



Sedona Fire District

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
Telephone (928) 282-6800 FAX (928) 282-6857

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Tuesday, December 13, 2022 / 4:30 PM

~ MINUTES ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to notice, a regular meeting of the Sedona Fire District (SFD) was called to order by Chairman Dave Soto at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, December 13, 2022. Executive Assistant, Kim Smathers recorded the minutes. A quorum was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

Board Present: Dave Soto – Chairman; Gene McCarthy – Clerk (telephonically on Zoom); Scott Springett, Helen McNeal, Janet Jablow – Members, and outgoing Board member Al Comello.
Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson; Gabe Buldra, JVG; Lydia Hunter, BeachFleischman (telephonically on Zoom); Acting Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell; and Executive Assistant Kim Smathers – Recorder.

A. Salute to the Flag of the United States of America and Moment of Silence to Honor all American Men and Women in Service to Our Country, Firefighters, and Police Officers.

Chairman Dave Soto led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chief Ed Mezulis requested a Moment of Silence for the 7 Police Officers and 5 firefighters who passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

II. SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

At this time, Fire Chief Ed Mezulis administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Board members, Eugene McCarthy, Helen McNeal, and Scott Springett. There was a brief pause for Red Rock News to take photos of the Fire Chief with the new Board members. Unfortunately, Board member McCarthy was ill and attended by Zoom.

Chairman Dave Soto presented outgoing Board member Al Comello with a plaque for his years of service on the Fire Board. Fire Chief Ed Mezulis presented Mr. Comello with an SFD recognition brick with his years of service to the Fire Board and explained that another brick will be placed in the flagpole area at Station 1 to recognize his service to the Fire Board. Mr. Comello stated that he was honored to have served on the Fire Board and that he would treasure the time and the knowledge he acquired during his tenure. Photos were taken and the meeting resumed.

III. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS/STAFF RECOGNITION

A. Acknowledgment of Years of Service: Captain Ralph Kurtz and Engineer Brian Espiau were awarded 25 years of service pins. Neither SFD staff member was in attendance, but Chief Mezulis gave some background information on each of them and thanked them for their dedicated service to SFD. Chairman Dave Soto thanked the employees for their service and congratulated them on their long success at SFD, saying that he looks forward to seeing what they will accomplish in the short time remaining in their SFD careers.

IV. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum:

Speakers are limited to three-minute oral presentations but may submit written comments of any length for Board files. Board Members may not discuss items not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to ARS 38-431.01(H), Board action taken as a result of public comment is limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism, or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date.

1. Public Comments

2. Executive Staff Response to Public Comments

There were no requests to speak.

B. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Actions:

All matters under the Consent Agenda are considered by the Board to be routine (i.e., Minutes and/or signatory authority for bank accounts) and will be enacted by a single motion approving the Consent Agenda. If discussion is desired on any particular consent item, a Board Member may ask that item be removed from the Consent Agenda to be considered separately.

1. November 15, 2022, Board Minutes

Board Chair Soto made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Board Member Jablow seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

C. **Financial Report and Updates – Gabe Buldra, Finance Director and Lydia Hunter, BeachFleischman**

1. **Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of June 30, 2022, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (AFCR)**

Lydia Hunter, BeachFleischman, provided an overview of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for 2022, stating that SFD was given an unmodified, or clean, opinion which is the “best” opinion that can be awarded.

Ms. Hunter stated that new accounting standards were implemented and are reflected in the audit reporting and will change SFD financial standings going forward. SFD had no sensitive disclosures and no significant, in fact NO, disagreements with management, as well as no uncorrected adjustments. SFD had an overall increase in assets and the total equity is positive and trending in the right direction. There was an increase in the net position for 2022 and the cash-on-hand position of SFD was increased during 2022.

Ms. Hunter thanked the Fire Board for their oversight and involvement with the process, stating that their positions are very important to the functioning of SFD and stated that the GFOA certification had not yet been received. She was asking the Board to approve the audit and stated that the final report will not be issued until the GFOA is received.

Chairman Soto thanked JVG, BeachFleischman, and SFD administrative staff for their work on the audit procedure and stated that he approves of the draft form with corrections as noted to Ms. Hunter on 12/12/22 regarding the Board Member information included in the draft report.

Chairman Soto made a motion to approve the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for 2022 with the stated corrections to the Board Member information, Board Member Jablow seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

2. **Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of November 2022 Finance Report.**

Gabe Buldra of JVG Associates provided the November 2022 Financial Report stating that \$2.7 million in property tax revenue had been recorded for the first quarter of FY23. This amount was down approximately \$33 thousand from what was anticipated.

