



Record of Proceedings Minutes of a Work Session of the Board of Directors

Held: Monday, August 19, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., at the Cimarron Hills Fire Protection District Administrative Offices, 1835 Tuskegee Place, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

A work session of the Board of Directors of Cimarron Hills Fire Protection District, Colorado Springs, Colorado, was called to order at 5:37 p.m. and held as shown above and in accordance with the applicable statutes of the State of Colorado with the following directors present and acting:

Call to Order

Director Miller opened the work session at 5:37 p.m. with 5 directors in attendance.

Roll Call

- Rene' Sintas - PRESENT
- KaTarra Taylor - PRESENT
- Mark Gass - PRESENT
- Erika Gass - PRESENT
- Paul Miller - PRESENT

Also present were:

Fire Chief Andrew York, Division Chief Matthew Gortner, Linda Glesne (Legal Advisor) via phone, and Executive Assistant Virpi Mattson taking minutes

CHFPD Strategic Planning

Chief York opened the session with information received from the State regarding 2023 sales tax collected within the district. Sales tax has been approved by recent legislation as an additional means of fire district funding; the data shows potential sales tax revenue that could be generated by the district to meet identified needs corresponding to a continued increase in population within and passing through the district, an increase in overlapping emergency calls, and 5-year plans to replace aging equipment and apparatus.

Chief York and Executive Assistant Mattson provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the history of legislative impacts to fire district property tax revenue since 2016, and projected impacts as we move forward into 2025 and beyond. Chief York summarized the challenges the district is facing with increasing population growth within and passing through the district, increases in overlapping (back-to-back emergent calls), maintaining competitive salaries/benefits, and replacing aging apparatus and equipment at both the station and headquarters. Along with these challenges, operational and replacement costs continue to rise. Coupled with continual cuts to our primary source of revenue, funding to cover expenses isn't sustainable. To meet increasing needs, we need to increase staffing and provide facilities to maintain an open 2nd company.

Identified personnel needs - estimated \$1 million annually:

- Increase Line staffing by 3 Lieutenants (1 per shift) to maintain 2 open companies with a manageable span of control
- Full Time EMS Coordinator to manage ambulance billing, supplies, and conduct quality assurance reviews
- Increase Division/Battalion Chief staffing by 1 (provides 1 per shift)
- Full Time Wildland Coordinator to oversee wildland program
- Update Administrative Assistant position to full time due to increased payroll and HR workload

Identified Facility needs

- Station upgrades and apparatus storage

Identified Capital Outlay for next 5 years - estimated \$10.7 million (\$2.6 apparatus, \$6 facility, \$1.1 wildland, \$990k equipment)

- Replace Engine
- Replace Ambulance (already ordered)
- Replace Type 3 Engine (current is a 1999)
- Replace 1342 (oldest brush truck)
- Replace SCBA's (11 years old) – set for replacement starting in 2027
- Replacement of ladder truck
- Replacing 1302 and other Chief apparatus (dependent upon mileage, wear/tear)
- 2nd Station (would include apparatus storage)

Chief York identified Sales Tax Advantages

- With the implementation of a sales tax, there is an opportunity for the Board to consider a mill levy reduction in the future.
- It would shift the sole burden of funding fire and emergency services off the property owners and spread it across everyone doing business in our district. People who live in the district should be minimally impacted as they don't spend much money WITHIN the district. We don't have big box stores, daily grocery/retail stores, etc. Most of the sales tax funding fire and emergency services would come from people outside the district who make purchases from commercial businesses located in the district, to include all the visitors passing through, stopping at the gas stations or fast-food restaurants.

If the average resident spends \$500 per month INSIDE the district boundaries (which we think is quite high), their additional annual sales tax paid on purchases throughout the year would be \$60. A sales tax would add to vehicle sales, as taxes are usually based on where you live, however the tax would still be lower than city taxes.

- Sales tax gives us the opportunity to stabilize our revenue in this current unstable property tax revenue climate.
- Chief York recommended, if the sales tax is approved and brings in the revenue anticipated, the Board reduce the mill levy in 2026. (Sales tax collections wouldn't start until July 1, 2025)

Chief York summarized that a 1% sales tax would allow the district to increase staffing to meet increasing response needs, fund necessary capital outlay, stabilize revenue, lower the mill levy in the future, and put the district in a position that it doesn't need to go in debt for 20 years to build a second station.

Director E. Gass recommended that the discussion/approval to put a sales tax issue on the November ballot be added to the next regular meeting agenda.

The Board also discussed the possibility of a term limits election in the future and received clarification from legal that, if desired, this could be held as a special poll place election separately from a Tabor or regular Board election.

This meeting was open to the public and no action was taken.

Adjourn

Director Miller adjourned the work session at 7:07 p.m.

The foregoing constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the above-referenced work session and was approved by the Board of Directors of the District on the 18TH day of September, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mark Gass, Secretary