



Approved by the Board, 6/18/24

# 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, May 21, 2024 / 4:00 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 Chair Dave Soto at 4:03 PM on Tuesday, May 21, 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 – Chair; Janet Jablow, Corrie Cooperman, and Scott Springett – Members Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Assistant Chief Jayson Coil; Division Chief Dori Booth; Finance Director Gabe Buldra, JVG; Attorney William Whittington; and Executive Assistant 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.**

Chair Dave Soto led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chief Ed Mezulis requested a Moment of Silence for the 18 Police Officers and three firefighters who passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

### II. BOARD MEMBER SERVICE RECOGNITION

A. Recognition of Board Clerk/Member Gene McCarthy's service, and presentation of brick for memorial courtyard.

Board members were given a chance to speak to Mr. McCarthy with their remembrances and words of gratitude for his service. Chair Soto noted that he admired the passion that McCarthy brought to the position on the Board, stating that he never wavered in his support and the District and Board are in a good place due, in part, to that passion. Fire Chief Mezulis thanked Mr. McCarthy for his guidance and unrelenting support. Mr. McCarthy noted that he was proud and honored to have served in a position to give guidance and serve the voters of the District. He stated that he was proud of the accomplishments and the high level of well-trained, quick response that the voters expect and deserve.

*At this 4:11, Chair Soto called a recess for photos and to congratulate Mr. McCarthy.  
Meeting reconvened at 4:15 p.m.*

### III. BUDGET WORKSHOP – Finance Director, Gabe Buldra, JVG

Finance Director Buldra presented the proposed FY2025 Final Budget for tentative approval and posting for public comment before adopting at the June 18 board meeting. Mr. Buldra noted that there had not been much change from what was discussed in the May 8 Special Workshop.

*At 4:20 p.m., the internet connection was lost. The Board continued to discuss and ask questions of Mr. Buldra. At 4:24 p.m. the internet connection was restored.*

Mr. Buldra continued to review the Capital Plan and the upcoming major expenditures that are on the horizon. There was concern about the jump in the mil rate in the proposed 10-year plan coming in 2029. Mr. Buldra stated that there are a lot of planned purchases expected in 2029 and that he recommends increasing funding to the Capital Plan in the interim years.

The budget for FY25 is \$24,440,081.00 with a mil rate of \$2.7030 which remains the same as the prior year. Member Cooperman stated that it was nice to see the smoothing for FY26 so that the change was not so dramatic. Chair Soto thanked staff and JVG for all their work in preparing the budget and Sara Simonton for presenting the line-by-line workshop. Cooperman stated that it was amazing that there was only a 2.51% increase in the budget of last year due to the affects of inflation. Chair Soto stated that the system adopted works and stated that he had spoken to Clerk McNeal, and she was comfortable with the budget as it stands.

*Chair Soto motions to adopt the tentative budget for FY25 as presented, Member Cooperman seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

#### 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. April 16, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2024, Special Budget Workshop Minutes

*Chair Soto made a motion to approve the Minutes presented, Member Springett seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.*

##### C. Financial Report and Updates-Director of Finance Gabe Buldra

##### 1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of April 2024 Finance Report.

Mr. Buldra presented the monthly finance report beginning with the tax levy collection had come in and was over budget by \$537, 964. There were some unexpected managerial costs due to the wage compensation study, legal fees, and liability insurance, but those are more timing issues than concerns. Member Cooperman noted that the cash on hand looks good but asked Mr. Buldra to speak to why. Mr. Buldra stated that SFD has increased the capital to have cash on hand for large capital project that will then not need to be financed. These are also the funds that carry over at

the end of the year to maintain operations before the next tax cycle deposits come in. Chair Soto noted that during the 2008-2012 economic downturn, the funds were spent down and since that time SFD and the Board has been more responsible with saving knowing that stations needed to be built and engines and apparatus continued to increase in price. Mr. Buldra did say that with expected spending until the end of the year, the number would be closer to \$18.2 million.

*Chair Soto motioned to approve the finance report as reported, Member Springett seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion carried.*

#### **D. Staff Items:**

##### **1. April 2024 Monthly Fire Chief Report –**

###### **a. Operations, Admin, HR – Chief Jayson Coil**

Chief Coil opened by showing a picture of himself, SFD crew members, and the Secretary of State, who was in Sedona for the Sedona Summit. He stated that it was one of the highlight of the past several months and the security detail noted that SFD was the most cooperative and assistive agency they had ever worked and coordinated with. SFD crews participated in many aspects of the security operations, including sitting in on the security briefing with over 60 people from multiple agencies.

Admin- focusing on revamping the website to provide smoother function and operation and allowing Ms. Robinson to update and maintain.

HR- firefighter hiring in progress. Open enrollment ending this week for new insurance plan.

Ops – last Wednesday, Chiefs Mezulis, Lechowski and Baker assisted Chief Coil by participating in the presentation for Coil’s Train the Trainer class in communications and teamwork. Coil is working on the simulation center in the annex, as well.

Wildland – SFD is not currently sending out anyone on Wildland deployments due to swiftwater training in Durango, CO. While crews have assisted on a couple of fires this season, until swiftwater is complete, SFD will stand down.

###### **b. Community Risk Reduction – Fire Inspector Dori Booth**

Fire Marshall Booth noted that Firefighter Puyana and Deputy Fire Marshall Riddell completed Arson IV, which prepares them to defend their inspections, etc. in a courtroom environment. Wildfire Prep Days were held and collected over 20 tons of yard waste and debris. The smoke alarm walk at Sunset Mobile Home Park went well, with the volunteers being able to get into over 30 homes and install smoke detectors, etc.

