

# *Lower Valley Fire Protection District*

*November 14, 2024*

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## **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors with the Lower Valley Fire Protection District was called to order by Board President, Cullen Purser. Advance public notice of this meeting was posted in three separate public spaces. The roll call was taken; the following board directors were present: Mark Bonella (excused tardy), Jeff Phillips, and Jesse Mease. Others in attendance: Fire Chief Matt Katzenberger, Kaiden Fife, Beau Schmalz, Stacie Dix, Gary Mulkey, Diana Manzanares, Mahea Rodriguez, and guest presenter, Matt Carson.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Jeff Phillips** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **CITIZENS COMMENTS/REQUESTS**

None.

## **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None.

## **APPROVAL OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Jesse Mease** motioned to accept the regular board meeting minutes from 10/10/2024. **Motion** was seconded by **Jeff Phillips**.

The **motion** was passed with 4 votes. (Of note: this motion was tabled until **Mark Bonella** was present, once he was present, motion was passed).

## **APPROVAL OF EXPENSES**

**Diana** rendered the information stating the expenses from October 5, 2024, through November 5, 2024, totaled \$93,802.54.

**Motion** was made by **Jesse Mease** to accept the bills. **Jeff Phillips** seconded the **motion** and was therefore passed with 3 votes. (Of note: **Mark Bonella** was not present during this time to be included in the voting of this motion).

## **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Diana** reports the total balance in our bank accounts, including cash on hand as of November 5, 2024, is \$3,843,473.39. The interest for the month of October 2024 is \$16,843.92. The YTD interest accrued is \$166,661.92. October's Mesa County Statement of Collections totaled \$44,712.96. **Diana** noted a transfer of funds from Colo-Trust to Grand Valley Bank for a total of \$350,000.00. This was transferred to maintain our agreed upon minimum account balance of \$600,000.00. **Chief Katzenberger** clarified that we keep this agreed amount because of the interest accrued. LVFD keeps the bulk of its funds in Colo-Trust

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due to the higher interest rate. **Diana** also pointed out that the interest rates discussed in the previous board meeting did go down again. As of Monday, Grand Valley Bank prime interest rates decreased to 4.25%. The Colo-Trust rate also decreased to 5.048%. **Chief Katzenberger** also mentioned an adjustment in the 2025 budget and encouraged the board to review the new proposal.

**Jeff Phillips** made a motion to accept the Financial Statement. **Jesse Mease** seconded the motion. The **motion** passed with 4 votes. (Of note: **Mark Bonella** was in attendance for this vote, and all others that followed this motion).

## **APPROVAL OF BILLING REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS**

**Mahea** presented the information. The billing write-offs for October 2024 totaled \$103,491.45. Accounts sent to collections in October 2024 totaled \$12,783.56. Our income from collections totaled \$84.56.

**Mark Bonella** made a **motion** to approve the resolutions and write-offs for October 2024. **Jesse Mease** seconded, and the **motion** was passed with 4 votes.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

**Mahea** reports the ambulance billing income for October 2024 totaled \$92,186.99 (money in the bank). She also briefed us on her billing conference in Hershey, PA. We'll be starting a new billing process for the billing of cardiac arrests. It was also learned that LVFD is ahead of the national curve in our report writing and QA processes for billing submissions. **Diana** reports that she canceled her CGFOA conference, however, was able to have the registration fees refunded. **Diana** is continuing her mentorship program and continued education classes online.

## **CHIEF REPORT**

**Chief Katzenberger** reports that both new ambulances are now fully in service. Ambulance 3113 is still listed for sale on several sites and is currently sitting at Loma Station. **Chief** will be decreasing the price to \$24,900, however, we'll continue to be conservative and wait for the right offer. The location of 3113 at Loma Station keeps it out of the way of our operations, and we will add a "For Sale" sign in the vehicle for passerby traffic as well. Next, **Chief Katzenberger** stated that all the officers attended a grant writing class that was held on November 6<sup>th</sup>. **Chief** also mentioned the federal AFG grant and trying to register for federal funds under the correct entity identifiers. There has been frustration in correcting our legal name and obtaining access to the site for this process. The deadline for this grant is approaching; the pre-application paperwork is completed; we just need to update our legal information and obtain access to the site. There is a mandatory all-staff meeting scheduled for December 18<sup>th</sup>. This meeting is an HR training that will develop that relationship with our staff. Our potential HR connection with the City of Fruita

# *Lower Valley Fire Protection District*

*November 14, 2024*

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is still pending. Odette, the HR Director with the City of Fruita, recently consulted with us, and we hope to continue that connection as an extension of our HR department. Another HR option – Chief obtained the final pricing for Lighthouse HR, if Lighthouse were to become our HR option. They are also facilitating the upcoming staff training. The annual contract would be \$725 per month, which is more cost effective than using them for individual project pricing. The annual contract would include training, form reviews, compliancy updates, and step objectives within our weight structure. Of note, this expense was included in the 2025 budget proposal. **Mark** mentioned his concern for the upcoming diversity and sensitivity training. He stated his belief that our staff is promoted based on merits and time served and not based on gender, race or sexual preference. **Chief Katzenberger** clarified that this training is in response to existing issues and this training is a steppingstone to reiterate our expectations and educate the staff on the limitations of the labor laws. This training will also set forth future baseline expectations and should be held annually. **Jesse** expressed his support for the chief's decision to have this training and acknowledged his desire to have this training completed as one of the first tasks of his promotion. Next, we had two internal applicants and interviews were held on November 13<sup>th</sup>. **Keila Utu** has accepted the full-time position. Her first full-time shift will be on December 11<sup>th</sup>. **Ben Linzey's** last day will on December 6<sup>th</sup>. We'll have a farewell luncheon for him on the 6<sup>th</sup> at noon. Regarding the part-time positions, we've received 12 applications, of which we have 10 viable candidates. The testing for part-time applicates is scheduled for November 22<sup>nd</sup>. For the Deputy Chief position, we have 8 viable candidates so far. The assessment process for DC will begin on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Both part-time and deputy chief application acceptance will be closed on December 15<sup>th</sup>. LVFD Christmas party will be on December 20<sup>th</sup>; invitations are completed and will be sent out tomorrow. The party will look a little different this year; more personalized and sociable. **Chief** reports that he is about 75% complete with his stay interviews and has really been focusing on three things – what keeps them here, what would make them leave, and providing their input for the development of the strategic plan. Lastly, the **Chief** reports that **Travis Holder** is currently at the National Fire Academy this week and next. **Travis** did prepare a report for the board that is included in the packet. **Travis** will be updating the board in the future on his Fire Marshal and PIO activities.

## **OFFICERS REPORT**

**Gary Mulkey** reports that we're currently at our average call volume, however, our critical calls have doubled, with multiple cardiac arrests within the last 30-60 days. That has increased our expenses for supplies.

# Lower Valley Fire Protection District

November 14, 2024

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## UNION #5625 REPORT

**Kaiden Fife** reports that we will have the hot cocoa event again this year. It will be held on December 14<sup>th</sup>, the same day as the Parade of Lights, which we will also be participating in. The Union would love all the help they can get for this event, as we mix hot cocoa and serve nearly 400 people.

## NEW BUSINESS

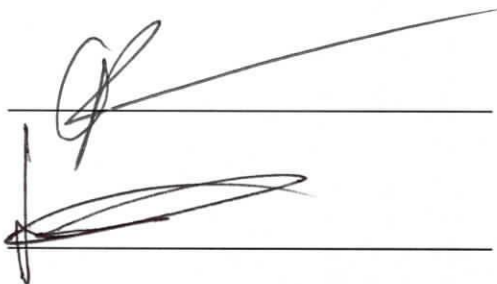
The staff welcomes Fruita resident, City of Fruita employee, and retired Battalion Chief from the City of Grand Junction Fire Department - **Matt Carson**. **Matt** is presenting to the board the Lower Valley Firefighters Foundation's history, information and status. **Matt** states the purpose of this foundation is to help first responders who need assistance after a personal hardship or tragedy; given to people that aren't looking for it. The candidates are nominated by other people. Currently, the focus is LVFD staff only, due to the early development and funds of the foundation, with a future goal to expand that to the community at large. The foundation is a non-profit organization with current funds of around \$29,000. Right now, the biggest fundraiser is the annual corn hole tournament and private donations. The foundation is run as a separate entity due to government tax laws. The benefit of the foundation is that it fills the gap of being able to help people without having tax dollar interference. It's members helping members, where EAP or other benefits might not help. The standard gift is \$500 and so far, the LVFD Foundation has been able to help four families. The current structure is there are currently 4 board members, which include 2 department members, one spouse of a department member, and Matt himself. They are actively seeking 3 more volunteer board members. The Foundation is a key asset to the department.

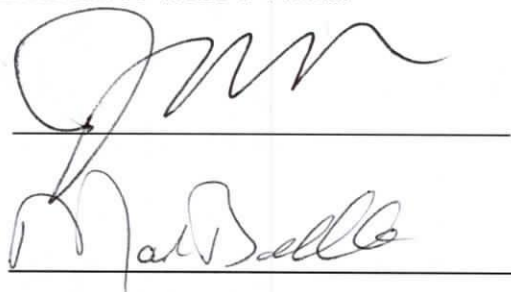
## OLD BUSINESS

None.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Cullen Purser** made a **motion** to adjourn. All in favor with 4 votes.

  
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