
Bourbonnais Fire Protection District

Special Meeting On Strategic Planning

Saturday, January 4, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

1080 Armour Road – Station #1

1. **Call to Order:** The Strategic Planning Meeting of the BFPD was called to order by President Myers
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Everyone participated in reciting the pledge.
3. **Roll Call:** President Randy Myers; Senior Trustee, Paul Grzelak; Treasurer, Bill Hemm; Secretary, Alice Argyelan; Trustee, Rob Casino; and Chief, Jim Keener. Additional District employees and Commissioners in attendance included Commissioners Jeannie Guebert, Darren Blair, Dave Demarah and Battalion Chiefs Brian McCrary and Ken Gebhart, and Lt. Rich Santilli. Facilitator: Jenny Schoenwetter
4. **Welcome and Meeting Objectives:** Chief Keener introduced Ms. Schoenwetter. Everyone in attendance gave a quick self-introduction.
5. **Staffing:** Approximately 40 minutes were spent on this topic. Some quick facts to get conversation started included 4,372 calls in 2024; Overtime hours in 2023 were 7,376 at a cost of \$256,000 and 2024 7,447, at a cost of \$298,000. Discussions involved recruitment, retention, paramedic versus EMT hires with time limit for when an EMT must have earned their paramedic, available education facilities, financial support for education process and current employee pipeline and need for emphasis on succession planning.
6. **Capital Projects:** Approximately 40 minutes was spent on this topic. Discussions included need to prioritize and potential for current grants available to which Chief Keener will apply. Discussion ensued about the phone system, front foyer area, flooring, dispatch room with considerations for safety, operations, employee well-being, etc. Everyone in attendance was asked to reflect on the discussion and information presented and forward their opinion on prioritization to Battalion Chief Gebhardt.
7. **Future Partnerships/Exploring Options:** Approximately 30 minutes was spent on this subject. Consideration was given to identifying potential opportunities for collaboration, i.e., IFFA, other fire protection districts where sharing resources and personnel may be feasible and potential for other joint ventures.
8. **Future Fire Stations:** This was discussed for about a half-hour. Several potential sites were bantered, some being more ideal than others. Everyone concurred there must be a solid plan in place with funding sources identified and realized before any firm movement to acquiring land/facilities for an additional station can be initiated.
9. **Succession Planning: Building for the Future:** Chief spoke to his goals of timing for retirement, the fact that Battalion Chief McCrary is currently enrolled in college curriculum, and the fact we are already short a Battalion chief. The discussion revolved around our current model of Chief/BC/Lieutenant model. A suggestion was made to add to our current 360° performance review tool a question concerning an employee's interest in moving up

the chain of command and the need for continual mentorship. Depending on staffing, there may be a need to recruit outside of the district.

10. **Summary:** Attendees were asked to continue working on and identifying areas where the district can move forward in a meaningful way focusing on meeting the needs of our community in the future while remaining steadfast in fiscal responsibilities. BC Gebhardt, along with the building and grounds committee will continue to work on facility upgrades and grant opportunities, Trustees will continue to focus on opportunities to recruit/retain staffing, apparatus needs, funding opportunities, and Commissioners will provide recommendations for application process and need to update/change the process.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

Alice E. Argyelan, Secretary

Randy Myers, President