

Boulder Fire Department

Boulder Rural Fire Rescue

Front Range Fire Rescue

Greeley Fire Department

Longmont Fire Department



Loveland Fire Rescue Authority

Mountain View Fire Protection

Platte Valley Fire Protection

Poudre Fire Authority

Windsor-Severance Fire Rescue

**FRFC Board of Directors
Special Board Meeting
June 15, 2023, 8:30AM – 9:30AM
Meeting Via Teams**

- 1. Call To Order:** Meeting called to order at 8:30am by FRFC President, Chief Tim Sendelbach
- 2. Director Roll Call and Attendance - Board Members Present:** Chief Tim Sendelbach (Loveland), Chief Brian Kuznik (Greeley), Chief Michael West (Front Range), Chief Mike Calderazzo (Boulder), Chief Dan Higgins (Longmont), Chief Dave Beebe (Mountain View), Chief Jim Klug (Platte Valley), Chief Darren Jaques (Windsor), Chief Greg Schwab (Boulder Rural)

Board Members Not Present: Chief Derek Bergsten (Poudre)

Also Present: Jeff Stranahan (Greeley), Chris Ellmer (Greeley), Lisa Willis (North Metro), Ben Ojinaga (Greeley), Frazier Spearman (Loveland), Rob Morris (North Metro), Tyson Barela (Poudre), Todd Vess (Windsor), Jeff Dykstra (Windsor), Sara Simonton (James Vincent Group), Cherie Kozak (FRFC & LFRA)

- 3. AGENDA ITEM:** Discussion for new Funding Model for Front Range Fire Consortium. A presentation will be included for consideration of the North Area Fire Academy Funding Model.

Chief Sendelbach shared with Chief Rob Morris and Lisa Willis of North Metro Fire Academy, that the FRFC Board met previously to discuss the North Metro Funding Model. Chief Sendelbach asked Chief Morris for an overview of the North Metro Model and to share any challenges the organization faced within their funding structure.

Chief Morris said the North Area Fire Academy consists of 6 agencies (Thornton, Brighton, Westminster, North Metro, South Adams, Adams County) and that, to date, they have had 12 academies together. He included that operationally, with each academy, the North Area Chiefs rotate in as the lead. He shared that they have a 5-1 ratio, recruit to instructor, so the size of the academy dictates how many Cadre members are required for each.

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Additionally, Chief Morris shared that North Area is considering a second site with South Adams joining them soon. He said the member agencies share the costs and build out the daily use fee for what is used each training session. Some of the areas billed are:

- Costs for the training center itself
- SCBA refill stations
- Propane/Disel – They have a tank at the Training Center they fill prior to academy, and the tank gets refilled after each academy. The amount used is billed back to that agency who used the fuel.
- The number of recruits an agency has in academy increases the percentage of what is billed to the agency for consumables.
- Lisa Willis (North Area) receives the use amounts and at the end of academy, she bills each agency for their fees.
- Chief Morris said they have capital costs incurred each year and the needs are presented by the Training Chiefs to the Fire Chiefs for consideration and approval.
- The maximum capacity for recruits at North Metro is 50. If they exceed that they have to have another academy. This year they will have a spring and fall academy due to their numbers.

Chief Sendelbach asked about additional expenses incurred and Lisa Willis shared that she is the CFO for North Metro and has three people in finance that help with their academy expenses. Lisa said North Metro manages all expenses for academy so they can maintain control of the finances. She also shared that they don't allocate/bill any of their finance time but acknowledged that they should since it has gotten so much bigger. They assumed management of the finances as their training center is the one being used for Academy. Lisa stated that in the next year they want to look at the rental cost for the Training Center and evaluate the administrative time they are contributing.

Chief Sendelbach asked if they are considering a full time Academy Chief and Lisa Willis said she had not heard that a full time FTE Position was a consideration. She said it was not in their 2023 Budget, but they are working on their 2024 Budget now. She also shared that they have Thornton at the Training Center with two full time positions, but they are only stationed there and aren't specifically for the academy. Chief Morris said they are asking the Fire Chiefs to provide a dedicated person in charge of academy, but they have not been given approval yet.

Chief Morris said until they can get a designated person to manage training, North Metro will take over the NAFPA portion and Thornton's Chief will take over North Side management. He also said if they are approved for a designated manager, that person will have to be an employee of North Metro so they can be offered benefits. He included that each agency would participate in the administrative salary and benefits for that person.

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Chief Brian Kuznik asked if North Metro had a formal agreement with policies and procedures between the 6 agencies, as their organization is not a separate entity. Chief Morris and Lisa confirmed that there is no formal agreement. Additionally, Chief Kuznik asked how North Metro navigates when a new agency wants to join the existing 6. Lisa said they are a closed group now as they cannot accommodate more agencies. She added that existing agencies purchase an equal amount of capital that is carried forward each year so there would not be a way to bill for a new agency joining. Chief Morris included that if they were to bring another agency on, they would have to be a full participant to share the operational and capital costs. Lisa said in the past, when a new agency was added, they would have to buy into the capital already purchased at a onetime buy in price.

Chief Calderazzo asked how long they have been working as a group and Chief Morris said it has been 12 years. Chief Calderazzo also asked if it will change their funding structure if they hire a full-time administrator. Chief Morris said it would not have to be an Executive level Officer. He said they would just have to deal with the day-to-day responsibilities and the Budget.

Chief Calderazzo asked about the shared costs and asked if it was the same regardless of the agency's size. Lisa said the operating cost is specific to each agency and how many recruits they have in academy, but that capital expenses are split equally amongst the agencies no matter the agency's size. Chief Calderazzo enquired as to who makes the decision on new capital purchases and Chief Morris said the decision is made collectively by the Fire Chiefs and when approved, North Metro makes the purchase. Lisa said the cost per recruit per academy is \$2,600 which does not include Capital expenses, only operating cost.

Chief Sendelbach asked if they have ever had an agency who was not able to put an instructor into the Cadre and if so, how was it handled. Chief Morris said they have never had that problem. Their member agencies put a Cadre member in even if they don't have a recruit, because they want to keep their Cadre current.

Sara Simonton asked if they submit a budget for academy. Lisa said the costs in academy run through North Metros books and then they get revenue from the agencies based on how the costs are allocated. She also asked how they handle any administrative costs for the academy on items such as legal costs. Lisa said they haven't had any academy legal issues. Chief Kuznik shared that for the FRFC they split the costs of anything that is an academy specific cost.

Chief Morris said, even if they have an Executive Director, the Cadre Lead will still rotate through the agencies for each academy. To be the Cadre Lead, the instructor would be required to have previously taught in the academy to take that position.

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Chief Tyson Barela asked if there was any discussion on what the second academy site with South Adams would look like. Chief Morris said there has been no discussion on that or on how the financing would be run, but he feels it will still go through North Metro to retain consistency.

Chief Sendelbach closed the meeting with North Metro and asked the FRFC to stay on the Teams Meeting. He asked the Board members on the call for direction on the next steps and if there was anything that they needed to address immediately.

Chief Klug said he likes the sound of how the North Metro program works, but that it doesn't sound much cheaper once he provides a Cadre member. He said the \$90,000 cost of an academy lead, split between 10 organizations is right at the \$10,000 annual membership cost that they are already paying and it's just to cover that one position.

Chief Sendelbach said the authority has a different structure, which has expenses built in such as legal fees (North Metro doesn't have these) and insurance (with North Metro all agencies carry their own insurance). He said that he and Emily Powell the FRFC Attorney had discussed the FRFC model and when the Authority was created, it was designed to be 100% independent from all other entities. He also shared that the Authority has a built-in administrator (i.e.- Cherie) where North Metro is absorbing the administrative costs.

Chief Higgins said his understanding is that North Metro is already dealing with the same problems that the FRFC is, but feels they are just shifting their costs and those costs will not stay the same. He also said that the North Area agencies are relying entirely on North Metro to take the brunt of the work (i.e.- Their finance time, training center coordinator, staff), is North Metro heavy. He said he thinks the structure of the FRFC is to not put the burden on any one agency as North Metro does.

Chief Calderazzo agreed with Chief Higgins and added that North Metro is not cost allocating a big portion of the administrative portion of their operations. He said he doesn't believe the FRFC will be able to reduce to North Metro's level of funding and is in favor of supporting the FRFC as an Authority. He said he likes that it gives the formality and legal structure and included that he has no interest in taking part in a model that is a handshake agreement. He said he does believe there are aspects of their cost structure allocations that are better than the FRFC. He also said he agrees with the model of contributing a certain number of instructors for the duration of academy, based on the number of recruits an agency enrolls. He said that is ultimately as expensive or more expensive than paying the \$14,250, but he likes that approach of the North Metro instructor model. Finally, he shared that he is in favor of incorporating what they like about the North Metro into the FRFC system but feels the formal model of the FRFC is the better way to go.

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Chief Sendelbach agreed that handshake agreements don't work. He expressed that he wanted to present the North Metro model against the FRFC's as a comparison and acknowledged that there are expenses with the Authority that the North Metro model doesn't have, as discussed with Chief Morris and Lisa.


Chief Sendelbach asked the Board what they think are immediate next steps. He feels that the FRFC would be successful at affecting a change and tightening thing up for the fall academy, and that a more formal restructuring can then be addressed for future academies.


Chief Sendelbach said he would take the information to the Executive Board level and create some next steps. The Executive Board will then share with the rest of the Board to establish next steps.

Adjournment: June 15, 2023, 9:11am.

ATTESTATION OF MINUTES:

We attest that the foregoing minutes, which have been approved by the affirmative majority vote of the Board of Directors of the Front Range Fire Consortium, are a true and accurate record of the meeting held on the date stated above.


_____ Tim Sendelbach, President


_____ Jim Klug, Treasurer