

Aspen Fire Protection District



420 E Hopkins Avenue ▪ Aspen, CO 81611 ▪ 970-925-5532 ▪ www.aspenfire.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting July 9th, 2024

The Board of Directors of the Aspen Fire Protection District met for their regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public in person and virtually via Zoom.

Meeting called to order by John Ward at 5:01pm

Roll Call:

- Board of Directors Present: John Ward (via zoom), Emily Taylor, Dave “Wabs” Walbert
- Board of Directors Absent: Parker Lathrop and Charles Cunniffe
- Staff/Volunteers Present: Rick Balentine, Jake Andersen, Ali Hammond (via zoom), Shannon “Shaggy” Fink, Amanda Perusse, Nikki Lapin, Jan Schubert, Ken Josselyn (via zoom)
- Public/Others: Richard Peterson, Paul Backes

MOTION: Motion by Emily Taylor to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on June 11th, 2024.

Second: Wabs

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Public Comment: None

AVFD Inc.:

- Comment from Rick Balentine that all of the AVFD Inc volunteers did a great job at the 4th of July event. Big kudos and huge thanks to all.

Board member Parker Lathrop at 5:04pm

Financials

- Paul Backes reviewed the 2023 Audit provided in the board packet.
 - Aspen Fire stayed under budget and within 1% of the 2023 budget, which is unusual for any government entity.
 - Due to the received backfill from the state of \$420,016, we expect to have an updated budget to the board for approval within the next month or so.
- Monthly Financials for June were provided in the packet, there were no questions from the Board.

MOTION: Motion by John Ward to accept the 2023 Audit

Second: Parker Lathrop

Discussion: None

Vote: All approved

Board member comments/action items:

- Emily Taylor
 - Thank you to everyone for an awesome 4th and amazing Aspen Wildfire Foundation event. Being here for both events was really fun.
- Wabs
 - The Aspen Fire Science Camp with the Science Center is happening here this week. Aspen Fire Department members have been wonderful in helping out.
 - 7/9/24 at the North 40 station, they did a demo of simulating rolling up to a structure fire and the kids loved it, they even got to hold the hose.
 - 7/10/24 they will be at Roaring Fork Fire Rescue in Basalt
 - 7/11/24 they will be at Carbondale Fire for extrication and use of the training center.
 - 7/12/24 they will end the camp here at Station 61
 - Thanks to everyone in the department; the 4th of July was spectacular. Never seen that many people in town and around the fire station, but everything seemed to go smoothly.
- John Ward
 - Both events are great community outreach and goodwill building. Thanks to all for the hard work that they put in for the 4th and to the science program. Awesome that people are all willing to help out.
- Parker Lathrop – no comments

Staff Report for both April and May

- Fire Marshal Report -prepared for the board packet by Fire Marshal Jan Legersky, reviewed by Chief Rick Balentine.
- Operations Overview provided in the board packet, reviewed by Deputy Chief Jake Andersen.
 - Some of our members attended a Helicopter Crew Class, so that they can go out as a single resource and work on a helicopter crew
 - Mo McPhee was out as a task leader over at a fire near Pueblo, she just returned.
 - We currently have 3 people out on fires out in California. Unfortunately, they are having some issues with the apparatus that they took (Brush 63), so they are waiting for it get fixed.
 - Great CPR save on main street about a month ago, just after our operations meeting as we were preparing for dinner. The Crew arrived on the call right away and made a great save.
 - We are working with the Hope Center for mental health. Recently sent LT Shawn Jones and FF Hutch Foster to a week-long training to help update our Peer Support Counseling offerings.
 - Pano AI cameras – the valley is now covered from the Silt/Rifle area all the way up the valley.
 - This is a great resource to catch issues early and keep fires from getting out of control
 - Request from the Board to see a press release at the end of the season on how many fires were caught by Pano and how quickly they were extinguished. Deputy Chief Andersen will take on this project.
- Training/Recruitment – information provided in the packet by Scott Arthur
- Wildfire Community Action Fund/Aspen Wildfire Foundation – information provided in the packet. Reviewed by Ali Hammond.
 - Aspen Wildfire Foundation fund raiser took place on 6/28/24
 - After expenses, the total raised was \$360,000 which will go towards our top 25 projects and more community outreach
 - BLM/Forest Service came and talked about partnerships in the valley as well.
 - There was also a nice article about the event in the Aspen Daily News.
 - Aspen Fire Honor Guard members provided a nice moment to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Storm King 14
 - Outreach
 - Spending a lot of the summer working with the City of Aspen, Pitkin County and the Emergency Manager on evacuation. Thanks to Parker Lathrop for helping with this as well. We are hoping to prepare our community as best we can on what an evacuation will look like and how to make decisions based on certain scenarios.

