

Kuna Rural Fire District

PO Box 607, Kuna, ID 83634

Phone (208) 922-1144 Fax (208) 922-1135

Minutes of Commissioners Regular Meeting

July 13, 2022

APPROVED: _____ **REVISED:** _____ (see revised version)

Vice Chairman Rebekah Luther called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm in the meeting room of Kuna Fire Station #1.

Present were Commissioners: Greg McPherson- via phone, Rebekah Luther, Brandon Carver and Randall Feaster. Billy Edwards was absent. Also present were Chief T.J. Lawrence, White Peterson Attorney Marc Bybee, and Officer of Administration-Secretary-Bookkeeper Krystal Hinkle.

Agenda Approval:

Comm. Carver moved to accept the agenda as printed and posted. Comm. Feaster seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: Comm. Feaster moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2022. Comm. Carver seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Financial Reports Presented by Hinkle: Comm. Carver moved to accept the financial reports and report of fund investments, and to approve disbursement of funds in the amount of **\$458,194.16** for the District for payment of bills and payroll as presented. A disbursement of \$0 for the Community Assistance Fund for payment of bills. Comm. Feaster seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Purchase Order over \$5,000 – None

Summary of Correspondence: None

Public Input/Special Presentations: Kuna Fire Budget 101 - Tabled

Staff Reports:

Chief Report – by T.J. Lawrence: Chief Lawrence reported that 8 firefighters participated in Swift Water Rescue training. The remodel is ongoing, hoping for a move in date in August. The Brush Truck chassis were delivered and are in Nampa.

Local 4165 - Full Time Firefighter Report: Matt Graham thanked the board members that attended the Golf Tournament.

Attorney Report: Bybee reported that White Peterson has been working on the Lease and MOU with Ada Co. and the other items that are on the agenda.

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Officer of Administration Report by Krystal Hinkle: Hinkle reported that everything was on the agenda.

Administrator of Impact Fees by Krystal Hinkle: Hinkle reported that the current fund totals \$1,805,835.99 thru May.

Old Business:

State Fire Commissioners Report: Hinkle reported upcoming training in the fall and the 2023 Annual Conference will be held in CDA.

Ada County City EMS System (ACCESS) Update: Comm. Feaster reported that the ACCESS meeting is at the end of the month. Ada Co. is changing their employees' schedules so it will increase availability by 20%.

Levy Committee Update –News release has been sent out. We will need help for Kuna Days. Comm. Luther will help coordinate time slots with the Commissioners and Matt Coffelt will help coordinate slots with the firefighters.

New Business:

Discuss and Consider Resolution Approving Subdistrict Boundary Changes –
The board already approved the boundary changes. This resolution will update the policy code.

Comm. Feaster made a motion approving Resolution 2022-24 updating the policy code with the new subdistrict boundaries. Comm. Carver seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Discuss and Consider MOU for Contract Services – Brisbie –

The MOU ensures that the agreement will be carried over if they sell the property. It will be recorded once signed.

Comm. Feaster made a motion approving the MOU for Contract Services with Brisbie. Comm. Carver seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Discuss and Consider Future Station Locations –

Currently the district owns property off of Cloverdale, Tim Ick has offered land to us on Avalon and ten mile, we are in negotiations with Rock Springs and the City currently has a working group to discuss an overpass at Meridian Rd.

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Chief Lawrence indicated that the Chiefs in the area have met to go over where they would like to put future stations, so we don't put stations next to one another.

Chief Lawrence will bring a hot map to the next meeting to show where a majority of the calls are coming from and where growth is going.

This item was tabled until August.

Discuss and Consider Resolution Approving Engagement Letter with McAloon Law for Bond Counsel - In order for the district to ask the public for a bond, the district must hire a bond attorney to draft the resolution and any documents if the bond passes. This is per state statute.

McAloon Law does not charge any fees unless the bond passes.

Comm. Feaster made a motion approving Resolution 2022-25 for the acceptance of the Agreement with McAloon Law for Bond counsel. Comm. Carver seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Discuss and Consider the Proposed Amended 2022 Budget and Direct Secretary to Publish the Notice in the Kuna Melba News - Hinkle went over the few changes that were made to the amended 2022 budget. The biggest items were the purchase of the new engine with Impact Fees, the Brisbie Contracted fees and the surplus of our ambulances.

Comm. Carver made a motion directing the secretary to publish the notice for the Amended 2022 Budget in the Kuna Melba News with a hearing date of 8/10/2022. Comm. Randall seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Discuss and Consider Potential Changes to Medical/Dental/Vision Benefits – Hinkle presented to the board the increase from III-A for Medical/Dental/Vision Benefits. The increase was 12%, however, the firefighter CBA indicates the district will only pay for a 10% increase and the employee would have to pay the difference. The Chief asked the board if they would pay the full 12%, which would be an additional increase above the 10% of \$7,707.60 for 12 months. This also covers 3 new hires, if that is passed in the 2023 budget. Another request was orthodontics coverage. If the board wanted to offer ortho coverage, it would be an additional \$4,608.00 per year.

