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

Members Absent:
Director Dave Legits, Rural District President

Staff Present:
Mark Miller, Fire Chief
Ned Sparks, Division Chief
Greg Ward, Division Chief
Andrea Wright, Human Resources Manager
Kristen Cummings, Business Services Coordinator
Cheryl Cabaruvias, Administrative Analyst
Emily Powell, Legal Counsel to the Authority
Eric Klaas, Battalion Chief
Tim Smith, Battalion Chief
Devon Saxbury, Fire Engineer
Craig Willard, Fire Lieutenant
Gina Gonzales, Fire Engineer
Melissa Kirkpatrick, Firefighter
Zach Cain, Fire Engineer
Dan Walsh, Firefighter
Ryan Armstrong, Firefighter
Uriel Sanchez, Fire Engineer
Trevor Twogood, Fire Lieutenant
Jeremy Bell, Fire Lieutenant
Caeden Quist, Firefighter
Ben Wynkoop, Fire Lieutenant
Anthony Distefano, Firefighter
Kalani Souza, Firefighter
Greg Van Heel, Fire Engineer
Erica Schmidt, Firefighter
Tyler Austin, Firefighter
Matt Gage, Firefighter
Samuel Leighton, Fire Engineer
Dave Friedrichsen, Fire Captain

Visitors:
Kammy Tinney, District Manager, Rural District
Alan Krcmarik, City of Loveland Chief Financial Officer
Matt Elliott, City of Loveland Budget Manager
Ron Lay, City of Loveland Senior Fiscal Advisor
Matt Love, Fire Chief of Fort Myers Beach Fire Department

Call to Order:

Chairman Swanty called the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority ("LFRA") Board meeting to order on the above date at 1:43 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 April 28, 2021 Regular Board Meeting

2. Consider a Motion to Appoint Chris Klaas to the Consolidated Volunteer Firefighters Pension Board

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

Regular Agenda:

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3. **Consider a Motion to Approve Resolution R-129, Reaffirming and Approving a Fire Chief Search Committee and Hiring Process**

Attorney Powell stated that pursuant to the Colorado Open Meetings Law, it was necessary to approve a Resolution reaffirming the decisions from previous Board Meetings establishing the Search Committee, Job Description, and Job Announcement, and adopting a timeline for the Fire Chief hiring process.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to adopt Resolution R-129. Seconded by Director Adams; motion carried unanimously.

4. **Consider a Motion to Approve Extending the Station 10 Land Donation Contract**

Chief Miller stated that the current land donation contract requires that construction commence on the donated Station 10 property by June 20, 2021. It is still projected that construction will begin at the end of June, but it is unlikely that it will be before June 20th. The construction deadline extension would be for three months, extending it to September 20, 2021.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to authorize the preparation of a contract amendment extending the construction deadline to September 20, 2021. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously.

5. **Consider a Motion to Adopt the 2021 LFRA Pay Plan and Associated Wage Adjustments Effective the Second Half of 2021**

Battalion Chief Klaas presented the findings of the Pay System Analysis Team (PSAT), which was the result of eight months of work by the PSAT. The following people served on the PSAT: Cheryl Cabaruvias, Allen Cravey, Robert Carmosino, Gina Gonzales, Shelby Baker, Greg Van Heel, Linda Thatcher, Erica Schmidt, Anthony Distefano, Craig Willard, Ben Andersen, and Melissa Kirkpatrick. Andrea Wright, Battalion Chief Klaas and Battalion Chief Carie Dann facilitated the process.

The directive of the PSAT was to find a pay structure that was understandable, fair and equitable, competitive, comparable, and could fit within the 2021 Pay Scale. The options that were evaluated were time in grade, across-the-board, incentives, forced distribution, pay-for-performance (current method), and hybrid models. They used data from other fire departments, government agencies and businesses.

It was found that only one other fire department was on pay-for-performance like LFRA, and that was Castle Rock Fire Department. Castle Rock also paid for incentives, which LFRA does not. All other fire departments evaluated use some version of a step plan.

The PSAT recommends discontinuing Pay-for-Performance because it is subjective, and is inconsistent between supervisors. The PSAT recommends going with a Step Plan. Their first choice was a step in grade with a 5% variance, second choice was step in grade with a 4 & 2 model, and third choice was step in grade with incentives. The pros for a Step Plan are that it meets the directives, is administratively friendly, is compliant with the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, and is supported by extensive data and research. The cons for a Step Plan are that senior employees would feel undervalued once they max out, and drastic change could have growing pains.
20 out of 21 surrounding departments also pay Acting Pay when an employee is acting in a rank above their own for a shift, which is something LFRA does not currently do. Other departments either pay the wages of the next rank, pay $1 to $2 more per hour when acting, pay a 5-6% increase from the employees base, or give an increase of 10% after acting for more than 4 hours.

The pros and cons for LFRA’s current Pay for Performance are: Pros include attracting and retaining high performers, may increase productivity, and builds a culture where performance and contributions are valued. The cons are that it’s hard to budget, it’s inconsistent, it’s hard to evaluate objectively and maintain equality, it lags the market, it creates pay secrecy and less transparency, and it can cause friction between employees and management.

