



# LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

*Serving Cuchara Valley Since 1949*

## REGULAR MEETING

**September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 1:00 PM**

**La Veta Station 1**

**100 Birch St, La Veta CO**

## AGENDA

Agenda is preliminary and subject to change by majority vote of the board at the meeting.

Individuals requiring special accommodation to attend and/or participate in the meeting should please advise the District of their specific need(s) 48 hours before the meeting. This meeting is open to the public, except for the Executive Session.

- 1. Call to order**
- 2. Pledge of allegiance**
- 3. Roll call**
- 4. Amendments to agenda**
  - a. Approval of September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Agenda
- 5. Minutes of previous meetings:**
  - a. August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Minutes
- 6. Public forum**
- 7. Correspondence, Guests, and Presentations**
  - a. Letter from Norma Mower to Board
- 8. Treasurer's report**
  - a. Corrections & Approval
  - b. Resolution 2023-09-16 Bank Signature Cards (New Signers)
- 9. Fire Chief's report**
- 10. EMS Director's**
  - a. EMS Billing Company
- 11. Administrator's report**
- 12. Unfinished Business**
  - a. Asset Accountability
  - b. Condition of the paint on the outside of the building and roof of building/water damage
  - c. Update on Firehouse Grants
  - d. Division of Fire Prevention & Control grant
- 13. New Business**
  - a. Set date for 2024 Budget Workshop (Preliminary due October 15<sup>th</sup>)
  - b. Tuition Agreement with Eddie Ray
  - c. North Door lock replacement
- 14. Executive Session – if needed**
- 15. Adjournment**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2210035115>



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**LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
RESOLUTION 2023-09-16  
REMOVE FROM THE BANK SIGNATURE CARDS**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of the La Veta Fire Protection District, Huerfano County, Colorado is authorized to remove District Administrator Eddie Ray from the signature cards at the First National Bank of Trinidad, Community Banks of Colorado, and ColoTrust.

Adopted and approved on this 16<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023, by the Board of Directors of the La Veta Fire Protection District, Huerfano County, Colorado.

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Mickey Schmidt, President

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Vonnie Valdez, Vice President



# LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Dear La Veta Fire Protection District Board of Directors:

On 6/13/23 Dave Mower and myself met at my request with Eddie Ray and Mark Brunner. In preparation of that meeting, I took the opportunity to review the SOP's and found several discrepancies as well as SOPs that even the board is not following. I only wish to bring this to your attention. I also wish provide you with facts regarding the inaccurate information provided by Melissa Ray to the Board of Directors.

1. First and foremost the definition of volunteering is as follows:

Volunteering is a voluntary act of an individual or group, freely giving time and labor for community service. Some of the membership, former board members and even current Board Members seem to have forgotten this because they feel that Dave and I should not have a say because we haven't responded as often as others do. The only time the number of calls or training is mentioned in the SOPs is if members ask for the District to pay for training outside of the LVFPD. **Article VII Section 1 C.**

2. SOPS – Please show me in the SOPs where it says members must get their continuing education and training from the La Veta Fire Protection District. The fact is the SOP's do not require this. The only reference I saw was: **Article VII Section I A - Fire department training meetings are held once a month at the discretion of the Fire Chief. All firefighter members are required to attend fire training for a minimum of 36 hours per year. Training outside the LVFPD may count toward the 36 hours if the appropriate certificates are provided and accepted by the Fire Chief.** **Article VII Section 1 C - EMS personnel must have 15 responses in the past 12 months to receive funds for additional training including recertification classes necessary to maintain current EMS certification with the State of Colorado unless waived by the Board of Director.**

Dave and I have submitted our training records to the State of Colorado and NREMT that have been approved and our certifications are in good standing with both entities. The EMS Director has also been provided with copies of our certification. Obviously our training is up to state and national standards.

I work full time from 8 AM – 6 PM and come home and work at least until 8-9 PM nightly to complete my work duties. The schedule for LVFPD EMS is not conducive to me attending LVFPD meetings/ trainings, on a regular basis and this is not a requirement for membership. **Section 5 Article II.** I will attend training drills, meetings, and other events where directed and befitting my position in this organization. I will earnestly learn and practice the skills required to do my part in making this department an efficient emergency response organization. – Again no mention that LVFPD trainings are mandatory. In addition some trainings that are required for our certification, LVFPD does not provide. Therefore it is mandatory to go to outside agencies. One reference is ACLS certification. We have in fact attended many fund raisers representing the district as well as member appreciation dinners and have covered events such as the yearly Mud Bog and were on standby for the Country Music festival in 2022. Alts were in the ambulance and communication was made letting them know we were present and available if our assistance was needed. We do what we can as time allows.

In addition when a board member / EMS provider ( Mark Brunner) puts out a memo on an EMT class that he is not even teaching, that says you may attend but basically, sit there, get your CEUs and don't interject or tell "war stories" is not conducive to my style of learning and I chose not to attend while this class was being taught.



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3. How is the training documented when it is obtained through LVFPD? Mrs. Ray stated inaccurately in a letter to the Board of Directors that it has been "at least 3 years" since the Mowers have attended training. We indeed have been to LVFPD training in the last 3 years, and this is a false statement. During covid we were on Zoom calls with Dr. Weber. In addition, I personally obtained my BLS certification in 10/22 at the LVFPD taught by Eddie Ray. Going further than this, Dave personally went to training held by Dr. Elias at the Walsenburg Ambulance Garage and I was on a Zoom call for this meeting because I was working. The meeting was not conducive to me going as I work full time and the training was scheduled at noon during the middle of a work week. Again I remind you, attendance of trainings is not mandatory. Maintaining Certification is mandatory. Dave and I have both met those requirements.
4. SOPs are wrong in **Article V section 1** as it states that All LaVeta Fire Protection District Personnel, **with the exception of the Board of Directors**, shall be referred to and known as members. If you are on the board and a responder this statement is not applicable.
5. SOPs wrong as in **Article V Section 2** it states the district has **three paid, part-time positions**. Fire Chief, EMS Director and District Secretary. The intention of combining the EMS Director / District Secretary was that that employee would work 40 hours per week being physically present at the Fire Department, therefore making this a full time position. It was intended to reduce the need of paying someone to be on shift and require the shift to be covered only two days per week. The full time position is not in the SOPs and there are not three part-time positions.
6. Under **Article V Section 10** it states that all other positions are UNPAID members, except the incentive rewards paid per each individual's response to calls and training sessions as outlined in the Incentive Rewards Policy of these Standard Operating Procedures.  
Incentive Rewards
  1. \$30.00 per emergency or page out
  2. \$20.00 per department meeting and training
  3. Support Team members assisting EMS or Fire Department personnel:
    1. \$30.00 per response
    2. \$15.00 per department meeting and training.

A. **AMBULANCE TRANSPORTS:** EMS personnel and firefighter ambulance drivers will be paid at a rate of \$75.00 for each transport to Spanish Peaks Regional Health Center. If multiple patients are transported on the same run the stipend will be \$30.00 for each additional patient. EMS personnel completing the patient care report in 48 hours (for all patients except trauma activation patients in 24 hours) will receive an extra \$25.00.

B. Transfers from one hospital facility to another will be paid at a base rate of \$75.00 plus \$1.00 for every loaded patient mile for the driver and each attendant.