- The Starwood district is our very first FireWise community! Mountain Valley is hoping to join soon. We have several Community Ambassadors who took a 6-week course to learn about home ignition and how to talk to their neighbors/HOAs about it. This is a great network of people who are getting out in front of the community.
- Projects – presented by Shannon Fink
 - Good outreach happening with ACES and Erickson Ranch
 - Still working with the Fire Department to reach into the water source for Aspen Water as it is a very limited reserve, especially in the summertime.
 - FireAside was approved by the board at last month’s meeting, and we have moved forward
 - Chipper Day Program – rolled out early this morning
 - Aspen Village is signed up, 28 people so far
 - Working with more HOAs/neighborhoods to get them signed up

CEO/Fire Chief and Good of the District:

- Aspen Wildfire Foundation event was way above all expectations, shows how much our community trusts us to use their funds in the appropriate ways.
- Remiss about the fact that we only tend to show photos in our board packets and on social media of our firefighters, but there is so much more happening behind the scenes. Thank you to the Administration team for all that they do.
- 4th of July went really well.
- Aspen Fire Honor Guard is now an up and running 501c3 and ready to accept donations. Looking forward to doing a fundraiser soon, maybe with a Backdraft theme. More to come on this.
- More discussions are needed with the lawyer on the 3 non-profits (AVFD INC, AWF, AFHG) and how the budget needs to flow back and forth with some of the administration who do the back-end work. Each one does have its own board of directions.
- Wildfire Resiliency Code Board meeting this coming Friday at Station 45 in Snowmass, a big meeting with some decisions being made, 2 Senators will be attending. To determine where the WUI is in the State of Colorado, where the code will apply in parts of wildfire interface. Looking 20-30 years down the road.
- Wildfire Hazard Assessment IGA – Draft form provided in board packet
 - Further discussion by the lawyer, 6 provisions are currently missing from the draft
 - Intent of IGA is to collaborate risk, welfare and properties utilizing these assessments to work with property owners on appropriate risk mitigation.
 - Actual process is: AFD will send someone out to do an assessment based on national standards and best practices via FireWise standards. The client will present this to the City and based on the danger zone level, the City will determine if there is a penalty for removing certain vegetation or if it needs to be removed and then replaced. The City Forester is very experienced, they will go out and make recommendations on removal/replacement.
 - This IGA will transform the city’s urban canopy over the next 30-40 years to a fire resilient canopy.
 - AFD will provide the City of Aspen with a hazard map that they can use for tree removal decisions. The City will pay \$5000 annually to AFD to manage the FireAside software for wildfire and curbside assessments.
 - Current discussion happening with Aspen Wildfire Foundation board to see if there is a policy that can be created to provide a stipend to help HOAs/neighborhoods cover the costs.

MOTION: **Motion made by John Ward to accept the amended version of the Wildfire Hazard Assessment IGA as discussed by Richard Peterson and final approval pending his review.**
Second: **Parker Lathrop**
Discussion: **None**
Vote: **All approved**

- City of Aspen 2024 Building IQ Compliance Notification and 2025 Benchmarking Deadline

- Thanks to BC Josselyn for working behind the scenes to get this accomplished, which opened us up for some grants. Thanks for all of the work that he did on this.

Old Business:

- Woody Creek Project Update
 - Still some interest to do a project out there, we will see where it goes.

New Business:

- Approached and met with someone interested in a possible housing project in the City of Aspen, will meet with a couple of board members to discuss.
- Aspen Village would like to have a discussion about some of their spaces as well. They have 8-9 lots zoned APCHA category 3 with no one interested in investing/building there. AV is interested in partnering with the Fire Department on this, with ADU on each unit, so possible 18 units. Housing is where we have a need and this might be a great way to accomplish this. No other details at this time.

MOTION: Motion by Parker Lathrop to adjourn
Second: Wabs
Discussion: None
Vote: All approved

Adjourned at 6:12pm

***** A full recording of this meeting can be requested by contacting the District Administrator at nikki.lapin@aspensfire.com or by calling 970-925-5532.**