



Loveland Fire Rescue Authority Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 26, 2020
2629 N. County Rd. 7, Loveland and Via Video and Audio Conference
1:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Chairman Jeff Swanty, Director of the Rural District
Vice Chairman John Fogle, City of Loveland Council Member
Director Dave Legits, President of the Loveland Rural Fire Protection District ("Rural District")
Director Richard Ball, City of Loveland Council Member
Director Steve Adams, Loveland City Manager

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Mark Miller, Fire Chief
Emily Powell, Legal Counsel to the Authority
Greg Ward, Division Chief
Cheryl Cabaruvias, Administrative Analyst
Andrea Wright, Human Resources Manager
Eric Klaas, Battalion Chief
Alex Klinger, Fire Engineer
Ben Andersen, Fire Lieutenant
Caeden Quist, Firefighter
Matt DeDecker, Fire Lieutenant
Devon Laughlin, Fire Engineer
Matt Gage, Firefighter
Jason Goodale, Fire Captain
Ingrid McMillan-Ernst, Plans Reviewer
Melissa Kirkpatrick, Firefighter
Mark Lyons, Fire Captain
Matthew Hintzman, Fire Lieutenant
Samuel Leighton, Fire Engineer
Uriel Sanchez, Fire Engineer
Shelby Vrem, Fire Lieutenant
Kalani Sousa, Firefighter
Cole Stephenson, Fire Engineer
Matt Taylor-Thorn, Firefighter
Anthony Distefano, Firefighter

Tyler Chesher, Fire Engineer

Visitors:

None

Call to Order:

Vice Chairman Fogle called the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority ("LFRA") Board meeting to order on the above date at 1:39 p.m.

Approval or Amendment of Agenda:

No changes made to the agenda.

Awards and Presentation:

Director Adams wanted to recognize Division Chief Cerovski for the successful completion of Fire Station 7, and a job well done.

Swearing In:

None

Public Comment:

None

Consent Agenda:

- 1. Consider a Motion to Approve the Minutes from the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority July 29, 2020 Regular Board Meeting**
- 2. Consider a Motion to Reappoint Three Volunteer Pension Board Members**

Motion made by Director Legits to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Director Adams; motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda:

- 3. Conduct a Public Hearing and Consider a Motion to Adopt Resolution R-120, Adopting a Supplemental Budget Regarding the Appropriation of Monies to and the Expenditure of Monies from the General Fund for the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, State of Colorado, for the Calendar Year Beginning on the First Day of January 2020 and Ending on the Last Day of December 2020**

Motion made by Director Adams to open the public hearing on Resolution R-120. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously. Notice of the public hearing was published in the newspaper prior to the meeting as required by law. No public comment was received prior to the public hearing, and no members of the public present at the hearing desired to provide comment.

Chief Miller explained that this Resolution would move an additional \$40,000 from the General Fund to pay toward the Consolidated Volunteer Firefighter Pension Fund. He stated that due to a variety of reasons, including low present returns, lower projected future returns, and an additional person being added to the plan, that the fund is not currently actuarially sound at the decreased contribution rate previously approved by the Board..

Kristen Cummings advised that there was a typo in the Resolution presented in the Board Packet, and that it had been changed to reflect that the additional funding was coming from the General Fund.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to close the public hearing. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously and the public hearing was closed.

Motion by Director Legits to approve Resolution R-120. Seconded by Vice Chairman Fogle; motion carried unanimously.

4. Conduct a Public Hearing and Consider a Motion to Approve Resolution R-119, Adopting the LFRA 2021 Budget

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to open the public hearing on Resolution R-119. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously. Notice of the public hearing was published in the newspaper prior to the meeting as required by law. No public comment was received prior to the public hearing, and no members of the public present at the hearing desired to provide comment.

Chief Miller gave a budget presentation. He presented the calendar for budget approval, a slide showing budget reductions before 2020, in 2020 and proposed for 2021. The base budget has a 1.12% decrease from the reduced 2020 budget; however, the need to increase firefighter salaries to a competitive level would result in a total 7.11% budget increase if the salary decision package is approved.

Chief Miller stated that medical insurance has increase 5.5% for 2021. Historically, LFRA has absorbed the increases. This year he wants LFRA to split the cost of the increase with the employees at a 50/50 ratio. It would cost \$106,294.08 for LFRA to absorb the entire increase. If the increase cost is split, LFRA's share would be \$63,269. While the City of Loveland has the employee cover 80% of the increase, Chief Miller believes asking employees to make the jump from 0% to 80% in one year would be difficult. Chief Miller added that most fire agencies pay for only 60% to 70% of the total cost of medical insurance, and LFRA is currently paying 96% of the cost. Vice Chairman Fogle stated that if employees are leaving LFRA because of low salaries and not poor benefits, then he does not think it is beneficial to LFRA to pay such a high percentage of benefits when employees do not consider benefits in the salary comparisons with other agencies. Chairman Swanty added that employees care more about what they are taking home in their paycheck than their cost of insurance. Chief Miller stated that he hopes to get LFRA to an average salary with the best benefits, and that the employees are starting to share the cost of benefits, but that it will be a gradual process. Director Adams stated that LFRA should compare total compensation when comparing to other agencies.

