
**BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
June 13, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order by Board Chair Mote at 5:05 p.m., Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 41090 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, California.

Board Members Present: Board Chair Bynette Mote
 Vice Chair Bob Rowe
 Director John Green
 Director Perri Melnick
 Director Randall Putz
 Director John Russo
 Director Kendi Segovia
 Director Larry Walsh
 Director Al Ziegler – arrived at 5:12 p.m.

Board Members Absent: Director Rick Herrick

Others Present: Mike Maltby, Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal
 Kristin Mandolini, Director of Business Services
 Chardelle Smith, Board Secretary
 Jeff Balinger, Assistant Authority Counsel

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Moment of Silence: Observed

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Director Walsh

ROLL CALL

Please Note: The Chair may, at his or her discretion, take items out of order at the meeting to facilitate the business of the Board and/or for the convenience of the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Fire Authority's Administrative Office will be closed:

- Tuesday, July 4, 2023, in observance of Independence Day and will reopen on Wednesday, July 5, 2023.

Engineer Shawn Sutherland is coordinating with LifeStream Blood Bank to host a blood drive at Station 281, tentatively for July 21, 2023.

Big Bear Professional Firefighters' Association is hosting their annual golf tournament, "Sink Some for Charity," on August 20, 2023, with a 9:00 a.m. shotgun start at Bear Mountain Golf Course.

PRESENTATIONS

None

DIRECTORS' GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS – Comments shall pertain to items not on the posted agenda and are limited to three minutes per Authority Member.

Director Walsh stated Big Bear City Community Services District is holding their second clean-up day from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., on July 15, 2023.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – *Members of the public who wish to comment on topics not included on the agenda or comment on agenda items are invited to provide comments in either of the methods described above.*

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

None

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Kristin Mandolini presented the finance report as of March 31, 2023.

Ms. Mandolini noted the summary in the finance officers staff report within the agenda packet was incorrect and the correct information was stated verbally.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

FIRE AUTHORITY CONSENT CALENDAR

Items FA1, FA2, and FA3 were removed by Director Walsh for further discussion

FA4. Receive and File Big Bear Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for March and April 2023.

Action: Motion by Director Putz, seconded by Director Melnick, to approve the Consent Calendar as follows:

AYES: Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Ziegler, Herrick

ABSTAIN: None

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

FA1. Approval of Demands – Check Issue Date 03/1/2023 through 03/31/2023 in the amount of \$1,140,133.76.

Discussion was held regarding the meals for the mutual aid assistance during the 2023 Blizzard. Director Melnick abstained due to unanswered questions from the Chief regarding certain purchases.

Staff responded to questions from Board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Segovia, to approve FA1 as follows:

AYES: Green, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: Melnick

FA2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the April 11, 2023, Regular meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority.

It was stated under the comment section, regarding the Southwest Gas bills at the Moonridge station, it was recorded in the minutes as a comparison to previous years, but what was asked is if a two-car garage unmanned station was costing more than the manned Sugarloaf station was correct. It was asked at what point does the department take action to better insulate the station and in the long run save on the utilities. It was also noted the roll call verbiage on page 5 was missing. The Board Secretary stated correction would be made.

FA3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the April 19, 2023, and May 17, 2023, Special Workshops of the Big Bear Fire Authority.

For the April 19th minutes, on page 1, it was asked if the location for Director Green was also included in the minutes. The Board Secretary stated the Directors location was on page 1, below Board Members Present.

Action: Motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Director Melnick, to approve FA2 and FA3 as follows:

AYES: Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
NOES: None
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC HEARING

FA5. Proposed Resolution No. BBFA2023-002 to Adopt the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Big Bear Fire Authority Budget

Board consideration of conducting a Public Hearing to approve Resolution No. BBFA2023-002 adopting the Big Bear Fire Authority Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Speakers: Senior Finance Officer Kristin Mandolini
Jeff Ballinger, BB&K

Legal Counsel Ballinger, BB&K, opened with background to how the budget approval is adopted under the Health and Safety code. The three options given were to adopt with any modifications and consider it the final budget for fiscal year 2023-2024. Another option was to approve as a preliminary budget before July 1st, with a final budget adopted by October 1st. The final option was to take no action adopting a budget which would default the budget to the current fiscal year's terms, with a final budget needing to be adopted by October 1st. It was noted that if no budget was approved, fixed assets and new permanent employee positions would be frozen until the new budget is approved. It was noted the fixed assets include the new ambulance, roof repair at station 282, Battalion Chief Vehicle, rope rescue equipment, as well as the MOU approved 3% raise for the firefighters.

Discussion was held between Board members and staff regarding the proposed draft budget for fiscal year 2023-2024. It was asked if the administrative committee or ad hoc committee should handle the in-depth discussion regarding the budget. A salary comp study on administrative staff was requested.

