

Lower Valley Fire Protection District

December 12, 2024

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: Cullen Purser, Cliff Gray, and Jeff Phillips. Others in attendance: Fire Chief Matt Katzenberger, Kaiden Fife, Thomas Creel, Keila Utu, Rebecca VanBramer, Diana Manzanares, Mahea Rodriguez, and community member, Cheyenne Fife.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Thomas Creel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS COMMENTS/REQUESTS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Cullen Purser tabled the vote of November's meeting minutes due to lack of quorum. The November minutes will be voted on in January's regular board meeting.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Diana rendered the information reporting the expenses from November 6, 2024, through December 3, 2024, totaled \$24,436.03.

Motion was made by **Jeff Phillips** to accept the bills. **Cullen Purser** seconded the **motion** and was therefore passed with 3 votes.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

Diana reports the total balance in our bank accounts, including cash on hand as of December 3, 2024, is \$3,733,654.98. The interest for the month of November 2024 is \$15,096.35. The YTD interest accrued is \$181,758.27. November's Mesa County Statement of Collections totaled \$57,296.95.

Cliff Gray made a motion to accept the Financial Statement. **Jeff Phillips** seconded the motion. The **motion** passed with 3 votes.

APPROVAL OF AMBULANCE BILLING RESOLUTIONS

Mahea reports that the billing write-offs for November totaled \$135,978.57. Accounts sent to collections in November totaled \$27,969.76.

Jeff Phillips made a **motion** to approve the resolutions and write-offs for November 2024. **Cliff Gray** seconded, and the **motion** was passed with 3 votes.

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mahea reports the ambulance billing income for November 2024 totaled \$74,170.31 (money in the bank). She states this amount is lower due to an issue with our clearing house that affected our largest payer at the beginning of November. That has since been resolved and claims are now being processed and paid electronically. **Mahea** also reports that insurance deductibles will reset in January, so we may see a decrease in our average ambulance income at the beginning of the year. **Diana** reports that the deadline for the mill levy certification is 12/15/2024. Once the budget is adopted, it will be sent to DOLA on 12/13/2024. Next, **Diana** states we are preparing for the May 2025 board member elections. This will be for **Jesse Mease's** and **Mark Bonella's** positions. Self-nomination forms may be filed between January 1st and February 28th.

CHIEF REPORT

Chief Katzenberger reports that we finished up our ISO (Insurance Service Organization) audit. This organization determines our hazard class rating and then they relay our rating to insurance companies. The rating affects what our taxpayers pay for their insurance. This rating is withstanding for a 5-year cycle. A letter will be sent to both the **Board President Cullen Purser**, as well as the Mayor for the City of Fruita. Our rating is not going down and the auditor is confident that our rating will remain at 3. The lower the rating, the better. We did improve from the last audit in 2019, but we're still in the category 3 range. The improvements we made included increased staffing; increased training hours in all five categories; and increased hydrants. The auditor's communication to **Chief Katzenberger** was to not decrease our water shuffle capabilities or that would increase our hazard rating. With that said, the district will retain the large water tender, sell water tender 32 and replace it with a larger tender (with an automatic transmission and an appropriate chassis), which would increase our water capacity, thus decreasing our hazard rating. Next, **Chief** reports staffing updates regarding the promotion of **Gary Mulkey** to Deputy Chief, with a start date of January 6, 2025. Gary was a unanimous decision from a 9-person panel for various testing areas. With his promotion, that opened a full-time position which was offered to and accepted by **Cooper Lovern**. **Cooper** will start on Black Crew on January 6, 2025. **Gary's** captain position will not be filled right now. This position will be tabled for another 6-12 months, and after a mentorship program is completed amongst 3-4 individuals. There will be 6 new part-time employees starting, 5 of which will begin in the academy on January 6th. The Parade of Lights will be on Saturday, and we'll be transporting Santa on the last float. The Antique will be pulled out as well. The annual LVFD Christmas Party will be on Friday the 20th at Adobe Creek Golf Course. **Chief** informed the board that it will look different this year,