Chief Miller presented that 76% of the budget is salaries, and that cost allocation with the City of Loveland will go up by 4% for 2021 if the budget is approved. He stated that for 2020 LFRA is on track to collect \$360,000 in impact fees.

Andrea Wright presented information regarding salary increases for firefighters with new 2020

data. She stated that Chief Staff would like to increase the budgeted \$8,609,259 for salaries to \$9,818,305, an increase of \$1,430,234. If approved, it would take the comp-ratio from 95.3 to 98.8.

Vice Chairman Fogle asked how much more LFRA spends on benefits than other agencies, and Chief Miller stated it was approximately \$3,500 more per firefighter. Chairman Fogle stated he wanted to see a total compensation comparison. Director Ball asked that Fort Morgan, Cheyenne and Laramie fire departments be added to the report, to compare with more similar departments. Chief Miller stated that LFRA does not lose employees to those smaller departments, and that the larger departments are where LFRA employees go. He also stated that total compensation is difficult to compare because every department does their benefits differently, and they are not comparable. Vice Chairman Fogle asked if there has been a focus group with employees to see what's important to them as between salary and benefits, and Chief Miller stated that the Local does their own surveys and compares LFRA with other agencies. Salary is the most important to the employees, and retirement and insurance were second.

Chief Miller stated he would like to amend slide 24 of his budget presentation. He stated that the \$1,430,234 salary increase amount listed would actually be reduced by approximately \$63,269 in health insurance/vision costs due to employees sharing half the cost of the 5.5% insurance increase. In addition, he asked the Board to approve withdrawing approximately \$215,822 of the salary increase out of reserves to cover the cost of FLSA overtime and FICA benefit costs associated with the increase in salaries. Subtracting these two reductions would bring the salary increase request to approximately \$1.1 million. Additionally, the reduction of the EM Specialist position, which was part of LFRA's 2021 reduction (approximately \$86,000) also was not included in this draft presentation. Finance will include all of the above revisions in their final budget to Council.

Motion made by Director Ball to close the public hearing and approve Resolution R-119 with the revisions discussed to the salary increase figures. Seconded by Director Adams; motion carried unanimously.

5. Chief's Report

Chief Miller reported that there are currently five staffing vacancies: four firefighters and one Battalion Chief. He stated that financially it costs \$96,489 per year less to replace those four firefighters than to have the increased overtime expenses.

Chief Miller stated that the Rural District Board approved two ballot questions: 1.) to eliminate the 2022 sunset on the mill levy and 2.) to de-Gallagherize. If both ballot measures fail, it would reduce the Rural District's revenue by two-thirds.

Chief Miller stated that the Ale House wanted to craft a brew with proceeds going to LFRA. Wilber's Liquor also brought in several \$10 gift certificated that will be distributed at the Appreciation Dinner.

Janet Bailey, long time member of FRAC, recently resigned. Chief Miller stated that FRAC is currently working on RAF and Governance Model analysis.

Director Ball asked what LFRA is doing to assist with the Cameron Peak Fire. Chief Miller stated that LFRA sent one crew for the first operational period, but that due to injuries, vacancies and other factors, there are 10 LFRA firefighters currently on light duty, so LFRA did not have available personnel to extend past that. LFRA also sent a crew to the Lewstone Fire.

Chief Miller reported that today two firefighters are being deployed through Colorado Taskforce-1 ("COTF-1") to assist with urban search and rescue for Hurricane Laura.

6. Other Business for Board Consideration

Director Adams stated that the Northern Colorado Regional Airport currently has a smokejumper and additional wildland assets on standby, 24-hours a day. He also stated that he appreciated all of the work put into the budget.

Chairman Swanty asked how much overbudget the department will be on overtime. Chief Miller stated that it won't be as bad as initially anticipated because COVID has caused trainings to be canceled and vacations to be canceled.

Director Adams stated that the CARES Act awarded \$4.1 million to the City of Loveland, with \$180,000 going to LFRA to offset COVID expenses.

7. Executive Session, if Needed

None

8. Possible Action on Any Matter Discussion in Executive Session

None

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Swanty adjourned the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

The foregoing minutes, having been approved by the LFRA Board of Directors, constitute the official minutes of the meeting held on the date stated above.



Jeff Swanty, Chairman



Kristen Cummings, Secretary

