

**CORTEZ FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 13, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Orly Lucero called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. in the meeting room at Station #1. Roll call followed after the Pledge of Allegiance and the board members present were Rodney Branson, Buck Woodman, Kent Lindsay, Sherri Wright, and Orly Lucero. Asst. Chief Shawn Bittle and Chief Jeff Vandevoorde were also present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Sherri Wright made a motion to approve the agenda for the September 13, 2017 Board of Directors meeting, Rodney Branson seconded. The agenda was approved on the following vote:

Branson	Lindsay	Woodman	Wright	Lucero
Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the regular Board of Directors meeting, held on August 9, 2017, were brought before the board for approval.

Sherri Wright made a motion to approve the minutes for the regular Board of Directors meeting held on August 9, 2017, Buck Woodman seconded. The minutes for the meeting were approved on the following vote:

Branson	Lindsay	Woodman	Wright	Lucero
Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS

The board reviewed the list of bills, accounts and the financials included in the Board packet. Ms. Wright inquired about the refrigerator magnet sheets purchased through Amazon, and what they are used for. Asst. Chief Bittle explained they are used for a training tracking system he and Lt. Beckermeyer are putting together. It is a big display board that will help the firefighters keep track of their training and certifications.

Rodney Branson made a motion to accept the bills and financials including the supplemental list of bills, Sherri Wright seconded. The motion passed on the following vote:

Branson	Lindsay	Woodman	Wright	Lucero
Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chief Vandevoorde introduced Emily Wright, the new reporter at The Journal who has just recently relocated to the area from West Virginia, who was in attendance.

Mr. Lindsay asked about the LEED Design review for the Green Business Certification, and if that is the name of the company. The Chief explained that this is part of getting the LEED certification. We work with Jeremy Rivera, our LEED commissioning agent (*and Allen at the Cunningham Group.*) Ms. Wright asked if we will be Gold or Silver. Chief Vandevoorde said we are shooting for Gold.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Virgil Gray, Building Division Manager, and Kyle Blackmer, Project Manager, for Weeminuche Construction Authority were present to update the Board. Mr. Blackmer reported that they have one slab placed on the south end and should have structural steel installed on Monday. Things will start to move vertical, which is a big step in the right direction.

Mr. Blackmer informed the Board that we also have a new architect working with Pacheco Ross, who is working to get things pushed through and improve communications. Things are going well.

Mr. Lindsay asked if we had caught up on any time, or are we still thirty out. Mr. Blackmer said they are projecting to be finished in mid May, and are on schedule with the change order days. They are making up time every day, and have worked a few Fridays and Saturdays.

Chief Vandevoorde added that he has been talking with Trautner Geotech, our third party inspector, and Sam Proffer, City of Cortez Planning and Building Director, and both have very good things to say about Kyle and WCA, and that they are doing a great job. The Chief added that he can call or e-mail Kyle at any time and always get an answer to his questions.

Mr. Lindsay asked about value engineering and when are we going to do this.

Mr. Blackmer replied that quite a bit has already been done with a savings of about \$80 thousand. There are still a couple of more items out there, but the big items are already off the table. Most will now be found in the finishes. One item is we will be working with a local cabinet maker WCA works with. This will save us some money over the company in Texas that was included in the plan by Pacheco Ross.

CORRESPONDENCE

Included in the packet were inclusions from the Cortez Journal from August 22, 25 2017, and a thank you note from Ms. Hernandez.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Ms. Mimiaga was not present for the meeting, but included a report in the packet. Chief Vandevoorde asked if anyone had any questions regarding the report.

The Chief reported that we have received the second payment request from WCA for \$284,237.88. \$130,749.42 will be paid by the Energy Impact grant, and \$153,488.46 is paid by our matching funds.

We have received the first payment from DOLA for the EIAF funds, but are still waiting on the second payment that was submitted August 11, 2017. We are experiencing a bit of a lag in the payments. We are getting ready to submit the third request. The Chief pointed out that coming

up in December, possibly, we are looking at a \$1 million payment, with over \$500 thousand as our match.

Mr. Branson asked if there were any issues with DOLA about paying. The Chief said there were not, it is just a lot of paperwork, on both sides, and they get bogged down. The issue with the first payment was they sent it to our old address and the post office did not forward it, and sent it back.

REPORT FROM THE ASST. CHIEF

Asst. Chief Shawn Bittle included his report and a list of meetings, events and trainings he attended. Asst. Chief Bittle reported that the recruit class is back in Cortez to finish their last month. They are doing great with a class average of 87%, beating out the last class. They have completed the FFI and FFII curriculum and are now working on Hazardous Materials awareness and operations. Graduation is scheduled for Saturday, September 30, 2017 at 3 p.m. at the Dolores Fire Station 1.

