

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RIVA CHASE
HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION**

HELD ON March 9, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Attendance:

Yvett Green	Mike Harding
Jesse Cox	Bernie Garvey
Dennis Dutson	Robert Segal
Jennifer Bennett	Adam Goldman
Mike Oakley	Brian Urtel
Brittany Plaven	Michael Russell
Alexis Krutsch	

II. ADAM GOLDMAN'S REPORT RE FOOTHILLS FIRE DISTRICT

The majority of the meeting was spent listening to Adam Goldman, who resided at Riva Chase since the construction of his home in 1993. He just moved to Spring Ranch.

Adam made clear that he was not representing or speaking for the fire department and that he intended to convey facts, not opinions.

Adam joined the Foothills Fire Protection District in the fall of 2002 as a volunteer firefighter and continues to serve in that role. During his tenure there have been 8 or 9 different chiefs. Although it is a good fire department, it has difficulty retaining its chiefs.

The department fields 550-750 calls per year. It is a volunteer fire department, similar to the fire departments in Genesee, Evergreen and Indian Hills. There are currently four paid staff. In recent years, there were 49 firefighters and now there are as few as 23 firefighters.

A major problematic issue is the decline in the number of people who are willing to volunteer as firefighters. Generally, the department is not successful in retaining firefighters for more than 1-2 years. Each firefighter needs to be certified at the state and federal levels for fire, medical rescue and hazmat functions. This initially requires around 200 hours of training and 36-72 hours of continued training each year thereafter. It costs thousands of dollars to train a firefighter and outfit

him/her. So due to the lack of retention, this becomes a very expensive proposition and poor long-term investment.

As of 2018, there were 45 active firefighters, 15 trainees/recruits, with 8-10 officers having extensive experience.

As of March 2023, there were 29 firefighters, 8 recruits, with 4 firefighters being paid.

If this trend does not change, one option would be to merge with another fire department, such as Evergreen, which reportedly is having similar issues. This is a business and it needs scale. If Foothills merged, it could get 25-50 additional firefighters overnight.

On the other hand, if the Jefferson County sheriff says we cannot merge, they are tasked with emergency oversight. The result is that the quality of firefighting will go up with an associated substantial increase in cost. Property taxes will increase and the current \$1.1 million budget for the Foothills department will likely increase between 3 and 10 times its current budget. Since the Foothills District has little to no commercial enterprises, the residents will have to pay for the increased costs.

Our District covers 25 square miles, a large area from highway 93/26 on the north end, west to Evergreen Parkway to Highway 74 in Idledale, plus responsibility for I-70 and 600 acres of Genesee and mountain parks. The Genesee fire district, on the other hand, has no highway responsibility, has a \$600,000-\$700,000 annual budget and receives only 25% of the number of calls Foothills does. Genesee's coverage is only 3 square miles.

The Bald Mountain fire occurred in September 2021 and fire activity continues to increase. Again, our Foothills Department is subscale with no commercial tax base.

Nominations for the Board of the Fire District were due on March 3, 2023. There are 5 board members; all 5 members resigned. An election is scheduled for May 3, 2023, with 3 directors slated for four years and two for two years. Owners were encouraged to attend the Board meeting and make their voices heard. Adam encouraged us to speak to County commissioners about merging with Genesee and/or Evergreen within the next two years.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Jesse Cox reported that we have \$48,000 on deposit. Mike Oakley asked what we intend to do with the amount on deposit and the Board determined that the funds would be preserved and remain on deposit for various eventualities, including legal expenses, etc.

III. ACC REPORT

Mike Harding handed out a report showing various issues at different residences. He discussed challenges with the FHMD partnership and indicated work is ongoing at the entry gate and street signage.

III. FHMD REPORT

It was discussed having a clean-up day the second week in June.

IV. GENERAL BOARD-RELATED BUSINESS

Minutes from prior meeting approved.

The Winter Valentines party was successful. Approximately 60 people attended.

Discussed having a fall party in September.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other comments, input or new business by those in attendance, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.