

Cedar Mountain Fire Protection District

Public Hearing Minutes

February 17, 2017

3620 Mammoth Creek Road, Duck Creek Village, UT. 84762

Board Members Present: Mike Petullo, Chairman - absent
Frank Gagliardi, District Clerk
Brad Robbins, Treasurer – absent
Diane Adams, Member – absent
Chuck Brechler, Member
Bob Shackelford, Member – absent
Don VanDine, Member

February 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. this is the Public Hearing for the Cedar Mountain Fire Protection District. District Clerk Gagliardi, Member Chuck Brechler and Member Don VanDine are in attendance and the Chief is here. The purpose of this hearing is to get public input on a proposed assessment increase and proposed budget amendment.

District Clerk Gagliardi will briefly state why these two things are proposed and then turn the hearing over to the Chief that will address the concerns and the rational for why 4 fulltime additional full time firefighters are considered appropriate.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated that several months ago the board approved a Strategic Plan and part of that plan included a list of priorities and as a result we find that we need additional resources in order to accomplish these things in any kind of a reasonable time frame. By reasonable time frame he is looking at 5 to 7 years out, not in the near term. The priorities short term were 4 additional firefighters, a deputy chief, renovations to this building as well as replacing the roof that is leaking as he speaks, sub-station at Swains Creek, new truck for the Chief. The truck he has is 12 years old. Ambulance, ultimately a sub-station at Zion, resurface the parking lot at Station 1 and Station 2, down the road a sub-station at Strawberry, and replacement equipment down the road, to name a few of the things. This is way we are looking at an increase of the assessment and modification of the budget. The budget modification only included two things; Payroll for 4 additional fulltime firefighters, and monies going into Capital Improvements. Those are the only two areas of the budget that there is any change from the budget that we approved in November. So he will turn the meeting over to the Chief so they can get any thoughts, concerns, questions, information, that the public has.

Chief Tuttle's presentation covers the 24/7 coverage detailed in the attached booklet in the minute binder. Firefighter Recruitment from 2013 to present was presented. Call Volume Increases from 2012 through 2016. NFIRS 100 and 300 Series from 2012 through 2016 was discussed: Structure fire from

2012 to 2016 300 % increase, vehicle fire 100 % increase, wild land fire 700% increase, MVA without extrication 900% increase, MVA requiring extrication 700%, BLS responses 9,000% increase, mutual aid given 400% increase, mutual aid received 300 % increase.

Question from the audience: What is the actual area this department covers?

Chief Tuttle responded 94 square miles. It goes from the Kane County sign coming up on Hwy.14 from Cedar City to Hwy. 89. Mile marker 108 to 101 ½ .

Chief Tuttle went on to explain what has happened with having the two paid firefighters in regards to the after hour emergency walk-ins to the station, response time with the full time paid firefighters here, and station and vehicle maintenance.

Chief Tuttle said the goal was to have an EMS response within 1 minute of the time of dispatch and a fire response within 2 minutes within the time of dispatch during the coverage times. Of the 83 calls that occurred while our full time firefighters were on duty, 80 of them had E71 en route within 1 minute. 3 of them had E71 en route within 2 minutes (MVA Responses). 100 % of the responses had emergency personnel and equipment en route within our goal of 1 minute for EMS Calls and 2 minutes for fire or MVA calls.

Chief Tuttle went on to explain the benefits of hiring four additional full time firefighters to the community. Initial response with a minimum of two personnel 24/7, station coverage 24/7, improved response times 24/7, improved customer service 24/7, improved station security 24/7 and improved personnel safety 24/7, public relations 7 days a week, public education 7 days a week, more consistent preventative maintenance, consistent station maintenance, consistent station cleaning, more visibility and increases security, outside of district recruitment.

Chief Tuttle explained the annual costs per full time firefighter. \$22,000 yearly salary, Utah retirement \$4,202, payroll tax \$2,200, insurance \$7,200, vacation (2 weeks per year) \$2,751, sick time (2 weeks per year) \$2,751 and uniform allowance \$600 per year. Total cost per year \$41,704. Annual cost for 4 additional full time Firefighters is \$166,816.

