

## Wasatch County Fire Board of Directors Meeting

December 14, 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

EMS BC Provost

Fire Warden Morgan

BC Fitzgerald

BC Sessions

Kierstan Smith

### Minutes

Chief: We have one small correction, its on page 6 under "Other". When Dustin talks about service fees and making sure we are covering the cost of those. It says "making sure we are overcharging" that should state "make sure we are not overcharging"

**A motion was made by Councilman Nelson to approve the minutes of November 9, 2021, Fire Board meeting, with the correction. The motion was seconded by Councilman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.**

### Warrants

**A motion was made by Councilman Nielson to approve the warrants as presented in the amount of \$447,214.38. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wade. The motion passed all in favor.**

## Chiefs Report

Chief: I don't have anything to really report today. We have our budget hearing tonight at 6pm. Are there any questions on this budget before the hearing tonight that I can answer or entertain?

## OTHER

Justin Grabau: Advisory Commission has actually been able to meet twice since our last Board meeting. At our last regular meeting we discussed a number of items, we didn't get to all of the items on the agenda, but we did talk about the continued discussion about the fees, and we are making good progress there. I think we are looking at a number of changes which is going to require more work and longer to review.

M Crittenden: What fees are you looking at?

Justin Grabau: All of the fire districts fees. We have all of the fees that the fire district currently accesses and would like to access. They are in the process of doing some of the analysis for justification of those fees. We had a rebus discussion about organizational chart within the fire district staff level. We also briefly talked about the bi-laws and that's when we created a subcommittee of the commission members to go through and develop those bi-laws further to propose to you on how we plan to operate on going as the advisory commission. So, we did make a lot of progress with that, we aren't 100% there but we are making progress.

So that is kind of where we are at. We didn't get to some things on the agenda but in January we do plan on addressing the fire code and having a discussion on that.

M Crittenden: Has the advisory commission looked over the budget?

Justin Grabau: Yes, we have looked over the budget and provided some feed back about presentation, on how to present the budget tonight and some of the justification. And honestly it is the acknowledgement that this is specifically for compensation increases, that we feel are very needed at the fire district and I think that's a message that citizens will support because they realize it's a very competitive environment out there. Its true for the County, true for the Fire District, true for McDonalds even.

Anything else? Thank you.

Chief: Just on brief thing, I have been in contact with the attorney whose been out with his wife in the hospital. He's back now and Susie Becker, myself, Rob and one other person from Zion's met up last week via phone. I think Rob has it in his hands, but I think we'll be out for advertisement if not this next rotation of The Wave than it'll be the next. So, we have to public notice, and we will have a hearing for impact fees as well as Zion's will be up here for a presentation. But we are moving ahead there, it looks like we are going to be within a 30-day window of getting that started. And once Council approves it, we are 90 days from charging.

Councilman Farrell: When was the last impact fee study done.

Chief: 2 or 3 years ago. 2017 I believe.

Councilman Farrell: Are going there going to be big changes?

Chief: Some is up a little and some is down a little. It's actually reasonably close. I don't think its going to be refundable by any means.

**A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to continue session at 6:00pm. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nelson. The motion was passed all in favor.**

Farrell: We are back to have Fire District Board meeting for the month of December. The point of this is to have a Proof of Taxation hearing as well as budget hearing. So Chief, you want to start with Taxation first?

Chief: Sure, in the past the Fire District went about 25 years without a Mill Levi increase and I know its confusing to a lot of folks, but the Mill Levi get drilled down every time the value in the county goes up. So, we're only able to collect a certain amount, so through the years I think it was about 13, we started a process of trying to catch up to the curve. In 2019, we actually inherited EMS which I think is a great savings to the taxpayers, to actually put this under the Fire District as we were doing a lot of the work and it increased our budget a couple of years ago. This year, I have kind of made a point to hold this mill levi, it isn't that I want to raise taxes but it's keeping up with inflation. And the legislation won't let us do that without these truth in taxation to actually do that. We got a hold of the State, seen where our mill levi would generate and it was close to \$200,000 to bring this mill levi up to 000710. So, it raised our fire tax 3.84% increase over last year to bring that up. We are going to try to do this year 2 years to try to keep up with inflation on this budget. The \$200,000 I have put towards retention of our employees, and I think everyone knows that employees are hard to hold, and the fire district is no different. So that is kind of where we are going with this, not only is it \$200,000 but it being paid towards the employees to hopefully keep them here.

Farrell: Any questions for the Chief from the Council?

M. Crittenden: Is this increasing salaries or getting more employees?

Chief: It is for increasing salaries and for two new employees in 2022.

Farrell: Any other questions for Chief from the Council? We will now open this for open comment-is there any comments from the public related to taxation and the tax increase posed by the Fire District?

Public: What is a mill levi?

Farrell: Mill Levi is a tax rate that supplied against assessment value to generate the dollar figure for the budget.

Public: So, the word "mill" is used like you can have half a penny so something less than a penny would be considered mills? So, we are talking about fractions of a penny for every dollar.

K. Crittenden: The mill rate that's set at 5 over the public and the maximum that can be set. And as Chief said, as the access evaluation of the county goes up the mill rate goes down to determine the same amount of money. With the truth in taxation, were saying we are going to hold that to what it was last year to earn that additional \$200,000 based off new growth in the county.

Chief: It is hard to understand a mill levi from a common person, when it's explained you think that stays up but drives that mill levi down.

Public: How many employees do you have?