Some agencies put their administrative staff in a Step Plan, too, but it is not as common because of fewer people in those positions.

The final recommendation is to move to a Step Plan for sworn staff and implement Acting Pay. This would include a positional revision that would combine the Firefighter I and Firefighter II positions into one, and a lateral transfer would come in at a higher pay step. There would be four pay steps for Firefighters and two pay steps for each rank above Firefighter. The recommendation is to continue Pay for Performance for non-sworn staff. The PSAT recommends exploring incentives in the future, include longevity pay, education and certification pay.

Andrea Wright stated that executive staff recommends the Step Plan following a 4 & 2 model as the most effective solution, and implementing Acting Pay. Currently pay for the Firefighter position is 18% below other organizations. LFRA’s entry level pay is on target, but past that it is lagging behind. Four-year firefighters are 28% behind. Other positions are on target. The cost to implement the Step Plan as recommended would be $252,154 in 2021, which would be funded by LFRA reserves, and $683,716 in 2022, which will be a budget decision package for the City and Rural District.

Chief Miller stated that if this gap in firefighter wages isn’t addressed, there is nothing that keeps a firefighter from going to any other agency, because they all pay more.

Director Adams stated that this is a new request, so it has not been discussed in budget meetings. Vice Chairman Fogle stated that this would also impact the Rural District, and he did not think the LFRA Board could commit the Rural District and City so the proposal would first need to be approved by both of those entities. Director Adams stated this would commit the City to an annual debt stream. Chief Miller stated that if the low firefighter pay wasn’t addressed soon, the gap would get worse. He stated there did not seem to be a lot of support from City Council for a public safety tax at the City Council meeting the previous night. Director Ball stated that since there was not a consensus amongst City Council about the public safety tax, it would be hard to pass, and stated they would have to close a station instead. Director Adams asked Chief Miller to prioritize LFRA’s asks, and develop a proposed solution in 30 days, per City Council. He also states that Chief Miller’s presentation to City Council about the response time and insurance impacts of closing a station was well presented.

Chief Miller requested that the LFRA Board take the decision package to the budget subcommittee hearing. He stated that every time a firefighter has to be replaced, it costs LFRA $55,000 in gear and training. He stated that there is inequity in how public safety budgets are scrutinized because the police department doesn’t get turned down for anything, including $9 million training centers, and LFRA is just trying to move to the same pay structure as the police department.
Chairman Swanty stated that he is not against moving to a Step Plan, he is only against the associated pay increases at this time, and suggested a rolling fire station closure to cover the cost of the increase.

Attorney Powell was excused from the meeting at this time.

6. Conduct a Public Hearing and Consider a Motion to Adopt Resolution R-131, Adopting a Supplemental Budget Regarding the Appropriation of Monies to and the Expenditure of Monies from the General Fund and Employee Benefits Fund for the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, State of Colorado, for the Calendar Year Beginning on the First Day of January 2021 and Ending on the Last Day of December 2021

Motion made by Director Adams to remove this item from the agenda. Seconded by Vice Chairman Fogle; motion carried unanimously.

7. Conduct a Public Hearing and Consider a Motion to Adopt Resolution R-130, Adopting a Supplemental Budget Regarding the Appropriation of Monies to and the Expenditure of Monies from the General Fund and Fleet Replacement Fund and Capital Projects Fund and Capital Impact Fees Fund for the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority, State of Colorado, for the Calendar Year Beginning on the First Day of January 2021 and Ending on the Last Day of December 2021

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to open the public hearing on the proposed Resolution R-130. Seconded by Director Adams; motion carried unanimously. Kristen Cummings 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. Chief Miller stated that these transactions are related to the Station 7 and 10 lease-purchase agreements, and general operations’ needs.

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

Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to adopt Resolution R-130. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously.

8. Chief’s Report

Chief Miller stated that the Rural District MOU with Front Range Fire Rescue is close to a consensus and should be signed by June and July.

Chief Miller stated that the Budget Sub-committee Hearing will be on June 22, 2021 at 9:00am in the Emergency Operations Center Conference Room. He stated that half of the decision package is for Station 10 staffing ($720,000), and $630,000 is for Step Plan wage adjustments, and that the total ask is $1.4 million. Chief Miller reminded the Board that Station 10 has been discussed for 10 years, and staffing it was part of those discussions.

Chief Miller stated that the Board would have harassment training in July, and that hopefully the Rural Board would, as well.
Chief Miller stated that in-person meetings can resume in June. Motion made by Vice Chairman Fogle to start conducting meetings in person, only, beginning at the June 30th meeting. Seconded by Director Ball; motion carried unanimously.

Chief Miller’s retirement event will be at Fairgrounds Park on July 1 from 4:00pm to 6:30pm.

9. Other Business for Board Consideration

None.

10. Executive Session, if Needed

None.

11. Possible Action on Any Additional Matters Discussed in Executive Session

None.

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Swanty adjourned the meeting at 3:33 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