

Meeting Minutes for  
Rico Fire Protection District  
Regular Meeting: February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The regular Rico Fire Protection District Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Board Chair Tyler Lapp.

**Roll Call:** RFPD Board members Gregg Anderson, Raegan Ellease, and Tyler Lapp. Sarah Eckles was absent due to work. Paul Ruud was out of town for travel.

**Guests Present:** RVFD Fire Chief Todd Jones, RFPD Administrator David Kunz, Allyn Svoboda.

**Approval of Agenda:** Raegan Ellease moved to approve the agenda; Gregg Anderson seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

**Approval of Minutes:** Raegan Ellease moved to approve the minutes for the January 8<sup>h</sup> meeting; Gregg Anderson seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Approval of Financial Report and Accounts Payable:**

Gregg Anderson motioned to approve payment for the bills as presented and to accept the financial report; Raegan Ellease seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

**Administrative Report:** RFPD has received payment of \$2,000 from San Miguel Power Association towards the eventual purchase of a Dry Light Rescue vehicle. Basin Electric will also fund \$2,000 towards the project. The Rico Center grant award (see below) is ready to be signed and returned. Kunz stated that all other items would be covered on the agenda.

**Grants (awarded):**

**Rico Center 2024:** (4) requests: \$2,980.00 for food and other expenses for the 2024 Fourth of July (awarded \$1490); \$21,785.75 for Operations (full award): kitchen remodel funds, equipment, fire hose and fittings, EMS training dummies, training funds; \$19,982.75 for TSFA expenses (awarded \$12,356.25); \$50,000 for Light Rescue (full award). Grant agreement has been received. Reimbursement will occur upon request. Closeout October 31, 2024.

**CDPHE EMTS grant:** Request of \$60,000 towards the light rescue truck. Awarded \$44,618.75. The purchase order has been received and RFPD can spend funds from this grant. The first and second quarterly reports have been filed. Closeout: June 30, 2024.

**El Pomar:** \$11,973.00 requested from the El Pomar Fire fund to pay for hand tools for the new tanker and wildland fire boots for RVFD personnel. Funding for \$12,000 has been received. Closeout: January 31, 2025.

**SMPA Community Focus Grant:** Request for \$20,000 for the light rescue truck; awarded \$2,000; an additional \$2,000 to come from Basin Electric. Kunz has notified SMPA contact MartyJo Davis that the Light Rescue may not be fulfilled until 2025.

**Grants (submitted):**

**Colorado Fire Safety and Disease Prevention Grant (CFSDPG) 2024:** Request for \$13,088 for (4) new sets of structural fire bunkers. Award notification: late March, 2024.

**Grants (potential):**

**USDA RD Community Facilities grant:** Kunz may apply for funds for the Light Rescue. USDA would like to see a letter from a bank stating that they will not loan to the District, which seems unlikely. USDA also will require an attorney's opinion the the District is a valid entity and able to legally spend the requested funds. Due date: rolling

**Fire Chief Report** (Fire Chief Todd Jones):

**Runs:** RVFD responded to (10) calls for service: (2) SAR calls (Lizard Head and Cottonwood Pass); (2) highway responses (no injuries); (3) EMS responses (no transport); (2) public service calls for assistance; (1) fire call (smoke alarm/contained fire).

**Training:** (6) RVFD members went to the burn tower last weekend.

**Equipment:** the El Pomar grant will equip the new brush truck (928); Tanker 927 will need complete refurbishment of water tank and possibly add compartments.

**Building:** Mike Contillo will install a backflow preventer on the existing water service as required by the Town. Kunz will follow up to see if Rico Town Manager Chauncey McCarthy has the correct part. Jones will contact Cruzan contracting in regards to the new building. They have reportedly constructed buildings similar to what RFPD is planning for under \$200/sq.ft.

**Old Business:**

**Light Rescue Truck project:** Kunz stated that the project will need a “complete reboot” due to the ever-escalating cost of the truck and the uncertain/long time frame to secure a chassis. RFPD currently has \$50K committed from the Rico Center 2024 grant, \$4k from SMPA/Basin, and \$44,618.75 from the 2024 EMTS grant, which Kunz will de-obligate. Kunz will talk to EMTS grant manager Andre Smith in regards to how other agencies are dealing with this issue, and may re-apply for EMTS funding in the 2026 cycle.

**RFPD Host planning for 2024 Tri State Firemans' Association (TSFA):** The event will be held August 1-3 of 2024. Issues to be addressed include: proposed menu (to be worked out with Will Nolan); training sessions (currently pump trailer/ flashover trailer and electric car fire simulator from DFPC); accommodations, trophies and merch, need for sponsors/ raffle prizes/ schwag and general donations. The school property will transfer from Dolores County Schools to Telluride School District on July 1<sup>st</sup>; Kunz will confirm with McCarthy about school usage for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and for the TSFA event. Kunz will also request money from the Town to help subsidize fixed costs for the TSFA event.

**USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Grant application:** On hold, due to Rescue Truck reboot. Kunz will try to establish the timeframe to spend USDA funding due to lead time issues.

**New Business:**

**Resolution 2024-4:** Approval of Application for Exemption from Audit. Gregg Anderson moved to approve Resolution 2024-4; Raegan Ellese seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

**Review of proposed Property access: Block 18 Alley improvement to Chmielewski property:** Gregg Anderson recused himself, stating that he could provide his opinion, but would not vote as he is designing Chmielewski's OWTS system.

The Board discussed the proposed (unnamed) alley access to the property (which cannot be reached by Hancock St.). The proposed residence would be served by an existing hydrant at the SE corner of Hancock and Soda Streets. Platted alleys in the Town are 16' wide, however the proposed alley improvement is for a narrower ROW. Appendix D, section 103.4 of the NFPA fire code requires turnarounds for access roads longer than 150'; the proposed alley access is 188'.

The Board discussed how to generally accommodate the requested exemption, the precedent such a variance could set, as well as the specifics of accessing this property (with Chief Jones).

It was agreed that language clarifying access standards for “alleys” vs. “roads” warranted further discussion at a future meeting: NFPA Appendix D, Table D103.4 does not consider roadways narrower than 20'.

Raegan Ellese moved to approve access to the lots subject to the following conditions: the road surface be improved to 12' wide (minimum); that trees and foliage be maintained so that they are vertically clear of the road surface to a height of 14' minimum, and to waive the requirement for a turnaround. These variance conditions are considered due to: the short distance of the single proposed residence beyond the 150' access road length, and existing site-specific drainage and foliage conditions. Tyler Lapp seconded. Approval was unanimous, with Anderson abstaining.

**Review and Approval of RFPD By-Laws:**

Review, revision and approval of the RFPD by-laws occurs at the beginning of even-numbered years. Raegan Ellease suggested several revisions to the most recent (2018) revision of the by laws: Section R should refer specifically to the 2006 International Fire Code; that the Article VII (Fiscal Committee) language should be clarified (by resolution) that the RFPD Board shall function as the Fiscal Committee; that Article VIII, Section 1 be revised to state that the Fire Chief is elected by the Rico Volunteer Fire Department, but can be vetoed by a majority of the RFPD Board. The proposed amendments to the RFPD by-laws shall be duly noticed and presented for adoption at the next RFPD regular meeting as per Article X, Section 1 of said bylaws.

**Additional Business:**

Raegan Ellease circulated for review a ballot measure as proposed and approved by voters of Dolores Fire District authorizing the conveyance of property owned by the Town of Dolores to DFD.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tyler Lapp at 9:03; seconded by Raegan Ellease. Approval was unanimous.

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Chairman

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Secretary