Chief Tuttle talked about the benefits of 4 additional full time firefighters: 24 Coverage 7 days a week 365 days a year, 48/96 hour shifts with a 3 shift rotation, two person immediate response 24/7, supplement the existing Volunteer Force, better station and fleet maintenance 24/7 and consistent station coverage. He then showed on a graph the 48/96 showing a single shift and then the 48/96 graph showing three shifts.

Chief Tuttle talked about the current fire fee is set at \$125.00 per year and how it is broken down per month and day. The fee increase to cover the additional four paid firefighters would require the fee to be increased to approximately \$17.00 per month or \$.55 per day. The difference of or increase is approximately \$6.25 per month or \$.20 per day.

Chief Tuttle stated the dividends are what the citizens get when the CMFPD mitigates an emergency incident. A return on an investment for our fire department is realized by shift coverage 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This equates: how fast CMFPD can initiate a response to the 911 call, how fast initial responders are able to arrive on scene, how soon, the patient begins to be medically assessed,

How soon the patient receives treatment, how fast we are able to stop the burning process, potential property saved, potential lives saved.

Sallie Shackelford asked if we were charging a fee when CMFPD goes out on a medical call or any type of call? Chief Tuttle stated there is no fee charged.

Brent Carter is against the fee increase. He stated it is like we are buying a Cadillac, but driving a Ford. He owns 14 vacant lots in Zion View and that is a lot of money to him. He did state he did not realize the fire department did all this EMT stuff as well. He does not have a cabin up here and even if he did he would be in it for only a couple of weeks a year.

Chief Tuttle asked him if he was on one of his lots and he fell and broke his leg. Do you want someone to come immediately to take care of him. Start treating you, issue some pain medication while the ambulance is on its way. The ambulance is about thirty minutes away.

Brent Carter said well sure.

Chief Tuttle stated that is what we are trying to do.

Brent Carter asked what Kane County does, what does the Sheriff's office do?

Chief Tuttle stated that once we took over Cedar Mountain Fire Department we are a fire department so we mediate fire and medical emergency. Without the ambulance, which the closest one is in Alton, then it goes to Orderville and then to Kanab. They are dispatched also, but it is a matter of time it takes for them to get here. We are there immediately. Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday we have coverage and in less than a minute they respond.

Brent Carter said he understood all that and thinks it is good, great that we provide that service, but his are vacant lots. Why can't we charge the people who live here full time more and people who have vacant lots less?

Chief Tuttle responded that the County came up with the assessments and they assess all the lots. It is a lot fee whether is it improved or unimproved. Chief Tuttle remarked that he has two lots. He pays two fees. The one he lives in and the vacant lot next to him. Chief Tuttle understands what Brent Carter is talking about. He can't answer why it was set up that way.

Brent Carter stated on top of everything else his lots are out at Zion View and we couldn't even get out there to fight a fire right now.

Chief Tuttle said for medical we could get out there, but for fire right now no.

Brent Carter said please don't get him wrong, he thinks the Fire Department and EMS is great, but if he has to pay this amount 14 times over for something he does not get for six months out of the year, or maybe 12 months out of the year if he is not up here, he is not in favor of it.

Chief Tuttle stated this is why we are having the public hearings to find out what the public wants. The Board will make a decision on this when all the hearing are held. They want public input so they can make the best decision that they can. Chief Tuttle stated he is pushing for it as it affects him how he responds and handles situations. He is salaried, whether he gets this or not he gets the same amount of pay one way or the other. He wants it as it helps him when he gets to the scene, he has additional resources. When they are here and he is in Swains he knows they will already be on scene to start their assessment and treatment.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated this was not an increase in service, this is just the ability to guarantee you that you will have some service seven days a week. Right now there are times up here there are no volunteers available, so if you call 911 no telling what you would be told and you can't count on someone responding whether it was medical or a fire.

Chief Tuttle stated there are no paid fire departments in Kane County. Even the ambulance is a volunteer service.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated that this proposal does not mean we do not need volunteers. If only two firefighters show up they cannot go inside a structure, they are prohibited from going in. Regardless if there is someone in there or not, they cannot go in there. The requirement is if two go in two must be outside, 2 in- 2out. There is a guideline in place that no one goes on a call unless there are two people here to respond.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated that unimproved lots are typically where the fires start and we want to get on them as soon as possible and protect your invest on that property. You don't want all the trees to burn down when you go to sell. You want to have a marketable piece of property. Zion's approached the fire department about keeping the road open all year round out there. Both years the property owners have said no they do not want to do it yet, but it is always an ongoing question out there. You have water and power out there now so there is the ability to provide fire services on a realistic basis all year round if the roads open. If the roads get opened up, you may well have that service. In our long term goals we are looking to have a sub-station out at Zions to help with your insurance cost and things. We can't do right now as you are too remote.

