



Sedona Fire District

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
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SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

**Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Tuesday, February 21, 2023 / 9:00 AM**

~ Minutes ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to notice, a special meeting of the Sedona Fire District (SFD) was called to order by Chairman Dave Soto at 9:11 AM on Tuesday, February 21, 2023. 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; Helen McNeal – Clerk; Gene McCarthy, Janet Jablow, Scott Springett – Members

Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis, Assistant Chief Jayson Coil (by Zoom); Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson; Director of Finance, Gabe Buldra; Attorney William Whittington; IT Manager Bob Motz; Fire Marshal Dori Booth; GIS Specialist Matthew Spinelli; 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 Soto led the pledge of allegiance.

II. OBJECTIVES:

- A. **To provide the Board with education sessions and updates on SFD Finance, Operations and Administration;**
- B. **To provide the Board with the necessary background to help frame future discussions and policy decisions; and**
- C. **To assist the Board in understanding the correlation of these factors and decisions, their impact on the General Fund, the Members, the Community and other Stakeholders.**
Chairman Soto reviewed the objectives and provided general meeting information.

III. BOARD WORKSHOP:

- A. **Administration & Operations Updates with Questions and Answer forum.**
1. **Presentation and discussion regarding SFD involvement with Copper Canyon– Fire Chief Ed Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis asked to deviate from the agenda schedule to discuss the problems at Copper Canyon Fire District and things that he is hearing from community members, staff, and others. He stated that at Copper Canyon's recent board presentation by JVG, one of the cost-saving measures they were evaluating was contracting admin services with Sedona Fire or Verde Valley Fire. There is a board meeting at Copper Canyon tomorrow that Chief Mezulis will attend, to discuss Copper Canyon's proposal to the County Board of Supervisors.

There was much discussion regarding what that would look like, if possible, etc. with Board members asking many questions of the Fire Chief. The consensus seemed to be that the attacks on the Fire Service would continue from state, local, and federal government representation and it may look like going to county-wide Fire Districts. Chief Mezulis said that while he is not opposed to sharing services, he wants to make sure that SFD is protected. Chairman Soto stated that maybe Yavapai County could be a model of the county-wide district and increase efficiency.

2. **Presentation and discussion of the Strategic Plan process including the status and frequency of reporting – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis started this section mentioning that there will be a meeting next Monday with the software company to discuss ways to make adjustments to progress, how to address goals, tasks, etc. where no progress is possible, and other areas to enable a workable product to show the Board, quarterly. Chief Mezulis said that he wants to make sure that we are mastering the Strategic Plan and not just mastering the tracking software. Chairman Soto talked about developing the plan and how narrowing the focus may be limiting creativity in problem-solving.

Board Member McNeal asked for a hard copy of the Strategic Plan. There were questions and comments from Board members regarding whether the Strategic Plan is achievable and if not, why and how do we fix. Chief Mezulis stated that he wants it to be an adaptable, living document.

3. **Presentation and discussion of an overview of SFD Operations including staffing, training and frequency of use of the different disciplines and the potential for significant events related to the various disciplines; this may include structural firefighting, wildland firefighting and special operations. – Assistant Fire Chief Jayson Coil**

Chief Coil provided a high-level overview of the operations. He spoke about significant weather incidents such as rain over snow events, wildland, floods, and winter storms. AC Coil spoke about other hazards and things that SFD doesn't necessarily train for, such as trench fails and confined space rescues. There is not a lot of need for those kinds of rescue and Flagstaff has hazmat and qualified personnel to diagnose and determine action. Training for Operations personnel and back on the 3-year schedule. Shifts are balanced and have the appropriate number of special ops personnel, and lists have been established to backfill vacancies. Technical Rescue is going to need new ropes this year. Board Member McCarthy asked about a list of resources of local, state, and federal emergency response units. AC Coil explained that SFD has a mutual aid agreement with Greater Flagstaff and those services are available.

AC Coil noted that Eric Lewis and Jordan Baker have done great work in facilitating and presenting the ASHER training. These types of events allow us to continue to build capacity and train with law enforcement partners. FY24 will focus on outside training for program managers to increase knowledge, skills, and abilities for all SFD staff, Board, and community.

SFD sUAS program has begun making strides to meet both industry standards and standards set in place by outside entities such as the Federal Aviation Administration. SFD has 6 licensed pilots ready to deploy aircraft.

Health and Wellness continues to grow, working with employees in areas to reduce and prevent injuries and decrease Workers Compensation claims.

Facilities Management consists of 4 primary responsibilities: safety, aesthetics, functional resources, and cost. Several projects were completed in the recent past, including upgraded crew quarters, HVAC work, and keyless card entry at all stations. With 7 stations (2 unmanned), SFD continues to experience higher maintenance costs on par with inflationary indices. Fourteen IT installations and telecom sites add to the maintenance workload and cost.

Logistics included a briefing regarding the new pumper trucks and anticipation of a pre-build meeting with Pierce Mfg. in mid-October, with delivery in March 2024. The new SCBA equipment have been delivered and training is happening in early March. The purchase and delivery of this equipment meets many NFPA standards, Other NFPA standards that SFD continues to meet are the air compressor and breathing air programs, as well as hose and ground ladder testing..

