



## **Fire District 1** **Steering Council Meeting**

7750 N. Wyandotte Way  
Park City, KS 67147  
316-660-3473

**August 17, 2023**

**Fire District 1 Attendees:** Fire Chief Doug Williams, Fire Marshal Brad Crisp, Deputy Chief Kevin Nelson, Deputy Chief Ray Hensley, Assistant County Counselor Kevin Stamper, and Clerk Janelle Davey

**Fire District 1 Steering Council Attendees:** Jim Benage /Bel Aire, Russ Lowen/Goddard, Susie Sutton/Haysville, Mike Strelow/Maize, Katie Bowen/Park City, Jeff Witherspoon/Bentley, Andy Hall/Spirit AeroSystems, Carl Amerine/Derby, Katy Jackman Tyndell/At Large Member from Unincorporated Areas

**Special Guests:** Chief Financial Officer Lindsay Poe Rousseau and Union President Casey Ingalls

(Yellow highlight means persons not in attendance.)

- I. Call to Order - Fire Chief Doug Williams called meeting to order at 1802.

Chief Williams - We know that Andy Hall is not going to be here, he had a conflict. Hopefully, Mr. Strelow and Ms. Sutton will make it. So we'll call the meeting to order.

Tonight, just review, I am Chief Williams and we have Kevin Stamper from the County Legal Department, and our Administrative Chief Janelle is here. Today we also have the Chief Financial Officer for Sedgwick County, which is Lindsay Poe Rousseau. She's going to give us a kind of an overview of the county's budget a little bit, and how we operate and how we deal with the financial piece.

Anyway, so the first thing we had on the agenda is the election of officers and approval of the bylaws. And I don't know which one you want to do first, but we can do either or however you want to do that. We want to wait on the others before we do election officers?

Deputy Chief Kevin Nelson - Susie is on her way. Mr. Strelow will not be making it.

Carl Amerine – We might want to dig into the bylaws first, you think?

Chief Williams - Yeah.

[Background noise unable to distinguish conversations. Someone asked to close the door.]

II. Election of Officers and Approval of Bylaws –

Chief Williams - We want to dig into the bylaws, let's do that. I think Kevin sent a copy out to everybody to review. I didn't bring mine off my desk.

Jim Benage - So just one time, I think you guys did a really great bylaws, but we come I think we kind of overlooked. What's the term of the officers and when you elected. So my suggestion is that a one term elected in January here, you have to elect one now, right now was officer that we then just every year, like that's just recommendations but like to have everyone's discussion here.

Carl Amerine – That sounds good. So you have the first regular meeting of the year, maybe January, just the first regular meeting of the year.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Well, I was just going to say I think, I probably just read it as implied, that the officers would serve for the full term. But I agreed that if we want to clarify that and make it a more frequent rotation, and that's probably a good idea.

Carl Amerine - That's the way I took it too was what she was saying, that in the absence of saying anything in the four (4) years that I see your point, sir, that four (4) years being the chairperson unless someone really wants to do it, that is a commitment. I mean, they'll get good at it, but it will be commitment.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - I think annually. Although since it's already August are we think...

Jim Benage - Well just following... we would just go on and elect some tonight but then January start that routine. Or we wait for a year from January, either one is fine.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - We wouldn't have to stipulate is they could serve twice in a row if they wanted

Kevin Stamper – I will go ahead and get that change incorporated.

Russ Lowen – I didn't have anything else that jumped out at me that required any changes and adding things to it.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Mr. Stamper, maybe if you've got a line there, you could read it to us so that maybe we can just go ahead and vote and approve them with the amendment.

Kevin Stamper - Okay. The term of all officers will be for one year and they will be elected first meeting every year.

Jim Benage - I make a MOTION we have adopted bylaws as presented and modified.

Katy Jackman Tyndell – I SECOND.

Chief Williams – It has been adopted by...It's been MOVED and SECONDED to adopt the bylaws, all favor?

AYE - ALL.

Chief Williams - Any opposed?

OPPOSED – NONE.

Chief Williams - Okay, we got that solved. Now for the election of officers, which is the chairman and vice chairman. Correct?

Carl Amerine - There's one (1) more person that we are waiting on for this Chief. I think we can probably, or did Susie sneak in? I think we can, unless we need it to move on to new business, I say we...

Jim Benage - Table that for now.

Carl Amerine - Unless we need it to hear about next presentation, or whatever...

Chief Williams - We can go ahead and move on and we can give her the update later.

Jim Benage – I have a question on the bylaws. Is the Fire board, self-adopted the bylaws as well as this just this committee here?

Chief Williams – It is just this council.

Jim Benage – I just want to make sure we didn't have another hurdle.

Chief Williams - Okay. Does the Union want to give a presentation now?

Casey Ingalls – Yeah that's fine.

IV. Union Presentation –

Casey Ingalls - Hello, my name is Casey Ingalls. I'm the union president for local 2612. I represent the 111 members of the Union within the fire district. We are affiliated with the International Association of Firefighters, the IAFF. I've been in this role as president since March of 2020. This is pretty new for me still, I'm still learning as I go. But as of right now, we do two (2) year terms. So I'm in my second term right now. It'll be up at the December of next year. And we'll kind of go through the elections again, if I choose to keep doing it, or somebody else wants to step up. But I have a PowerPoint presentation that I'm working on right now, I'm not going to give it tonight, because I think there's some other things that we need to get to. So I don't want to take up too much time. Hopefully, at the next meeting, we have everybody here and then I'll try to give that presentation then. But, one of the things that we really strive to work on over the last few years has changed the relationship that this union has had with our administration, with the county. In 2016 we were unrecognized. So I don't know if anybody really understands that but in 2016 and before we were able to negotiate contracts, we were able to bargain, negotiate either two (2) or three (3) year contracts. I've been an employee here since 2011. Right now, I'm a Captain at Station 37. So in my time with Sedgwick County, I think I've only been under maybe three (3) contracts. Before that 2016, it was voted upon by the Fire Board at the time to no longer recognize our union through PEERA (Public Employers Employees Relations Act). And at that time, we stopped negotiating for contracts. So the goal has been ever since I've stepped in is to gain that recognition back. Our goal is to once again be able to have that opportunity to negotiate and bargain for contracts. Honestly, I think it makes a lot of people's lives a lot easier if we're able to do that. We're not having to kind of go through our pay plans every single year. And we're not having to juggle, you know, come in last minute or throw, you know, four (4) or five (5) different plans on the table. And it's a mess right now. So our goal is to get to recognition, we're negotiating contracts, we're doing all this, I guess, behind closed doors, and it shouldn't be as messy. So that's our ultimate goal right now. We have some other goals that we're that we're striving for, obviously, to fix our pay. We basically went almost 10 years where our pay was just kind of was stagnant. That didn't go anywhere. 2013, our starting pay, that was the last year our starting pay was actually higher than Wichita fire. Before last year, our starting pay was roughly \$14.26. We were able to pass through the pay scale last year that raised our starting pay to \$18. So like I said, I have a presentation I can show you next time but our starting pay remained roughly around that \$14 range for about a good portion of 10 years. So when we lost our negotiating powers, the two (2) contracts before, they had chosen to freeze steps in those contracts. So even in those contracts, we still did not receive pay raises. So that's kind of the reason why we're in the state that we're in right now, when it comes to compensation, and all that with our firefighters. So we're in the middle of kind of cleaning that up. I think there's some plans right now, on the table that I think they're going back and forth between two (2) of them. They're, they're good plans, I think it's going to do a lot to help our firefighters, it'll help a lot for retention, to keep the ones that we have, and I think it'll do a lot for bringing in new firefighters. So we're, it's a work in progress. One of the things that I would really like to see, especially with

this Steering Council is they're starting to become some talks, you know, we talked about IRB's. And that's kind of been a hot topic for a few years with me anyway, about exempting the Fire District from IRBs. Specifically, so you'll hear Commissioners talking about providing free services to some communities around here that don't pay Fire District tax. And that's essentially what we're doing with businesses when they are exempted through IRBs. They're not paying Fire District tax, but we are still responding to businesses. So I would like to see something push legislatively, or however we get it done. Just to get to a point where the Fire District is exempted from those IRB's. I know, I know, it's a lot. I know, there's a lot that goes on, when you're trying to get in new businesses and grow communities, those IRB's are a big deal. But that would be huge for this Fire District, or we're talking about growth and where we want to be 20, 30, 40 years down the road. That would be huge for us, and especially when we talk about lowering mill levies that can have a direct impact on lowering mill levies. That's kind of what I wanted to get out there today. Do you all have any questions for me?

Jim Benage - Yeah, I got a couple...One (1), is you don't currently have a contract?

Casey Ingalls - We are not under contract, we're not able to bargain for a contract because we're not recognized by the County. We have to be recognized through PEERA or there might be a couple other means. But we are not legally or they're not obligated to negotiate with us so we're not under any contracts.

Jim Benage - Another thing is David Dennis talked to me last week, I think, was about one (1) thing he wanted to see this group do is make a recommendation for wages. They said something between now and the end of the year so that we'd be ready to go 2024 and start from here. So I know that I'm kind of jumping ahead here with things but I would like to see some presentation...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – You will tonight.

Jim Benage – Not tonight.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – No, you WILL tonight.

Jim Benage - Well, you already have a presentation? Well, okay.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – He specially said earlier this week, he'd like us to talk about it. So...

Casey Ingalls - I will say on top of what you just mentioned, the recognition portion of...to re-recognize our union takes a majority vote from the Fire Board. One thing that I would also like to see from the Steering Committee is potentially for you all to support recognition of our union. So

we are able to negotiate and bargain for contracts. That is something that I think that you all have the ability to do, if you're willing, and if that is something that you all want to push that up to the Fire Board as a recommendation to recognize our union for that ability to negotiate. So that is a high priority for us as well. That is right at the top, so...

Susie Sutton – I have a question and I apologize if I missed it, I know you mentioned and I know some firemen that I've talked to have said there have been no raises for eight (8) to 10 years. Now, when your saying no raises, does it mean is no performance raises? No Colas? No nothing? You're at the same rate you were eight (8) to 10 years ago?

Casey Ingalls – So, right now? No, because we were able to increase our compensation for this this year. They got that done last year. So in that 10 year timeframe, there was a period where we received a one (1) % bonus. But keep in mind, the bonuses fall off at the end of the year. I think the next year we got a two (2) % bonus and that fell off. We did receive I think a two (2) % Cola and a two and a half (2 ½) % Cola. But then after that, in between, we didn't receive anything as far as a compensation increase to an hourly rate. So...

Carl Amerine - Can you explain a little bit from your perspective if I'm a brand new fireman that just got hired into the department. How do you actually progress through the ranks in pay? Is it in the current system that we have now, that just got passed? Is it an automatic step increase after certain years of service or did it get frozen? Is that frozen as well? Or was it frozen? Or...

Casey Ingalls - So it was it was frozen. The way it worked before we were all in ranges. Legally, I don't know what you, I would say they were frozen before or right around 2020. Going into 2021. I think 2021, I'm trying to remember off the top of my head, that we received four (4) %. Or maybe it was 2022 or we received four (4) % increase. That was the first increase we had received since 2011. So was that four (4) % increase. So talking to a new firefighter how you progress. Right now our stuff. We have steps. Currently, we have 12 Steps. And right now you would receive annually, January 01, you would receive your next step.

Carl Amerine - Okay, so that's the new system you're in right now. Right?

Casey Ingalls – Right. It's automatic January 01 every year. Every 12 months, or I say every 12 months with every January 01 you would receive your next step.

Carl Amerine - And just like every does every skill code, have its own steps, like a fireman skill code has 12 Steps? A Fire Marshal has his 12 Steps or...?

Casey Ingalls - Chief can answer better than I can when it gets to that level. But firefighters, Lieutenants, Captains, those are our three (3) ranks each one of those has steps. So if when you promoted to Lieutenant you're on the next tier, which is, I won't get into too many details. But when you get to the Captain level then we have Division Chiefs, and then they fall in line. And as far as they go steps, I don't know. They don't necessarily fall under steps.

Carl Amerine - But your normal union membership if they're just the fireman skill code, right? Now, there's a mechanism now to...

Casey Ingalls - So our Union consists of firefighters, Lieutenants, Captains, which are all hourly, we do still have some Division Chiefs that choose to participate and pay union dues, but they're not technically part of the bargaining unit. Because they're salaried employees.

Carl Amerine - But for a fire man to progress through the ranks and a career, and he or she doesn't want to become a Lieutenant and become a Captain. There is now mechanism with this step plan that they will progressively receive pay based on compensation on their experience, experience and stuff where that was not the case four (4) years ago, six (6) years ago...

Casey Ingalls - I will say it wasn't the case. Because there was something in place. We just weren't going...there weren't steps. So but yes, there are steps now that is in place. So a firefighter can top out every, after 12 years, they can top out in their pay. After 12 years right now in the current 12 Step.

Russ Lowen - So let me put this into perspective. Starting pay is competitive with Walmart. 15 bucks an hour. True Story?

Casey Ingalls - Yes. There's a little caveat, but it's just because of the hours that we work. It's, we work 2912 hours a year. That's the difference. So but yes, our starting pay is \$18 an hour right now.

Russ Lowen - Thank you.

Susie Sutton - With the steps, am I to understand, if I take training and tried to improve myself and took like 40 hours of training this year and he decided he's just going to sit on the couch and watch TV and he didn't have things to do...At the first January, we're going to get same increase?

Casey Ingalls - Right as of right now. Yes, yeah.

Chief Williams - We struggled with that. I think I can talk to you about that a little bit. We struggled and I would argue that the County has struggled. We went to a pay for performance concept. It started in 2008 and originally, it was just for management level; Division Chiefs, and above. We struggled with that because of the size of our department. You have multiple supervisors doing evaluations and the fairness of pay raises, as you know, some supervisors were pretty generous with their evaluations, where others were not and you could honestly...the reason I don't like that type of concept. You know, your point is made, do you want a less than stellar employee getting the same raise as a good employee? No. But I think what's more detrimental to an organization is if a stellar performer that has a real tough supervisor that grades really tough on an evaluation and gets a lower evaluation and a lower pay raise than the dude that sat on the couch that his buddy is the supervisor and he gets a better [raise] then that stellar performer gets mad and says, Well, I'll sit on the couch. You know, to me, I prefer to stay in a constant system, and where we don't get into the evaluation process, because we struggle with it really hard in our organization and I would argue the County did as well. You know, because you would have one department that everybody ended up with better pay raises than another department, because the way they were trained on how to do evaluations. We, as you know, it's in...if you're a real estate person, and it's based on how much you sell, or if you're a dude that manufactures stuff, and it's how much you build, it's easy to evaluate somebody on what they accomplish. But in our business, you know, we're not...there's not a standard of what you do. That's easily measured. It's really hard for us to evaluate on a performance pay concept. We tried it, it didn't work well.