There was a decrease in ambulance revenue, as well, but SFD is under budget in all categories across the board, mainly the Workers Compensation bill has not yet been received at the time of

reporting. Mr. Buldra stated that JVG will continue to monitor the lagging tax revenue and stated that Wildland billing is driving the overages for the budget revenues.

There were some large vehicle maintenance and EMS supply purchases, but other liabilities have decreased.

Chairman Soto asked that as Mr. Buldra is reporting throughout the year, he highlights where the new accounting standards are affecting SFD's budget so the Board can see the adjustments mentioned by Ms. Hunter. Mr. Buldra replied in the affirmative that he certainly would gear his report as mentioned.

Chairman Soto made a motion to approve the November 2022 Finance Report, Helen McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Staff Items:

1. November 2022 Monthly Fire Chief Report

a. Administration Updates – Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson

News and Events – Toys for Tots Everest Climb led by Firefighter Mark Feeney exceeding SFD goal of 968 trips up the Station 3 Tower, with 1088 trips made by SFD personnel. Donations are still being accepted until December 15.

ASHER Incident Training was held December 9-11 and SFD is receiving excellent feedback from community members.

Bike Rodeo – 65 bikes were assembled and distributed; obstacle course set up for participation and Light Duty personnel were able to man and assist.

Annual Awards nominations are due for 2022 Award committee to review and vote.

Staffing Updates – No viable candidates were determined from interviews. Defer to Chief Mezulis for next steps, course of action

Upcoming – AFDA Winter Conference in Laughlin, Nevada, January 11-13, 2023. Statutory training for Board members, or the training can be done online. Please let Director Robinson or Kim Smathers know if/which you would prefer to attend.

Board Workshop for all Board Members orientation/acclimation to SFD is being planned, possibly for February. Please submit dates of availability to Director Robinson.

Mental Health Moment: Universal Human Rights Month celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and their efforts supporting worldwide human rights.

Chairman Soto asked for insight as to the IT position process. Chief Mezulis stated that it is like “looking for a rubber duck in the Pacific Ocean.” Chief Coil has been heavily involved in the interview processes and the applicants are not meeting the advertised requirements. Chief Mezulis advised that Cottonwood is advertising a comparable position and not having a lot of luck filling, either. Chairman Soto advised that this should be addressed in the Board one-on-ones with the Fire Chief.

Board Member McNeal asked that she be given the dates of the AFDA conference in the summer and was advised that they are not set yet, but it is usually around the 2nd week of July. She also asked if she could attend the orientation for the new Board members and it was stated that all Board members will be invited to attend. Chairman Soto stated that it is an all-day event with guest speakers and staff, usually in February and that he is also looking forward to attending again. Director Robinson stated that there will be a survey sent out to Board members and decisions will be made as to who is presenting what material.

b. Operations Activities – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis

Chief Mezulis briefed for Chief Coil who is on vacation leave at this time. The Fire Chief mentioned a couple of structure fires that have happened in the last month but deferred the details to the Acting Fire Marshal to brief. Chief Mezulis stated that fire crews did an outstanding job of keeping the fires at the point of origin, as SFD is becoming known for doing, with less-than-ideal conditions, and that it has generated conversations between the Fire Chief and the Homeowner groups, which he appreciates.

Wildland activities include Todd Miranda and Chief Mezulis discussing Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Grant funding with the Verde Valley Fire Chiefs in a cooperative effort for a regional approach with targeting hazard identification and fuels mitigations strategies including outreach and coordination with the Yavapai Firewise program. Captain Todd Miranda is co-chairing the Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council (PFAC) working aggressively to increase PFAC reach, set up a drill for April and looking at strengths and weaknesses from Flagstaff fire this past summer.

Captain Miranda and Firefighter Shawn Foster attended the National Rapid Extrication Module (REMS) Standardization Taskforce. Both will attend the National Meeting in Boise, ID to discuss REMS, medical section development, new Medical Unit Leader (MEDL) curriculum and EMS standard equipment, contracts and education.

Firefighter Foster also just returned from S520, Advanced Incident Management, serving as a cadre on a teaching team, which is a very high honor for this program. This program is classroom training for National Type 1 team command and general staff with Foster being a national level expert in Logistics.

GIS has Matthew Spinelli jumping right in and that a lot of stuff is happening and getting things done. Spinelli has been familiarizing himself with the software SFD uses and making things work. There is a lot going on and Spinelli has jumped in with both feet and has great ideas on how to use the software differently and/or more effectively for SFD.