May 25 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EMS and there is an Open House scheduled at Station 3.

Plan reviews continue to increase with numerous multi-family homes pushing up on the three-story limit.

Safety Message-Home Fire Sprinklers significantly slow fire growth allowing more time to get out of the residence while awaiting response.

###### **c. EMS, Safety, Development & Planning – Chief Ed Mezulis**

Fire Chief Mezulis briefed the Board, Chief Lechowski was involved in a family situation that needed his attention. Chief Lechowski has been busy coordinating and prepping for the EMS Open House. Also, letters of concern have been sent to DHS regarding the certificate of necessity and the gap areas that are somewhat “open” at this time. Chief Mezulis would like to get the EMS committee more involved.

Fleet – The ladder truck passed testing and Mechanic Sheehan will be doing upgrades and maintenance. Next month there will be a funding request for an ambulance chassis remount.

IT – the second radio tech has been hired and started work. He is a good fit for SFD and already contributing to the IT division. Welcome Jonnie Dicken.

GIS – Matt Spinelli spoke briefly about hosting the new GIS for the City of Cottonwood, attended quarterly Yavapai County GIS meeting, and working on maps of hike-outs and heat-related incidents.

**d. Operations – Training-Division Chief Jordan Baker**

Chief Baker also had a family emergency, leaving Chief Coil to brief the training activities. Venomous Reptile training is on-going this week for all crews and shifts. The trainers have great expertise and really seem to know what they are doing.

Executive Assistant Smathers gave a briefing on the Women’s Leadership Conference that she attended along with Firefighters Detrick and Peyton.

Regional Assailant Training was held in conjunction with several regional partners in Cottonwood. There was a lot of feedback from participants and volunteers and, while the hope is to never have to respond to a situation of that complexity, training and being ready make a difference.

**e. Fire Chief Report – Fire Chief Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis stated that everyone has been busy with budget prep and everything else going on. He is currently engaged at the County-level regional communications study initiated by Sherrif Rhoades. Next week, the Chief will be meeting with the City Manager to try to spur the land swap agreement and make some progress on Station 4.

The AZ Parks Dept. want a proposal for Station 5, and he is working on navigating who it goes to and what they want.

Chief is attending the Station/Building Design Conference in Glendale currently. He drove up for the meeting and will return after. There is a lot of information to soak up and vendors are helpful and engaged.

The Chief reviewed the turnout and response numbers, noting that times are trending downward and mentioning that the Comm Center had hired a number of people and he had expected that as they were trained up, the dispatch times would come down. Member Cooperman would like a way to compare month-over-month trends and decreases in response times.

**E. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible approval date change for July 2024 meeting which coincides with AFDA conference.**

There was a brief discussion about the date change and whether Finance would be inconvenienced by moving the meeting up a week. Chief Coil said that typically July was kind of a slow month for everything, and he did not feel it would be an issue. Chair Soto stated that finance could give us a report as up to date as possible and then they could cover it in August. It was decided that July 9, at 4:30 would be the date for the July Board Meeting. The Board was polled, and all agreed.

*Chair Soto made the motion to move the July 16, 2024, meeting to July 9, 2024, at 4:30. Member Cooperman seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.*

**F. Discussion/Possible Action: Discussion and possible approval of Regional Community Risk Reduction IGA with regional partners.**

Fire Chief Mezulis stated that this will be a good effort in improving regional services and coordinating fee schedules. Chief Booth stated that it will make the entire region safer for fire personnel and residents. Chief Mezulis noted that there will be “one book” regionally on how things are done, so contractors, and vendors, etc. will not have to try to navigate rules and fees and it will improve customer service.

Member Jablow asked how we come up with an equitable schedule of fees, as some areas will be more and some much less. Chief Mezulis stated that this is just the beginning and aligns us to have those discussions to evaluate and coordinate. Chief Booth said the fee schedules would be based on the International Code Council schedules. Chair Soto asked how it would benefit the members of the communities and would it be reciprocal? Chief Booth stated that VVFD personnel are already training with SFD staff and gaining experience, while the VVFD Fire Marshal has vast experience as a fire investigator. Attorney Whittington asked that Chair Soto sign a consent and waiver.

*Chair Soto motioned to approve the Regional Community Risk Reduction IGA as presented with the consent and waiver; Member Springett seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.*

**G. Discussion/Possible Action: Discussion and possible approval of EMS Week Proclamation.**

Chief Mezulis asked that we declare the week of May 19-25 EMS Week. As EMS response is 80% of what we do, SFD fully supports. May 25<sup>th</sup> is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*Chair Soto reads the proclamation into the record and reminds all the Open House at Station 3 on Saturday from 10-2.*

**H. Board Member Items:**

A. Discussion of Fire Board Members Fire District related activities since the last Board Meeting:

The Fire Board members provided details regarding their activities for the month of April which included billpay.com, signing checks, meeting with Fire Chief Mezulis, and reviewing the budget. Board Chair Soto outlined his participation in the Yavapai Firewise program involvement in Dewey-Humboldt expo and Prescott Home Show, while Member Springett joined the Sunset Mobile Home Park walk.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Soto adjourned the meeting at 5:51 PM.**

*//signed by H. McNeal, Clerk//*

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*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: