

Cedar Mountain Fire Protection District

Public Hearing Minutes

December 5, 2019

3620 Mammoth Creek Road, Duck Creek Village, UT 84762

Board Members Present: Diane M. Adams, District Clerk
Dan Parsley, Treasurer
Robert Shackelford, Member

Diane Adams, District Clerk-

It is 6:00 p.m. We are calling to order the Public Hearing for the 2020 tentative budget for CMFPD. I would like to cover the highlights of the budget rather than going line by line. I will give the categories, highlights and numbers. I would like this to be an interactive meeting. If you have a question as we proceed, please, raise your hand and we will call on you. There is an abundance of information for the 2020 Board to take over next year so I have given them the information and logic behind a lot of the cells in the budget and how we came to the information.

Members of the public in attendance (see attached sign in sheet) numbered 18 in addition to the Board Members and CMFPD staff.

District Clerk Adams proceeds to highlight the main categories in the budget. An emphasis is placed on the Service Improvement Project income and the building of Station 3 in Swains Creek which she confirms is being built in case there is any doubt about it. SIP income is partially loan and partially grant with the greater part being the loan.

Questions and comments from the public were:

*Under the category of payroll regarding increase in budget line for Assistant Fire Chiefs-
What is the possibility that more assistant -fire chiefs will or will not be hired?*

Answer-

The increase is for 2 assistant fire chiefs that Chief Rieffer wants to bring on board. To insure that each shift has a fire chief to comply with state mandates.

Does Chief Rieffer get to decide whether these people get hired or does the Board?

Answer-

If the Board approves the budget and has the money, then he can hire them. He doesn't get to decide without the Board's approval. The money is allocated but we are looking at some other revenue incomes that have to be proven.

So those people won't be hired until that's proven?

Answer-

No, there was an agreement that they could be hired but it is subject to the income. It will be up to the Board

How many full time employees on the fire department right now?

Answer-

Right now there are 8 salaried employees and this includes the Firefighters, Deputy and Chief. Every day there are 2 firefighters that work 48 hours on and 96 hours off. These new assistant chiefs would work with a single crew and stay on a 24 hour shift as incident commander.

So if I understand what you are saying, we are not increasing the amount of money that this fire department is spending? We are not increasing the bottom line because we are offsetting whatever additional personnel that Chief Rieffer is asking for by getting additional revenue?

Answer-

We're spending more but we are hoping to have more revenue. This category has increased compared to last year to include more personnel.

Comment-

Just to clarify, where I'm coming from, it's fine that there are big changes being made within the existing budget but we as taxpayers? I am all for making changes and adjusting the personnel as needed but I don't think it's a good idea to come back and ask for more money from the taxpayers.

Answer-

That is not the plan. Your assessments are exactly the same as they have been \$200 dollars.

What were the total expenses last year?

Answer-

\$1,837,862 dollars. You can see that the majority of this year's budget is the SIP.

A question from the public is rephrased by District Clerk Adams. How are these numbers going to affect Member Charles Hightower's projections for the SIP?

Answer-

We have asked him to make new projections. We've provided all of the budget information to Mark Anderson at Zion's Bank. He is aware of the status of the grant and of the loan and he will be responsible for the new projections.

If we are allocating money to spend that we were originally putting toward the SIP and now we are putting it toward payroll and fire suppression and a few other things, I just wondered how that was going to affect the budget?

Answer-

Member Hightower has been presented with this question and Mark Anderson has been made aware. Member Hightower and Chairman Robbins both have this budget but they were not able to attend the meeting tonight. They are going to have to evaluate the numbers again. It would be a great question to present again at the Board meeting on December 14th when the entire Board is expected to be here.

Comment-

First loan payment is not due until 2021 so it is not reflected in the 2020 budget.

Comment-

A summary is made which includes some department history and improvements which have been made including moving from a volunteer to full time staff. The procedures and personnel involved in responding to an incident and the further improvements that Chief Rieffer would like to make.

Where are the volunteers in the picture now?

Answer-

In the 2019 budget we had \$2600 dollars budgeted for volunteers. In the 2020 budget we have \$4150 dollars so we are still very dependent on our volunteers. They are still an integral part of the Fire Department.

There is a discussion regarding the definitions of volunteer and reserve staff and the role of each. The intent is to always have a four person team to respond to an incident and one of these could include a volunteer.

Comment-

Traffic accidents are Highway Patrol's responsibility, they are the incident commanders. We are potentially there for extricating people from vehicles. The Forest Service is the incident commander for forest responses when they take over from us. The subject of incident command is being made too much of an issue. Because the only thing we are responsible for is fire up to the developed areas and in the community.

Answer-

I appreciate your comment. Please come to the December Board Meeting. I hear what you are saying but this is the budget that has been prepared. This is the Public Hearing that we are

mandated to have to present to the budget to the public. Whether the 2020 Board approves these changes or not remains up to the Board.

Comment-

I'm afraid we are going to become top heavy and that is bad in an organization that is this small.

Comment-

I wanted to reiterate what we are paying back for the loan. I know we have to keep our debt service ratio at 1.25 percent and I know that Charles targeted that by the year 2025 we would not have met that without an increase to the fees.

Answer-

That has been stated all along in public meetings

Comment-

But, because of the extra expenses you are now adding and looking at the year 2024 and not 2027 I just wanted to make sure that the increase won't happen earlier.

Answer-

Charles Hightower has been given these numbers and Mark Anderson will have these numbers as soon as the Board approves them to be able to make that determination. I believe Mark Anderson will be at the December meeting to talk about this.

Essentially, how many full time staff are we adding?

Answer-

We are adding 2.

District Clerk Adams-

Are there any more questions regarding the budget? The minutes from this meeting will be distributed to the Board Members before the meeting on the 14th of December so they are aware of what your concerns were. I thank you all very, very much for coming this evening and with that, I am closing the public hearing.

Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:49 p.m. December 5, 2019.

Minutes Approved by _____ Date _____
Diane M. Adams, District Clerk

Signed copy on file at 3620 Mammoth Creek Road.