Fire & Rescue Authority Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 9, 2012

Members Present:

Mayor Cecil Gutierrez
Rural Board Secretary Greg White
Asst. City Attorney Teresa Ablao
City Councilor John Fogle
Public Safety Admin. Dir. Renee Wheeler
Division Chief Ned Sparks

Rural Board President Dave Legits
Fire Chief Randy Mirowski
Division Chief Merlin Green
BSC Roylene Sterkel

Absent Members:

Board Chair Jeff Swanty
City Manager Bill Cahill

Visitors:

Rural Board Member Mike McKenna
Battalion Chief Greg Ward
Battalion Chief Tim Smith
Firefighter Dan Engelhardt
Firefighter Zach Sullivan

Call to Order:

Mayor Gutierrez called the Fire & Rescue Authority Board meeting to order on the above date at 1:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Secretary Sterkel conducted roll call.

Awards and Presentations: None
Consent Agenda:
1. Rural Board President Legits moved to approve the July Board minutes as written. Councilor Fogle seconded the motion and it carried.

Regular Agenda:
2. Consider a Resolution to Adopt the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority 2012 Strategic Plan-

Chief Mirowski said that the Strategic Plan has been in process for over two years and this is the final version for the Board to consider. He asked if the Board had any questions or concerns about the final document. No one on the Board had any questions. Councilor Fogle moved to approve Resolution R-006 to adopt the 2012 Strategic Plan. Rural Board President Legits seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the Board.

3. Review the Second Quarter Budget Report – Budget Biz

Public Safety Admin. Director Renee Wheeler discussed the budget information for the 2nd quarter as it was written in the Budget Biz. She talked about the supplemental requests that were submitted for approval. Councilor Fogle asked the Chief if he knows what station the Type 6 Engine will be housed in. Chief Mirowski said that we are not sure at this point which station it will go to. He explained why we need another Type 6 Engine in addition to the two that we already have. The two that we have now are showing their age with maintenance issues and both are owned by the Rural District. The City has 5,109 acres of open space to cover.

Renee reviewed the costs associated with the High Park fire incident. We will be submitting the costs for the Masonville Task Force patrols to FEMA on Monday and should recover some of those costs. Councilor Fogle was glad to see that we were proactive in that effort. Mayor Gutierrez commented about how incidents like these are not only about the costs but more importantly the “human capital” with people putting in long hours and being affected by the stress.

4. Consider Rural District Service Delivery Contingency Planning –

Chief Mirowski discussed the issue paper submitted to the Board and about how hard it is to make the kinds of decisions, related to service level reductions that the Board may need to make if future Rural District mill levy elections do not pass. He said that there are two primary outcomes from following the options
listed in the issue paper:

1. A two-tiered response – Rural vs. City
2. Overall reduction of services in the Rural District

If a future mil-levy is not passed by the Rural District voters, the current 18% contribution, required of the Rural District by the IGA establishing the Fire Authority, will not be able to be met after 2013. Chief Mirowski said that voters indicated that the May election for a mil-levy increase was problematic for three reasons:

1. The mil levy increase that was asked for was too high (4 mills was asked for).
2. There was no end proposed for the increase (a sunset date).
3. There was not a definite answer to what would be lost if it didn’t pass.

Councilor Fogle said that with the upcoming election we need to give clear direction to the voters. We need to let them know “how much”, “what for”, and “why”. We need to get the information out to the public in any way possible to gain support.

Rural Board President Legits said that the majority of costs associated with the Fire Department are operations (wages). His suggestion would be to stop running EMS calls in the Rural District. The group discussed how hard that would be operationally because it’s not always clear where the City and Rural jurisdictions start and end, as well as the fact that people use cell phones a lot and those don’t track by an address in the dispatch center. Also, it will be hard to determine the cost savings of eliminating EMS, or reducing fire-rescue services in the Rural District. Chief Mirowski said there is also a reliability and sustainability issue, as addressed to the Fire Authority Board at the July meeting. He explained what equipment and staffing would respond, both from LFRA and TVEMS, on a life threatening call. Renee said we are already understaffed so we can’t really cut stations or people.