During our meeting with Eddie Ray and Mark Brunner, the subject of putting a schedule out monthly for good communication was brought up. Eddie Ray stated that the only people currently taking shifts are Sue Pezze and the Alts. It should be noted that when taking a shift, you are paid \$80.00 from 7a-7p and it requires 2 hours in person at the fire station to do chores. Whether or not you get a call during the shift, you are paid \$80.00. If you get a call or two or 3 calls during your shift you are still only paid \$80.00 plus \$25.00 if you complete the patient care report in the allotted time frame per the SOP. **BUT** if a



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responder who is NOT on shift and answers 2-3 calls that day, because they are separate calls, they will be paid up to \$100.00 per call if they complete the patient care report per the SOPs. If you do not do the PCR you get \$75.00 per call if you transport to Spanish Peaks Hospital. It seems to me that looking at this arrangement would be a good idea as I believe you have outpriced the incentive to pick up shifts. You will make more money if you just answer a call should the pager sound than picking up an entire shift. **Additionally the question I have is, when this new fee scale was passed did any director that was also a responder vote on this?** If they did, it is a clear Conflict of interest as they were in a position for gain financially from this vote. At the time this was passed the only board member who was not a responder on the department was Vonnie Valdez. All other board members were also responders. (Dave Mower, Danette Chimenti, Maurice Heikes and Mark Brunner). That being the case, how did this pass? I believe the fee scale should be revisited in order to get more people to pick up shifts.

7. The district is in violation of **Article V Section 4**. General Procedure for membership for members:
  - A. Each applicant must fill out and submit an application for membership to the Fire Chief/ EMS Director.
  - B. Minimum age for membership is 18 years of age
  - C. **Must be a FULL TIME resident, OR work within the district for a minimum of 6 months prior to completing the application.**
  - D. Hold a valid Colorado Driver's License.

**There are at least 3 members who do not hold employment or live within the LVFPD district and this should be addressed. There is no exception listed in the SOPs. Traveling from outside of the district during an emergency situation is a huge liability for the district.**

8. **Section 5 Article IV - Code of Conduct.** Again ,volunteering means you go on calls when and if you are able to. With so much emphasis being put on the Code of Conduct, why are personnel allowed to gossip about the Mowers not going on calls and allowed to go outside the chain of command by calling to complain to a BOARD MEMBER that Dave did not answer a call close to our home? This complaint was shut down by Vonnie Valdez. The person complaining was directed to call Dave himself to find out the answer to her question. The fact is no explanation is required and it is no one's business why someone can or cannot answer a page. Why did this person not follow the chain of command if she had an issue with a peer? Why did she not follow the Code of Conduct?
9. The fact that Mark Brunner reported he had been on 40 calls since January only tells me that he was available to do so and is making a significant income from the LVFPD for his services based on the above scale. The fact that Dave had only been on 2 calls tells me he was not available, and as a board member at the time, was not benefiting financially from the district. The number of calls a person goes on does not make them a more valued member than one who goes on less calls and it should not be assumed their opinion is more valuable than anyone else's.
10. Dave and I believe in what is right for the district and will continue to express our opinions. We a
11. care tax paying citizens of this district, of which other members are not, and if we ask questions or make suggestions they should be accepted without fear of being called a trouble maker.
12. For clarification about Mrs. Ray's belief that Dave is trying to run the entire department, I would like to give the Board a little history. Dave was approached prior to Malea Schmidt's retirement to take the EMS Director position upon her retirement. After much thought and discussion he decided not to take that position given the fact he already had a full time job and he felt he would



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not be able to devote the time he felt it needed to serve the district in the way it deserved. There has also been an open Chief Position that he chose not to apply for. This statement by Mrs. Ray appears to be based on her insecurities and not facts. However, she is entitled to her opinion.

As stated in Mrs. Ray and Mr. Littlefield's letters, we do encourage you to go back and look at the minutes of the last 3 years and the SOPs and attendance records. You will find, as stated in the SOP's attendance is not mandatory, nor is a certain quota of calls and the only thing that was being attempted was to make the district aware of issues and to hold its employees accountable. We are taxpayers and it is within our rights to ask questions and get answers. I hope this letter gives you food for thought about what the SOPs actually say and what is being practiced.

Sincerely,

Norma Mower



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