We will be updating the web site again, adding our new personnel. All of our full time firefighters have an additional job assigned to them, i.e. building maintenance, apparatus maintenance, supplies, etc. Our three (3) newest members, Krob, Dykes and Ertz, have been working with Public Education. Perhaps with public education they can also work on the web page.

We tested seven (7) people on Saturday, September 9, 2017, for volunteer, part-time and full-time positions. There were some good candidate that turned out for the test.

Chief Vandevoorde added that he has been working with the Montezuma County Health Department regarding our three (3) car seat technicians. They would like to advertise it more and give us some car seats to keep here. They would like for us to also be a car seat check point. This will also allow our technicians a chance to use their skills, and help the community. The Health Department stated they do over 200 car seat installations and checks a year.

President Lucero asked Asst. Chief Bittle if the trainings with the regular firefighters were going well and if everyone is updated. Asst. Chief Bittle stated that everyone is updated, and that just last Friday the State Police delivered the State Hazardous Materials trailer so the focus for the week is on Haz-Mat and Haz-Mat mitigation. The crews have been going down to Station 2 and practicing damming, diking and diverting.

REPORT FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Chief Vandevoorde went over his report and list of meetings that were included in the packet. The Chief reported that Troy Rightmire has turned in his letter of resignation. The resignation will take place immediately. This was his second time testing for Farmington. He really wanted to be there. Unfortunately, Farmington did not let him know definitively that he had been hired until Thursday, and that he had to start the next Monday. This did not allow him to give two (2) weeks' notice, as is standard. Chief Vandevoorde did call the Fire Chief in Farmington to express his concern about not allowing for 2 weeks' notice, and how it puts the employee in a bind as the personnel policy manual states they need to give two (2) weeks' notice or they are not re-hirable, and also puts the departments they are leaving in a bad situation. The Farmington Chief was not aware of the short notice, but they have to work around the college's schedule. He was going to see why the firefighters were given such short notice. Chief Vandevoorde wished Mr. Rightmire the best of luck stating that he really wanted to be there (Farmington.)

The Chief stated that administration just recently met with Mark Carlson, our insurance agent with ESIP, and Dan from VFIS, who is working on a new quote for the District. We switched to ESIP two (2) years ago from VFIS. Both are comparable companies offering good and similar

coverage, but ESIP was an \$8,000 savings over VFIS at the time. VFIS contacted us this year stating that they are lowering their rates and would like to requote our insurance. The Chief continued that this will probably be a yearly thing for us with insurance being so expensive. The service between the two companies are identical. They are both very good, great customer service, and both offer what we need. It all comes down to cost.

Chief Vandevoorde also reported that he assisted dispatch with their interviews. They have hired two new dispatchers as they were short. The Chief has also been working closely with Sam Proffer at the City's Building Department. Mr. Proffer has done a great job working with us on the new station.

Kate Pacheco from Pacheco Ross Architects, flew in to meet with everyone on Thursday, August 31, 2017, on the construction of the new station. The Chief stated, to her, that he had concerns with the way the weekly meetings were going. Ms. Pacheco came out and met with The City of Cortez Building Department, and then with Kyle Blackmer and Virgil Gray from WCA just after. She also sat in, on our side, of the weekly construction meeting that afternoon. Having her out here really helped get things ironed out, and addressed issues that may have been falling through the cracks. The architects will make another trip out here soon.

There were 155 calls during the month of August, 127 EMS calls, 17 fire calls and 11 vehicle accidents. The total calls for the year is 1,403.

We deployed three (3) firefighters and our new brush truck to the Grand Junction area for seven (7) days. Upon their release, they were the last crew to be released, they were asked to go to Wind Cave Park in South Dakota. It is about 1,100 acres of mostly grass land and zero percent contained. They are on their way. They could be gone up to twenty one (21) days. While in Grand Junction they had some incident command people go out with them for training, and were highly complimented on their work ethic and how hard they worked out there. The firefighters who were deployed were Lt. Mike Cabel, Engineer Mike McCoach and Firefighter Matt Fudala. Lt. Cabel and Engineer McCoach are also wildland engine bosses.

The Chief reported that we have been working on the new station every day. Currently we are working on having the flagpole and the sign moved. Moving the sign will require a special exception from the City due to the setback. It will be in a better location and move visible from Main St. We will get the paperwork finalized and sent to planning and zoning.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Review – Fire Chief – Chief Vandevoorde requested the annual review be done in an open meeting as opposed to an executive session. The Board was given an evaluation form, at the last Board meeting on August 9, 2017, to fill out and bring to this meeting.

Mr. Lindsay stated that they are supposed to evaluate the Chief based on his performance, however we are not out in the field watching him perform.

Ms. Wright clarified that the question states it is not how he is performing in the field, it is how the Chief performs in the board room.