Casey Ingalls - When it comes to training, specifically, I would say our department does a very good job of making sure that we get people...we have mandatory training that we are doing monthly. So that's forcing people to get out and do training on their own when they're not having mandatory drill cycle. So yes, there are other people that might not do as much as others, but I would say, as a department as a whole, we do fairly well, when it comes to training. I don't think we have people just sitting around all the time not doing anything. So...

Carl Amerine - I guess the only follow up question I would have to what she was saying was, if you only have one (1) skill code for firemen before going to officer ranks, is there enough differentiation for people who do have, you know, get their paramedic, their EMT, or whatever certification but you don't have to have that right as a...

Casey Ingalls – You have to have a minimum EMT.

Carl Amerine - EMT. But there's a higher rate, isn't there a higher level that matters?

Casey Ingalls - There is an advanced EMT then paramedic.



Carl Amerine - Yeah. So but did you guys have some firemen who choose to go above? Or maybe they came with it or something?

Casey Ingalls - We have a couple paramedics in here.

Carl Amerine - Yeah. So I guess that's my question, is there enough like tread outs or whatever they came in the firemen skill code to recognize that we have some firemen who have gone and got that advanced education or advanced training, and it is of value to the County?

Casey Ingalls – It is a value. Yeah, right now they do not receive any extra compensation for that. That's something that was on the table this year that we've talked about. And that's like I said, during negotiations, if we're able to negotiate or even Chief has tried to push it pretty hard I think. I think we labeled it as advanced provider care pay. That is something that we would like to see happen. But as of right now, we don't have that.

Chief Williams - I think that's something that's fair for your Counsel to weigh in on. Last year, I've pushed real hard for advanced, what we call advanced provider pay, because our paramedics that become credentialed and back to your comment, our providers have to credential through the medical director. So I'm a case, I'm an advanced EMT, but because that's not my role anymore, I don't credential; therefore, I wouldn't be paid for it. You know, because I'm not. But we have paramedics that are credential. And they can carry the advanced lifesaving jump kits that we provide to them, that they individually carry when they're on duty. And so they can provide the same level of services as EMS can, EMS paramedics. So it is a benefit to us. But we also have some paramedics that don't credential because there's no pay for it and they just don't feel that we support it enough to pay for it and they're not going to do it. So, I do believe there's value to it. However, last year, we fought through a lot of pay processes and we worked through dealing with base pay so much that they kind of fell to the wayside. And we're there again this year. I think it's probably a really good argument for this Council to weigh in on and push for next year to get the provider pay. Because I do think that the incentive of it is really, really good.

Carl Amerine - Because I remember watching a couple board meetings ago and, more than a couple, I forget how long ago it was. But I think you put it in a grant, your district put in a grant for advanced lifesaving equipment, I forget where it was...right?

Chief Williams - Yeah.

Carl Amerine - And I remember the Commission was asking because they don't have enough people trained to even use the equipment. So you didn't ask for the equipment for every fire station...

Chief Williams – Correct.

Carl Amerine - And I think that was the discussion that you guys had was, if we could incentivize some of our troops or some of our firemen to go and get that advanced training, then we would need the equipment. So I kind of see, I definitely see the benefit of why we would have that. So...

Casey Ingalls - If anybody like my contact information I can get with any of you after the meeting and I'll get you my contact info. If there's any questions that come up after feel free, I'm open anytime. So appreciate it.

### III. Fire Chief Update –

Chief Williams – Okay...we skipped over the Fire Chief update because I was choking. Anyway, as a quick update some of the things that we've had going on, I think Janelle handed you what we call our monthly bullets. We send that out to the Commissioners every month. That's just kind of a highlight of some of the things that we do outside of the normal. It's not really meant to be a summary, it's just kind of a bullet thing that we send out. We're going to start working a lot harder on the call volume stuff because the numbers on there are not very good. We have one of the things I'll say in our update, we're starting a new record system. Our record system is out of date and it's not downloading from CAD very well. So our response to data right now is terrible and once we get our new [system] with the new CAD and when I say CAD is Computer Aided Dispatch. But when the 911 software, properly downloads to ours and will be able to run you a lot better data than what you're showing. So don't pay a lot attention to that. Mechanics have a report on there and is to follow up with some of the things that we're doing. Our Fire District budget is up for adoption on Wednesday. Lindsay will go over that with you in a few minutes. A couple things in our budget that's in there when we start this process in February every year. We this year got, what we call, a decision package which was approval to add a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) mechanic position. The reason we've done this is our fleet mechanics are working about 1000 hours of overtime a year. They're on...both of them, anytime we have a truck break down 24 hours, seven (7) days a week, they are called out. So they're alternating being on call all the time. So we're trying to take some of the load off of them and we finally got approved to hire a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) position. Then we're hiring a permanent Fire Training Officer. We are the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) largest fire department in Kansas and I think the top seven (7) or eight (8) fire departments have training officers and training divisions. We've never had a full time Fire Training Officer in our history. We've been doing it in a temporary basis for the last couple years and we finally got approval

from...got it through so it'll be approved on Wednesday, we think, to make it a full time permanent position. A couple other things, we applied for a grant for Firehouse Subs for new set of Jaws of Life Rescue Tools. Every station runs the Jaws of Life tools on a truck so we have 10 sets. They are \$31,000 each and we wrote a grant for Firehouse Subs to get one free. So we just got approved for that and we're getting ready to order them. We did last month to go through and get approval from the Board of County Commissioners to buy a new fire truck pumper and a heavy rescue truck. The pumper is \$1.1 million now and the rescue truck with equipment is \$1.9 million. It takes about three (3) years to get it...three (3) to four (4) years to get them. I did want to touch, because it's something that really is affecting our budget differently now than it used to in the past, prior to 2020, it used to take between 11 to 13 months to build a fire truck. So we would order normally, try to order in the summertime for what we needed next year in our replacement...we build that replacement program out 10 years. And so we're going to order this year for what we need next year, you know and constant. Well in 2020 and with all the supplier backlogs and all of the things that occurred now it has taken three (3) years to get a fire truck. So, right now we have four (4) what we call an Engine, which is one of the pumpers that you normally think of as a fire truck. We have four (4) Engines that are a million dollars each. We have a Quint, which is the ladder truck out here, we have another one of them on order, which is \$1.5 million. Four (4) Tenders, which are the tankers. Then this Heavy Rescue truck that are all on order now, because we didn't get any deliveries in 22 or 23. Because of the backlog, so we're now ordering. So we have a whole lot of trucks on order to stagger out over the next four (4) or five (5), four (4) years. And so it seems like we have a tremendous amount of equipment on order. But it's because we couldn't get anything for two (2) years and everything got shoved out for four (4) years.

Carl Amerine - When you start making payments on those things, immediately? Or you put them in a piggy bank, just have to start putting money into the piggy bank now kind of thing?

Chief Williams - It's something that Lindsey will touch on in a minute. But one thing we do because we're a standalone budget and so that our budget doesn't go up and down, we tend to lease purchase. So that we can spread payments out over five (5) years. But we never pay on them until we get them. When we receive them, then we will get that lease purchase and then pay it in four (4), or five (5), or six (6) year timeframe.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - And there is a good reason for that tell them about your latest truck. The one that got hit on its way to delivery.

Chief Williams – Oh yeah, we got one (1) got hit in Kansas City being delivered before it got here. So they went back to, straight back to the factory to get rebuilt.

Jim Benage - So, you're making payments on that?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - We did not, not until we got it and that is why we don't.

Chief Williams - And that's a funny thing, you know, because we used to [as it] was a big thing in the fire service to, you know, firemen would volunteer to go drive the truck back. And we don't do that anymore. Now, we don't pay for them until they're delivered to our property just because we don't want to take the liability of getting them hit on the way here and stuff. So...

Carl Amerine - I think I heard you say, as I was listening to the staff meeting...I think I heard you say too, that a lot of the fitting out of the fire truck occurs in house with your mechanics?

Chief Williams - It does with our...

Carl Amerine - or that just another engine?

Chief Williams - It's what we call our Squads which is the smaller utility type looking trucks that have small pumps in them that run medicals and car wrecks. Our Brush trucks and even our Staff vehicles. The funny thing about our Brush truck is we order them in parts. When we get them our mechanics put them together and build the all of the emergency lighting, the sirens, and the radio. They spent a few weeks on each one by the time they put them together. But the Brush truck that we did two (2) years ago ended up costing us about \$125,000 to put it together in pieces. And Derby went out for bid and they're paying over \$250,000 for essentially the same vehicle. So on those small vehicles like that, our mechanics are saving us about \$100,000 per truck to put them together in house.

Jim Benage - Should offer to build one (1) for Derby.

Chief Williams - We'd have to get more mechanics. One of the things we looked at is we have a really good mechanic. He's a little gripy, but he's good.

[Laughter and too much background noise to hear what was said.]

Chief Williams - But you know, one of the things I looked at was because our mechanics were working so many overtime hours and so busy was, hey, we're just going to start outsourcing. And, I had this great idea that I was going to go down and tell him that, hey, we're going to outsource, we're going to hire companies to build these for us. One of the things he brought up, which I hadn't thought of, was when they build them in house and all the electronics that are in them, and the lighting, the sirens, the radios, and whatnot fuses and when they build them in house,

they know where everything is. And where the weak spots are because they constantly build them. And they know. So if it's Saturday night at 11 o'clock, and it is 10 degrees outside and they have to respond somewhere in the county to figure out why this truck isn't working, they have an idea where to trace the wires and look for them. And if we go out for bid because if we would build them out of house, we would have to bid and so this company might get at this time and that company next time and do things and all of a sudden when they're out there trying to trace the problem they're working on somebody else's and so I'd lost that. Anyway. And we have the pay proposals, which we're going to talk about in a little bit. One of the things that we're looking at with these pay proposals is to make sure that we have adequate funding sources to do the pay plans. And we've been working on those. We'll talk a little bit after Lindsay goes through all that shortly. We are redoing the pay classifications for our mechanics in the near future. I talked about the record management solution. And we're seeing some growth, we're really happy about Park City got approval to do the casino up here at the Greyhound Park and all of the bar and restaurants that they're proposing to go in with that. We know that there's, you know, the potential Star Bond down here that they will get, and we're hearing that Maize is expecting to grow by a third (3<sup>rd</sup>). We've heard that Goddard's expecting to grow. And, of course, Bel Aire got Integra and Haysville has got growth also. So we're excited, you know, because that's all funding coming into the district for the future for us. I talked about the monthly bullets. One thing that we'll probably send out to you between now and the next meeting is all of our mutual aid agreements. If you listen to me the other day, you heard Commissioner Dennis get a little vocal about our mutual aid agreements and I'm going to send them all out. A mutual aid agreement for us as the agreement we have with Wichita Fire Department or Derby Fire Department or Andover, we have 20 mutual and auto aid agreements. The difference is in auto aid agreement is an agreement that is automatically dispatched upon a call, you know, and so you don't have to ask permission. It's just the dispatch has all that in the records, and we go help Valley if they get a certain type of a call, and it's just automatically dispatched. The other side of it is what they call mutual aid agreement, which is if you get on scene and you need help, then you call and request it. And it's a little bit different scenario. But we have 20 of those with the surrounding counties in Wichita and some of the smaller communities that we don't cover, like Colwich and Clearwater, so we'll send those out. And we'll take a look at those in the future. Because I know there's a couple Commissioners that want some feedback on those aid agreements [as] they are pretty politically sensitive. So...

Carl Amerine – A question on that Chief is, when it actually happens in real life, firemen in distress or whatever and they need help, and they need another Quint or something or engine to show up, right? Does the EMS service center or the EMS folks by EMS, emergency services? Sorry, emergency services, the 911 Center? Do they have to come and get like a Chief or Deputy Chief permission or Battalion Chief to provide your support? Or is it automatic? And you look like...what's the bureaucratic behind it? Is there like an approval...is the on call person has to

approve it. Or there's emergency services that 911 guys can just say that we need six (6) Engines and send that kind of thing?

Chief Williams - They're both. The Automatic Aid Agreement, which we have several, is automatically in the dispatch computer system, and it's just done, it's dispatched. The Mutual Aid system is okay, if we have a mutual aid only...not an auto aid, or don't get me wrong, there's also auto aid and further like Valley Center. We send if they have a fire, we'll go assist them with this station will respond and help Valley if that's not enough, and they need more help, then it kicks into an auto aid, or excuse me, mutual aid, where they say hey, we need more help. Can you send another two (2) trucks or whatever another station, then that gets to where our on duty supervisors will hear that radio request and approve or not approve it. So does that answer your...?

Carl Amerine – Yeah.

Chief Williams - But now if it's Conway Springs or somewhere that we don't have an auto but it's only mutual, then dispatch gets that phone call. Either we hear it on the radio or dispatch gets a phone call and reaches out to our on duty supervisor and say hey, Conway Springs has requested assistance on a building fire and then they can approve or not approve it.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Is the approval process dictated by the terms of the mutual aid agreement?

Chief Williams - Yes.

Carl Amerine - Kind of assuming like firemen in distress or something like that. It's pretty urgent and quick right?

Chief Williams - They're not turned down very often. Generally, the only time one is going to get turned down is if you're already in a pickle yourself. I mean, if it's one of those days where we're all getting our rears kicked, then it's like, hey, we don't have anybody sitting here. You know, generally they don't get turned down, which is what creates the political problems that the Commissioners get mad about.

Carl Amerine - Is there a mutual or some type of agreement with the base?

Chief Williams - Yes.

Cal Amerine - Okay. Can your trucks drive on the base and...?

Chief Williams - They're delayed but yes.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Chief Williams - I mean, they have to go through security.

Carl Amerine - Base housing and flight line whatever, anywhere?

Chief Williams – Yes.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Chief Williams - We have an Auto Aid with McConnell. Anyone else have questions for me?

Russ Lowen – Does that extend from county to county?

Chief Williams - Yes, there's a couple of different ways like we have aid agreements with Newton, Whitewater, Andover, Rose Hill, Augusta, Eldorado, Conway Springs, and Mulvane. Because half of Mulvane is in the other county. Some part of Reno County that are already, we have agreements with in writing. The state has which...the state has a statewide mutual aid system, or it's a law, that if you [or] if a county declares a disaster, they can request it's just an automatically they can get aid from anybody. There's some formalities to that that generally doesn't get followed. But it's the same thing. I mean, we send, we'd go to Harvey County. We do get out of the county a little bit on the mutual aid calls based on State's Mutual Aid system which so...but we do have some out of county written agreements in place also.

## II. Election of Officers (Part 2) –

Chief Williams - All right. We need to feed back to the chairman to the officers of electing a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Chair Persons.

Chief Williams - You're right. Thank you, Chair persons.

Carl Amerine - While you were, (speaking to Susie Sutton), we had previously approved the bylaws, but we that we held off...yeah...we previously approved the bylaws, but we held off with

electing the chairperson in question. We wanted to give everyone the opportunity who is here to make a nomination.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - I would **NOMINATE** Carl, if you're willing to serve as chair.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, I can serve as chair with a strong bias.

Susie Sutton – I **SECOND** that.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Anybody else eager for that position? Don't be shy.

Russ Lowen - I'm here for [indistinguishable statement then laughter]

Carl Amerine - I guess, let's...there is a second. Let's go ahead and vote for that. And then we'll take the next vice.

Chief Williams - Okay. Well, we have a nomination of Carl to be the Chairperson and a second. All in favor?

**AYE** – ALL

**OPPOSED** – NONE

Chief Williams – Okay, you could take over your meeting.

Carl Amerine - Okay. It's my meeting?

Chief Williams – It's your meeting.

Carl Amerine – Okay. So if we could ask the council then if there's any nominations for vice.

Susie Sutton – I **NOMINATE** Katy.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - You know...

Carl Amerine – How do you feel about that?

Katy Jackman Tyndell - The only time I took a vice seat, the President ended up resigning about two (2) months in. So I ...



[laughter made the rest of the statements indistinguishable]

Katy Jackman Tyndell – I'm fine with that...they don't do anything unless the President's gone.

Carl Amerine - So there is a nomination, is there a second?

Russ Lowen – **SECOND**.

Carl Amerine - Second. Okay. So what was a terminology you were using? There was a nomination and a second. So all in favor say aye.

**AYE** – ALL

Carl Amerine - Not in favor? Say Nay.

**OPPOSED** – NONE

Carl Amerine - Okay. **MOTION** passes. Alright, so I think that finishes us. Now we are ready to go to Roman numeral V or five (5) for budget presentation, Ma'am?

V. Budget Presentation – Chief Financial Officer, Lindsay Poe Rousseau

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Well, good evening. I'm Lindsay Poe Rousseau, I am the CFO [Chief Financial Officer] for the County. I've been in this role for about six (6) years, I was Budget Director before that. So hopefully, I know a little bit of what I'm talking about, but we'll see if you can stump me tonight. I will tell you that this is kind of the first time I've ever put together a presentation like this. So if there are things that are missing, as we go through this, that you need, I am happy to go back and try and put something together. This was just kind of a job that we took to try and get you some of the basics on how we do our finances. I'm also now a second week of [being] a Bel Aire resident. So I'm excited to be here and I'll start sitting in more of these things going forward?

Jim Benage – Welcome to Bel Aire.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So Well, thank you. It's been lovely so far. Okay, so first, let's talk and I'm sure you already have had this conversation. But I think it's important to reiterate, before we get into this, why do we have a County budget and a Fire District budget? Well, because as you well know, the Fire District is not all encompassing of all Sedgwick County. It includes only certain properties and certain residents and so because of that, it wouldn't be fair, right? To levy taxes on

all Sedgwick County citizens who may also pay property taxes to City of Wichita or City of Derby, for example, who provide their own fire service. So for that reason, we have two separate budgets, even though and I...this has been discussed recently. I'm sure it'll be put on your radar for discussion. The Sedgwick County Commission is elected across all Sedgwick County, but then they automatically become the governing body of Fire District One, whether they live in the fire district or not. Right? So they still sit as the governing body but they have to separate themselves from that. They pass a separate budget. They have separate public hearings, separate commission meetings, separate bid boards where they actually make purchases, and that's in recognition of the fact that they are a separate legal entity. And so that's when the Union was dissolved, as Captain Ingalls discussed. The idea was to try and treat the Fire District more like Sedgwick County, but because of this unique setup, that complicates things. We do have some support, obviously, that we provide our district loan on technically to Sedgwick County, CFO, but I'm here speaking to you tonight, because we manage those financials. We do use the County's IT and payroll systems and those things to administer and issue payroll for the Fire District. So there are some administrative costs that are charged for that about \$600,000 per year. I'm confident you'll have conversations about that going forward as well, because I know that it's a concern of the Fire District. It is even though it's a separate legal taxing entity, we do actually have to report on the Fire District in the Sedgwick County audit. Legally technically, from the IRS perspective, it is a component unit of Sedgwick County, even though we are forbidden from moving money between the two (2). Because in the government's mind, it would be like the Sedgwick County giving money to the City of Wichita. Like it just doesn't happen. Right? You don't share money in that way. So because it's a separate legal government, it makes it a challenge without a doubt.

Carl Amerine – Ma'am. May I ask a question about the \$600k? I'm not sure if I'm phrasing the words correctly, but if you're like me, I pay Fire District taxes but I also paid County taxes. My property taxes, some portion of it, of the \$600,000 is all property tax, right? That property tax...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - It's kind of fundable, so whatever that money comes into the fire district, which is we'll get into it. It's primarily property tax.

Carl Amerine - Primarily property tax...so if I'm Fire District taxpayer, I'm paying County taxes and I paying Fire District taxes, but the Fire District is then paying...reimbursing is the right term?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yes.

Carl Amerine - Reimbursing the County with my property taxes, back to the County?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yes. And the idea is, so we do that across, and it's a federal requirement, if we want to charge federal grants for the costs out for the cost to support that program, the

administrative burden, then we have to impose it across all funds that don't have a specific statutory exemption. And so the idea behind it is...ComCare general or, I'm sorry, ComCare grant fund Fire District back when we had an EMS tax fund, right now the Aging tax fund, all of those pay into the general fund with the idea that it offsets the amount of property tax support that Sedgwick County citizens are having to provide to these non-Sedgwick County type programs, if that makes sense. And we can certainly dig into that at some time. There's a lovely, very exciting cost allocation plan that we get each year. And I'm most happy to share that with you, you guys can dig into we can give you any of the spreadsheets you want. We can have good fun.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - But yes, I am confident we'll have conversation about that. So, one thing I want to talk about too, because this comes up a lot, when we talk about budget and forecast. The budget is a spending clinic, it's a plan, it is not a goal, you don't want to spend every penny of the budget, and it just gives us the ability to spend money under Kansas law. Whereas the financial forecast is a tool that helps us see what we really think is going to happen. So what you'll see is a Fire District recommended budget of about \$27 million, of that, \$5 million is contingency. We don't actually plan to spend that \$5 million, we don't tax to support that \$5 million. But we want to have that budget authority there because if we need it, we want to be able to get it quick. There's a lot of complications with adopting a budget, you have a public hearing, right? [The system did not record this line well so I asked Lindsay to clarify her statement. This is what she replied, "*we have to publish the proposed budget, hold a public hearing, and vote to amend the budget – and you cannot increase property taxes in the middle of the year (to support the amended budget).*"] So we like having budget authority accessible. So that's more with a forecast represents what we really think will spend, what we really think we'll bring it in, it's not just for the current year, but it's for five (5) years into the future. And it helps us see if there are problems on the horizon. So we can take proactive steps to try and correct that. And please do stop me if you have questions or concerns. I'd really like this to be more of a conversation than me just talking at you at seven (7) o'clock at night.

Carl Amerine - I guess, since you offered, if you have a nest egg, your savings account, basically. Right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - We call it a fund balance.

Carl Amerine – Fund Balance. You include that, even though you know, intend to spend it, you include that as in your budget. Right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Right.

Carl Amerine – I thought it doesn't get spent...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Both actually. So that's great question. And I think we'll maybe get into that, just in case I don't have just the right slides, let me take a second to talk about that. So in the budget, when we have that contingency, and we're not taxing for it, we're not expecting to bring in revenue to pay for it. What we do then is we plan to draw down that fund balance if we have to, if we have to access the contingency, we're going to use that cash in the bank, the fund balance to support it. On the forecast side, what you'll see is because that's taking our actual expenses and revenues, that obviously gives us either a surplus or deficit projection. If we have a deficit projection, that means we're going to eat into that fund balance. And there are allowable uses for fund balance. Like most of the time, they want you to use one-time buy, because it is a one-time thing, because it's one-time money. But there are other times to where you can kind of use it as a glide path. If you do see trouble on the horizon and gives you can use up some of that fund balance what you're trying to figure out how real that problem is, and how you might tackle it. So does that answer your question?

Carl Amerine – Yes.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Okay.

Susie Sutton - Okay. I had a question too.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yes, ma'am.

Susie Sutton - I guess the only time we had you had a vote on the budget was when it was...trying to remember...non... I can't remember the terms, like when they non-balancing or when they were actually going over budget basically.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So I think what you might be talking about is the revenue neutral rate?

Susie Sutton – Maybe.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - The property tax that was before that? So that's when a public vote occurs. What I'm talking about a vote here, I'm just talking about the Board of County Commissioners, just them adopting a budget. And we'll get into some of those details and hopefully, it'll be clearer, but if does not stop me and we'll go back into it.

Susie Sutton – Ok ay.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Any other questions on this slide? Okay, we'll keep going. So we do adopt a budget each year for both the County and the Fire District and as the Chief so really excited to get to next Wednesday, get this behind us again for a while. The weird thing about it is because it's a tax fund, and we tax on an annual basis, we only get to have one (1) year of budget authority at a time. So come December 31. Whatever is not spent at 11:59, doesn't matter it goes away. We start brand new fresh with a budget that's going to be adopted this upcoming Wednesday. That'll be in place January 1. And that's something that's really tricky for people to understand, right? Because at home it doesn't matter what date it is. Your money is your money all the time. But it's the budget authority, that's the kicker. So that expires December 31.

Carl Amerine - So real quick, I was in the military. And I remember come every September, everyone in the office got brand new like Leatherman's and night vision goggles and all kinds of stuff. Right? My question is, does the County pledging process incentivize everyone gets...come December 31, welcome to the New Year, here's your new Leatherman or whatever? So...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - You have the same problems...

Carl Amerine - So it's a use it or lose it...?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yeah. Okay, so what we see is about this time of year. And Janelle maybe can attest to this, we start seeing a flood of..., what we call shopping carts and purchase orders and big increases on the P cards [purchase cards] because people are trying to get that money spent.

Carl Amerine - So for the Fire District, is that a statutory requirement, we have to use it or lose it? Or is that a law?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - [the conversation was on top of each other and cannot tell what was being said]...This is also the governing body, we have a January 1 to December 31, with the exception of there...so those are mainly the operating funds. If there's property tax support, there are some weirdo funds out there, like the Fire District has a special equipment fund, we can put that cash in there and the Commission can take action at any time. Now we're five (5) years down the road to establish budget authority to access that, and that's actually going to be a key part of the Fire District's finances in the next few years is making sure to leverage those dollars to ease any burdens on the operating budget. So we can really focus on compensation.

Chief Williams - Lindsay? One thing we do is, we are a standalone budget. I mean, if we have a bad event in November, we can't borrow from the Sheriff or from EMS. You know, we are stand

alone and we have nobody that can loan us money. So what we tend to do, as a standalone budget, is we plan you know, like if we need to buy rescue equipment or if we need to buy hazmat equipment or if we need to buy air packs. Big ticket items that we need to buy, we wait until this time of the year to buy them which kind of along what she's saying...you know, we wait because if we buy them in February and then something bad happens to us now, we're just in dire straits. We have to go to Commission and tell everybody that they have to reamend the budget. That's a very unpopular thing for Commissioners to do...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - And haven't do it yet.

Chief Williams - And so we tend to protect our budget...pretty, you know...until this time of year. And it's like, okay, everything looks good. We can go by that rescue equipment, or that...so it's really not a...we're not going and buying everybody toys. We're exercising the stuff that we had forecast to buy. So I mean, it's...

Jim Benage – Yep, understood.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It's okay to buy toys too at the end of the year, as long as you've got money.

Jim Benage - Do you run reserves? Do you hold the reserve account?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Oh, yes. We'll get into that...