Director Putz reminded the Board the Financial Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee was formed regarding financial sustainability going forward. He stated it was not intended to revisit the current budget and potentially withhold adoption.

Staff responded to questions from the Board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: At the hour of 6:14 p.m., Board Chair Mote opened the public hearing. There being public comment:

Patrice Duncan, on behalf of herself and Sugarloaf Property Owners Association:

Listening to you guys, I want everyone to put their egos aside and differences aside and look back to the basic issue of what is going on here. As an example, when Chief Willis spoke to me a few years ago about adding the fire prevention risk reduction department, I thought it was a great idea. Bring the business local, the control, and revenue local, should we issue violations. So, in addition to everything we are talking about, you approved two new admin positions, that used to cost this department \$46K and change to farm that out to San Bernardino County. Now we have two additional people on this payroll probably

exceeding \$250,000. This doesn't sound like good business sense to me. I know we want to bring the prevention risk reduction in house, but it really doesn't make financial sense to me. If I did that in my personal budget, I would lose my home. There are a lot of little things in the budget, I'm not saying don't pass the budget, you all really need to dig down to the details. We have been running in a deficit spend for the past 6 years. This year maybe different, but you all are going to approve raises. Now suppression staff, absolutely. They deserve it, they deserve more. But you are approving admin staff raises who by the way, got big raises a couple years ago when their positions were reclassified. So please dig into the details. I agree with Director Segovia, you can probably find a lot more money if you dig into the details. Thank you.

Chris Segovia, Big Bear Lake: As a fireman for 36 years and every time I hear politicians talk about cutting the budget, it's the boots on the ground and then the comment oh we don't want to lose a single life, that's a bunch of crap. Why is it always the boots on the ground? I can look at this budget and easily cut half a million dollars from it, and I don't even have the facts. I look through this budget for a second, and cut half a million dollars out of it. But you are worried about kicking this down the road. We knew this was coming and we did nothing about it. The best idea we can come up with, is let's wait till next April when this budget comes out again and we are going to kick it down the road again for another year. \$69,000 is about what you are going to roll over till next year, off the cuff. I'll buy anyone dinner that wants to take me up on a bet that we aren't close to a million dollars in the hole this year. I've looked at stuff on the budget for this past year and its not inking out. We will end up at about a million dollars down, not \$69,000 up. The last ones that should be cut is the boots on the ground. I could really care less if you guys had to come in and sit on the floor. If I'm having a heart attack, I want that big red thing showing up at my door. I don't care what all the other complaining is about, I want the budget cut that puts more boots on the ground. As director Green pointed out, to save another life, but we can't keep saving lives when we are buying luxuries. Here is an idea, let's do something about it next year. Whoever has looked at this budget, and I did a deep dive on it, and I've seen the one and a half million dollars that we are going down every year. That's why I want to bet one of you people dinner, we are going to be at least a million this year. When that audited budget comes out, November 15 to sometime in December, I'll be standing back here collecting my dinner. Because that's where the actual budget and how much we spent, and how much we are getting back, that's where it all comes to reality. So, you tell me next year we have plans that its going to be three hundred and something, it'll be another million dollars in the hole. But here's an idea, lets worry about it next year and forget about it this year.

Pat, Sugarloaf: I may be completely off base here, but what if the money was already here but we haven't asked for it. Its my understanding the County makes the budget, is that correct? I am wondering if we can tap into the TOT budget. It would seem to me that all these taxes that are being collected on the mountain, should be spent on the mountain. I've been told Lake Arrowhead can keep their TOT in Lake Arrowhead. There is a million for you. Why can't we do it?

Board Chair Mote closed the public hearing at the hour of 6:21 p.m.

Motion by Director Ziegler; seconded by Director Green, approving staff recommendation to adopt Resolution No. BBFA2023-002 adopting the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget.

RESOLUTION NO. BBFA2023-002

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY, A CALIFORNIA JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING THE BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY APPROVED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

Action: Motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Ziegler
NOES: Segovia, Walsh, Mote
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: None

Motion by Director Walsh; seconded by Director Segovia, to table staff recommendation to adopt Resolution No. BBFA2023-002 adopting the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget until the August 8th Regular Board meeting and moving forward with the FY 2022-2023 budget:

Action: Motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Segovia, Walsh, Mote
NOES: Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Ziegler
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: None

Motion by Director Melnick; seconded by Vice Chair Rowe, approving staff recommendation as a preliminary fiscal year 2023-2024 budget, but removing the administrative “office staff” 3% raise:

Action: Motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Melnick, Rowe
NOES: Green, Putz, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: None

Motion by Director Green; seconded by Director Putz, approving staff recommendation to adopt Resolution No. BBFA2023-002 adopting the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget:

Action: Motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Ziegler
NOES: Segovia, Walsh, Mote
ABSENT: Herrick
ABSTAIN: None

At 6:47 p.m., Director Ziegler stepped out, returning at 6:51 p.m.