Mr. Lindsay continued we still fight fire, it is part of the job. How are we supposed to evaluate him based on goals. What goals has this Board set for this man.

Ms. Wright stated that she goes in (to the office) to talk with the Chief and discuss how the department is doing, and to see that the department is running smoothly. The Board's direction was for the department to run smoothly.

Mr. Lindsay said life safety, tax payers, you have to protect them from fire. That's what we're elected to do. A fire board is totally different from any other board. We're obligated three (3) times; protect the firefighters, protect the community and protect their livelihoods and their lives.

Chief Vandevoorde stated that it is difficult for the Board for only one (1) meeting a month. Mr. Lindsay continued we see the duck on the water but we don't see the swimming going on. Ms. Wright pointed out that the Board does not need to be out in the field, they would be in the way. Mr. Lindsay continued that it's like he has to have us (the Board) looking over his shoulder. We're not bankrupt, nobody got hurt or killed. Mr. Woodman added that is our job, to just look over his shoulder, to make sure he is doing everything fine. We are here to make sure everything keeps going smoothly. Ms. Wright added that we (the Board) are very honest and ask the hard questions.

President Lucero stated that the Board will address each question on the form.

The first question addressed organizational management and leadership.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 2. We never expressed any expectations. I know he is meeting expectations. We still have a serious problem with manpower. Our volunteer staff is down to four (4) now. We have harped on that ever since I've been a Board member, but it doesn't seem to change. He knows the federal and state laws. Information wise we could do with a little bit more. We always hear the good side and not the bad side.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 4. Anytime there is an issue he knows about it at least a year in advance. When the budget comes out he has looked at grants for new equipment or if we need to do anything. He has a plan in place. It is one of his strong points.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 2. The knowledge of the City, State and Federal laws is very stout. The shortcoming on us as a Board toward the Chief by not having an annual workshop where we can set goals, like by the end of 2018 lets have this many volunteers. We don't micro manage this, but as a Board we should set goals so he know where we are trying to go and we do not lead from behind.

Ms. Wright asked if Mr. Branson was saying we need a Board retreat.

Once a month we meet with him (the Chief) and he tells us what went on. But we need to set goals. What is expected from the community. That is what we are representing. He does a good job with the staff.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 3. On the whole the Chief does well. There can be some improvements. The Chief is exceptional for taking responsibility for his decisions.

President Lucero – rated at a 3. There has been a lot of improvement over the past couple of years. The Chief works with the Board a lot more. Good communication with the staff and firefighters.

The second question addressed fiscal and business management.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 4. This is the Chief's strongest field, especially when it comes to the budget. Here we are building a new fire station using a lot of grants.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 3. He seems to watch the money. Like DOLA, he watches that so it doesn't dip in our account.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 4. The Chief knows the budget inside and out. Where he is going and what he is doing.

President Lucero – rated at a 4. I like to see a good strong balanced budget, and we have been doing that. The new fire station is well organized as to how everything is being paid for.

Chief Vandevoorde stated that he appreciates the Boards oversight of the budget and the finances. And knowing that the Board is behind what we are trying to accomplish.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 3. He does well at organizing and administrating the budget. It is forecasted out, doing a good job so far, and we have money in the bank.

The third question addressed communication and relationship with the Board.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 3 (high end). He does real good at communication both verbal and written with the Board. He is better than and exceeds the expectations. We have never had any guidance to what exceptional would be. He plans and organizes well. He has a good team and directs them well. Always has an open door policy if you want to meet with him.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 3. The Chief always lets the Board know they are welcome to meet with him to discuss anything. The door is always open, or call on the phone.

President Lucero – rated at a 3. Agreed with the previous comments. Communication with the Board is stronger, but the Board also needs to get into it as well.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 4. At times we have butted heads, but anytime I call for information it is there, we visit time to time on the front porch. I don't see any problems.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 3. He exceeds expectations. There are things I don't like or agree with all the time, but if I have a question or a concern he answers it every time. He offers to have me come in and look at stuff. Any questions I have, even if we don't agree, we talk about it. Communications with the Board, even when there are conflicts, is really good.

The fourth question addressed community and intergovernmental relations.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 3. In the broad spectrum this may be his weakest, but he still exceeds expectations. Ms. Wright pointed out when the Board was concerned about the turning lanes and the medians going in downtown, he went to the meetings and presented the Board's concerns.