District Clerk said that the \$.20 a day the Chief is talking about is not all for the salary of the full time fireman. About half goes to the Capital Improvement Fund as he talked about earlier. We have both those issues that we are wrestling with and how do we best do with what you want from this fire department and how do we do it as economically as we can? The assessment has not been increased in years and years, probably around ten years. The Board in general is not wanting to raise the fee and have been looking for other ways, but have not found a way of not raising the assessment and still want the services typically out of a fire department. We do understand your concern as most of us do have more than one lot and have the same challenge, so we are not taking it lightly and we are looking at this very hard.

Question was asked if we know the number of full time residents up here?

District Clerk Gagliardi stated that was a really hard question as the post office does not have a clue. He thought around 200.

Member Brechler stated 270 and that includes Elk Ridge, Swains, Strawberry and the village up here. District Clerk stated that was not a lot of people, but in the summer upwards to 5000 to 10,000 people. Part of the challenge with the 270 full time residents in the winter is getting volunteers both physically able and up here full time and willing to put in some time to help out as a volunteer. When you only have 200- 270 people to choose from and most have grey hair, it can become a bit of a challenge. If we had a lot of young folks up here it would be a lot easier. That is why we are looking for four fulltime folks.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated we are having three more public hearings and one meeting before we make a decision. So, if you come up with thoughts, let the Chief know or the Board Members know, or just call the station and one of the secretaries will write down your comment, positive or negative, we want them both. He appreciates the frankness with your concerns and that is a valid concern and that is not the first time we have heard that. One of the rules in the State of Utah is that we cannot assess differently for different properties. It has to be the same assessment. We are not on a tax bases if we were then you can go by mill that is based on property value. We are not on that and we are a local district so we don't have the ability to tax that way. We have an assessment that is a flat amount per year that every property owner gets to absorb. If the Board decided to go with this assessment then you will see it on your tax bill in November this year.

Member Brechler stated that we would not receive the monies for this from the tax bill until December, so we could not hire four fulltime firefighters on until next year.

District Clerk Gagliardi stated the way it works in Utah is you have already paid your taxes for this whole year. Our operating monies are from revenues collected last December, two months ago. So we won't see this money until a year from now.

Brent Carter asked if this was the Board right here.

District Clerk Gagliardi answered this was half the Board.

Brent Carter said so you could decide if this is going to happen or not?

District Clerk Gagliardi stated the seven member board would decide, in May.

Brent Carter said so you guys can just vote and charge us more money?

Chief Tuttle said they could, but that is why we are having these meetings. The Board was elected by the public and they are here to represent everyone. If the Board did whatever they wanted to do without the concern of what everyone wanted then they wouldn't be elected in again.

District Clerk said legally the Board could just vote and not have the Public Hearings, but they choose not to do that.

Brent Carter was not trying to insinuate anything, he just did not realize they were elected officials.

District Clerk Gagliardi said if the public does not like what they are doing there will be four openings in December for Board Members. Anyone interested in running for the board position let the current board know and they will help the person apply. This has to be done by June. We as a Board are only required to hold one public hearing in order to make a change to the budget or to the assessment. We have chosen to have two last year and four this year for a total of six to talk about this as we want to get as much public input as we can on this matter and we want the citizens up here to understand why we are even looking to do this. The next Public Hearing is March 25 at 6:00 p.m. and one in April and May.

District Clerk Gagliardi said he appreciates the time everyone took to come to the meeting and just cause you came tonight doesn't mean you can't come again and voice your concerns again or your approval.

Public in attendance were: Kevin Davies, Dru Runion, Carol Gagliardi, Sandra Van Dine, Irene and Tom Jackson, Brent Carter, Cheryl Tuttle, Connie and David Runion.

It is 7:00 p.m. February 17, 2017 and the Public Hearing for Cedar Mountain Fire Protection is closed.

Minutes Approved by _____ Date _____

Signature on file at 3620 Mammoth Creek Road