delayed the presentation. I am going to have Fire Warden Troy Morgan to introduce these folks.

Morgan: Thanks Chief, I would like to welcome Dani Barnes who is the Director for Forestry Fire State lands, Jason Curry is the acting deputy direct for the Forestry Fire State land. Brett Ostler who our State Fire Management Officer; Wade Snider is the Assistant Fire Management Officer and you guys know Ryan LaFontaine is the area fire management officer. So, we welcome the State up here to present the award we received as a county as the operator of the year.

Brett Ostler: Thank you for having us here today, it's quite the honor. As mentioned before, Wasatch County was given Cooperative of the Year in 2020 but due to Covid and some of the restriction we were under, we were not able to get this award out to them. So, what we would like to do here is talk a little about the help that Wasatch County has been to the fire program. With Covid, you know we have had quite a bit of changes with testing and making sure firefighter were good to go out on the line. We couldn't have done that without the help of the health department. They came out to each incident and were really quiet a help to us. We also received a tremendous amount of help from road department up here as we asked, and we just wanted to make sure we were able to honor Wasatch County as a whole. It wasn't just health department or road department; it was the entire county that teamed up. It was really significant in the cooperation and help they give to the fire program. So, we would just like to thank Wasatch County and so we have a plaque here. It reads "State Forester Award 2020, Corporator of the Year: Wasatch County. For outstanding service to Utah's wildland fire program." We just want you guys to know that we appreciate all the effort and help you guy provide us. So, thank you very much.

Chief: I'd just like to echo his comments. This County works together really well, from dispatch to Brandon's crew on the road to health department. It's like he said, it takes all of us. I know Mike and Dustin have been a big help on sending folks out to help us fight these and to keep our cost to a minimum cause I know as Steve said, these wildland fire can be devastating and awfully costing. So, we appreciate the award and the State for what they do. They have been a great resource and bring a lot of training also.

Over the last several months we have advertised, interview, written and oral interviewed for a Deputy Chief. The commission has been great with it, they have interviewed and done a great job. I would like to present the chosen names; For Deputy Chief it is Eric Hales and Assistant Deputy Chief Jason Provost. If they'd come up, please. These two interviewed, we actually had a lot of applications, very formable people, very educated. It's a big thing in the district and one of these two men will take the reigns over from me when I decide I'm done. Anyway, I just wanted to introduce them in Fire Board and like I said, we will get this out to the public, but I just wanted to introduce to the Fire Board first.

I can't give enough thanks to the advisory commission, they did a great job in selecting and working through these people. I had the pleasure of interviewing the top three and it's amazing the people and their talent that are actually here.

Chief: With that, I'll move onto this Fraud Risk Assessment. Everyone should have a copy of it in that packet. I'm pretty proud that we are actually where we're at with the moderate. I would like to get it lower but if you actually look through there, you can see the points scored. It does very good at the Fraud Risk Assessment that they go through and look at. It's pretty humbling to actually go through there and see where you scored. It gives you an idea of where you need to improve on some of these items and so it's a great thing to have done every year. If I'm still around next year, I'll get to present it again and hopefully we even lower then. Very grateful for our admin staff and Kierstan all making sure we are within the law.

Just a little heads up on what's coming; we are actually going to be getting an ambulance in about 3 weeks to a month. That'll be our 2022 purchase, we are going to try to purchase one every year. There is also going to be a pumper that will be delivered in Mid-January to first of February.

If you actually looked at the warrants, the med bed that we discussed previously for our Ranger will be hopefully coming within the next few weeks. We will get it ready and have the tracks put on that vehicle within the next two to three weeks, so we can at least go over at least asphalt and snow.

Farrell: Chief, on that ambulance- adding a new one to the fleet, are we getting rid of one? And how do we dispose of them? Do we auction them off?

Chief: So, we had that sealed bid a couple months ago. We had the out in front of Heber Fire Station and actually did very well with bids. I mean, up there Oregon where we get our trucks-where we are getting the new one; they sell these chassis for \$500 to \$700, and I think we got \$2500 or something out of the chassis we sold. So, we did well with those bids. And what we have been doing is, Eric has been handling the EMS side of things on that and we rotate the one that has the most mileage per year and the old that have good boxes on the back, we remount them and send the old ones to Vegas. Save about a \$100,00 to \$125,000 in taxpayers money. Any other questions?