Jim Benage - ...And capital improvement project accounts?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So we do have capital project accounts, the Fire District right now does not have any CIP [Capital Improvement] projects that have been approved by the Commission. So at this point, it's a non-issue. But yes, we would have a way and it would be like what I described as the weirdo accounts before, CIP, right is a weirdo account to put the cash in, and we can access it whenever we need to. That's what we would do. Okay, so again, all the budget does is give people the authority to spend money if we don't, and we'll get to it on a later slide. But if we don't have a budget that's adopted, it doesn't matter if we have \$25 million sitting in the bank, if there's no budget authority to deal with it, we can't touch it. And that's as a state law issue. So we do have to budget in a specific way. And so that's why you'll see the budget book broken out in the way that you do if you have not yet spent any time with it. It's this lovely 800 page document. You can find it online and a much simpler format. But it does have some interesting info in the executive summary and actually within the Fire District budget, so might be worth giving it a gander some time. So state law also requires that we have a balanced budget. So if we

don't have enough resource coming in and fund balance, which I promise we will get to, if we don't have enough of those resources combined. We can't budget to spend more than that we are limited to the amount of resource we've actually got. And then we can't spend money we don't have that's the cash basis. Well, I'm sure many folks have heard that. So basically, it's if you don't think you're going to have it in good faith, and you can't spend it and that makes great sense, right? We should all live life at home. It does include specific deadlines, which is why we're racing toward this August 23 date after six (6) weeks of having a recommended budget out so we're really excited to be done. Also, the County's budget by policy includes a staffing table, and HR and finance together are directed by County policy to hold to that staffing table and the Commission approves. So that means we can only fill the number of authorized positions that the Commission or the governing body in Fire District One has authorized if there are some exceptions, we can do some double fills. Sometimes the Manager can approve those under certain parameters, but really were limited to whatever the Commission adopted the budget and then it's our job to be really mean and say, No, you can't have that we know that you need more, but no. Then, if a position is eliminated, if we go through a process, and let's say, this training officer that's come up, it's eliminated, it's gone. If and until the commission action comes in place to replace it. So let's shift gears a little bit, those are kind of the parameters under which we operate for a budget. Obviously, budget has two (2) sides, primarily revenues and expenses. So for the Fire District, this was mentioned earlier, we have a property tax base that looks at real property, so our land, our personal property, so cars and stuff that can generally can be moved around, and then the value of state assessed utility. So all of the gas lines and the power lines, and all of those things that come through, we get some income off of that. But that is very volatile, and hard to predict. And there is no model out there that allows us to do it because it's based on consumption and price. And there's a lot of averages that are used. So it's a tricky figure. But those are the three (3) primary components of what we call our assessed value. We have a mill levy rate, I'm sure you're well aware about 17.9 Mills, this is included in the 2024 recommended budget. And Capt. Ingalls already referenced this, so I appreciate the candy segue. But we do have property tax abatements that happen all across the county. A lot of them happen within the Fire District. And so what happens then is that for some very small portion, that goes to support basically school bonds, every property tax entity that's involved in that; the schools, the cities, the county, we don't get any revenue from that, sometimes for five (5) up to 10 years. Sometimes that can even be extended if there are project plans that are introduced and so basically, what you get is, it locks whatever that base revenue or that base tax amount was, when that project was very, very slowly it started. That's all the revenue anybody gets for five (5) to 10 years, while that property is continuing to improve in build value. And so but we're not able to capture that money. And the problem with that is typically those are new improvements. So that means we need to provide a fire service to make sure that the home or the business is protected, we need to make sure that EMS can get out there. There is an expected increase in service delivery, but there's no dollars to come in for that. And so, I think a discussion about a legislative

platform that would look at some of the more specialized districts that are really locked in and tied to property tax revenues is something you guys could really take a good hard look at, and make some recommendations to the County Commission to include on their legislative platform. It's one thing for the County to miss out on some of those dollars. We have other revenue sources, we're much larger and it's easier for us to absorb some of that. For smaller... [Ringing phone]...I'll pause. Okay, so for those smaller communities that it can be a much bigger blow. And you start to think about for an example, Integra that is going to have very specialized equipment, chemicals, things that are needed, and there's no property tax coming in from that. But we know the Fire District is going to be expected to provide service that creates a challenge for the district until that property comes off of abatement.

Carl Amerine - Real quick question. Because I don't want to get caught up in saying the wrong thing is, is it really no property taxes coming in? Or it's locked out? Whatever it does do that if it was in a rural field?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yeah. You're right. I'm sorry. I should rephrase.

Carl Amerine - Basically, the developer, the developer is paying what he's always paid when he bought that.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - For that property. I mean, of course are paying for the improvements and other things. So it's a great economic development and so no other people in it come in, but it is a hardship to the governments that are...

Carl Amerine - Quick question. I don't know how this all works with like fire inspections for, you know, to occupy a building like having Fire Marshal come out and make sure everything's working and stuff...do you charge for services for that?

Chief Williams – [Nodded yes.]

Carl Amerine - Right, okay. So even though they have a property tax abatement, Integra still going to have to pay for the Fire Marshal to come out and perform a service.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Normal permits or fees or any of those things would still be charged by the relevant covenants.

Carl Amerine - So it's purely just property tax. All right.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – So...



Susie Sutton - So follow up on that. I'm so sorry. Sorry. When the city gives away property, so there hasn't been property tax being paid on it and there's abatement then there will be no property taxes?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Exactly. Right there. Basically whatever it is the day before the project starts, that's what the government gets.

Susie Sutton – Okay.

Carl Amerine - Yeah. So I was looking at I got notice here with the...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Your RNR's (Revenue Neutral Rate).

Carl Amerine - Yeah, my RNR's. So I got that. And so I see here that the assessed value is basically 1.2ish billion, I rounded up by the way, but it's basically 1.2 billion for the Fire District. When there is a property tax abatement what the value is actually worth is not included in this valuation. Right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Right. So remember, an assessed value. And I don't know how you guys talked about assessed versus appraised yet?

Chief Williams – Not yet.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Okay. So appraised value is just what you think it is. Like I'm getting ready to sell my house in Wichita, right? I'm going to have an appraised value on that property, the real market value, but when it actually comes time for me to be taxed on that property, the state constitution has certain amounts that it says you're not going to pay on 100% of your property value. If you're a residential homeowner, you're going to handle 11.5% of that property. So that's what that assessed value represents is once we've been...and if it's commercial, it's a much higher number, if it's AG [agricultural], it's an average of certain years. I mean, it just varies by the type of property.

Carl Amerine - If there's a property tax abatement, and that...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Right, that affects the assessment.

Carl Amerine - The assessed value, okay, got it. And then going back to this property tax abatement, something like Integra or something where for whatever reason, they could on their

own reasons, negotiate paying for services with the Fire District writer? I mean, they're not obligated...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - But they could be having those conversations.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, exactly. But so what function in the Fire District actually performs those discussions?

Chief Williams - We have those agreements...

Carl Amerine - ...Counselor or...

Chief Williams - Yeah, we work with the Commission in the Manager's office and Legal, but we have, well I just was thinking of it, but it's payment in lieu of taxes, is what they call it, and we have that with Spirit and we have that with Textron, and we have that with the Casino. Because the Casino, the 11 acres this Casino sits on is protected land, it's not legally in the Fire District. So they pay us money for to provide a service to them. And I say Spirit and Textron and there's another aircraft manufacturer...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Figeac.

Chief Williams - Yeah. So we do have that, whether we'll end up with Integra in that, we don't know. I mean, that's going to be discussed.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – That's a lot of years down the road.

Chief Williams - But it's going to depend on what they want in service.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Well, and the thing is with Integra, so maybe it's abated, there's a lot of activity that's expected to occur around it. Right? And so because that's happening, maybe there's an abatement that there's probably going to be new property taxes that are generated by virtue of that plant being located there. So there's still a lot discussion to be had on that.

Carl Amerine - A question on this Greyhound park, because that doesn't have an abatement. I forget the developer's name.

Chief Williams – Ruffin.

Carl Amerine - Yeah. So will the County Appraiser, right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Yes your right.

Carl Amerine - Will, the County Appraiser next year take into account that he has...the assessed value should go up even if he has made improvements, correct? Or does it only go up when there's improvements?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So in this case, it's hard to say it'll be whatever is happening as of January 1st, that's kind of a snapshot that the Appraisers office uses to evaluate property. But this is going to be complicated. Normally, they'll look at what was the market price for the land that actually sold. And that'll typically have an effect, even if there's not a lot of improvements. In this case, it was his property before and after. So how that will affect it and based on whatever...

Carl Amerine - Just the value of it, if you've got some Kansas State Legislator approved casino rights on the land, you have to assume the appraised value has gone up, if Ruffin had decided to sell it to someone else.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – One would assume, yes. But I cannot speak for the County Appraiser. They would get quite irritated with me if I did.

Carl Amerine – No, I get it they're independent. Yeah, they're independent. I get that that would be against the law. But I guess I'm wondering because you're on the forecast. The reason I'm asking is because on Tuesday and that staff meeting, there was a lot of Commissioners asking you...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau -There sure was, wasn't there...

Carl Amerine - ...There was a lot of Commissioners asking you to find the money. It sounds like and I'm just wondering is...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So this right now, because there's so little data, it's not included in the forecast and you'll see that noted down the road. And that's part of the I think that was part of a really good conversation that also happened Wednesday, the Commissioners mentioning that there's development that's happening that's not yet been taken into account forecasts and the problem is we don't know what to account for. So we haven't. We have some baseline stuff that we include, but probably I don't know that it'll be enough for all the new development that's happening. But that's something that as a...in the budget office or in my role, I'm not going to take a guess on whether the Appraiser is going to value that stuff that I have. That is not my area

of expertise. So it will come into the forecast, we do quarterly updates, and as we get more information that will get updated. But to give you a good answer right now would be impossible.

Carl Amerine - Yeah. And I guess what I'm hearing, I'm looking kind of at the Counselor at this point, is someone in the County, could somebody in the County government could go to the County Appraiser and say, in this situation, what are you expecting? Like...or is that appropriate?

Kevin Stamper – Yes.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – We do that all the time but he won't tell us until January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Carl Amerine - Well, what the amount is but to take in account...the guy has...Ruffin has...there's three (3) casinos in the...he's going to be the third casino in the area, right? I mean, that's got to have some value to it. You would think?

Kevin Stamper - Well, that's something they are just going to have to determine when it happens.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yeah, I mean, our Appraiser...I appreciate him for the work that he does. He has is a very tough job. But in terms of like, forecasting or things, he's not always super elaborative.

Carl Amerine - I get it, just...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - He's very conservative.

Carl Amerine - I mean, if you're using...if you're trying to do comparative data on a dilapidated mothballed Greyhound park...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Right.

Carl Amerine - And what the value that is versus the one site in which Sedgwick County that is not an Indian Casino, that has the casino rights. I mean...

Susie Sutton – You don't know what kind of casino he is going to build, is he going to build a Morton building? Or is he going to build a very fancy high class? There's no way...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - We know there's money coming in. But we have no clue.

Chief Williams - I think the good thing about this scenario is they want to be opened by 2025. So I mean this thing is going to...

Carl Amerine - Which is in our forecasts, right, because it was the Commissioners were saying that it's a five (5) year forecast, right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Yes and that year is in the forecast, these dollars are not in the forecast, because we don't know what they are.

Chief Williams - So it'll be coming in pretty quick. That's one of the good things about it, you know, Integra is going to be quite a ways down the road. Where this is going to be...He wants to get that thing open.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Okay, so I understand that there was maybe a question last time about mill levies in particular? And so, what I don't necessarily want to get into the weeds on this, but I wanted you to have a reference document that you could come back to. And as you have conversations, and run scenarios, maybe you can do some of the math yourself based on this guideline. So a mill, even though it's a mill which one would think million, not as much, a mill is \$1, tax for every \$1,000 of Assessed Value. And remember Assessed Value is that number that the State Constitution says, you're not paying for every dollar of your value, you're going to pay for just a certain portion of your value. So in this case when we talk about a mill, let's say 17 mills, you'll see it's actually represented this way. So basically, your decimal point comes over three (3) parts when you're trying to represent a mill levy rate. So you just kind of fit it into this, you've got 17.8 mills, this is how it looks, you just swap out your numbers, it's actually really easy. It sounds hard, but it's not. So Assessed Value, again, takes that fair market value, applies the percentage we've already talked about, 11.5% is the Residential Rate. So in this scenario, you've got a \$100,000 home, the state's only going to assess us on 11.5% of that value. So \$11,500. And then that mill levy rate for the Fire District is going to determine how much of this basis we're able to collect and use as property values to support the Fire District. So when we actually take those three (3) figures, and multiply them out, what that means is if you have a \$100,000 home right now, based generally on the recommended budget, you're going to pay \$205 for annual Fire Service, and the insurance rating that comes with that. So when you take that into account, it's actually darn good value. But that's how the mill works. That is, again the primary basis of funding for the Fire District because they are very limited by state law and how they can collect revenue. So speaking of that, in our 2024 recommended, and now I am wandering...I'm pacing. So property taxes are estimated at about \$20.8 million to come into the Fire District based on property taxes. Combination commercial, residential, all of them - 87% very reliable. Motor vehicle taxes are a different type of property tax, we pay them differently, right? We pay when we build registered vehicle, but it's still based on last year's property tax rate. I don't know if

people notice that. So we're expecting to bring in 2 million. Now miscellaneous charges, this is kind of what you're trying to have inspection fees and some of those other things. It's not a lot, I'll be honest, that comes in along with those charges for service, the pilots that the Chief referenced. Then one of the good things about all of our interest rates skyrocketing, is investment income is going up. So right now we're estimating about \$265,000 of that. So in all, we're expecting to bring in 23, well...we'll just round, \$24 million of new revenue. That assumes that we are able to fully capture the growth in the district. And we're able to continue to go with the 17.889 mill number that was included in the recommended budget. So remember that \$24 million, okay, actual revenue. Now, one of the reasons that we get in Finance, me in particular, the reason I get a little antsy is because when I came into the budget office in 2010, this is what was happening with the Fire District. And you can see it has been volatile over the years. Now, we're seeing some really nice growth here, which is wonderful. But what I'm afraid of is what happens here, these kinds of trends that we see. Now is that likely to happen based on everything we've been hearing and the fact that I mean, we've had a really weird intervention from COVID and in federal money? So this probably will look very different than any trends in the past. But it's hard to guess. And this 4% is the last 10 year average. So that is what we look at in terms of...one of the things we look at in terms of talking about long term forecasts for the Fire District, because there is a lot of volatility. And it's not always easily explained, right? A lot of times, maybe it's an annexation, or maybe a really nice large project comes off...or comes on to the tax roll, excuse me. But sometimes it's just weird stuff happening with certain properties, because we have a really diverse unincorporated area/small cities in this community. Okay, so I said \$24 million in revenue, right? Here's our expenses. That's what we're actually planning to spend in the forecast next year, which means we're setting ourselves up for a very positive thing. However, I'm going to throw really big however in here, because this includes the base plan for compensation, which you're going to hear about. No one, even though it's in the recommended, nobody on County Management staff, no Commissioners, no one believes that is the right plan to go with anymore after we've had new information and done some more analysis. So I'm putting this out here because this is what Commissioners have seen. And I don't want to roll anything out to you that they haven't seen because I get in trouble. So just put that personnel stuff on the backburner and we'll get back to it. So what this would plan for is about \$11 million in total earnings, so that is salaries and wages, overtime, call back pay, and all that, about \$6 million in our benefits, and then about \$1.2 million in payroll taxes. We pay a lot of contracts, if we're not paying people who are basically paying for stuff. It's all for a service organization. So Contractuals include our utilities, those admin charges we talked about, that's baked into that \$1.7 million that we are planning on spending next year. Another \$1.7 million is planned right now for Lease Purchase Agreements but I'll tell you that includes an increase. And maybe this is a bit optimistic that these pieces of equipment actually doubled over the next year. So this is the one I probably have the greatest sense of unease with because it's hard to predict, because there's so many factors that are not in our control. Commodities, these don't really change a whole lot from year

to year. They have to have equipment, they have to have fuel, they have to have uniforms, etc. So about \$1.2. And then as the Chief was talking about, it's the big apparatus, the big equipment that we lease purchase, around now around seven (7) to eight (8) years because those costs are getting so large, and we want to provide some stability to their budget. You don't necessarily want to spend all the Fund Balance at once on big equipment. But we do spend for their squads and some of the smaller vehicles that they may have about three (3), that they have a vehicle replacement plan, and I see that the Chief has it with him so he can regale you with all the details if necessary. But we're estimating about \$370,000 on those next year. So that's kind of a baseline.

