

**Minutes East Grand Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting
December 6th, 2023**

Board Directors Present: President Garth Hein, Vice President Donald Maurais, Treasurer Rachel Hoyhtya, Secretary Richard Kramer, Pension Chairman Blaine Faulkner.

Staff Present: Chief Todd Holzwarth, Fire Marshal Dennis Soles, Volunteer Coordinator Steve Waldorf, Office Manager Kristen Rybij, Assistant Fire Marshal Ryan Mowrey, Volunteer Coordinator Jed Henry.

Director Garth Hein opened the Board of Directors meeting at 18:07 p.m. There was a quorum of Directors present. There were no additions to the agenda. There was no public.

The Board reviewed the November 15th, 2023 minutes.

- ❖ Director Donald Maurais moved to approve the November 15th, 2023 minutes. Director Rachel Hoyhtya seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Financials: Due to the short turnaround between board meetings, there is not much to report. It is noted that LPL's statement has not yet been received, therefore this information has not been updated in the Cash Flow report.

- ❖ Director Richard Kramer moved to pay the bills. Director Donald Maurais seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Director's meeting was recessed at 18:13 p.m.

The Board of Director's meeting was re-opened at 18:15 p.m.

Fire Prevention Bureau Report: The Resort's new workforce housing building is occupied. Dennis finds the Upper Fraser Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant a pleasure to inspect. He noted the development reviews for 850 Badger Ln and the new Railwater project.

Chief's Report: SB23B-001 was passed at the close of the "Extraordinary Special Session" in November. This brought about an additional \$40K reduction in residential value per residential property alongside a reduction in the RAR from 6.765% to 6.7%. Todd presented a letter from Governor Polis requesting that counties, municipalities, and special districts further reduce their mill levies for 2024's revenue collection which came attached to a "toolkit" to help guide us through the process. The Governor claims that he has signed bipartisan legislation which gives us a temporary "statutory authority" to reduce our mill levy rate without the risk of permanent loss of revenues in "an uncertain future." We are "uncertain" about these claims, and hesitant to make this move as we are currently already operating on reduced mill levy rates as a consequence of the passing of our revenue stabilization ballot question. We are also leery of a Constitutional Amendment on the horizon which aims to restrict all entities to a 4% cap on budget increases. There has been considerable progress made at the South Station. The lower slab and bracing are in place and all retaining walls are completed. They backfilled the center area where the underground plumbing was installed and are ready to go next week for the last on-grade slab to be poured. The Concrete block (CMU) scaffolding and mortar mixing area are staged and they are close to building walls. We are looking at the last week of January for steel delivery. Burn season is open and the USFS has about 10,000 piles set for prescribed burning. We are about 80 calls ahead of last year at this time.

Training Coordinator Report: Our hydraulic tools have been tested and maintained. Most outfits are currently moving toward battery powered tools. We are interested in that as well, but right now our tools remain in good operational status. Steve noted that the crew held ice rescue training last night and this led into a lengthy discussion over the fatality and rescue efforts made on Lake Granby this last weekend. The search was suspended on Sunday when the weather handed us white out conditions with a 3-4' chop. It was resumed on Monday, where CPW eventually recovered the young man's body in 124' of water. We feel certain that our team could have recovered the body with our ROV had we had better watercraft and a way to anchor in that depth of water. This incident, although horrific, is testament to the potential for the continued success of our water rescue program. This experience also shed light on the need for equipment additions and the creation of further operational protocols / training for our Headwaters Rescue Team. There have been 13 car wrecks this last month and an increase in general alarm calls as second homeowners and tourists flood the valley for the holidays. The Tower is partially out of service due to a malfunction of the voltage regulator.

There were no public comments.