Chief: I believe 45 full time employees.

Public: I know your busy in Midway.

Chief: We are busy everywhere. The retention of these employees is well earned. These folks, we ask them to do things a lot of people in this room couldn't do. I am just pleased to have the crew I really have and hopefully we can keep them.

Farrell: Any other comments? Seeing that, we will close the public hearing and go back to the Fire Board for action.

**A motion was made by Councilman Park to approve resolution 21-05 accepting the mill rate. The motion was seconded by Councilman Goode. The motion passed all in favor.**

Farrell: Motion passes. Now Chief, do you want to go over the proposed budget.

Chief: Can we do the amended first?

Farrell: Yes.

Chief: So, this is an amendment to the 2021. As you actually look, that second column to the right is the amended budget; the original budget is the one to the left. The top portions above this is the revenues of the property tax. We actually get them this month from the county for the 2022 budget. As you can see the growth of the county on the top line, it is right around \$300,000. It is what new growth added to the budget on our revenue side. As you can see the revenues actually came in above what our original was on my revenue side, I'm really hesitant to get them to high and overshoot that budget for our revenue so the biggest one is below the ambulance revenue, last year we budgeted \$850,000 and we went to \$900,000 as you can see. That's probably a little low but it is based on our calls which as we've said, we are busy. So, the 2022 budget, I didn't want to get it up where our revenues are now so we raised that to \$1.2 as you can see there. Most of them, I mean wildland firefighter reserve, there revenues are based on call outs and what wildfires we have. I really don't like to get that number high, if we don't have any that number would be zero. Plan and inspections are another difference we have there, it is truly based on how busy it is. I mean, this year was super busy, and we are projected next year to be about the same; only on revenues I really don't want to overshoot those.

We can coast down to expenditures next, as you can see, the 3<sup>rd</sup> column from the right is what was budgeted and the column 2<sup>nd</sup> to the right is our amended. Looking at that, as you can see, we have moved some of money around in some of these areas, none of them were at the bottom line and we came out very well, but we did have to transfer some of these funds from others to make the difference up. Most of them are down but if you look at utilities, that went up from our budget but at the time when we set this budget last year we hadn't had a meeting with he county council to find out what portions we were paying for the Midway and Heber stations and both of those buildings we occupy most of the time so we took over the utility bills on those, which is the reason that number is so far off.

Professional service is a little up as well, that is because we went out and hired Zions Bank to do an impact fee study but just looking throughout, I don't see anything else that is super out of line.

If you have any questions, just let me know.

K. Crittenden: Equipment & Repairs, does that mean repairs or is that maintenance?

Chief: Both, we are just trying to keep this fleet afloat. As many of you know, our fleet was depleted a few years back. We aren't quite back to the top of the curve yet, but we are getting close. We have some nice equipment thanks to the taxpayers of this county; we have been able to acquire those over the last few years and save some money.

Farrell: So, we have an increase of about \$2 million over the closed budget that we need to amend for 2021?

Chief: That is correct.

Farrell: Any questions from the Council on this amendment?

Kierstan Smith: Don't forget about the Capital Project budget.

Chief: Why don't you talk about that Kierstan?

Farrell: Is that for this amendment?

Chief: Yep, well we transferred funds from the general fund to pay off the property in Heber and now we have paid that back to the Capital Projects fund.

Kierstan: And we are going to do some transfers like when you're taking about the extra fund in 2021, you'll see we are planning on shifting \$950,000 into the Capital Projects fund so we have money going forward with the new building design. Construction will have funds in there to help with the cost and with the impact fees we are significantly higher of course with the growth you see here in the county. Trying to be conservative for next year because you just never know.

Farrell: Thank you. Are there any other questions on the amended budget for 2021? If no further questions, we will entertain a motion to pass 21-02 amending the 2021 Budget.

**A motion was made by Councilman Goode to approve resolution 21-02 to amend the 2021 Budget. The motion was seconded by Councilman Parks. The motion passed all in favor.**

Farrell: Now let's move on to the 2022 budget.

Chief: As you've been looking at the spreadsheet, it's the column furthest to the right, 5.412 that's roughly where the \$200,000 that this tax increase is going to go into. As you look through that, some of those figures on our revenue side are conservative. If you have any questions on those, I'd be happy to entertain.

As we scroll down through the expenses, you can see the salary and wages go up some. That is where that money is going to be put. There aren't any big chunks into any of that, I think we raised the training certification up about \$19,000, as we keep growing and with all our employees, we are trying to keep the training up and do as much as we can in house but there is always training outside that is required to

keep there certs up. Couple of others that are pretty small like the Professional Services, we're just trying to get through January and February with our impact fee and service fee. So, any questions on that?

Farrell: Questions for the Chief on the budget? If there is nothing from the council, we will open this up to the public now for any comments on the 2022 Proposed Budget for the Fire District.

I see no comments. We will now close the public hearing and go back to the Council. I think its safe to say with the growth we are seeing, and it comes to the certified tax rate next fall, this increase might be wiped out by then.

**A motion was made by Councilman Crittenden to approve resolution 21-03 for the 2022 Budget. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nelson. The motion passed all in favor.**

Chief: Resolution 21-04; setting a date and time of our Fire board meetings will be every second Tuesday of every month at 3:30pm.

**A motion was made by Councilman Nelson to approve resolution 21-04 for date and time of fire board meetings. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Crittenden. The motion passed all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Councilman Park to close session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Goode. The motion passed all in favor.**