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with a major focus being on appreciation for our staff, board members and retirees and everyone's corresponding years of service. We will not be selling raffle tickets this year, but there will be a system in place regarding the raffle tickets. Next, **Chief Katzenberger** reports that we had a site visit from T-Mobile. The engineer would like to extend the tower by 40 feet, which would make it a total of 140 feet; they have attained approval from the City to do that. They would also require a Geotech study; a ten-foot patch of space; and gate access to the tower's location, all of which T-Mobile would pay for. Xcel Energy would also have a separate meter for them. In summary, they pay us for the use, they pay their own bills, and they would have their own access locks. Next, **Chief Katzenberger** mentioned that there are several grants (most of them were BLM mitigation grants) that never got closed out dating back to 2001; receipts and paperwork were not submitted. We had a federal auditor that works with the BLM visit, and he's been working with **Travis** to get those grants current. Those grants are expected to be concluded soon. In addition to the BLM grants, there are a couple of CO Division of Fire Protection and Control (DFPC) grants that are also not closed out, and DFPC will not issue money until the grants are properly closed. As of last week, the DFPC grants have been closed and we should be receiving around \$5,000 within 60 to 90 days. With the BLM grants, we currently have about \$12,000 worth of grants and unaccounted receipts, which means we didn't spend the money they gave us. With that, there is a possibility we'll have to return that money. The other possibility is that we put the \$12,000 into the 25-mitigation project. These issues also explain why some of the recent grants were denied – we had open grants in their books that were never closed out. Lastly, **Chief** announced that he will be out of the office from 12/24/2024 through 01/06/2025 on vacation time. He will be available and staying in town for anything if necessary. Regarding **Travis'** report, it's included in the packet. **Travis** had more inspections and plan reviews which is expected to continue growing.

OFFICERS REPORT

Thomas Creel congratulated **Keila Utu** on her full-time promotion to Red Crew. **Thomas** also states that the officers have formed a recruitment and retention committee. They've been receiving letters of interest from employees and tomorrow will be the closing day for committee interest. This committee is excited to get started.

UNION #5625 REPORT

Kaiden Fife reports that the hot chocolate event will be happening again this year during the Parade of Lights. He invites the board to come out and help. **Kaden** also expresses his appreciation of the board for hearing them out and taking the time to hire quality candidates for both Chiefs. He states that the

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Union is thankful for the opportunity to be heard. The Union survey is coming up. **Kaden** invited the board to submit any questions they would like to see included in that survey. The Union will also be collaborating with **Chief Katzenberger** and **Deputy Chief Mulkey** for the survey set-up. The Union would like to have the survey available in May 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Budget Adoption: **Chief Katzenberger** reports that the valuation from the county came in and resulted in a \$12,000 decrease from the original projection in August. In addition, the FT grant was removed due to complications surrounding the SAM registration issues. **Chief** reports that he has discovered what the discrepancies were and has decided to rebuild our SAM registration from the beginning. Therefore, the FT grant was removed from the budget to prevent having to do a budget addendum later. **Chief** also reports that adjustments were made to purchase new handheld radios, as that is a top priority for the crews right now. The budget was adjusted to meet this need, and vehicle budget considerations will be revisited in 2026. Next, **Chief Katzenberger** points out the mill levy is also slightly different than last year. The Budget Committee was made aware of these changes prior to today's meeting. **Cliff Gray** asks for clarification on the plan for the district's xeriscaping, specifically the future of our water rights and usage. **Chief Katzenberger** clarified that the board members are looking at the condensed, DOLA version of the budget tonight; not the outlined subcategories of the full, expanded budget. **Chief** stated that all of the subcategories are still budgeted as discussed in previous meetings. The main goal is to use zero water for our yards and landscapes. **Chief** states that our water tap would remain in its current position. Xeriscaping would also eliminate potential concrete damage, as the current water lines run under the station and are starting to fail.

Resolution 12/12/2024-1 (Adoption of the 2025 Budget) was motioned into action by **Jeff Phillips** and seconded by **Cliff Gray**, the **motion** was passed with 3 votes. Resolution 12/12/2024-2 (Certifying Mill Levy) was motioned into action by **Cliff Gray** and seconded by **Jeff Phillips**, the **motion** was passed with 3 votes. Resolution 12/12/2024-3 (Appropriate Sums of Money) was motioned into action by **Jeff Phillips** and seconded by **Cullen Purser**, the **motion** was passed with 3 votes.

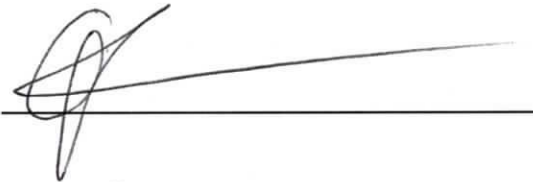
OLD BUSINESS

None.

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ADJOURNMENT

Cullen Purser made a **motion** to adjourn. Of note: No seconded motion was made due to lack of quorum.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Purser', written over a horizontal line.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cullen Purser', written over a horizontal line.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cullen Purser', written over a horizontal line.



A single horizontal line, likely a placeholder for a signature.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cullen Purser', written over a horizontal line.