Loveland Fire Rescue Authority Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 26, 2020
410 E. 5th Street, Loveland
1:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent:
Director Richard Ball, City of Loveland Council Member

Staff Present:
Mark Miller, Fire Chief
Emily Powell, Legal Counsel to the Authority
Greg Ward, Division Chief
Ned Sparks, Division Chief
Michael Cerovski, Division Chief
Kristen Cummings, Business Services Coordinator
Cheryl Cabaruvias, Administrative Analyst
Andrea Wright, Human Resources Manager
Melissa Kirkpatrick, Firefighter
Paul Brown, Fire Engineer
Dustin Waldorf, Fire Lieutenant
Dave Schuetz, Captain
Jeremy Adent, Fire Lieutenant
Michael Zweigle, Firefighter
Ryan Armstrong, Firefighter
Ron Hill, Fire Engineer
Erica Schmidt, Firefighter
Chris Sandoli, Fire Lieutenant
Tony Curtis, Fire Engineer
Vinnie Knickelbein, Fire Engineer
Dan Engelhardt, Fire Lieutenant
Jason Goodale, Captain
Greg Van Heel, Fire Engineer
Gina Gonzales, Fire Engineer
Dave Friedrichsen, Fire Lieutenant
Visitors:
Kammy Tinney, Pinnacle Consulting Group
Dick Minor, Retired Fire Chief of LFRA
Tim Smith, Battalion Chief

Call to Order:
Chairman Swanty 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:
None

Awards and Presentation:
None

Swearing In:
None

Public Comment:
None
Consent Agenda:

1. Consider a Motion to Approve the Minutes from the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority January 29, 2020 Regular Board Meeting

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

Regular Agenda:

2. Conduct a Public Hearing and Consider a Motion to Adopt Resolution R-114, Adopting a Supplemental Budget Regarding the Appropriation of Monies to and the Expenditure of Monies from the Capital Projects Fund and the Capital Impact Fees Fund for the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, State of Colorado, for the Calendar Year Beginning on the First Day of January 2020 and Ending the Last Day of December 2020

Motion made by Director Legits to open the public hearing on Resolution R-114. Seconded by Vice Chairman Fogle; motion carried unanimously. Attorney Powell certified for the record that notice of the public hearing had been published in the newspaper 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. The public hearing was closed.

Motion by Director Adams to adopt Resolution R-114. Seconded by Director Legits; motion carried unanimously.

3. Consider a Motion to Amend the 2018 Strategic Plan, Specifically the Essential Services Expansion “Plan on a Page”

Chief Miller stated that with the addition of three new Battalion Chiefs with the opening of Station 10, there was a need to adjust the timeline of the 2018 Strategic Plan’s “Plan on a Page”. Director Adams asked why the new burn building for the Fire Training Center is no longer on the plan. Chief Ward stated that it had been intended to be funded by TABOR override funds but no longer has a funding source, and that Staff hope to add it into the next Strategic Plan.

Motion by Director Adams to amend the 2018 Strategic Plan as presented. Seconded by Vice Chairman Fogle; motion carried unanimously.

4. Consider a Motion to Approve the LFRA Pay Plan and Associated Market Wage Adjustments, Pending Actual Fund Balance Available in March 2020

HR Manager Andrea Wright gave a presentation showing the results of a recent salary study comparing LFRA positions’ pay to other comparable organizations. It was found that for four positions, in particular, LFRA was significantly lower than nearby departments. She stated this could become a future problem in terms of recruitment and retention, and increase the cost to replace firefighters that leave. She asked for authorization to immediately increase these pay rates, at a cost of $640,000 for 2020. She stated that LFRA would take $500,000 from fund reserves, and $140,000 from the benefit forfeiture account. However, starting in 2021, the salary increase cost would be fully-burdened by the City and Rural District’s annual contributions to LFRA.
Vice Chairman Fogle asked whether the benefits packages should be decreased to increase wages. HR Manager Wright stated that employees, on average, receive $8,500 in annual benefits. Chairman Swanty stated that the amount of benefits received differs between firefighters electing family- vs. employee-only health insurance. Chief Miller said that he does not want to decrease any of the benefits from the employees. He stated that he wants LFRA's pay to be average, so that the benefits are what set the agency apart from other agencies. He stated that the police department is exactly at market average, and that is what the fire department is also asking for.

Director Adams stated that he supports the firefighters, and that the study that was conducted is not being disputed. He stated that the City used a 10-year financial plan for its long-term budgeting, and LFRA has already asked for $1 million for 2021 that is not in the financial plan. He stated that in budget planning for 2021, the City already has $8 million in expenditures over revenue that has to be reconciled. A CARE committee has been established to determine what the priorities are for the community, and possible new revenue sources.