Carl Amerine - By the way, when you say that seven (7) or eight (8) or what you're saying seven (7) or eight (8) years for the debt lease. Do you as a county, do you issue bonds to cover those seven (7) years? Or are you or is that's the Fire District...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – The Fire District is actually issues like an RFB [Request for Bid] and says, here's what we're buying, give us your most competitive interest rate. And I will say that we do, we try and be as strategic, not sneaky, as we can try and use the County's Triple A bond rating to help with those...

Carl Amerine - The Fire District?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It's the Fire District that enters into the contract. But it's not really a bond, right? It's like, let's say you went leased a car, and you were going to buy it at the end of a five (5) year term. That's what we do with this, this is really not remotely as fancy as it sounds, and it is called debt service. Because we're paying somebody for it but it's really just a fancy term for a lease.

Chief Williams - Actually, the funny part of the lease purchase is, it's just like if you borrowed money to buy a new car going difference is they hold the title instead of us. And then when we pay it off, they give us the title, if we fail to pay it off, they take the truck. So it's really a...it's a loan, it's just a little different variation.

Jim Benage - The interest rate on these deals is that competitive to GO [General Obligation] Bonds?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It is actually much cheaper.

Jim Benage - It is?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Yes, because it's a lesser term and because it's so much less dollars, and there's so much less risk. So we actually have, I don't know, I wouldn't say half (1/2), maybe two thirds (2/3) of what we pay on our GO debt is what we pay on the interest for these lease payments. So I mean, for that kind of rate, especially the last few years, it's been, you know, really cheap debt to do. So it's actually been a pretty good arrangement for us. Okay, so because we talked about it and because you, if you watch the commission meetings, you've heard them talk about Fund Balance a lot. So I'm going to way nerd out on you. So maybe pinch your arm or do something, whatever they need to do to stay awake. So Fund Balance means different things to different people. So I told you, I came up on the budget side. So what I'm used to is when I talk about Fund Balance, I'm used to talking about cash in/cash out, or if I've made an obligation to buy something, I'm going to go ahead and assume that's gone. Nice and simple, right? And now that I'm CFO, I have accountants, and they see the world very differently. And thankfully, over the last six and a half (6 ½) years, they have taught me a lot. And so what they live in the world of is, GAAP, right? Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. And so the GAAP says, just like the typical balance sheet at any business, what are the value of your non-spendables right? Your inventories? Or maybe the depreciated value of your buildings? What are all those things? What does your Balance Sheet say you have? So when we talk budget, we're talking about this, because that's what Commissioners have to spend, right? But we know that when it comes time to actually do audits, and those things that are really important to credit rating agencies and the public, we have to put it in different terms we have to talk about in terms of GAAP. So the best practice out there from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), talks about things in terms of GAAP, because Accountants...need I say more? So, the best practice from GFOA says if you have a General Fund, and it doesn't distinguish between types of general funds. That's a County, a Fire, a City, you ought to maintain at least two (2) months, up to 25...some say 25%, of basically the amount of expense you have in your Budget and Fund Balance and you don't touch it. That's what you maintain. You can have more, so that you have a cushion. But you don't really want to dip into that part of Fund Balance unless something has gone grossly awry. So that's why we try and look at it in those terms. So for the 2024 recommended budget, 20% would be \$5.5 million. This practice also says and we already talked about this earlier, you should only use Fund Balance on one-time things, because it's one-time money. So when we look at where we are today at the end of 2022, which the most recent figures we have, the GAAP balance has a \$8.6 million so we have a \$3 million cushion before we hit that minimum. On a budgetary basis because it doesn't include all this other stuff, the buildings and the assets. We're at \$7.9 million. Now, part of this is also again and we've ordered some vehicles, we've done some things, that means that those dollars have already been obligated even though we haven't spent them. So that can confuse people too. This just includes commitments also of any money that we'll have down the road. So either way, you look at it in pretty good cushion, right? So we take those revenues, those expenses, that fund balance, we package it in one big thing called the Financial Forecast, we used to call it the Financial Plan. But that plan showed insolvency between the



County and the Fire District. And so while most places call it a plan, our CFO at that time was really cranky about a plan, because we weren't "planning to", we were going to fix it. Now we call it a forecast like the weather. So anyway, probably you don't...So our revenue assumptions, we are right now planning on 4% growth, basically across the board in property taxes based on assessed value and flat mill levy rate, is that accurate? Probably not. There are a couple things that we know that are brewing out there. Obviously, we know all of the different buildings that we just talked about. But we also know that there is a constitutional amendment, that's most likely going to be on the ballot next year. So November 2024, that is going to seek to change the constitution. So that any, any municipality cannot increase assessed value by more than 4%. Unless the property has changed in use, you sold it, or something like that. And after the last couple of years of pretty significant increases on the RNR. I mean, I think anyone who thinks that wouldn't pass it foolish, it's probably going to pass. So that's probably what's coming for us. It doesn't mean that we won't have more than 4%. But it sure does present a hurdle for us when we've just had a couple of really great years, especially in the Fire District. So again, we've already talked about this, some of the assumptions that are not yet included. And we continue to expect a modest improvement in those other areas. Now, compensation increases, we built in 4% per year past 2024. And that's because we know there are 3% steps. But we also know that it is a strong goal for the Commission, to continue to move the baseline so that we don't have a starting pay range that stays stagnant forever. Now, this may come in different years, we may look to do two (2) or three (3) % on different years, but we're just trying to make sure we're capturing something for that until we get better direction from the Commission. All these expenses continue to go up. And then of course, the Chief has the vehicle replacement plan that they worked on that goes into 10 years. And we've tried to take that into account between the debt service and the equipment. So here's the base, don't get too used to this one. Again, we said this is not one we want but this is what's in the budget. So this is what we need to be consistent with at least as a starting place. So I have my favorite paint colors in here just for the Chief. So you will see Expenditures. Expenditures are bad, right, so they're red. And then Revenues are good so they are like a nice cool blue. So what you can see in this scenario that is crap...sorry. Is we exceed...Revenues exceed Expenses in every year, fantastic, right? Too bad. Okay. And the reason we say too bad is because that plan includes a 3% step and a 2% Cola adjustment for hire staff. And what we have since learned is that some of the placements that were done last year weren't enough. And so we need to do more for the entire Fire District, not just firefighters, not just Lieutenants, not just Captains. So Commissioner Howell, bless his heart, has a plan that he has sanctioned, we'll talk about that. HR and Fire have plans that they have put together, bless their hearts. This has been a tremendous amount of work in what, the last six (6) weeks? They have all busted their butts, so extra credit to them for working on this. So the first scenario, and I want to point out that you do have some handouts. You have a presentation, but then do they have this too? Okay. So this one is something that the Commission just saw this week. And what this outlines are different scenarios. And so what we're going to walk through on the screen here

is just a visual depiction of what this looks like. For all of these years, the numbers tie out, so you can see...

Carl Amerine – A quick question for you. So in 2023 Estimate, and not to yield in 2022 Actual you have Expenditures over Revenues, so you drew down the Fund Balance. Is that the right way to say it?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It is and it's actually a really good thing to bring up because what we did is we basically took all of the Budget Authority that was left at the end of the year. And we spent it by taking it out of the Fire General Fund and put it in their Special Equipment Fund. So we could kind of save up that money. And so we can access it at any point in time, right? With just a simple Commission vote. So maybe it looks like they spent more than they brought in. But that's really more of an accounting thing. Because they kept the cash just went somewhere else. And we also...do they have this too? Okay, well, this will really bore you to tears. This is 10 years of Actuals, of what we call a Commitment Item Level. And so this is just the Fire District General Fund. And our accounting system captures money spent and dollars collected at what we call GL Code or Commitment Items. So like salaries and wages, we wrapped that up to Earnings up here. But in the system, the actual salaries and wages, we pay people for their normal shift is here, overtime, broken out, those Admin Charges under Contractuals are broken out, you can see all of the revenues and all of the expenses in the bottom line impact to the Fire District financials on a budgetary basis here. All of that is here for the last 10 years. And I'm happy to answer questions because it has been a volatile time for the Fire District. And so there's not a ton of trends that you can take from this, but at least its information that you have. And you can kind of see how those operating surpluses and deficits look. And you can see if there's a transfer out Expenditure why that may have given that operating income or deficit. Okay, so getting back to this sheet, you'll see across the top is the base plan, this is what was included in that Recommended, again I will tell you please don't pay any attention to it. None of us are advocating for this anymore. The second one is the 50% plan. This is a methodology that I think Commissioner Howell worked on. I think maybe some of the staff were involved. But basically it looked at, if you have progressed through a normal step system, from back in the day all the way through when the steps went away when the Fire District [words were lost due to sound interference due to coughing]. Where would those folks be on a step system? And what he did is he cut that in half. So basically, they're not getting all the way but it's a partial correction. So that's the 50% step plan. Then you can see an Evergreen 12 Steps. So when you hear Evergreen, we just spent the last nine (9) or 10 months working with a consulting firm called Evergreen that went through and looked at the general paid plans. So people like me, and said, what grades should we have? Where do people fall in those grades, it looked at their time in position and then it gave partial credit for their time with the organization. And it basically gave a pay raise based on that. Well, for this methodology, that's what with Evergreen 12 Step, we kept the 12 Step plan just like it sounds like, and HR and

Fire, were able to work together to say, okay, taking all of those other variables into account, where would someone line up on that Evergreen plan, and then move them to the closest step that was more dollars than they were making today? No one would lose money. So that's what this plan looks like. Evergreen 15, very simple. Very similar, I'm sorry. But instead of going to 12 Steps, it went to 15 Steps. And so it made it more like what EMS and the Sheriff have with a 15 Step plan. So that's what this one depicts. And then the final one, which I know makes people very sad, and we're not going to spend any time talking about is the full fix. If we went all out on that Commissioner Howell plan that we talked about, where if everybody progressed through steps, where would they be, we can't go to that one. Because if you look at the very bottom, or I'm sorry, the very far side, you can see we actually project that we're broke by the end of 2028. So it's not something anybody is willing to entertain at this time. But the others are all up for grabs. And this is where Commissioner Dennis specifically said during staff meeting on Tuesday, he would like your input. So...

Carl Amerine – Quick question on the steps, I guess I'll look at the Chief on that one. Because I'm thinking back to my looking at my pay tables back in the military, right? Like you wouldn't, you wouldn't have a 05 Lieutenant Colonel, at two (2) years' experience because it takes at least 12 years to get there like that. So their step was didn't start at one (1) right, it started at Fire. How do you...so a fire man obviously goes from zero (0)...from one (1) to 15? Do Lieutenants also in their skill code from one (1) to 15? The same thing working on up the chain...

Chief Williams - They do but in the Lieutenant's skill, technically the first three (3) are worthless. And the reason I say that is because you cannot take a promotional test here until you've been in position, you have to be a firefighter for five (5) years before you can take the promotional exam.

Carl Amerine – Yeah.

Chief Williams - So you're not going to make Lieutenant until you're six (6) year person, your Step six (6)...

Carl Amerine - At the earliest.

Chief Williams - And so when the County guarantees, I believe, a 4% promotional increase and so in our system, if you're going to fall back four (4) steps, because the way it works in that 3% step range, you're going to fall back. So Step six (6) firefighter would go to a Step two (2) Lieutenant or it's not that it's got to be Step three (3), because we've had that conversation so many times, but, but you'll fall back to a step. And look, there's a little bit of overlap. So but you, you trickle back to this, Step three (3) Lieutenant and then you'll start crawling up one (1) year at a time. And then if after you've been 30 months, you can be promoted to Captain. And same process, you would fall

back to wherever that wherever that raise that guaranteed rates put you in the Captain's range you would fall back to and that's the way our system works all the way to Division Chief.

Carl Amerine – And the guaranteed raise that's a policy the county has?

Chief Williams - Yes.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Chief Williams – It's the Fire District.

Carl Amerine – Oh the Fire District has a policy that if you promote it, at least it...is it at least or it shall be 4%?

Chief Williams - It's 4%. No, you're right. It is guaranteed 4%. It could be four and a half (4 ½) or, you know, you go into the step that guarantees you 4%.

Carl Amerine - Got it. Understood. Okay. And then I think the Captain was explaining that Chiefs, like Deputies Chiefs, Battalion Chiefs, whatever you guys are salaried? Steps, new steps. Are you guys on the step plan or not?

Chief Williams – Not currently, that's part of the discussion that's going on now,

Carl Amerine - Is that the Evergreen 15 includes the...I don't know...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Really any variation of this could include them being on the step or not. Because I think there's different discussions, right? So like an EMS and Sheriff, their top people are not on a step plan but they do have 15 Steps. So if we make these guys look like that, then how does that play out, right? Or if we keep them on 12 Steps, and we include them on steps that can look different, too. So I think that's something that also the Commission would seek feedback on and Doug can certainly give his opinion and I'll pipe down, like whatever he wants to do.

Jim Benage - So Evergreen is a consultant project. You maybe they looked at, or you looked at average, what is done in the area for firefighters? I mean, you have Wichita, you got Valley Center, and you've others...research like that?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - For this...for Evergreen no. That was done as a part of the Gallagher study last year that was not really received well. So there is some data out there on it. But really Evergreen was about trying to take care of the folks we have today and get them into...the taking into account that time in class and the time in the organization. And that's not a typical approach that you would see with a step system and so that's why even if we looked at I think we can look

at starting wage, and that would be comparable. But otherwise, I think this methodology, and Chief you can correct me if I'm wrong, I think this is a pretty unique way to look at steps. So Chief, correct me if I'm wrong.

Chief Williams – We can talk about it when you're done. We're going to have to go through all these again, because we'll have to weigh in on them.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, I guess that'd be my question would be like, how did how did the group like to come up with like, what the hourly pay should be for firemen at Step nine (9). Evergreen actually didn't come up with what that number is. Your guys' command staff with HR and other people said we think it should be this.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - And let me clarify, Evergreen didn't actually consult on this. We stole the methodology that they used for general County employees and apply that to these guys. So they didn't actually do the work...