M. Crittenden: I have one, going back to your fraud assessment, on page 2, where the questions are at. Questions #3 and #9, both are kind in that financial area. What are you doing to work towards that? It looks fairly simple to take care of; like it's just re-allocating who is doing what. Adding some more people for double checks with the finances, credit cards, things like that. I'd like to see that taken care of which should be fairly easy to do.

K. Crittenden: How does that medicating control work on saving?

Kierstan Smith: That's where I come in. I am looking through charges on the credit card when I do month end closings. The mitigating charges.

K Crittenden: So, we kind of have that in place already? Just not what they want.

Kierstan: Right. You don't have enough staff to separate out duties to the extent that they would like to see happen, and most small districts don't. Which is why you throw in litigating controls.

Chief: If you remember Marilyn, we just hired another administrative assistant which I think will help with that next year. To try to keep those duties separate, like Kierstan said these smaller departments- the same people have to do the same job sometimes.

M. Crittenden: Also, I just have one other questions. I'm sorry for not grabbing it before our discussion moved away. But under A under #2; that first one: "The conflicts of interest" - Can you explain that?

Kristen Richardson: Marilyn most of those are that we are updating our policies & procedures and we don't have those policies yet. So, when we update our policies & procedures, and that process is finish that is going to add quite a bit of points on. But we only have partial on that policy, so it is one we need to update, which we are working on doing.

Chief: Next year we can maybe do a comparison on this year and show you where we've improved with those, but this gives us a base line.

I don't know if its official or not, but the ISO rating has been finished and we have dropped that down. So, I think, as we go out to the media, on our tax mill levi hold level-I think that's going to be an important thing. Because that's something this district in previous councils have promised to get that ISO rating down and we had it drop 2 points so that's huge especially for these commercial sites and properties.

Goode: Chief, have you had an opportunity to talk with the fire commission about becoming the governing control board?

Chief: We have had some discussion about that, yes.

Goode: Are you ready to talk about that or are you need to do more work?

Chief: Yeah, I think we are kind of in the process of doing that, getting our commission formalized and done. I think the comfort of this fire board too, with the professionals we have on. But yes, we have talk about it, even on Thursday at our meeting.

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Farrell: Dustin, do you have anything for the Board?

Garbau: Yes, so we did actually talk about the fire advisory commissions roll and being an administrative control board. What we are doing is, we have a number of projects that we are working on right now and those projects include, working on our bylaws. So, our intent is to pass bylaws for how we act as the fire advisory commission, which could be a launching point for what an administrative control board would look like and how they would govern themselves. We probably need to have a more in-depth discussion with you as a council on what your vision is for that board and what timeline you would like to see on that. I know some would like to see that happen sooner rather than later so I'm not sure if that's a subcommittee of you working with the fire advisory commission or if that's something we do in this meeting next month or at a future date. But that's something we should address specifically, with specific direction from you on what you want to see out of us.

Goode: Dustin, I would like to see the fire commission change or evolve into the governing control board by Jan 1. I don't know if the rest of the council feels that way, but that's my opinion.

Nelson: I don't feel that way. I don't think it has a timeline.

Farrell: I think it's something we should discuss.

Park: I don't feel that way either.

K. Crittenden: I feel it's something we should work towards.

Grabau: Okay, so we'll at least continue with some of our tasks and some of the things we have been working on. We met last week and talked about congratulating Eric and Jason on their new positions, updates about the fire station. We talked a little about the financing options for that which we are going to dive into more within the next month or so on how we are going to address those need for that Fire Station. I think they are coming along as far as the architectural design goes and I think we have a decent handle on it. There are some future grant opportunities that we're going to have to take advantage of for some other projects. But we are hoping we are still on track for this to start next spring, which is the plan right now.

We talk about our tasks lists which include a number of things we are working on. I know you've seen that list before; I don't actually have it in front of me right. I actually have a meeting I have to run to in a few minutes, so I've been focusing on that which I apologize for. But the Fire Advisory Commission did review the warrants that you approved so I don't if you want us to report prior to you approving those warrants, to get our feedback on it but members have asked questions about it and feel very comfortable with the warrants.

Park: They had two signatures on the warrant list.

Grabau: Okay, you saw those. Good. So, I don't know if that's enough for you if you see those signatures on those warrants.

