



Approved by the Board, 4/16/2024

Sedona Fire District

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

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

**Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Tuesday, February 13, 2024 /1:00 PM**

~ 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 1:22 PM on Tuesday, February 13, 2024. 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; Janet Jablow, and Corrie Cooperman – Members. Others Present: Bill Whittington; and Executive Assistant Kim Smathers – Recorder. Chief Mezulis entered the meeting about 2:45 p.m. at the Board's request.

A. Salute to the Flag of the United States of America.

Chairman Dave Soto led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. POLICY WORKSHOP

A. Discussion/Possible Action: Policy Review

Chairman Soto called the meeting to order and began by asking Clerk McNeal to present her thoughts that she had shared with him earlier. Clerk McNeal stated that the origination and responsibility of the SFD policies was a function of the Governing Board, but that included in the policies reviewed were both Governing Board policies applying to the Board and District policies that the Board oversees. Those District policies should reflect alignment with the Governing Board policies. There was discussion with the Board members regarding overlapping in the policies and their scope.

Chairman Soto contemplated whether there was a need to review policies annually or give the Fire Chief the authority to review. Clerk McNeal continues to assert that all policies need to be reviewed by the Board, especially employee and HR policies. Chairman Soto asked attorney Whittington if the Board should be reviewing annually and he replies that if so, they would be the only Board in the state that does. Mr. Whittington stated that no policies were ever adopted without Board and legal review and while they may be modified on occasion, those are reviewed also. Member Cooperman stated that it would have to be hired out at a great cost and Mr. Whittington stated that it is already being reviewed by the Subject Matter Experts and Lexipol.

The discussion continued and Chairman Soto asked about the legal ramifications, with Mr. Whittington stating that the Board is liable, as they choose to be bound by the policies, but they have legal representation and insurance to cover them personally.

Chairman Soto stated that he wants a copy of the binder that Mr. Whittington has. Clerk McNeal stated that the policies are not in great shape and do not look good, and they need to be reviewed for relevancy. Member Cooperman asked what expertise made the Board able to do that. McNeal stated that if the policies are not clear to the Board, they are not clear to employees. Member Cooperman stated that they should start with the Board policies and choose which ones are relevant to the Board.

Mr. Whittington stated that many of the policies are integrated into the MOUs with Labor and are contractual, are reviewed, and updated every 2-3 years.

Member Cooperman stopped the discussion to interject that the Board hired the Chief, and the Chief has hired his staff and that they should be trusted.

At this point, both Attorney Whittington and the Board asked questions of the Executive Assistant that she could not answer, regarding Lexipol. Chairman Soto asked that the Chief be called to come in and clarify.

Chairman Soto stated that ANY change in policy should be reviewed by the Board and the Chief asked if they wanted a continual stream of updates as many policies are changed when laws are changed and that happens frequently, or if they would prefer it come in periodic updates. There was discussion about the Board having access to Lexipol and being notified by the system when changes are made, with the Fire Chief stating that they can be added to the emails to be notified.

Chairman Soto again stated the Board should have the ability to review all policies that exist. He asked about a 5-year window to review all policies with access to the portal to keep the Board informed. Member Cooperman reiterated that she felt the Board is overreaching and should trust the Chief and staff to stay up to date on policy review.

There was discussion on how long it would take for Lexipol to have all the policies uploaded. The Chief determined that 12 months would probably be sufficient with DC Baker learning the ins and outs with the training policies.

At this point, the Board determined that they should decide which policies they should consider Board policies to review for the next workshop session. They reviewed the current listed Board Policies, deleting a few from their purview, and noting what others needed.

No motions were made and the consensus to review through Lexipol with emailed changes was stated.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Soto adjourned the meeting at 3:27 p.m.

//Signed//

Helen McNeal, Clerk of the Board

SFD