

**SOUTH DAVIS METRO FIRE SERVICE AREA**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

The South Davis Metro Fire Service Area Board of Trustees held a meeting July 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the South Davis Metro Fire Service Area Station #81, 255 S. 100 W., Bountiful, Utah.

**CONDUCTING:** Vice-Chair Commissioner Ken Romney

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ken Romney – Vice-Chair  
Rick Earnshaw  
Clark Wilkinson  
Randy Lewis  
Bob Stevenson

**STAFF PRESENT**

Dane Stone – Fire Chief  
Dave Powers – Deputy Chief  
Greg Stewart – Deputy Chief  
Jessica Hardy - Accountant  
Nikki Dandurand - Secretary  
Todd Godfrey – Attorney

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ken Leetham – Administrative Committee Chair  
Duane Huffman - Administrative Committee  
Gary Hill - Administrative Committee

**BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Len Arave- Board Chair

Commissioner Romney stated that this was a regularly scheduled meeting and a notice of time, place, and agenda had been sent to the newspaper and to each member of the Board prior to the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR JUNE 2021**

Commissioner Romney presented the minutes for the June 2021 meeting. Commissioner Earnshaw made a motion to approve the minutes, Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 2021 DISBURSEMENTS– JESSICA HARDY**

Ms. Hardy reviewed the disbursements. Ms. Hardy stated she has started the FY2021 audit, which will be complete in September. Commissioner Lewis moved to approve the disbursements as presented with Commissioner Earnshaw seconding the motion. All voted in favor.

**DISCUSSION OF PROPERTY TAX/CITY ASSESSMENTS – MR. GARY HILL**

Mr. Hill made a presentation of why the Administrative Committee recommends raising the city assessments to 10%. The biggest problem with the district is growing expenses, without any revenue to match. This is a perpetual problem of how to continue to fund without revenue resources. Prior to district times, our growth was limited and very challenging. As we agreed to a district, we installed a property tax. Up to this point, the policy was that the property tax would pay for debt service, capital improvements and a portion of new personnel. The challenge that was created was the lack of predictability. At the beginning of the year, all the cities estimate what percentage will be assessed. The 10% as suggested is a good compromise.

Mr. Hill continued that now, if we don't follow the original policy, how much it's going to put us back. Fixed assessments with no growth is hard. We all know that Truth in Taxation is difficult as well, specifically to my city, with an adopted budget with the 10%. Now we are going to the voters with a double taxation and possibly have to reduce our rate. Taxes should remain with the city. That's why we are here and to further discuss with the Board. Commissioner Earnshaw asked what option was being discussed. Chief Stone replied "option A." Mr. Godfrey stated we have sent our direction to the county, but there has been no final decision. Mr. Hill stated it was the option with a lower tax rate and same assessment. Commissioner Lewis asked if other city managers agreed with this option as well. Mr. Hill mentioned that the other city managers agreed with

the 10% assessment. Mr. Godfrey stated that this process is very typical, especially during a Truth in Taxation. The discussion last time was policy based. It was said that if the district (fire) needs something, the district should do it. This is nothing out of the ordinary.

Commissioner Wilkinson asked if we look at the future, do include a percentage annually. Commissioner Lewis stated we should get a better picture from the county and the impacts on the cities. We should make sure they mesh, have good communication and get input as we move along. Commissioner Romney said there is a lot to consider. How much do the assessments really matter? Do we need to set a policy for the future? Commissioner Earnshaw replied that we brought that up last time, but nobody wanted too. With the Board changing soon, we should keep it memorialized. Mr. Godfrey stated that policies are good and bad. His recommendation is not to write a policy that binds you. The Board members agreed.

Mr. Hill stated they follow "guidelines" at his city. It's good to be persistent and the clarification has been great this year. Guiding principles would be great. Mr. Leetham stated this is a complex issue funding the district. We had a good assessment funding formula a few years ago. This year is unique, trying to share in the district's revenue by creating a healthy assessment and property tax. You have a good recommendation from the Administrative Committee, and I favor a growth in assessments. The challenge is how much does it grow? Do we do this year after year and come back to the Board with reasonable expectations. We should not fund everything with property tax. Mr. Huffman stated he knows the district is relatively young but this is a healthy conversation. We are a model to other areas. He is not worried about a Truth in Taxation. Public safety is huge in this area and adding to those departments ie. Police, parks would be great. It's very tempting to lock in rates, but its more valuable to balance out. Commissioner Romney appreciated the discussion and said thank you to the city managers.

#### **DISCUSSION OF FY 2021-22 BUDGET**

Chief Stone stated we have a public hearing scheduled for August 2, 2021. Depending on that discussion we can decide. This option has already been presented to the county. Commissioner Romney asked if funding remains the same. Commissioner Lewis said we will all meet on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Godfrey stated that all hearings are set differently. Commissioner Romney asked if they wanted to make a decision and inform the cities, what do we do formally? Mr. Godfrey responded we already set the budgets with option A, the 10% increase. If that's what you choose on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the cities will move forward. Other cities will have to adjust their budgets. The fire district is scheduled first for public hearings. Ms. Hardy stated that if we don't maintain our rate, we will get behind. Chief Stone said he remembers talking to Chief Bassett and the public would like to see small increases every year, not a large lump sum. We, the district, can handle small ones and a Truth in Taxation every year.

#### **FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

Chief Stone reported the 4<sup>th</sup> of July was not too bad, only 24 fire related calls. We put out a special thank you to the public on social media. Bountiful City will hold their fireworks show on the 24<sup>th</sup>. On July 11<sup>th</sup>, we had a structure fire. Two dogs were saved, it then re-ignited and we again extinguished the fire. We also had a suicide on the Front Runner tracks. Commissioner Lewis asked about fire times and response times. Chief Stone replied that we have great times. The state has an eight-minute respond time, and we are running four to five minutes. We treat every call as an emergency.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting. Board meeting was adjourned.

  
Vice Chair Ken Romney

  
Nicole Dandurand, Clerk