President Lucero – rated at a 3. I appreciate that he works with the City fire inspector, and with the building projects going on now. It takes a lot of communication. Meeting with the county commissioners on items that affect the fire district.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 3. He always talks with people, goes to a lot of meetings and represents us well. Handling the deal with the City and the property down south.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 4. Working for the City, I see him more on a daily basis at City Hall and at our (police) department visiting with different heads of departments. He is very well respected. Things seem to be going well with the different organizations in the government.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 3. The only concern I have is the relations between the District and surrounding fire districts. I have heard from a few of them that they get called all the time. It could be a misconception, or the fact that we are low on personnel. As a Board we need to put that on our shoulders to. We haven't set that goal for him. We have to figure a way to help him do that.

President Lucero commented that the one thing that keeps coming up is a retreat. The Board can get more training.

Mr. Lindsay said after the next meeting, let's discuss what we are going to do. What have you been involved in the past, what you think you should do.

President Lucero stated he would like to get the budget taken care of first, and schedule something for the first part of next year.

The fifth question addressed personal and professional traits.

President Lucero – rated at a 3. Understanding the goals of the firefighters, and that they have built up a stronger team. Keeps personal life separate.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 3. Pointed out the first bullet point 'demonstrates composure, appearance and attitude consistent with an executive position.' The Chief does all of that. Sometimes it is impossible to maintain composure with some of the people you have to deal with. He is always professional.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 3. I have seen you lose your composure before, but I do as well, that is just the way it goes. You're the boss and have to be more composed than everybody else. Every single other thing (listed in the question) you have.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 2. Meets expectations. You have some real strong (points) in here. You have to talk to people outside, once you're on the Board they come talk to you. Viewed positively by others, there is talk in a community like this, you have to let it roll off your back, and you're not going to keep everybody happy, but we need to work on that as a goal for the Board and the fire department. We need to build cohesiveness in the staff where there is no grumblings as much as you can. We need to get to where people want to be a firefighter for Cortez and they want to stay here. Almost all this is based back on what we set as a board.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 3. (note: too much rustling on the tape to clearly hear what was said.)...He has always been composed.

The sixth question was overall performance.

Mr. Lindsay – rated at a 3. No comments.

Mr. Woodman – rated at a 4. He always has patience with Board members even if we are wrong, he always answers stuff. He knows the budget inside and out, years in advance. Knowing what equipment will need to be replaced, and what year. It is very rare to have it that well pinpointed.

Mr. Branson – rated at a 2. Did it scientifically. Added all up and divided. Meets expectations. Actually a little stronger than a 2 because we haven't set expectations.

Ms. Wright – rated at a 3. He exceeds expectations, but nobody is perfect.

President Lucero – rated at a 3.

President Lucero said that after the first part of next year we will all get together for a training and goal setting.

Mr. Lindsay asked if we still had the five (5) year plan hanging around.

Chief Vandevoorde stated that he was looking at it recently, and that we have met almost everything on the five (5) year plan. The Chief commented that the success of this organization is because of the staff and the firefighters. They all take on a lot of extra responsibilities.

The Chief stated that he does have internal goals for the department and himself, but they might not be relayed to the Board like it should, as far as manpower, where the District stands, etc. I have been here over eight (8) years, and the District has changed every year. We started off with two (2) part time people during the day and volunteers at night, to where we are now. To say I haven't been trying and I don't get frustrated, I do at times, but it is not too often. I dish out discipline, but it is always fair. It is not about the person, but more the action and what took place.

One of my biggest goals here is with the full timers. I hate to lose Troy Rightmire, but he lives in Bloomfield and is closer to Farmington. My goal has been, and what we have been trying to do, is replace them with someone who is local. We have more fulltime firefighters now who are local, who are not planning on going anywhere, and who do come back for calls. We will continue to promote our part time firefighters who live in the area and want to stay here. They have a good buy-in to this community. We have a good group of people, including those who live in neighboring communities. My goal is to continue to recruit these individuals.

As far as volunteers, you are not going to see them anymore. The Board will have to make a decision soon on volunteering or working part time. You cannot do both, it is against the state statue. We offer individuals, when they test, if they want to be volunteer or part time. They always chose part time. Most people do not want to be a volunteer anymore.

Some of the frustrations we have is in turnover. It is not just here, but you see it in dispatch, police officers, all over, it is hard to find (qualified) help, and frustrating. Right now we have Chris and Gabriel who are volunteers, and both are locals, that come back for the B-tone calls, comes into the station a lot, helps with pub-ed events. Gabriel has just been offered a full time position to replace Rightmire, and Chris will start working part time. We always try to promote within before we have to go outside. This helps the organization a lot.

Ms. Wright was the score keeper for the annual review and came up with a score of 18.6. The highest possible would have been 24.

President Lucero stated that the pay increase for the Chief will be on the agenda for October 11, 2017.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to come before the board, Kent Lindsay made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Sherri Wright seconded. The motion passed as follows:

Branson	Lindsay	Woodman	Wright	Lucero
Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Orly Lucero – President

Attest:

Kent Lindsay – Secretary/Treasurer