Comm. Cover made a motion approving the district covering the 12% for the year, however, the employees still would pay their 20% dependent coverage. The district will

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not pay for ortho coverage. Comm. Luther seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Discuss and Consider the Proposed 2023 Budget and Direct Secretary to Publish the Notice in the Kuna Melba News –

Sec. Hinkle went over the Income vs Expenses for 2023. Significant changes to income were the reduction in ambulance fees due to not transporting. Misc. Contract services increased due to Brisbie's Contracted Fees and Impact Fees decreased because we don't have large expenditures in our CIP for 2023. Significant changes to expenditures were Maintenance and Fuel cost for our new engine and two new brush trucks, Capital Outlay decreased because we don't have large Capital items in our CIP for 2023, Payroll increased because the Chief is asking the board to hire (3) new firefighters and an Assistance Chief. Lastly, Personnel cost increased due to the Chief asking the board to pay for annual physicals, outside of what is covered already with III-A.

There was a discussion about the percentage of the budget allocated to payroll. Average for governmental entities should be between 65%-75%. However, if the board approves the 2023 budget, the percentage of payroll is 87.69% for 2023.

Comm. Feaster expressed concerns about how high our payroll budget is compared to the average. He mentioned Eagle Fire being at 75% and also shared a news article that talked about fire departments being at 65%-85% of their budget going to payroll.

Hinkle did provide the board with a ten-year CIP that shows where we would be with a Levy/Bond and without if we hire the (3) firefighters and the assistant Chief.

Comm. Feaster brought up Star Fire and how they were bankrupt not that long ago. He mentioned the public coming for their heads and don't want to be in the same position.

Hinkle corrected Comm. Feaster and let him know that the Chief at the time was fudging numbers and not being honest with the Commissioners of Star. Hinkle stated that the district will have over 2 million in savings, close to 1 million in checking at the end of the year and well over 1 million in Impact Fees. There is transparency at Kuna and we aren't Star.

Comm. Feaster would like to get our payroll in the sweet spot. He wants to take care of the employees and make sure we have apparatuses that aren't old and costing us more money.

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Hinkle indicated that we have an abundance of overtime available to make sure we have 5 on shift to run two apparatuses, but the crews are burnt out. This impacts their ability to take vacation and sick leave. We have injuries that cause the crews to drop to $\frac{3}{4}$ and we can't run two apparatuses, yet we have simultaneous calls close to 25% of the time.

Chief indicated that if we hire the (3) firefighters, that will reduce the amount of overtime needed. Once we receive the new engine, we can run two engine companies. If someone calls out sick or uses vacation, we don't have to call back, we can drop down to 1 engine and a squad.

The reasoning for giving up the ambulance was to run 1 engine, 1 squad and Ada Co. run their ambulance. When we are short staffed, we are only able to run one unit with Ada Co. With close to 25% of our calls being simultaneous, we need more manpower. We can't rely on mutual aid.

Comm. Feaster mention in 2024 we will have a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Union. More than likely they will want an increase. That will put us over the 87%.

Hinkle indicated that the CIP shows an increase of 3% for pay increases and promotions. She also asked, do we hire more people to respond to calls, or do we take away from the public to give higher pay increases? The board will need to make that decision.

Part of the negotiations with Brisbie, was to hire 3 firefighters. If we get the levy, we can hire 6 in 2023 and 3 in 2026.

Chief has another option for hiring. We could hire an Assistant Chief and not the (3) additional firefighters, and that would put our payroll at 75% of the budget for 2023. However, for the district to provide the best service, we need (3) firefighters and an Assistant Chief.

Chairman McPherson stated that the district has always operated on the edge of limits for funding, minimal personnel, crappy turnouts and vehicles that ran half the time. We have always had a plan on how to get better. Krystal and Chief have provided a good plan, even though we are skating on the high end of that 85%. We have a detailed plan on how to make it work for Kuna, because we aren't Meridian or Eagle, we are Kuna. I'm not sure what we can change, as everything that is on the proposal, we need to provide the best service for the constituents.

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Comm. Carver made a motion to approve the secretary to publish the proposed 2023 Budget in the Kuna Melba News. Comm. McPherson Seconded the motion. Further discussion took place.

Comm. Luther asked, if we approve the budget with just the Assistant Chief, can we reopen the budget if the Bond/Levy pass. Hinkle responded with, yes, however, the payroll budget for 2023 won't change, because we don't get the funding from the bond and levy until 2024, if it passes.