Telecom – Bob continues to put out spot fires on existing equipment and patching it along. SFD met with Motorola to secure bidding for a system build out, but that meeting has been delayed until 12/14/22 due to weather and other conditions. Chief Mezulis stated that by the January board meeting, there should be a plan/proposal with workable numbers for the continuing to upgrade the existing system.

c. Community Risk Reduction Activities – Acting Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell

Acting Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell reviewed inspection, plan review and consultation numbers for the month of November, stating that CRR has been very busy the last month. There have been 2 significant fires and investigations continue. The structure fire is challenging to determine the cause of the fire due to lack of access into the structure. Battalion Chief Cochrane was able to assist by flying the SFD drone into the building and providing pictures of areas that cannot be accessed. There were challenges with the fire of low water volume coming from the hydrants and Engineer Cooper Carr was amazing at running water lines during that time. Riddell reported that for 2 days after the fire, crews were on-scene putting out spot fires and assisting with the investigation where possible.

The second fire was at Bear Wallow and was contained to the 5th wheel that is originated in. The RV owner was awakened at 3:00 a.m. and saw smoke behind the refrigerator. When the owner looked outside, the unit was already on fire. The occupants were able to exit the RV sparing their lives, and crews did a great job, saving the RV next door from catching fire. There was damage to other vehicles and nearby RV units, but the fire was contained to the one RV.

Fire Marshal Riddell thanked Lars Romig, who is on light duty, for learning quickly to assist with investigations to free up the Marshall's time for other investigations and duties.

Last month, Riddell spoke about carbon monoxide detectors, so this month he addressed smoke detectors, especially in RVs. Most RVs are not equipped with smoke detectors. There are now detectors good for 10 years, so the battery does not need to be replaced for the life of the detector. Chairman Soto asked if CRR was reaching out to other Verde Valley arson and fire investigators to share and learn so that the local area is getting better as a whole? Fire Marshal Riddell assured the Chairman that information is shared at monthly fire marshal meetings and that other investigators have been assisting. He believes that the insurance investigators will piece together the structure fire during demolition and be able to find the source of origin where he is not able to access due to the instability of the structure.

Board member McNeal asked where to buy the 10-year batteries for smoke detectors and the Fire Marshal replied that they are part of a unit and must be purchased as new smoke detectors, not sold separately for existing smoke detectors.

d. Operational Support – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis

Fire Chief Mezulis again expressed his appreciation to Pat Ojeda, filling in this position while on light duty, handling inventory and EMS activities. He is focusing on automating the inventory system, receiving training on the software side of the inventory issues, and is currently managing opportunities to meet and engage with NAH.

Mechanic Mike Sheehan continues to do a great job with the fleet, dealing with some major repairs and parts that arrived broken, dealing with finding replacements and getting them installed and units back in service.

Training is ongoing to prepare staff for both Battalion Chief and Engineer assessment centers, as well as continuing to train new hires. January will see training ramping up in TRT and wildland areas.

e. Fire Chief Activities – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis

Call Volume and Response Review

a. Incident Summary and Year-to-Date Comparison – calls remain steady and as expected with the winter dip in call volume.

Station 4 Update: Chief Mezulis engaged with Wilmeng Construction regarding the 2 recommended options. Chief Mezulis continues to work with the City of Sedona regarding vacant properties and the City of Sedona has identified properties that might be available. Chief Mezulis has a meeting with the property owner on 12/14/22 to determine if there is a workable solution to the adjacent land situation.

Infrastructure Update – No new towers for Uptown Sedona going in. We will continue to upgrade what exists.

PulsePoint Update: Arizona State University funded a grant to provide PulsePoint and the system was revamped to include narcotics overdose situations. The Cottonwood Communications center has the software and there should be a January roll-out for updating and use.

Backcountry Response times: As the Board is meeting with the Fire Chief to ensure what he is reporting is what the Board wants to see, Chief Mezulis prepared a backcountry response time report which he feels would be beneficial to report quarterly alternating with the Strategic Plan updates. Chief Mezulis said as he looked at this data, other questions opened up for him as to what changed, was new equipment being used, etc. He discussed how Station 5 reduced their times significantly in a year and feels that adding the 3rd person on duty at Station 5 was highly beneficial and speaks to the faster responses.

Chairman Soto stated that on-scene time is still just time on-scene, and he feels that the Board, and the general public, would like to know response times from the time the call came into the station to the out-the-door time. He would like that to be reported monthly, not quarterly, and then determine the “why’s.” Board member McNeal stated that she was pleased to see this report and agreed that it should be reported monthly.

