

**CASCADE RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
SPECIAL COMMISSIONER'S MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2022**

Larry Scarborough called the special commissioner's meeting of the Cascade Rural Fire Protection District to order at 6:10 p.m. at the 109 East Pine Street Fire Station.

The following Cascade Rural Fire Protection District officials were present: Commissioner Larry Scarborough, Commissioner LaDawn Saxton, Fire Chief Steven Hull, Emergency Medical Services Director Keri Rueth, and Secretary / Treasurer Pam DeChambeau.

Larry Scarborough made a motion to approve the agenda, and LaDawn Saxton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Matt Spelsberg, Board Member for Cascade Fire Community Fund, the non-profit organization that provides funds to support burnout funds, community outreach and education, welcomed the citizens to the open house and informational session about the upcoming special tax levy election requesting a permanent tax levy override in the amount of \$650,000, and introduced Commissioner Larry Scarborough, Fire Chief Steve Hull, and Emergency Medical Services Director Keri Rueth.

Steven Hull spoke about the history of the Cascade Rural Fire Protection District. Reported the District was created in 1984, the City of Cascade and had two fire departments, a city and a rural, both all-volunteer based departments. Reported in 2008 the city and the rural combined both departments because of the shortage of volunteer employees and because of the stress of coordinating out of two buildings. Reported in 2010 the Valley County Emergency Medical Services District was formed and Cascade Rural Fire Protection District hired three (3) Emergency Medical Technicians and an Emergency Medical Services Director to work with the full time Fire Chief. Reported in 2015 he was hired as full time Fire Chief. Reported in 2017 the volunteer employee base started declining and the Fire District began cross training and hiring Firefighters / Paramedics and Firefighters / Emergency Medical Technicians. Reported before then employees were strictly emergency medical services staff, not actively fighting fire. Reported employees on shift respond to brush fire, structure fire, and emergency medical services incidents. Reported he feels the reduction in volunteer employees over time is related to the Boise Cascade Sawmill closing down twenty (20) years ago. Reported the trickle-down effect because there is not an industry employer in the area to have volunteer employees in town to respond during the daytime at any given time. Reported on the change and keeping up with current day conditions. Reported on lacking the fifteen (15) to twenty (20) volunteer employees.

Matt Spelsberg reported the average number of personnel that responded to structure fires from 2010 to 2014 was 13 on 9 incidents, and from 2015 to 2020 was 8 on 24 incidents. Reported on increased training requirements and hours of commitment demanded for volunteer employees and on volunteer employees decreasing.

Steven Hull reported the cost to the property owner, if the levy is approved, with a \$550,000 property value would be an increase of \$282.67 per year. Reported a current levy rate of 0.288622 per \$1,000 of assessed value and a new levy rate of 0.808013 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Reported on grant funding received for fire engines, fire trucks, ambulances, and equipment. Reported on not being able to sustain the grant offered to hire a new employee.

Matt Spelsberg reported on the Fire District coverage area of 110 square miles and the Emergency Medical Services coverage area of 1,300 square miles.

Steven Hull reported the levy override funds would support hiring two additional personnel per shift, one Firefighter / Paramedic and one Firefighter / Emergency Medical Technician, would increase the Administrative Support to full time, and would hire one Deputy Chief to rotate support to the team on shift. Reported on incidents this year where a vehicle had to be left on the side of the road in order to have a driver for the ambulance, where Valley County Sheriff's Department staff had to drive the ambulance to the hospital, and where Donnelly Rural Fire Protection District had to respond to a fire alarm.

Roberta Winkle, 1758 Pine Lake Ranch Drive, Cascade, confirmed the Fire District has three (3) fire trucks and two (2) ambulances in town, and a fire engine and a water tender at the Clear Creek fire station. Charles Moore, 9761 Moore Drive, Smith's Ferry, confirmed Smith's Ferry is outside the Fire District boundaries and confirmed the area may petition to join the Fire District if seventy-five percent of the property owners agree to the petition to join the Fire District. Ronnie Julian, 516 Lake Cascade Parkway, Cascade, confirmed the levy override funds would continue to maintain the increase in employees.

Discussion followed on the company called ISO (Insurance Services Office) that creates ratings for fire departments and their surrounding communities. These ratings calculate how well-equipped fire departments are to put out fires in that community. ISO provides this score, often called the "ISO fire score," to homeowners insurance companies. Insurers then use it to help set homeowners insurance rates. The impact of the area's ISO score on homeowner's insurance policy varies by insurer and ISO does not officially release scores. Steven Hull reported every seven (7) years ISO reevaluates fire departments in Idaho, reported on the 5, 8, and 10 ISO ratings in the area, and reported on insurers requesting miles from a fire station.

Discussion followed on the Fire District boundaries, the Fire District coverage area of 110 square miles and the Emergency Medical Services coverage area of 1,300 square miles. Discussion followed on the Fire District's forgone amount, the amount of a previously allowable increase in property tax that was not taken. Discussion followed on the three (3) percent increase allowed each year in property taxes being sustainable. Discussion confirmed the three (3) Fire District Commissioners approve the annual budget and the decision to take the three percent increase allowed in property taxes.

Discussion confirmed the Fire District receives sales tax revenue from the State of Idaho. Discussion followed on destination recreation communities. Discussion confirmed patients are charged for emergency medical services. Discussion confirmed currently there are three (3) volunteer employees that live locally. Discussion confirmed six (6) firefighters responded to the commercial structure fire for approximately sixteen (16) hours.

Commissioner Larry Scarborough discussed the growth in the area and the increase in salaries for the Fire District employees over the last four (4) years.

Firefighter / Emergency Medical Technician Gavin Courtney spoke about the nationwide shortage of volunteer employees, the employees on-shift duties, and the increase in the number of incidents to respond to and when more than one incident is happening at the same time.

There being no further business, the special commissioner's meeting of the Cascade Rural Fire Protection District adjourned at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela J. DeChambeau
Secretary/Treasurer

Approved:



Larry V. Scarborough
Chairperson