4. Presentation and discussion of an overview of Emergency Medical Services, Training, and Fleet, including goals and objectives, program direction, equipment, and apparatus needs – Division Chief Ed Mezulis

Chief Mezulis provided an overview of the EMS equipment and apparatus situation, including the ways COVID has had an impact. He provided an update regarding the Medical Director. Chief Mezulis described the anticipated effect on protocols and the community paramedicine program. He discussed how COVID impacts training and how SFD is maintaining certifications and the ability to provide services. Chief Mezulis described the impact of COVID for obtaining parts for the apparatus and the management of the district's fleet. There was a discussion on prioritizing training, vaccination distribution, and staffing intentions. He gave overviews of facilities, and logistics, and Telecom and the Board asked relevant questions regarding these areas to clarify upcoming budget requests and staffing needs.

5. Presentation and discussion of Telecommunications activities, projects, needs, goals and objectives. – Telecom Manager Bob Motz Mr. Motz provided an overview of the Telecom department and the areas of responsibilities. He spoke about what is being done now and what the telecom needs will be for the foreseeable future. He presented information about tower roads and the need to upgrade the the access to these areas to allow propane trucks to service generators. Board members asked many questions about functionality, staffing and recruitment of new technicians and there was interest in the new format to facilitate forwarding of Board packets and other confidential information to the Board. Chief Mezulis asked Mr. Motz if at this time, he was able to do anything preventative and he responded that almost 100% of his time, at this point, is reactionary, not preventative.

6. Presentation and discussion of GIS activities, projects, needs, goals, and objectives - GIS Analyst Matthew Spinelli

Mathew Spinelli presented a slide presentation detailing maps and showing how GIS can be used by SFD. Board members asked many questions about mapping trails, and how data is gathered. Mr. Spinelli gave a brief overview of how he gathers data online and other formats in order to update trail maps.

7. Presentation and discussion of Community Risk Management activities including occupancy, inspections, plan reviews and compliance. – Fire Marshal Dori Booth

Division Chief is provided information on the Community Risk Reduction department and prevention responsibilities. She detailed how many hours her section had worked last year, completing plan reviews, inspections, etc. There was much discussion on several points in her slideshow including educating youth deemed to be firesetters, behavioral health and other areas that might not necessarily appear with any frequency in Sedona. She spoke about risk and community risk and the differences. Chief Mezulis stated that the CRR office is working on a process to outlast personnel changes. Chief Booth spoke about fee schedules and enforcement activities/actions and how they could be upheld.

4. Presentation and discussion of the Administrative Services Department including staff changes, projects, goals, community relations and support– Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson

Ms. Robinson provided an overview of the Administration department during the Board meeting presentation. She reviewed and described the roles and responsibilities of each of the administrative staff members.

B. Legal Matters – Attorney Bill Whittington

1. Provide and discuss information on Legal Matters and Legal Requirements as they pertain to the Sedona Fire District, including matters such as the scope and purpose of Board Members, general overview of legal requirements for a Board Member, Fiduciary Responsibility and pending legislation impacting Fire Districts.

2. Discuss Meeting Protocols/Procedures to ensure efficient and systematized meeting structure including general expectations for Board Members, Chairperson, Clerk and the general processes for effective meetings.

Mr. Whittington, SFD's Attorney, began his discussion by providing the board members with a booklet containing pertinent information relating to legal requirements, the scope and purpose of Board Members, and fiduciary responsibilities. He stated the information he

would provide was the same information included in the Arizona Fire District's Association (AFDA) training. As Mr. Whittington provided an overview of the table of contents, he explained each section would be reviewed more thoroughly but not in detail.

Mr. Whittington reviewed the fire district law which included the following requirements: taking an oath, reviewing the open meeting law, conflict of interest, and appointing a Fire Chief. The discussion included fingerprinting requirements, public comment, executive session requirements, open meeting law violation and ratification process, criminal statutes and possible penalties, and record-keeping when using external district systems such as text messages.

C. Financial Updates – Finance Director, Gabe Buldra

- 1. Presentation and discussion of the accounts payables process, including an overview of bill.com and the role of the Board.**
- 2. Presentation and discussion of the Financial Reports, including an overview and interpretation of Finance Reports, the role of the Board in Internal Controls, the status of SFD finances, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report Process and spending limits.**
- 3. Presentation and discussion of the Budget process, including the frequency of workshops, the role of the Board and approval deadline.**

James Vincent Group (JVG); Gabe Buldra presented the financial section. The presentation covered an overview of the financial report, internal controls, the status of SFD's finances, and the budget schedule. There was a discussion regarding the timing of bills received and paid, the payment cycle, approval process, and frequency of Board Member approval. There was further discussion regarding the transferring of funds and the pay cycle, why bills show overdue in the system, and alternate approval capabilities for unavailable staff.

JVG explained the monthly financial report, the Board's responsibilities, and the areas to focus on during review. They explained the difference between the budget comparison month to month and year to date, and the profit and loss performance.

D. Board Member Items

These items were scratched due to time constraints.

**Slideshow presentations are attached for all the above that were provided.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chariman Soto adjourned the meeting at 4:24 PM.

//Signed Helen McNeal 3.21.23//

Helen McNeal, Clerk of the Board