K. Crittenden: I think it just lets us know they are reviewing it.

Grabau: Yeah, and that is what they have been doing. They regularly meet before this meeting to go through the warrants just so that our advisory commission is aware of them.

We did talk about our process of adopting and updating the fire districts fees. So, we've asked the fire district to come back and our next meeting we will dive a little bit more into that. I think this is the gist of our last meeting. One thing we wanted to talk with you, we intend to provide to you an executive summary of our fire advisory meetings and we're just curious if you feel that's something you want. What we are hoping is that after we have those meetings, we can provide that summary and you can use that for future meetings. But the timing is a little tight because usually by the time we're meeting you already have your agenda for this one so maybe a little after the fact if that's okay.

Farrell: I don't know if we need an executive summary of all your meetings. I think we'd like a summary of the items you want with the board.

Grabau: Yeah, that what I'm thinking. This is a bullet point list of the big topics of things we've gone through not a report every month.

K. Crittenden: And you can present that here, now.

Grabau: Yeah, I think the hope is that we want facilitate communication between you and the fire advisory commission. So you are aware of what we are working on, and we are hoping that it can be a

two way communication. As your aware of items that you'd like us to work on, you can also share that with us and give us that direction.

M. Crittenden: I would like to be advised of something before we vote on it, that's for sure. I would like it to be before not afterwards.

Grabau: Yeah, like the fees-the model that we'd like to us is to review them at our level and then make recommendations to you about changes to those fees. We will try to keep you apprised of that process, but it is a work in progress. I don't we will adopt all of the fees at once, I think we will take them a little at a time. But I think going forward, we would work on something, make a recommendation to you knowing those things are coming from the advisory commission.

Farrell: Wouldn't there be a public hearing on those fees?

Grabau: There would be, so it would just be a recommendation from us that then you would have to go through the public process on adopting those fees. If there is any other direction or things you would like to see from us, just let us know. If not, we will keep proceeding as usual.

Goode: Dustin, if you could just send us an email of the agendas then we can go from there. That would be a good starting point.

Grabau: Yeah, that's a good idea. I can get those sent out. Thank you.

Farrell: Chief, we got on the agenda there's a tax increase and tenant information, is that something we would discuss in here?

Chief: Yep, we have to have this out, I think, deadline is before your next Wednesday's meeting. Which is why I think it's on there, so the things I have to have approved is the intent to increase. And that's to hold a mill levi and for the purpose of wages, the dollar amount of the increase is \$200,000. The average market value of a home in Wasatch County is \$668,392. The average taxable value is \$476,679.

K. Crittenden: Those numbers aren't matching what I have on this form in front of me.

Chief: That might be an old one. This has just been updated.

Kristen Richardson: When you enter it into the tax website it rounds it to the nearest hundred, so I think it just say 668 on your notice. It automatically rounds it.

Chief: The current tax rate is .000684 and proposed new tax rate is .000710. That is a difference of .000026 which I have to have on a public record.

Farrell: And that's the same tax rate you had last year?

Chief: Two years ago, we had the .000710 and that probably not going to be a mean. By the time we get the certified tax in June, that 71 is probably going to be 69. Just the way things are going, the values drive that mill levi down so we are going after 71 but its probably going to end up being 69 or 68 depending on the property value, but that means it could go up instead because it depends on that value. Which I just needed to make known to the public. And this should go out on our tax notices which should be printed on Friday, I think. I visited with Diane Burgner today and it sounds like they have to be out two weeks prior to election, or maybe it's 7 days prior.

Kristen Richardson: They have to be mailed out 7 days prior, so I believe by October 26th.

Farrell: Did you want a motion this?

Chief: Yes, I would like one.

A motion was made by Councilman Goode regarding the proposed tax increase. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.

Goode: I just wanted to say again, congratulations on the new positions. I also wanted to point out we had previously agreed to hold the mill levi steady every two years and this is the scheduled year to do that, so I am in support of that.

Chief: Yes, and with that we are at the final stages of the impact fee study, so you'll see that go out. We are going to try to get it advertised, it has been on the web but the finalization from Suzy Becker should be within the next week to 10 days. And as you know, that is a 90-day deal once we've approved it.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Crittenden to go into close session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Park. The motion passed all in favor.