Chief Williams - To get, I think we need, because half of this discussion is going back to how we got where we're at. Okay, you know, Captain Ingalls, talked about the Union and, you know, the Union got into some very spirited negotiations with the very unfriendly County Commission back in 2016. Yeah, it was started about 2013 - 2014 and they got real crappy contracts and no contracts. And finally they got because of the ongoing back and forth they ended up getting unrecognized but so essentially their pay got about 2014 started getting really restricted and no pay raises or if they got him they were bonus paid that was not continued. You know, they fell off and you get 1% bonus pay and it goes away and you get 2% bonus pay, and then that goes away. And so they went a lot of years...and then when they got unrecognized, they lost their steps period. So they went seven (7) or eight (8) years, and lost without any steps. And then they were put into where they were just basically getting colas [cost of living adjustments]. So, last year, there was a, one of the things we got into last year, Wichita negotiated a very beneficial contract. I mean, Wichita Fire got the contract of a lifetime. And they were going to go up to where their starting pay was going to be approximately between \$12 and \$15,000 higher than our starting pay and Wichita, so had a policy in place that you could, you could resign from here, you could sell your KP&F [Kansas Police and Firemen's Retirement System]. If you leave here before you're vested into KP&F Retirement, which is Kansas Police and Fire, all you get back is what you put in, which is 8% or 7.25% but you get that money back if you resign prior to being vested. Wichita started a program where you could sell your KP&F, get your money from that and then you could buy up to five (5) years into Wichita's pension system. So we were facing a problem last year, where we have 75 firefighters up to nine (9) years that could walk across the street and get a pay raise and invest in their pension system up to five (5) years. So I mean, we were looking at a crisis. And on top of that, Wichita got a Safer Grant to hire 42 people on top of the normal attrition is like 35 to 40. So they were looking at hiring in the nearly around 80 or 90 firefighters and we had

75 that could walk across the street, get a pay increase, and reinvest in their pension system. So we were truly in a real dire position last year. Anyway, we ended up...the plan that got pushed forward, pushed the bottom from \$14.50 an hour or something \$14.70 whatever it was...pardon me?

Chief Kevin Nelson - \$14.26.

Chief Williams - Pushed it up to a minimum of \$18. And at the time we did everything we felt was financially responsible. And so it just shoved the whole bottom up into the middle and so now we have this major compression problem because we have seven (7) or eight (8) year firemen making what two (2) or three (3) year firemen are making in one (1) year firemen are making what three (3) year firemen are making. We have this massive compression problem, would that be agreeable? So and our Lieutenants didn't get treated very well, either. So we got into this year, and we started looking at all these plans. Commissioner Howell challenged me in a meeting to create a plan and go back and look at every firefighter and say, if we would have never taken away steps, where would that person be in the step system. We created the step system last year, we went back into 3% per step plans for all levels up to Division Chief, through Division Chief. And the reason they were capped at 12 was because we couldn't afford to go any higher with the money we had available. So it wasn't that we didn't want 15 like EMS and everybody else had it's just we were dealing with the money we had. So the plan was created, capped it at 12. So when Commissioner Howell asked, we went back and it's really easy to track firefighters, you know, if you've been here, you started Step one (1) and if you've been here for six (6) years, then you're going to be Step seven (7), that's really easy. But where you get into the problem is like we talked about with Lieutenants and Captains and Division Chiefs. We had to say okay, you were promoted on what date? So you would have been Step eight (8)? Well, you would have went into Lieutenant at Step four (4), and your Lieutenant for four (4) years and then you made Captain and then your we went back to Step two (2) Captain and I mean, we've had to zigzag through, you know about 50 positions to try figure out where these guys would end up all the way up through Division Chief. And after we did all that we came up with a plan that was called Perfect World plan and was would bankrupt us. So Commissioner Howell came up with this idea okay, well, we're just going to split it in half, and essentially if, if you were supposedly to Step eight (8) firefighter and you're right now Step three (3), we're going to move half of that distance. And that's what the 50% plan is called is 50% of the movement that you would get. There's a couple flaws with that. And if you're Step three (3), and you should go to Step seven (7) is really easy, you go to Step five (5). But what if you were Step three (3) should go to Step eight (8), what do you do with the person falls halfway between steps? Well, the idea that he had was, well he just moved that guy up, so now you've assumed that 50% of the people fall into the odd range. And so we've just compressed 50% of our people into the other 50%. So we still haven't solved compression. So we didn't really, we have got to figure out something else. Well, the HR director

came up with the idea of using this Evergreen methodology, which is based on years of service and put into a formula that creates...so we did that on what we call the 12 Step plan, which is right here. And it does a really good job of spreading our people out, it really does. And you take them out of steps, you use their range in the calculation and come back with what they should make. Then they're put into the step plan, and they're always rounded up. So everybody gets rounded up, which so it's evenly equal, I mean, some more than others. But, you know, if you fall in \$1, under the next range, you only get rounded up \$1. If you fall in \$200, you get rounded up, you know. I mean, there is some little bit of, you know, but mostly it's pretty fair, and it spreads out or people really well, but it really came up short of where we needed to go to, to fix the pay of our people. So then the idea that we as a fire staff came up with is, let's look at the 15 Step plan. And the reason the 15 Step plan works better, is because this whole thing is based on mathematical equation, of your salary range. It takes your maximum, subtracts your minimum, and then you figure that over a 30 year career, then it takes in your time. And there's a formula, but because it's it widens the range, it adds, basically it puts everybody up another step really in the end. And so it really worked out, I mean, across the board, it just came out really, really well. I mean, it's like, hey, this works. But it is a little bit of a financial challenge. Not near as much as the full fix, but it does present some challenges. So that's what we're dealing with now. And now that I've kind of explained the plans, and where we're at, you want to tag on into your deal?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So you can see on the sheet, I'm going to go, I know that we're getting really close on time and I want to be respectful of that. So you can see on the handout, this is a chart of that exact information. I don't want to fall back either. So we need to circle back and have compensation discussion with you all. But that's kind of the next thing on the agenda, I think, is to get your feedback. So the last thing I want to leave you with is information that actually was requested yesterday, again, this is nothing that I think we need to get into majorly today. This is information for you to have handy for future conversations. And that is, as we talked about, there are a number of exemptions that have happened in the Fire District, there are more than are expected that this only deals with the ones that we know about today. And this is the expected additional revenue. So actual tax will be not just Assessed Value, but the actual money that would come into the Fire District in each year. I'll tell you is we actually it gets a little complicated. But when we project our Assessed Value, we do claim for some of this to come back on the books. So whether this is brand new revenue to the district, at least in terms of the forecasts, I would say not necessarily but at the same time, the dollars are not going to break the bank. So either way, if you want to assume that they're rolling in or obviously this would accumulate over the years, right? They'd come \$26,000 comes in 2024. That same money will come in 2025 and every other year, so understand where this would be a rolling total. And these the exemptions that would come off and because Commissioners specifically yesterday, asked during our commission meeting about some of the bigger projects that are out there, we show money even though they're well beyond the life of the forecast, but you see, and again, this is Fire

District revenue only. So \$70,000 in additional tax revenue budget year 2035 from the Charlotte pipe entity that's coming in for the West and then \$435,000 from Integra. So that's huge when you think of the Fire District size, and then you think about the rest of the county, plus you start considering any suppliers, any home building, retail restaurants that would come in. So that is the last formal slide I have. I think the biggest takeaway for me for you today is just making sure you kind of understand the different drivers of the budget, and how unique they really are. I'm happy to answer questions at a later time if you have anything. I've got business cards, because I know you guys need some time for discussion. So any questions for me before I sit down, and you talk?

VI. Council Discussion -

Jim Benage - Oh, I would really like to see if we can grab a hold some sort of study of what is the market for firefighters as far as pay, I know you're looking at it. Okay. So Wichita doesn't do that, Right? So I don't know how that plays out between the two. But you know, would be good if we could see some of that and it would good to see what was the range the firefighters get, okay? Because I don't want to say close to 20, let's do the Evergreen 15 and find out we're still 20% lower than everybody else. And I don't want to do it if he's paying over 100% higher than everybody else, either. So, yeah, that's why I might seize on that. And I don't know if Jeremy [cannot understand the last name stated] from WSU can help with that. [The rest was indiscernible].

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – I think that we could actually probably have our intern at the office go out and pull different fires or I'm sure, I would not be at all surprised if this group maybe...[Laughter ensued so I could not hear the rest of the statement.]...should pull resources.

Chief Williams - We know that Wichita Fire's starting pay next year and they have, they are going to look at a five and a half percent (5 ½ %) increase January 1. We know that and they're starting pay right now is around \$19 an hour and then they receive EMT pay. And they receive a lot of longevity. They because when they negotiated last year in order to not look like a massive pay increase. They put a lot of side pay, I don't know what you want to call it. But they put in an EMT pay they put in...if you're on rescue team, you get paid if you're on hazmat team, you get pay, they put in longevity pay. I mean, they put in so many things that it's hard to do that comparison. But we can compare to their base salary that starts at around \$19 an hour, which ours with the 2% cola, we're projected, it's going to go up to \$18.20. And so we know that we're below them. Right now, we know that even in our skill, we know that. So Derby Fire, they're going to go to \$18.25 an hour. And our last I heard with their pay scale on January 1, and they work on a system that they get a 2% cola and up to a 4% merit increase every year. So we know that they are our two (2) primary competitors.



Jim Benage - Right.

Chief Williams - So and Hutch raised theirs above \$18 an hour and Newton's above that also. So we are not, no matter what plan we adopt, we are not going to go above our neighbors. You know, we're going to keep even with them.

Jim Benage - That's good enough.

Chief Williams - Because we do, we did a lot of research on that last year before we did the \$18 minimum. Go ahead.

Casey Ingalls – Wichita Fire also kind of did a thing where they don't overlap their positions either, like the Lieutenant's don't make the same as their firefighters and Captains don't make the same as Lieutenants. Their Lieutenants are coming in, I think at a minimum of Step 11 on their step scale. So even when you look past firefighter and compare our Lieutenants to their Lieutenant and Captain to Captain, they're significantly higher just because they chose to do that within their department and not have any overlap.

Chief Williams - That's one thing I forgot to mention. There is no overlap between firefighter and Lieutenant, their scales actually overlap. But they negotiated that there will never be overlap. So if it's the youngest firefighter possible that makes Lieutenant he's going to make more than a 30 year firefighter. So...

Carl Amerine - That's well that's a philosophical change.

Chief Williams - Yeah. Yes, they are. They negotiated that a few years ago. And it pushed the Lieutenant's up about \$20,000.

Carl Amerine - So a question for you, Chief on this, I'm focusing on this Evergreen 15 Step is if we were actually looking at people, and you have a 14 year firefighter or you have a two (2) year firefighter in this Evergreen 15 Step. Will the 14 year guy be at Step 14? And the two (2) year guy will be in Step two (2)?

Chief Williams - It doesn't mean...

Carl Amerine - Or is there still going to be some like weird thing to make sure the pay works out where you could have the 14 year guy actually Step 15, even though he's only 14 year experience? Like, what was the actual variables you were changing? Are you changing the actual pay and a step? Are you putting people? You mean, how many variables were you changing there? What I'm wondering is a couple of years now we still going to end up with these mid-career guys getting

to like step...at their 10 year mark, but they're already at Step 15. Because the way you had to place them for pay reasons, get to place them at 13. Because they're only eight (8) year guys?

Chief Williams - No, because one of the things when we compress that scale, you remember we shoved the whole bottom up. So we shoved you know, I mean, when we raised that scale, three and a half (3 ½) dollars an hour. So I mean, we shoved all we've got like an eight (8) or nine (9) year guy that's today is that like Step three (3). So when we start spreading them back out, it's going to be a long time before anybody tops out.

Carl Amerine – So in that example, though, the nine (9) year guy who's making it in Step three (3), at the end of this Evergreen 15 Step, is he going to get Step nine (9) next year?

Chief Williams – It doesn't perfectly work that way. But it spreads them out extensively.

Carl Amerine – I was just wondering, there's going to be firefighters who are still not in the appropriate step is my question? For years of service, they're still not going to be correct. At the end of this.

Chief Williams - I think that this does, I think that, we went through this with the union guys the other day, and sadly my paperwork I have with me on the pay doesn't have the steps in it. It has the amount they're going to get paid, but doesn't have the steps. But it does a really, really good job of spreading them out. And I think our topped out firefighter that we have, the highest senior firefighter, he ends up at Step 13, I believe in the 15 Step plan. Step 14? Isn't that correct Kevin?

Kevin Nelson - I think so.

Chief Williams - But I think no, Chris tops out. Because we have one firefighter that would top out.

Casey Ingalls – We are very young.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, that's what I'm wondering is that we have a very young staff? Is that what I'm hearing?

Chief Williams - We have very young firefighting staff. Yes.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Chief Williams - We have, there was a lot of turnover in our department through those years that 14, 15, 16, we had a lot of turmoil between the Union, the Chief, the County Commission, at the time, there was a lot of turmoil. You also have to remember, we got hit with something that we didn't see coming. I did not see, I didn't see coming, I was a field supervisor. But the Tier Two (2) KP&F kicked in and what that did is the old timers like me were in a system where you had to be age 55, or you had to have 32 years of service to retire. But the people, the folks that started in 1990, under Tier Two (2), went to a plan which was called 25 and 50. So if you had 25 years of service or age 50, you could leave. So that because that started in 89 and 90, about 2015 was when all of those folks started hitting that 25 and 50. And they started, there was turmoil and morale challenges at that time in our department, and they started looking into retirement saying you know what? I'm out of here. So we lost a lot. We had a lot of 25 year guys retire in that timeframe. We had a lot.

Carl Amerine - So to ask the question a different way. Really great on the background there because that does help me understand a lot of what's going on here and see is that Step 13 firefighter you gave an example of, that he'll top out and he's not topping out but he's going to be placed...

Chief Williams - He'll top out. The one will.

Carl Amerine - But only 13 if it's a 15...he'll still the next two years.

Chief Williams - No, he will top out. He will be a 15.

Carl Amerine - Oh he will be a 15 okay.

Chief Williams - But right now he's like Step 8, Step 9. Because when he got plugged back in that's...yeah.

Carl Amerine - My question is those high end firefighters? How many are do you have firefighters are currently over 15 years firefighters not like Lieutenants and Captains but actual firefighters?

Chief Williams - I would have to look and double check, but we have maybe four (4) or five (5).

Kevin Nelson - We have a few, but not a lot.

Carl Amerine - Okay.

Jim Benage - So we're going to talk a lot more about this, at our next meeting I would assume? Is that correct?

Chief Williams - Probably not because they're going to adopt this next Wednesday.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, but...