Correspondence/Thank You Letters to SFD

All stations continue to receive gifts from Oak Creek Knolls containing snacks, in thanks of SFD response to fire in their neighborhood.

Thank you card from Carl Saban, rescue from Airport Loop Trail

Monthly Thank You from Robert and Joanie Neri

Public Outreach and Communication

At this time, Chairman Soto stated that the new website is up and online and the link to the Firewise program was a link to the National Firewise program link, and he would like a link developed to a more personal-to-SFD site. He would like the discussion to be included in the one-on-one meetings with the Fire Chief.

- E. Discussion/Possible Action: Resolution 2022-05 and 2022-06, Modifying Bank Account Signers:** Resolutions to add new Board member Scott Springett and to remove leaving Board member Al Comello from SFD bank accounts at Chase Bank and Yavapai County. Chairman Soto read the resolutions in entirety.

Chairman Soto made the motion to approve the resolutions as read, Board member Helen McNeal seconded the motions, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

- F. Discussion/Possible Action: Nomination and selection of Sedona Fire District Fire Board positions of Chairman and Clerk of the Board:** Chairman Soto nominated Helen McNeal for Board Clerk and Board member Janet Jablow seconded. Soto asked if McNeal would accept the position and she replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Soto motioned to nominate and approve Helen McNeal as the Board Clerk, Board member Jablow seconded, there was no further discussion, and the motion passes unanimously replacing Eugene McCarthy as Board Clerk and approving Helen McNeal as the Board Clerk for 2023.

Nominations for the Board Chairman position are opened with Board member Jablow nominating Dave Soto to the Board Chair position. Board Clerk McNeal seconds. Chairman Soto states that he will accept the nomination.

Chairman Soto moved to approve himself as the Board Chairman for 2023, and Board Clerk McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion, and the motion was unanimously passed; approving and appointing Dave Soto as Chairman of the Sedona Fire Board for 2023.

- G. Discussion/Possible Action: Approval of 2023 Board Meeting Dates:** Chairman Soto reviews the dates proposed and clarifies holiday meeting dates.

Chairman Soto moved to approve 2023 Board Meeting Dates as proposed, and Board member Jablow seconded the motion, there was no further discussion, and the motion is unanimously approved.

- H. Discussion/Possible Action: Strategic Plan Quarterly Presentation Dates:** Chairman Soto asks Chief Mezulis to address presentation dates for Quarterly Strategic Plan updates. Chief Mezulis suggests a motion be made to approve the presentation dates for January 17, April 18, July 18, and October 17, 2023, Board meetings.

Chairman Soto moved to approve proposed Strategic Plan Quarterly presentation dates to January 18, April 17, July 18, and October 17, 2023, board meetings, and Board Clerk McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

I. Board Member Items:

1. Discussion:

Helen McNeal: Board Clerk McNeal states that she is probably the only member of Sedona who has had the privilege of being drug across a cafeteria floor by the Fire Marshal. She was a “victim” in the ASHER training on December 11 when this occurred. She congratulated the team who put the training together, not just the ICSafe team, but everyone who assisted with SFD planning and implementation.

McNeal stated that she had received a magnet from GIS Specialist Spinelli and feels that they

should be sold to the community to support SFD.

Janet Jablow: Board member Jablow reported that she has been out with the flu and has missed several events, including the ASHER training, but that she is on the mend and back now.

Gene McCarthy: Board member McCarthy reported that he has not been feeling well but wanted to congratulate Al Comello, Scott Springett and the new Board Clerk on their positions. He wished everyone a very Merry Christmas.

Scott Springett: Board member Springett reported that he has been getting his feet wet, had a one-on-one with the Fire Chief and is very interested in exploring the boundaries of the Fire District. He had a tour of Station 1 and has been asked a lot of questions by the community, in reference to his new position. He reported that his onboarding, thus far, has been smooth and that he has received his business cards and Budget binder and is looking forward to the Board workshop.

Chairman Dave Soto: Chairman Soto stated that he has been very busy with the Prescott chapter of Firewise and working on bringing it into Sedona. He thanked the staff and wished everyone Happy Holidays, but that with the impending weather coming, he wanted to end the meeting so everyone could travel home safely.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Soto adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

//Signed by Helen McNeal, 1.17.23//

Helen McNeal, Clerk of the Board

SFD Multipurpose Room is accessible to the handicapped. In compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, those with special needs, such as large print or other reasonable accommodations, may request them by calling 928-282-6800.

Posted by:

Date:

Time: