

## **State of the Florissant Fire Protection District** **– By Judy Dun, Vice President of the Board**

It has been a rocky road for our fire district since the five of us were entrusted, overwhelmingly, into these positions by the community members of Florissant. Despite the vitriol rhetoric that has shown up on social media, the harassment, and nasty zoom names and remarks, we continue to move forward in a positive and productive manner to provide protection to this district.

After the election was over and the community had made their desire known as to who should lead the district, the opposition refused and continues to refuse to accept the will of the people and allow this board to do its due diligence in conducting business. Outgoing president Starla Thompson attempted to deny us our first official meeting; records, bank information, passwords, and necessary files were kept from us. She even filed a law suit questioning the outcome of the election that was conducted under the scrutiny of the law firm to act as election officials of her choosing. It went nowhere. Then Erik Holt filed a lawsuit much like Bailey did which has been handed over to insurance. There is also an EOCC by the prior administrative assistant which has confused us as she quit when we were elected.

Erik Holt, who was chief at the turn over refused to cooperate or work with us. He would not attend meetings and when asked questions, we were told it was none of our business or a lawyer had to be present when speaking to him. The straw that broke the camel's back was his not issuing a check for district insurance and not informing the new board it was due. He waited until after the district had operated without insurance for a week before mentioning it. He was fired for this and he then refused to turn over district computers for over a month, deleted the entire roster of the responders. He also deleted all of the assigned equipment information, training info, and all contact information. We still have no idea what happened to the gym equipment that was donated to the department and that had been in the training room and we can only assume that it's been stolen.

After Holt was terminated, volunteers who had been dismissed, suspended, demoted, harassed, and bullied came back and along with several community members and board members took to the task of reversing the neglect of the buildings, furnishings, equipment, and vehicles. Countless hours were spent cleaning, repairing the vehicles, replacing, or fixing broken fixtures, and numerous other things that had been neglected and/or ignored in all three stations, administration building, and storage sheds.

It has been an arduous task to get everything in working order while at the same time painstakingly going through whatever financial records that could be found to rectify, balance and create a workable, sensible budget. We had idea of what bills were due, which ones were paid, and some that were paid, were paid twice, but now we are getting a handle on it thanks to the efforts of Bob Perry, Vicky Collings,

and others. We are still working to get an audit, but due to the lack of records and having to dig and research everything, it is taking time to get things prepared and in order.

Our fire district has had numerous accomplishments with the help of our wonderful volunteers and members of the community.

- We were able to hold our Pancake Breakfast that netted us \$35,000. This was after having to clean and sanitize the kitchen, rusty grills, and other equipment and after getting rid of all the moldy and outdated food items.
- Thanks to the efforts of Bonnie Walters, a grant that was started, yet never followed up on by Mr. Holt, was finished and brought in \$32,000.
- Then Mrs. Walters secured us a rather significant grant of \$107,000 of wildland and structure fire PPE's to properly equip ten volunteers. That took a strain off the 2024 budget.
- We have submitted paperwork for reimbursement from the state for our tenders extended attack duties on the Fossil Bed Fire.
- Inventoried out of use AFFF foam and initiated government buyback program which will return around \$10,000.
- Captain Jordan Moon initiated a volunteer reimbursement program through his place of employment that will bring in up to \$10,000 per year to the department.
- We did purchase brush truck running boards and by doing the installation ourselves we will save around \$1,000.
- We were introduced to the Thetford Team, a new realtor in Florissant and they graciously held a fund-raising event for us and raised \$4000.
- We were also blessed by an anonymous donor who donated \$10,000 to the department.
- And there have been numerous donations of time, treasure, talents from many people in our community.
- As of today, we have 27 firefighters in our department some already certified and the new training program has been vigorous.
- We now have three volunteer Captains; Mike Bukowski, Jordan Moon, and Cindy Sebring, who have been working in close relation with David Quick, our interim chief in their respective assignments.
- Each one of our Captains have years of experience in each area that is needed to run our Department.
- With approximately 80% of our calls in medical we have Chief Quick and Capt Cindy Sebring leading the way.
- With over 10 years of experience in Wildland Fire fighting we have Capt Mike Bukowski
- And with structure Fire we have Captain Jordan Moon. They make an amazing team!
- Training has been a top priority and the EFF and Wildland programs are now reinstated.
- Many members have been given their red cards utilizing the Wildland IQS system.
- Renewed S130/190 and pack test for red card certification.

- We have reestablished a relationship with DFPC RMS for structure fire qualifications and training.
- Renewed CPR certifications and acquired S212 certification.
- Completed annual SCBA pack flow test with SCBA vendor, which was the first time in two years.
- We have scheduled a SCBA bottle hydro test, which is the first time in five plus years and is required every five years for in-service SCBA bottles; which two-thirds of our bottle certifications expired in the last two years.
- We also reinstated the Junior Firefighter training program and currently have two signed up.
- As mentioned earlier, our vehicles had not been properly maintained, however, the pump on Brush 53 has been repaired,
- the plumbing on Brush 51 has been repaired and has been put into service after a year of being moth balled, r
- repaired hydraulic TNT Rescue tools on Rescue 51
- and repaired engine which was donated from Marble, CO, turbo components, refilled the tank, and placed it back into service after being removed from service for approximately six months,
- restocked and placed Engine 50 back into service,
- Did the same with Tender 53 and it is now in service for the first time since we got it.
- Rescue 50, which was out of service due to an oil leak and pump issue due to lack of maintenance has been repaired.
- Squad 51, 52, and Chief 50 are all repaired and serviced.
- Installed a new 800MHz radio in Engine 51.
- All logos on vehicles that were de-badged or lacked official department markings have been replaced.
- We also replaced the inventory of Wildland tools and rescue equipment onto Rescue 50.
- We have reinstated truck check schedules and digitized truck equipment inventories and all trucks are completed.
- Both helicopter landing zones now have windsocks and lights.
- All structure and Wildland gear has been inventoried including reacquired gear from approximately ten previous volunteers.
- All gear handed out is now recorded and tracked.
- We have digitalized tracking for gear, equipment, and truck maintenance.
- We organized the department slash chipper program, which resulted in over three dozen properties utilizing the chipper and mitigating dozens of acres.
- All gear sheds have been cleaned and reorganized.
- We installed road-side Fire Danger Signs at Stations 1 and 2.
- Offices in the administration building have been cleaned, set-up, and organized. Application process has been revamped.
- Flags have been installed on parking lot near highway 24.
- The website has been updated with new pages added.
- We are getting quotes on heating in the administration building and adding a generator system.
- We are also obtaining fire crew shirts and winter gear and have created a guide for newcomers to area.
- Audio/Visual system has been reinstalled with enhancement.

- Gained control of door entry, camera systems, and IT systems and moved administration in house.
- We also replaced the door access components that were damaged from a lightning strike.

We have accomplished a lot in five short months and I don't mean just the board. Everything that has been done and is being done is a team effort with the chief, volunteers, community members, and board members. Florissant Fire has responded to 2 medical calls, numerous smoke investigations, a traffic accident and 2 flight for life flights and that has been in the past 24 hours! What is really cool is that we've had 5 to 6 responders on each call which is a big difference from last year.

It has been difficult having to deal with the antics of the former board and chief. I can't tell you the exact number of CORA requests they have made and attempts to disrupt our progress, but as you can see, we have been busy and are continuing to do our jobs to get FFPD back on its feet and better than ever.

Oh, I almost forgot— and we have a 2024 budget!