Jim Benage - Well, I guess, back to Commissioner Dennis' comment to me was that he wanted us to do a thorough review of this wage thing between now and the end of the year. He didn't think we would have next Wednesday but that is what he made comments that we'd like to see that? So I'd like to see us work on that more?

Chief Williams - Well, I think Lindsay can weigh in on it. But he's one (1) of five (5) Commissioners and I believe that there is going to be action Wednesday.

Jim Benage – I understand.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - There will certainly be action, I would say we do have, the budget is adopted August 23rd. But obviously doesn't go into effect until January 1. So there are still opportunities to make changes between now and then. If that was something that the Commission wanted, I would agree with the Chief that I think Commissioner Dennis' thought is he's probably the only one (1) who is who thinks that. My understanding from the other four (4) Commissioners is that they are looking to come to a resolution, which I don't think it hurts to have study at all, because there will always be next steps or things to improve. But I think they're looking for any feedback you might be willing to share, recognizing how little time you had to spend with any of this. And we don't have the data that that you've asked for. But if you have any feedback, we can pass along, I know they would be grateful.

Carl Amerine - I mean, just from my perspective, the example you just gave where you have a hard working firefighter spend a career at this district? And he's currently at it, what did you say? At an eight (8) or something? Something like that?

Chief Williams - Don't quote me.

Carl Amerine – But I mean, something needs, I mean, just in general something needs to be done for our first responders here, in my opinion, I don't know. It seems like the only thing that we could sit here and say for, in my opinion, what we can sit here and say for next Wednesday, before next Wednesday is just looking at these different examples. It looks like the Evergreen 15 Step plan, it dips below the goal, the ending Fund Balance goal.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It does.

Carl Amerine - And just from our short education here and also our own experience in real world. I guess it just I think that's really the only education that we can provide here this or opinion that you provide is, as users and community members that we use the Fire District what is, I mean...I guess an open discussion what are your guys' thoughts on that?

Chief Williams - Well, I think to dip into this further. We're sitting with two (2) Commissioners that are...that feel very comfortable that the growth of the District will support the 15 Step plan. We were dealing with at least one (1) Commissioner that wants to see us make some assurances that we can make some roadway curves that will guarantee that if the growth isn't there that we can afford the 15 Step plan if that's what. So, the last two days, we've been crunching numbers, and we've been coming up with methods to make sure that we can, if our District doesn't see the growth is that we believe it'll see your two (2) Commissioners believe it'll see that we can come up with the money. And so what we've done is, one of the things we did, was to see what's coming off on IRB's (Industrial Revenue Bonds). In the IRB's in 2023, this year \$26,000 comes off, next year another \$85 comes off to make \$111 available next year. The following year, we'll have \$152 available. And by 2028, we have \$606,000 coming off IRB's. That's available to us. So we believe that does do some support. The flip side, we've looked at some other issues that we can do. We talked about the debt service and because our fire trucks that we propose to get this year aren't going to get here. We have budgeted money that we can set aside to pay off some of our debt service. And if we use our funds for this year to pay off debt service in the amount of \$470,000 will reduce...we will have a savings of \$24,310,025 200, another 156,000. So we've done a lot of things that way to cover those gaps in that 15 Step plan to where we are will present this to the Manager tomorrow and to share with the one (1) Commissioner that has requested us to come up with alternative methods if the growth isn't there. So that's what we've worked on for two (2) days.

Carl Amerine - These alternative methods, you're talking about the debt service and stuff, is that not taking delivery of something as planned? Or that you're just realizing that it's not going to happen? Because of...

Chief Williams - It's not going to get here this year?

Carl Amerine - Yeah. So that's really I mean...

Chief Williams - Like I said...

Carl Amerine - We are taking, you're taking credit for that in your forecast. It's not like you're actually making a conscious, you feel like you're making a decision to defer delivery for six (6) months or something like that.

Chief Williams - No, no.

Carl Amerine - You're just changing stuff on the ledger.

Chief Williams – Yes.

Carl Amerine - And assumptions.

Chief Williams – We set aside money to make truck payments this year, for a truck we're not going to get. And so we can use that money to buy down debt payments in the future, because we've projected those trucks in the future.

Susie Sutton - We're looking at the budget for next year and you've got those debt payments in next year's. So yes, you can buy down from this year's budget, but we're still looking at trying to balance next years. Right?

Chief Williams - You want to talk to that Kevin, you're better at that than I am?

Kevin Nelson - So essentially, what she's talking about is, like we have trucks we're paying on from now through 2026. If we have existing budget authority this year, to pay it off, then that debt that we would have paid in 24, 25, and 26 is no longer there. So it elevates some of our debt burden.

Susie Sutton – So pay off one (1) this year. Okay.

Carl Amerine - And do you saved some interest payments as well.

Kevin Nelson – Absolutely.

Carl Amerine - So there's so it's a win/win regardless? Okay. I mean, that's so I guess my question is on that, because what you just said there makes perfect sense. How do you get this by Wednesday to not show red? [Laughter masked other words.] How do you do that? I guess or what is the plan to do that. Right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - So we'd have to have a conversation and basically sit down. And I think you'll see that 10 year Actual sheet. That's actually what our financial forecast looks like. We go in and forecast expenses at that level. So what we would do is go in and talk with these guys and

figure out what that looks like, sit down with the Budget Analyst and update the forecast. I think the only concern I have with this is, some of this is going to be one time. But Kevin and I were talking earlier, one of the things that I think we could look at too is as we take into account of some of these vehicles that we have planned, being received in particular and debt service not starting in that year now based on the fact that things are maybe more delayed than we expected when we last updated this, that does become recurring savings, right? Because you're moving it out into the forecast, we have a five (5) year forecast. So you've got a recurring reduction in expense. And that makes me feel a lot better. I totally appreciate buying down debt. But in terms of having recurring money to support this, which is what personnel cost is that's the kind of stuff we'll look for is where can we make sure that we're going to see a recurring offset?

Jim Benage - A curious question, is it smarter to buy down debt and dip into pretty low interest rates and take on a higher interest rate when those vehicles are actually delivered or hold the money in the bank and not taking on as much debt on the vehicle?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau -Well, so we actually so because we don't start paying on those until they're received. There's really nothing to buy down right now. We have the least purchases that we have on the books now that yes, we could pay off. But you're right, they have that very low interest rate that we've got now. We know that when we get the new vehicles three (3) or four (4) years from now, they're going to come in probably seven and a half (7 ½) at the very best or more. But right now, there's really no way to take into account those savings because we don't have we don't have real money tied to that. It's just forecast. Does that make sense?

Jim Benage – Yeah.

Susie Sutton - I think he's saying like, make a bigger down payment then, instead of...

Katy Jackman Tyndell - You can't do that because if you don't use it, you lose it. Right?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Right.

Jim Benage – Well...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - I mean, they're good ideas, but in the way we work, it's trickier.

Jim Benage - In reality, it depends on how you put in your budget, CIP type fund, you don't lose it.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Right.

Jim Benage – If it's in a regular payroll fund then you lose it.

Susie Sutton - Yeah, but they don't use CIP budgets.

Katy Jackman Tyndell – Yeah.

Jim Benage - I'm sorry.

Susie Sutton - It sounds like they don't use CIP budgets.

Chief Williams - We have a special equipment fund.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - But I think right now those are committed to other uses. I think we've already dreamed up plenty of opportunities to spend that now.

Susie Sutton - Well, I saw a couple things. I looked up real quick, a couple, just ads. It looks like Hayes is advertising and they're starting at \$21.50. So and then a place in Texas, they do ads, add \$3,000 for the paramedics. And then I saw some other things. But that kind of look like about what other places are running...a quick look. And then just...I know there's a lot of research on here. But if, like, we couldn't expand any of the budgets, I noticed there's a big jump between the 12 Step and a 15 Step...\$3,000 or...a...\$3 million. I like the idea of the 12 Steps...or rather...the 15 Steps better than the 12 Steps because it gave a bigger variety. And I understand the mathematics and the equations would fit better. But is there a way, that just so you could get over that \$5.6 million, that you could use the 15 Steps, but just make a slight adjustment? So it would go...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Like, [Susie & Lindsay talked over the top of each other so I missed the beginning of Lindsay's statement]...two and a half percent (2 ½%) instead of three (3) or something?

Susie Sutton - Yeah. So you could get from the **qualified 8**, which gets you under the goal and get you to the like 5.8.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - I was thinking along the same lines, like 13 or 14 Step.

Susie Sutton - Maybe just like you're just there. [Katy, Susie, & Lindsay talked over each other so I missed something here too.] Maybe like you said change from three (3) to two and a half percent (2 ½ %) or something.



Lindsay Poe Rousseau – I mean, I'm get my tires slashed for saying this out loud to you guys... but one of the things we had talked about is trying to go the 12 Step waiting to see what the what the Assessed Value is next year and then working to toward implementing a wider step. I know that is exceptionally unpopular. And I am a conservative finance person. So I put everything out there recurring **assault** that I know is Chief said he is supportive of the 15 Step and our HR Director is in support of the 15 Step. Several Commissioners are supportive of the 15 Step. I give numbers and...

Susie Sutton - Say you guys don't get any.

Carl Amerine - I think that's the...

Chief Williams - There is some other method. I mean, we are rearranging some things to come up with those funds. You know, we know the IRB's is are coming off to end which will actually correct it, if it works right. You know, the worst case scenario, and I'll say that was the Union President in here. The worst case scenario, if we would freeze step, if we got into a real problem at 2026, 2027, we can free steps and freezing steps for us saves about \$350,000. So I mean, if it came to worst case scenario, and I'm speaking for myself, I would rather have a good pay plan put in place to keep retention and keep pay raises. And then if we have to correct it, then we do that later. But if we wait now and implement later then they're behind the rest of their career. I would rather implement now and then stop for one (1) year versus you know, delaying and pushing problems down the road and delaying people their whole career. So...

Jim Benage - Thanks, do a little bit of my perspective on this. I'm always a fan of making sure that your employees are paid well, paid a hazard wage. When you lose a person, it's more than just their salary. There's a whole training, even if they come in trained certified, they're still knowing the ropes of your organization, which is different than where they came from. I'm a big fan of that. Unfortunately, from my perspective, I don't have enough information here to know the program is a good choice or not. I think you guys have been dealing with the company a lot, you know, a lot better. So I'm, I'm actually unfortunately I have to say, I just not able to say, yeah I think 15 is right or 12 is right, I just don't know, I'm not in a position to know that tonight. And if we had time to go through more study and workshop with this, then I would be better...but that is my perspective. I mean, we've done this with our own police department, we've had to go back and reevaluate the pay. I mean, we were 50% surplus on the whole police department a couple of years ago, we are 100% now. We fixed all that. And so I'm just telling you, that's my perspective. That's what we want to make sure that our people are well taken care of. But we need to know what those because competitive numbers are. Because it was like it or not, wages are a competitive market, just like it's a commodity, just like gasoline, and oil, and cars, and

everything else. So there's, there's a competitiveness. We got to be sure that we know what that is.

Chief Williams - Yeah, I agree. And we actually told the Commissioners that, Commissioner Dennis in particular, we did tell him last week that it was very unfair to dump this on your committee with the limited and I mean, we told him, but we were told to do that. You know, a couple of things that you brought up some good points. It costs us when we hire, we put our new recruits through a 12 week academy. And by the time we get them hired, by the time we pay for their physicals, by the time we buy them firefighter protective clothing, by the time we buy them uniforms, and we put them to a 12 week academy, it costs us almost \$30,000 a person before they ever worked a shift. I mean, we've got an academy going on right now we're at Station #37. And it will cost us \$30,000 to \$35,000, probably before they ever work a shift, and it'll take three (3) months. And so retention is a huge, huge deal for us. And that's why we take pay very seriously. And the problem we get into is I didn't realize it, you know, the Hutch Fire Chief told me last year, everybody was affected by what happened with Wichita. When they push their pay scale up 30 to 35%, over two (2) to three (3) years, and they're willing to let your people buy into the retirement up to five (5) years. I mean, it was a problem for Derby, it was a problem for Newton, it was a problem for us, and it was a problem for Hutch. You know, the Hutch Chief told me that there's about 30 Hutch firefighters that live within Sedgwick County. So you know, we are all hiring from the same pool. And you know, it is a problem. And so retention is a massively big deal and pay is a huge deal for us. So everything is very accurate.

Jim Benage – We used to have a joke at one of the machine shops I worked at years ago that we were the training facility for Boeing employees...don't need to be there.

Chief Williams - So I completely understand if I think to dump this into your lap is kind of unfair.

Katy Jackman Tyndell – We would feel that way, eventually anyway. Right. I think the unfairness comes with the timing of it all. But I would say I mean, timing is everything, though, to your point about retention. And people aren't, as you know, expendable as some would think that they are. And so I think that even if we can't, as an advisory council, say, oh yeah, this Evergreen 15 Steps is what we all think is the best way because we simply cannot, Right? We don't have we haven't had enough time to analyze everything. Is there something we can do before Wednesday? Or an action that we can take that would be supportive of increasing? I mean, of the 15? I mean, not the 15 Step but of saying, look, it's important that we would that we increase pay, it's important that we figure this out. I don't know. I just I want to be supportive. And I feel like it's not just because of the timing. That's nobody's fault. Right? That is what it is. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be able to do something to try and help with this situation.

Carl Amerine - To add what you were saying, there's the recommended budget. I think it was Chief Nelson, I think you talked about that last week, maybe you did Chief Williams, but one of you talked about the budget, it's been out there online for about six (6) weeks...?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau - Five (5) weeks.

Carl Amerine – Five (5) weeks...And that's the one that includes the additional mechanic, the training officer position, that kind of stuff. So I think in general, other than pay, I think there's enough information that we can say that from a recommended budget perspective other than pay, we think you guys are on the right track. And I concur with staff's recommendation, basically. But when it comes to pay, to that, it's hard to...there's definitely no way this base recommended budget, which you already acknowledged, that's kind of a no fly. That's no go. So anyways, I guess, to add to that, separating that to just say my own personal opinions on this is...I like what Commissioner Howell tried to do with the 50% plan, but it doesn't really seem that it doesn't...it seems like if you say here's a perfect plan, and just cut it in half, that doesn't seem very elegant. And elegant meaning, not like it needs to be pretty complicated. But it just seems like that's you're asking yourself to reopen the same conversation over and over and over and over. When you're making decisions by saying let's take what it should be and cut it in half. You're, if you're going to... So that's what I would say the plan one (1), and plan two (2), and plan five (5) are basically, from my own personal opinions, just from what we've heard today, I couldn't support those and three (3), four (4) just don't have enough information. And specifically four (4) which is what everyone's kind of leaning towards, I don't really have enough information to say, I can recommend this. I can't, I can say no, I feel like I do not recommend it. I just don't have enough information. So...

