

# SILVERTON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

March 3, 2025, 9:30 a.m.  
Silverton Station # 1

## I ROLL CALL:

Les Von Flue, President  
Stacy Palmer, Vice-President  
Robert Mengucci, Secretary-Treasurer

Dixon Bledsoe, Director  
Ryan Bielenberg, Director

## **ABSENT:**

*Director Bielenberg, Secretary-Treasurer Mengucci*

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Miles, Office Administrator (OA) Cantu, AC Veit

## II **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The meeting was called to order by President Von Flue at 9:30 a.m. and led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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## III **DISCUSSION:**

### 3.1 **STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS DISCUSSION**

AC Veit provided an update on Goal 3, Objective B. He shared that, after surveying neighboring agencies, the District would focus on strengthening the Duty Officer program. After noticing that AC Veit's updates were not posted to the progress chart, OA Cantu mentioned that she would update the Strategic Plan accordingly and ensure the revised version was posted on the website.

On Strategic Goal 4, Objective B, concerning the Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP), Director Bledsoe asked how the program was performing and whether the budget for it should be increased. Chief Miles responded that the VIP committee had met the previous year to revise the program after concerns were raised about how credits were awarded. Since its inception, there has been a decline in the number of volunteers qualifying for the incentive. Given this, increasing the budget wouldn't be effective, as it would only increase the payout for a small group of qualifying volunteers. OA Cantu explained that increasing the budget would also prompt further discussions regarding IRS classifications and the distinction between "volunteers" and "staff." The Board then asked if the District had considered other forms of volunteer pay. OA Cantu shared that the administration had explored options such as moving to an accountable plan or establishing a LOSAP as alternatives to providing a stipend. Vice President Palmer suggested whether additional awards or events might be more effective. OA Cantu responded that the District was the only agency that fully funded appreciation events for both staff and volunteers, whereas other agencies had associations that hosted events for volunteers. She noted that the

Association had mentioned plans to engage with the membership about events, and the District had recently conducted a survey to gather feedback on events and celebrations. AC Veit added that increasing the training opportunities for members, at their request, and paying for additional certifications was another way the District was demonstrating to the members that they are valued and respected for their skills and qualifications.

Regarding call response times, Strategic Goal 5, Objective A, Chief Miles asked for clarification from the Board on what call data they would like to see when it comes to planning for community growth. The Board clarified that they were seeking the average call response time for emergent EMS and fire calls, not the fractal times. Chief Miles confirmed that the current average response time was 7 to 8 minutes.

Chief Miles discussed the need for an additional station on the Epping property. However, after conducting GIS mapping, he concluded that placing a station at that location was not in the best interest of the District. The data on call response also indicated there was no pressing need for a station there. Chief Miles emphasized that outfitting an additional station would incur significant costs without sufficient data to justify the expense. Vice President Palmer asked whether the District should consider transferring the property to the City or hold onto it for a while longer until more information about future needs became available. Chief Miles replied that discussions were ongoing with AC Veit about whether the City of Silverton might be open to a property trade at another location that might better serve the District's needs. The Board were not opposed to this suggestion.

Director Bledsoe inquired whether the District had considered merging with Drakes Crossing to expand the response area and pool resources. Chief Miles responded that the topic of merging with Drakes Crossing has been briefly discussed at various times over the last 25 years that he knows of. Further discussion would need to happen between the two district Boards. AC Veit added that the District already collaborates with Drakes Crossing, encouraging cross-training and participation in drills to strengthen the relationship, improve communication, and enhance mutual aid responses.

Strategic Goal 11, Objective A, Vice President Palmer raised the topic of medical evaluations, asking whether the District had found a process that would encourage volunteers to consistently complete their evaluations. Chief Miles responded that AC Veit had built a strong relationship with Township Health, who had been very accommodating with firefighter physicals. AC Veit added that Township Health had expanded their testing services specifically for the District, and so far, everyone had been very satisfied with the service and flexibility provided. In addition, the services included labs and x-rays in house which makes a significant difference for members and alleviates the need to drive 20-30 minutes away for that service.

### **3.2 REVENUE & EXPENSE PROJECTION**

Chief Miles provided an update on the radio project with Marion County. He shared that both the North County Fire Chiefs and the South County Fire Chiefs would be making decisions on whether or not their agencies would proceed with joining the Marion County 800 mhz radio system. Chief Miles noted that districts might be compelled to join, given the number of police and fire departments transitioning to the new system, which could affect the District's ability to communicate with those agencies.

He explained that moving to the new system would cost the District approximately \$100,000 in subscriber fees the first year, with expected increases in subscriber fees over time. It is still not clear at this time what one-time equipment and additional system costs

the District would be required to pay to be on the system. Chief Miles expressed the view that, due to the significant costs involved in purchasing and maintaining the system and radios, it was not financially feasible for the District to move forward with the transition. Instead, Chief Miles recommended directing funding toward improvements to the District's current system. When the Board asked about the possibility of using a municipal lease or bond for financing, Chief Miles clarified that subscriber fees could not be paid from bond funds.

Chief Miles announced that the District would proceed with the standard 3% increase in tax revenue, which is expected to generate approximately \$70,000 in additional revenue for the 2025-2026 budget year. OA Cantu mentioned that staff salary and benefit proposals would be presented at the regular board meeting once the Chief had more information about the radio project.

The Board inquired about any potential impact on State and FEMA grant revenue. Chief Miles responded that any impacts are still uncertain at this time and noted that reimbursement for the California Fire response wouldn't be received until the next budget year. OA Cantu added that the District is now contributing 50% towards the full-time equivalent (FTE) position currently funded through the Capacity Grant, and the District had received all funds allocated for that position.

President Von Flue adjourned the board work session at 10:51 a.m. to go into executive session and stated that the work session would resume at the completion of the executive session.

**3.3 EXECUTIVE SESSION ORS 192.660,(2),(i)**

President Von Flue called the Executive Session to order at 10:51 a.m. The Board reviewed and evaluated the employment-related performance of Chief Miles. President Von Flue adjourned the executive session at 11:22 a.m. and reconvened the work session at 11:22 a.m.

**3.4 ADJOURNMENT:**

The work session was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Approved this 11<sup>th</sup> day of march, 2025.

Les Umblue

President