Board Business: After much research and discussion with our legal counsel, it is confirmed that we have the option to use either our traditional method of calculating revenues or our recently implemented method created after the passing of our revenue stabilization ballot question in 2019. Kristen recalculated our newly anticipated Assessed Valuation by implementing SB23B-001's parameters and created a chart detailing the difference in tax revenues charged to properties worth \$500K, one million, and two million dollars under both methods of revenue calculation. The difference in property owner's tax bills between the two methods is nominal and can be compared to the average cost of a few Starbucks coffees a month. The difference in tax bills between the two methods may be mostly insignificant to the property owners but proves to be of substantial importance to us. The traditional revenue calculation method gives us more revenues which will be used for the construction of our South Station. This increase in projected revenues will also ultimately decrease the amount of monies we have to borrow through a lease purchase. This savings is then passed down to the taxpayers. The Board had a lengthy discussion over which revenue method to use and ended in agreement that we use the traditional method of revenue calculation with 5.861 as our mill levy. This was voter approved in 1998. With the potential for a future 4% cap on revenues and the threat of recession and declining valuations, using the traditional revenue calculation gives us the stable funding we need for operations with a miniscule affect to our constituents. It was noted that legal confirmed that we have NOT ever over-taxed our constituents, as this was a concern regarding the new calculations and mill levies certified in the last two years. There will be additional language included in the final budget documents / resolutions addressing the potential State backfill our District could receive in 2024 in response to the revenue decreases caused by SB23-001.

- ❖ Director Donald Maurais moved that the Board authorizes the calculation of 2024's revenues, based on 2023's assessed values, be executed using our traditional pre-2022 budget year model of revenue calculation using 5.861 as our base mill levy. Director Richard Kramer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The 2024 Budget was then presented. Todd explained that the budget was final with the exception of numbers regarding General Property Taxes, Treasurer's Fees, and our TABOR Reserve as these are all dependent on the final valuation due to us by the County no later than January 3rd. He proposed that the Board adopt the budget tonight contingent on a motion to allow these changes to be made when the final numbers are received. Kristen will then prepare the final budget adoption packet and resolutions to be signed by the President and Treasurer outside of our regular meeting before filing with the County and State. This movement will then be ratified by the Board at the regular January Board meeting.

- ❖ Director Donald Maurais moved that the Board of EGFPD gives authorization to the President and Treasurer to review and proceed with final approval and signing of 2024's Budget Resolution A – To Set Mill Levy, Resolution B – To Appropriate Sums of Money, Resolution C – To Adopt Budget, and the Budget Transmittal Letter, outside of any board meeting, once drafted and finalized after receiving the Final Certification of Values from the Grand County Assessor, due to us no later than January 3rd, 2024, with final certified Mill Levy contingent on the final certification of values given to us by the County Assessor. Director Rachel Hoyhtya seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristen then presented a proposed revision to how we deal with accrued vacation after presentation to and discussions with Todd. Previously, the Board agreed to increase our vacation days per each tenure block as suggested by the Market Study done in 2022. It was also suggested we increase our max accrual from 160 to 272 hours to match the increase in vacation days. We have been unsure of how to deal with accrual payout alongside the recent laws implemented to combat the "Use it or Lose it" philosophy that many employ. It was confirmed that we are in fact exempt from this law as a government agency, but Todd requested that we keep the system of paid vacation days and vacation payout we have had in place for the last two decades. It was decided that we will increase the max accrual to 272 as suggested and pay out only upon severance or termination. The Employer's Council noted that it is best practice to have an accrual cap and NOT pay out every year as this is a rarity only seen in the private sector. A capped amount only paid out at the end of employment avoids unfunded liability, gives a clear-cut policy, and does not force employees to take vacation time every year that they cannot swing. The Board agrees with this. Kristen will revise our policies to reflect. . The Board set the workshop for noon on January 16th.

- ❖ Director Donald Maurais moved to adjourn the meeting. Director Rachel Hoyhtya seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 19:51 p.m.

Garth Hein

Donald Maurais

Rachel Hoyhtya

Rick Kramer

Ryan Barwick