Jeff Witherspoon - I'm not asking a question. We haven't heard from the folks that it's effecting the most. And do you guys have any... Have you been shared this information? I'm just really curious, because you guys are the ones that are going to have to...you got families are going to say, Hey, I'm going to make more money over here. And he's got to spend \$30,000, to train your replacement. Plus, we lose all of your experience. And now we have people with less experience going on fire calls. That's what I want to hear.

Casey Ingalls – So, one thing that we've tried to be on board with our Admin with and we've talked to all of our people, we, you know, we've been going through this for several years now, we went through a long time where we were losing people. I've had to talk to multiple people out of leaving this department to stay, and basically in hopes that we would get to this point today where we fix their pay. So we also want to be good stewards of the money and the Fire District and we don't want to bankrupt the Fire District. So obviously, what would benefit everybody the most is the perfect world. I know, we know, that's not...that's not feasible, we can't do that. The

15 Step plan would come to, you know, kind of a...I don't want to say conclusion, but a 15 Step plan is the plan that gets people that we think is fair to where they would be able to stay or we wouldn't lose them. That's we've talked with Admin enough and we think we have our trust in them to be able to make it work within the budget.

Carl Amerine - When you say stay, you're not talking like a temporary stay. You're talking like stay for careers?

Casey Ingalls – Stay for a career, which is important. That's important for that we, for continuity for its...there's many reasons. We can't just keep having turnover and training new guys and new guys, we have no continuity, and then that affects the service to you all. We have constant new people coming in that don't have that experience. So honestly, right now, we don't have the hiring pool available of the quality candidates. And it's not just us. It's you know, it's everywhere. Everybody's having a hard time hiring. And we're no exception. So to keep our people is the highest priority right now and to do that, I really think the 15 Step plan is the one that gets us there.

Carl Amerine - So Captain to say that another way, what happened last year, got you guys to stay temporarily.

Casey Ingalls - That was temporary that was worried about when that happened, we knew we were going to have to go through this process that we're going through today we knew that. But that was a band-aid. There was just a band-aid to keep people from leaving immediately. To be completely honest with you, if we wouldn't have done that. I fully believe we would have closed half of our stations. I think we would have lost that many people. So...

Jim Benage - Is your 15 Step plan a better band-aid but still a band-aid?

Casey Ingalls - No. I don't feel it's a band-aid.

Jim Benage - Because see, that's what I don't know.

Casey Ingalls - Yeah, it's I mean, it's not a complete fix. But like I said, if we're trying to be good stewards of the money, and we're trying to be fiscally responsible it is the fix that gets us far enough to where we should be that I believe that come to a compromise with all of our people that that it's fair.

Carl Amerine - And speaking of the Commissioner, Mayor (Benage) that you were talking about, I've heard him say a couple of times in meetings that decisions were made that were rushed, and

there wasn't enough coordination, all that kind of stuff. From your perspective, with your membership, where people are being placed in this 15 Step plan, has there been enough open communication/transparency, that you feel like what you just said, is not a band-aid, it's a fix. That you're not going to, you're saying that in good faith, that there was enough information to say that there's not going to be a shell game, you're not worried about a shell game. We're like, oh-oh, something happened. It's not what we intended or something.

Casey Ingalls - I'm not worried about that.

Captain Greg Peters - He has been transparent the whole time. He sends out stuff throughout the whole department, even the ones, even the members out there that are not a part of the Union. They know everything that he has put out there on these plans. Because I've got a couple, well, I've got a firefighter and she's got 13 years on. And she's stuck in that pay plan where people got booted up \$18 an hour, she's been on for 13 years. She's only made...I had a kid at my station that was making the same, almost the same amount of money as she was, he had two (2) years on and she had 13. So it left a huge bad taste in her mouth. But she's very aware of what's happening with this and likes these plans or likes the plans that he has put out.

Casey Ingalls - The good thing with the Evergreen 15 plan is it's consistent across the board with everybody because a formula that was used wasn't...just put a person over here, put this person here, there's actual formula that was consistent from the bottom versus the top. So I feel like it's going to be the one that does the best for everybody.

Jeff Witherspoon - Maybe we should make a recommendation.

Chief Williams - I think to the touch on that conversation, I think the conversation that I'm looking at her pay, her current pay is \$59,000 a year. And the new firefighter is going to be...a new firefighter is going to come in at \$53,000. So, I mean, she's been here 13 years. And that's the difference.

Captain Peters - And she's a paramedic.

Carl Amerine - And that's the...the number you gave is the 15 year plan?

Chief Williams - No, no, no, no, that's what she's making today.

Carl Amerine - Okay, gotcha.

Chief Williams - She will go to, she would go up to 65, seven.

Carl Amerine - And nothing would happen to the lower because the new firefighter still stays at \$18 or whatever.

Chief Williams – The brand new one would.

Carl Amerine - So. Okay. Thank you very...

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Well, I was just going to ask what this would be to you what a qualified endorsement of a 15 Step Evergreen plan, meaning from what the council has heard so far. We know something has to be done, right? Status quo was not an option. We're going to start losing people, anybody that's had employees before and knows that if you don't pay your people fairly, you're, it's you're going to end up costing you in the end. Right? And we're in that situation right now. So could we say, you know, from what we've heard so far, the Advisory Council supports this plan; however, in a perfect world, we have I mean, some sort of a qualified endorsement.

Jim Benage - That's exactly what I thinking, I'll just make this **MOTION**. I think we should propose that the Fire Board adopt the 15 year plan with the provision that they understand. We really don't have enough information to make a good decision based upon what we've heard from the Captain here and the Chief, from our Chief Financial Officer, I couldn't see her title. Upon that information, I think that's it. But I think that this thing still needs to be revisited. I don't think it is right that a qualified EMS or EMT gets the same pay as a regular firefighter and it just doesn't sound right. I know how hard it is. I know some EMT's and it's hard for them to get in that position, that's not something they just walk in to do.

Chief Williams - You know, I think that it would be very beneficial to weigh in on a 15 Step plan. And then if you want to touch on the advanced provider pay like the paramedic pay, I think that you can also make a motion that we re-address and look very, that you recommend we look at that as a future.

Jim Benage - That's what I'm saying.

Carl Amerine - And if you're open to **MODIFYING** your **MOTION** to be that, that the council, I forget the word that you used, endorses or supports the recommended budget with the changes to the pay to align with Evergreen 15 Step Plan. If you're open to that type of modifications or motion.

Jim Benage – Yeah that's fine.

Jeff Witherspoon – I'll **SECOND**.

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Just to be clear, so are we supporting it outright? Are we going to have any qualification that says, you know, we support it, knowing that this is the, you know, we've heard from you all, but this is the only time we've had to sort of mull it over. I don't know what that looks like.

Jim Benage – We can do a parallel motion right after that one. [Conversation was muffled.]

Katy Jackman Tyndell - Well, I guess my only thought there is the Commission is going to know we didn't have a whole lot of time to review the tables, right? So if it's just a wholehearted endorsement, they're going to be like, well wait a minute, you know, how could they had an effect?

So I think it...

Susie Sutton – It doesn't affect the Motion so far or whatever this is...

Katy Jackman Tyndell – You mean before this?

Susie Sutton - I mean it affects how we made the decision, but it doesn't affect what our proposal is.

Carl Amerine - I think, to your point, though, to add a qualification to it is based on the recommendation of the staff and the Union feedback. Yeah, I think we can support this. Yeah. Because I have to say, knowing that, I have to say, I have to commend this whole group here on the transparency, because the company I work for, there's not transparency of what we're getting paid. I can commend you guys that that you have been so open. So that...

Chief Williams - One thing that I want to talk about, I just thought about it a minute ago, when he, when Casey was talking. When we worked on this plan, with Finance and HR and the Manager's Office, the comment was made, do our firefighters, Lieutenants, Captains support this plan? Is this something that they support? You know, so we took the plan, and we put it on the screen in our boardroom and took the names out, then let the three (3) Union guys that are here today, went through the whole plan. They saw every pay from the starting pay to the Chief pay was put up there with the names taken out. Now they have their own copy of everybody's current pay in order so they can scroll through. And we took the names out, but they simply put them back in a nutshell, so they saw the entire plan. And that was what our challenge was from our meeting was if they sign off and say, look, this is you know, the fix to this problem. But the best we can do. So I think they've agreed that it was.

Carl Amerine – So we're cutting, we had a *motion* and a *second*. So I guess we're having our discussion right now. I guess what I would say is to answer your concerns if we modified the motion and say that this council I guess I think the words are used with recommends the recommended budget based off of the recommendation of the professional staff and the feedback from the Union. With the pay tables is that what we are saying. Does that work? We're basing our work. Basically we are concurring with their recommendation, essentially what we're doing. I'm not sure how you want to phrase that as a motion or modify your motion. But I think that would address...I think that would address your concern that have a qualification to it is that this body is basically concurring with the professional staff and they...

Jim Benage – I **MOVE** that we ~~adopt, accept~~, Recommend to the Fire Board that they adopt the budget as presented with the proviso of adopting the Evergreen 15 Step Pay Plan based upon the recommendations of the Staff and the Union members who are here tonight. With the understanding that we do not think that we have adequate information to make a full endorsement of this. We will need more information that we ~~will need to~~ intend to study this further. Or maybe additional enhancements in the future. Did I speak too fast for you? Oh, you have recording? Okay. Certainly.

Katy Jackman Tyndell – And Sir instead of “we need to”, I might change it to “we intend to”...

Jim Benage – Okay then change that to “intend to” instead of “need to.”

Carl Amerine – Do you still second sir?

Jeff Witherspoon – I'll **SECOND**.

Carl Amerine - So any other discussions or call the vote? Any your discussion? Okay. All in favor of the motion? Say AYE.

AYE – **ALL**

Carl Amerine – Any not in favor say NAY.

NAY – **NONE**

Carl Amerine - Okay. Motion carries.

Chief Williams - Did you want to weigh in on the Advanced Provider Paramedics?



Lindsay Poe Rousseau – No, he had that in there that they intend to study that enhanced pay?

Chief Williams – Okay. I must have missed that I was mesmerized?

Carl Amerine - Yeah, I guess final comment, because we're still in the discussion phase on the agenda is, I think you already know this, but I think it would help on Wednesday, if these reds go away by whatever County that you get to do. [Laughter made this very difficult to hear so I left what I could hear.] Whatever, whatever. I know, whatever. Color I can't tell you what to do.

Carl Amerine - Based on Chief Nelson, what he was saying, what you were saying? It seems like you guys have something to do to in order to...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – We're going to try. Yeah, a little red is not a bad thing.

Carl Amerine - A little bad. But that's a lot...

Chief Williams - But that's one of the things I wanted to weigh in on this earlier. And now let's say is one of the things in the fire department that I always said, and we are facing it today is the people that really the firefighters that really make a difference are your five (5) year to your 20 year people. I mean, you don't want the ones in here with white shirts on is not who you want showing up if you're in a car wreck, and you need help. You want it but you don't want the rookie either. So you know, as the problem you get into when we keep if we continue to lose our young, you know, our youth and the bottom keeps rolling the 10 year, 15 year people get older then you end up with this huge gap between one (1) to three (3) years and the 25 to 30 years and the gap ends up being in the area where your strength in your department is. And because we want to strength we want those 10 year, 15, and 20 year firefighters, Lieutenants, Captains, we don't want the 30 year Captain or the rookie.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, I was just going to say, I was looking at the time, but if you had something...

Katy Jackman Tyndell - My only other question is would it be helpful for any of us to be present at the meeting on Wednesday?

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – You will be taking on a new level of hell [laughter erupted so it masked any other conversation]. I would encourage you to maybe watch.

Carl Amerine - Yes.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – Keep an eye on it. I think it's going to be a brutal meeting.

Carl Amerine - Yeah, and if they're if they hold their what they've been doing lately, they've been holding their open comments for the Fire District talk to actually go the normal rate.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – We have a go through with adopting a County budget around this going to come from so you have sit through all of that, then come to Fire. And I'm telling you that Commission meeting is going to be something.

Carl Amerine - So the question would be if staff could type up a letter, I'm happy if you sent it to me, I'm happy Chief Nelson, I'm happy to sign it for...based on unless we need to, I'm looking at the Counselor, we make a motion that authorize me to sign a letter or not. But I'm happy to sign a letter. If someone drafts it, I'm really excited to do it. But if you want it when someone wants someone to staff will draft it and the Counselor tells me I can sign it.

Kevin Stamper - We can do that.

Carl Amerine - Okay. Then that I think we had a letter for you all that you would present and read it in...

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – It's a public hearing. I think we ought to and so the Chief or someone, Kevin, I'll volunteer you. You can read that letter to the record during the public hearing comment.

Kevin Stamper - I did not have to go to that meeting. [Laughter erupted.]

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – You're welcome.

Carl Amerine - The next thing we're going to do before we closed out was just looking at the next, the next meeting. If these this timeslot on the third Thursday still works, that would be the 21st of September time. Okay, so the 21st of September. And I think if anyone has any suggestions for agenda or whatever, they can email me into the, Counselor they can, someone can email me individually for something.

Kevin Stamper – It might be better to go ahead and send it to Kevin.

Carl Amerine - Okay. So don't send it to me. Send it to Chief Nelson if you have something you want for the agenda. We'll plan on the 21st of September at 6pm. Again, in this building, agenda

to be determined and Chief Nelson will send it out. Is there any other business that needs to come before our council or we'll go to adjournment?

Chief Nelson - We see you guys just for a couple of hours once a month. But if and I know you're busy, you have a million things going on. But if you want to, or have time to sit down with us, individually or in small groups, so we don't break KOMA rules. We would love the opportunity to be able to share more in depth, how we actually operate and answer a lot more of your questions that we can't get to in a two (2) hour period. Literally reach out to come in.

Chief Williams - Thank you for your patience tonight.

Carl Amerine - I think for just someone being new to the side of the government, you know, assisting the government this way, just seeing how you guys have communicated and been a team as a district. I think that's the least lifts my spirits.

Lindsay Poe Rousseau – They are a great group.

## VII. Meeting Adjournment

Jim Benage – MOTION to adjourn.

Carl Amerine - Okay, so you said motion to adjourn. Is there a second?

Carl – I SECOND.

All in Favor say AYE –  
AYE – ALL

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Meeting adjourned at 2100