A break was taken at 7:08 p.m., returning to open session at 7:26 p.m.

Board Chair Mote reopened public comment at 7:42 p.m.:

Jon Bidwell, Big Bear City: I just want to point out that this budget is end result of years of change. You can't reverse engineer last years budget. That's where I stand, as well as the association, if you use this current budget, you have the most modern up to date information that you could possibly have to start looking at each line item and find where the increases happened and have Kristen approve or disapprove those line items. If you try and give her last years, she not going to know what those numbers even mean because it will be too difficult to cross reference. There are too many receipts, too many things. You know I am a big proponent of figuring out this department and making sure we are sustainable. You know we are working together. I want you to know there won't be anyone stagnant. I'm here, as you all have seen, with emails every single week. We have a department that is gung-ho and more Board members that are gung-ho as well. I don't think anyone will be sitting stagnant. I think the committee is going to be full speed, because you are going to have to. I just think it would be a huge mistake to not vote this budget because I think it will be very difficult to nit pick those old numbers.

Board Chair Mote closed public comment at 7:44 p.m.

The motions did not pass, therefor, the department will continue with Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget until the new budget is approved.

NEW BUSINESS

BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY DISCUSSION ITEMS

FA6. Proposed Resolution BBFA2023-004 Authorizing Ambulance Service Fee Increase

Board consideration of approving Resolution BBFA2023-004 that increases ambulance service fees:

Speaker: Speaker: Senior Finance Officer Kristin Mandolini

Ms. Mandolini stated Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) provides ambulance rates annually to reflect change in the EMS services and transports. The rate adjustment set by ICEMA for next fiscal year comes to a 10% increase.

Staff responded to questions from the Board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion by Director Melnick; seconded by Director Walsh, to authorize Resolution BBFA2023-004, to increase ambulance service fees:

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES:	Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Herrick
ABSTAIN:	None

FA7. Tax And Revenue Anticipation Note from First Foundation Bank

Board consideration of adopting Resolution No. BBFA2023-003 and authorizing to enter into agreement between the Authority and First Foundation Bank for borrowing of funds for fiscal year 2023-2024.

Speaker: Senior Finance Officer Kristin Mandolini

Mandolini stated at the May 17th budget workshop, there was discussion regarding the Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note (TRAN), for fiscal year 2023-2024, in the amount of 2 million dollars. A request for proposal had been sent to 22 banks with the best rate First Foundation Bank at 7.50% and an estimated cost of issuance if \$60,000.

Discussion was held regarding last years TRAN and how many months it was needed. It was asked if this did not pass, what would happen.

Staff responded to questions from the Board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion by Director Melnick; seconded by Director Green, to approve staff recommendation authorizing Resolution No. BBFA2023-003 and to enter into an agreement between the Authority and First Foundation Bank.

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES:	Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Herrick
ABSTAIN:	None

FA8. Establishment of a Financial Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee

Board Chair to appoint four members to the Financial Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee.

Speaker: Board Chair Mote

Board Chair Mote mentioned she hopes the first meeting will be held by the end of June.

Action: Board Chair Mote called for appointment Financial Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee as follows: 1) Board Chair Mote; 2) Director Russo; 3) Director Segovia; and 4) Ziegler.

Said Motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES:	Green, Melnick, Putz, Rowe, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Ziegler, Mote
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Herrick
ABSTAIN:	None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

DIRECTORS' CLOSING COMMENTS

Director Segovia mentioned in the last few months, she had met with some of the wonderful firefighter staff. They are very dedicated people.

Director Walsh stated we were told the inspections for hazard abatement would start in June, but in fact they started in May, because people were already getting notices. If we start now on North Shore, we've got sage brush that's hanging out into the street, along driveways, and weeds along public lands. He mentioned from what he could see, every parcel within the valley probably has a violation, including our own fire stations. Good luck.

Director Green invited all to Replenish Big Bear open house on Wednesday July 19th, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. There will be a tour of the facility. This is important to the valley and he hoped to see everyone there.

Director Putz stated its his hope that as we continue through this process, we all do our best to not take this personally. That we are all here for the right reason, and that's to best serve our community, specifically, to best serve our fire board. He mentioned he will do his best and he hopes everyone else will. He stated he looks forward to getting beyond the current budget, and nervous about where we are heading over the next couple months without an approved budget. He mentioned hopefully we can move forward in a positive way and is looking forward to any insights or inspiration the ad hoc will have.

Board Chair Mote thanked everyone for sticking with us.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Fire Authority at this session, Board Chair Mote adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Chardelle Smith
Board Secretary

APPROVED AT THE MEETING OF AUGUST 8, 2023