Councilor Fogle asked if there might be a way to get the Rural back to the previous 13% contribution that would be sustainable should the mil-levy not pass. Unfortunately, this would put us back to the City having to pay more than their share, with a revenue allocation formula based on call loads.

Rural Board member Mike McKenna from the audience talked about the short time we have to plan this election and get the information out to people. He said the last election failed because there were no consequences and decisions need to be made this time as to what will be lost if the election fails. He said that people are aware that their ISO ratings will probably be going up next year, which will cost them more for insurance. He feels that telling people there will be a fire
station in the Rural District would be good information. This is just one election to meet adequate service level funding and there will likely need to be additional elections every five years (in 2017 and 2022) to sustain needed service levels and meet increased costs.

Chief Mirowski said that there are no indications that ISO ratings will go up next year. We are due for an evaluation from the ISO in 2013, but that has not been confirmed and even if and when that occurs, it doesn’t mean the ratings will change. He talked about how important it is to get to 3 people on every rig and the differences of what can be done on a scene with the extra person.

Mayor Gutierrez said that the Mayor and City Council do not want to tell the Rural District what they need to do. Rural Board President Legits said we must make an impact on the voters and let them know how they will be affected if the mill levy increase does not pass. Chief Mirowski said we need to check with the County to see if they would respond to a wildland incident in our Rural district if we did not. Mayor Gutierrez asked the question, if we stop responding to all calls in the Rural including wildland calls, would we still need to purchase a new Type 6 Engine. Chief Mirowski said yes, and explained why. He said another option would be a reduction in our initial response to incidents. Greg White said he doesn’t feel like people understand what that means or how it affects them directly. Councilor Fogle said it really boils down to the services that are received being paid for by the people who receive those services, whether it’s City or Rural. Mayor Gutierrez asked some additional questions concerning cost savings, and cost shifting, if services were cut and/or reduced. Chief Mirowski responded that staff could put together some estimates of cost savings and some better information on how much costs would shift to the City of Loveland if the Rural District could not meet its financial obligation of 18%.

Chief Mirowski asked for direction from the board (related to the final statement in the issue paper that accompanied this agenda item): “Our staff is seeking some direction from the Board in how to construct a response to voters who ask questions about the consequences for a failed election. Also staff is seeking direction from the board in constructing a service reduction strategy and action plan for implementation should the Board decide on a course of action to reduce emergency services in the District.”

After further discussion, the Board directed the LFRA staff to develop, for future consideration by the Board, a contingent operations plan that would reduce services to the Rural District by eliminating EMS response and reducing other multi-company responses by up to 60% in apparatus and personnel to the Rural District. Councilor Fogle made that motion and Rural Board President Legits seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
As another option to address these concerns, Division Chief Sparks brought up the issue of ending the partnership (the fire authority). This action would require the Rural District and the City of Loveland to be independent of each other and responsible for their own response areas and funding (in essence, causing the Rural District to create their own fire department). The Board did not want to entertain that option at this time.

5. **Review Briefing Papers and Correspondence** –

Chief Mirowski asked if the Board had any questions about the 4 items listed on the agenda under item 5. There were no questions.

6. **Board Member New Business/Feedback** –

Mayor Gutierrez said there are two oil well applications by a company named Anadarko in process in our Rural jurisdiction.

Firefighter Zach Sullivan handed out information that has been put together by a group of firefighters as to what we need to do to help get the mil-levy passed. They will be putting together handouts to distribute. He indicated that they plan to start going door-to-door in October. The Board’s direction was they need to start that campaign in September, not October.

The Board has changed their meeting time beginning with the September meeting. They will now meet at 1:00 p.m. instead of 1:30 p.m.

With no further business at hand, Mayor Gutierrez moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

*Minutes submitted by Secretary Sterkel*