Comm. Carver withdrew his previous motion.

Matt Graham, Firefighter for Kuna Fire, located at 748 W. Washakie St., Meridian, stated, "I'm disappointed on the new proposal. The money is there, and I get what you are saying. We told Brisbie that is what needed to use the money for, to hire firefighters. I guarantee they will start on their second building, to give us another \$300k. So, we are looking at \$600. Even if you go ahead with your previous proposal, we are still putting money away. This is the problem that we have had with previous Commissioners, putting money into savings. Every year we are putting \$500k or whatever into Savings. It isn't doing us any good, we need more firefighters on the ground. We will have a 900k Engine sitting in the bay if the levy fails. What is the point, we need firefighters. I'm sorry to say, I think we are going backwards"

Riley Holmes, Firefighter for Kuna Fire, located at 1808 W. Havenwood, Nampa, stated, "If I gave you \$162k for 6 months and the next year I double it and you still didn't do anything, how would that make you feel? If you are worried about them backing out of a contract, that is one way to make that happen. You didn't fulfil your obligation that you negotiated for. That is my perspective."

A probationary Firefighter will cost the district \$111k to hire in 2023. A Chief Officer will cost the district \$160k to hire in 2023.

Matt Graham, Firefighter for Kuna Fire, stated, "It does no good having an apparatus sitting in the bay with no personnel. We just spent all that money and time remodeling the station and a plan that you guys made previously. Bringing on two engine companies to provide a better service. I live in a community that provides a great service. Unfortunately, you folks don't, and I want that for you. This is how we do that. You have to hire these guys to provide a better service for you guys. You guys deserve it 100%. If you bring on 3 more firefighters and a second engine company, and like Chief said, if someone is out sick, we will still have an engine and a squad. That is still providing a better service. You have to think about that, it is about service."

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Comm. Feaster stated, "It is also about affordability. I would like to provide Cadillac service to every member of the community, they deserve it. I like this community, but can we afford it."

Hinkle also asked the Union members in the audience, are you comfortable with a 3% increase each year going forward. That is a factor in the 2023 proposed budget and CIP to hire on more personnel. If you want to provide a better service by adding more firefighters, there must be some sacrifices.

The union would not comment.

There is so much unknown to our budget when it comes to the legislature. We are trying to provide a great service, be conservative and balance the unknown.

Comm. Carver made a motion to approve the secretary to publish the proposed 2023 Budget, including the hiring of (3) firefighter and a Chief Officer. Comm. McPherson seconded the motion. Motion passes with a 3 to 1 vote. Commissioner Feaster voted No.

Discuss and Consider Fee Schedule Changes and Direct Secretary to Publish the Notice in the Kuna Melba News – We met with City of Kuna regarding how they are collecting fees on behalf of the district. The City is not including the full valuation of electrical, plumbing, etc. They were only taking the building value. The City is not willing to collect the correct amount until we get an agreement in place, that spells out what the 30% fee covers. Unfortunately, back in 2018, the district secretary, Robin Ward, made an agreement with the City via email and we need to have an official agreement.

Dawn argued that the district shouldn't receive a percentage of the building fee for electrical and plumbing, because we don't inspect it. That is false, our inspectors look at the full building when determining fire alarms, fire sprinklers, lighting, signage, etc.

At this time, the City is unwilling to collect fees on properties that aren't within the district boundaries, even though we have a service agreement with the property owners. Brisbie will work directly with the district for our fees.

However, we need to get this taken care of, so we don't miss out on additional funding for work that we are performing. If they city doesn't collect the correct amount, per code, we might need to raise our 30%.

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The Chief and Krystal will negotiate with the City and bring an agreement forward to the board in the next couple of months.

Discuss and Consider Resolution Approving MOU with Ada County – Tabled

Discuss and Consider Resolution Approving Lease with Ada County – Tabled

Executive Session Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting– The Commissioners, upon a unanimous roll call vote, went into the executive session, pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-206 (1) (f) to communicate with legal counsel regarding pending litigation. The executive session commenced at 4:14 p.m. In attendance were all the members of the Board of Commissioners, Chief Lawrence, Krystal Hinkle, Union Reps Matt Graham and Riley Holmes and legal counsel Marc Bybee. Krystal Hinkle was appointed as secretary to take the minutes of this executive session. Information was then exchanged among the those in attendance. A motion was made by Commission Carver and seconded by Commissioner Feaster to come out of executive session which motion passed unanimously at 4:41 p.m.

Open session resumed and Vice Chairman Luther reported that information was received in relation to the announced purpose for going into executive session and no action was taken by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Open Discussion – None

Commissioner Carver moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Feaster seconded the motion, motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Krystal Hinkle, District Secretary

Greg McPherson, Chairman