Chief Miller stated that wage adjustments are his number one priority, and therefore a higher priority than bringing on a second Battalion Chief, and he would be willing to delay that if it helped the City to work the wage adjustments into its budget. Director Legits said that the Rural District could absorb the wage adjustments for only three or four years, but after that it would need to seek voter approval for a mill levy increase. Director Adams asked if it was possible to phase in the wage adjustments. Chief Miller stated it was not possible, because every year that wages are not brought up to average, LFRA continues to fall behind.

Vice Chairman Fogle stated that the last City election shows that the public is not interested in a tax increase. He stated that the City has the lowest sales tax and property tax in the region, and that if people want a higher level of services, they will have to be paid for with additional tax revenue. He stated that the CARE committee should consider a public safety tax, as additional revenues sources is the key.

Director Adams stated that he did not support LFRA using its fund reserves to pay for the pay rate increases in 2020, when there is no funding at this time to continue the higher pay rates for 2021 and going forward. Chief Miller asked about possibly using fund reserves to offset the City and Rural District contributions in future years, allowing them to phase the pay rate increases into their budgets. Director Adams stated this would need to be discussed with City Council, and he could not vote yes until they were brought into the conversation. He asked Chief Miller to produce data for what the costs would be if the pay raises were phased in, and if the additional Battalion Chief positions were pushed to later years. Chairman Swanty asked what it would cost to only increase the three positions that are furthest below average. HR Manager Wright stated it would be $450,000 for those three positions. Chairman Swanty stated that he would like to see these pay increases effective April 1, 2020.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to table this discussion item until the May Board meeting. Seconded by Director Adams. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Consider a Motion to Authorize the Fire Chief to Develop and Approve Operational and Administrative-Level Policies to Promote the Efficient Conduct of LFRA Business, while Governance-Level Policies will Continue to be Established by the LFRA Board**

Chief Miller advised the Board that Chief Staff are working with Lexapol to update LFRA's policies and procedures. He requested Board authority to authorize the Fire Chief to approve the operational- and administrative-level policies. Attorney Powell stated that the Board would still
have to approve or amend any governance-level policies which would include financial policies and some human resources policies.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to approve authorizing the Fire Chief to develop and approve operational- and administrative-level policies. Seconded Director Legits; motion carried unanimously.

6. Chief’s Report

Chief Miller asked Division Chief Cerovski to report on the status of Fire Station 7’s construction. Chief Cerovski stated that there were punch-list items currently being worked on through the week, and that crews should begin occupying the station within two weeks. Director Fogle requested that the next Board meeting be at Station 7. Chief Miller stated he would try to make that happen in March or April.

Chief Miller asked Division Chief Ward to report on the status of Fire Station 10’s construction. Chief Ward stated that he has been looking at fire stations in the Denver-metro area for design ideas. Front Range Fire Rescue FPD will likely be building a fire station one year after Station 10, so he is working with them to possibly work on a design together to be used for both stations, and save both fire departments money on the design.

Chief Miller stated that there have been two meetings so far for employees to learn about defined contribution versus defined benefit retirement benefits, each meeting lasting about four hours in length. When the meetings have concluded, the employees may bring a proposal to the Board.

Chief Miller reminded the Board that Fire Appreciation Dinner would be February 29 at 5:00 p.m. The keynote speak would be Major Tim Keaton with Colorado State Patrol.

7. Other Business for Board Consideration

Steve Adams thanked LFRA for its part in setting up an emergency homeless shelter the previous month, specifically Division Chief Sparks and Chief Miller.

Chief Sparks stated that the Emergency Management Conference was presently being held at the Embassy Suites, and that the following week the ICC Conference would also be held there.

Attorney Powell brought two new pieces of proposed legislation to the Board’s attention. The first is HB20-1017 that states that people would be allowed to drop off their legal and illegal controlled substances at a fire station without risk of being arrested. The responsibility of drug disposal and patient assessment and potential transport would then fall on the fire departments. HB20-1233 is an evolved version of the “Right to Rest” bill, and states that people have the right to perform basic life functions in public spaces, including any outdoor space owned by the government, as long as they are not blocking doorways or walkways.

Vice Chairman Fogle stated that there have been no applicants for the downtown fire sprinkler program. He asked Chief Sparks to make sure that money is getting used while it is still in the budget.

8. Executive Session, if Needed

None

9. 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 3:45 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.

Jeffrey M. Swanty (Chairman)  
Kristen Cummings, Secretary