



Sedona Fire District

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
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REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Tuesday, June 18, 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; Helen McNeal – Clerk; Janet Jablow, Corrie Cooperman, and Scott Springett – Members Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Assistant Chief Jayson Coil; Division Chiefs Buzz Lechowski and Dori Booth; Finance Director Gabe Buldra, JVG (by Zoom) 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 seven Police Officers and one firefighter who have passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

II. STAFF RECOGNITION

A. Introduction of IT Radio Technician:

1. Jonny Dicken

B. Years of Service Recognition – 10 Years

1. Phil Bruglio

As neither employee was present, Chief Mezulis briefed the Board on recognition and Chair Soto made remarks regarding looking forward to seeing their contributions to the District in future years.

III. PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

A. Open Public Hearing for Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.

Chair Soto opened the public hearing at 4:07 p.m. inviting comments from the public. Chair Soto asked Mr. Buldra if he had any further information, to which he responded that he did not, it had been discussed in workshops for the past several months and there was nothing new to add.

B. Public Comments regarding Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget; Staff Response.

Chief Mezulis reported that there were no public comments, as there was no public attendance. Chair Soto closed the public hearing at 4:08 p.m.

C. Discussion/Possible Action: Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, Resolutions #2024-01, Approval of Fiscal Year 2025 Budget including Pension Funding & Salary Scale.

Chair Soto makes a motion to approve the minutes, then asks if there were further comments from the Board. Member Cooperman stated that she would like to say a few words and then notes the commendable work that was done on the budget and keeping it within 2.51% of last year's budget. In a time of heavy inflation, with supplies and medical costs getting higher, she congratulated everyone on their work. Chair Soto reiterates that it was a lot of work, and SFD has had to tighten its belt, but staff made the best of it and the presented budget showed that.

Clerk McNeal seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Soto read Resolution 2024-01 for the public record. He then referred to the pension funding policy included with the budget and salary scale. Mr. Buldra stated that SFD is on track to fully fund the pension policy, at the rate being paid, in 2036, stating that the annual contributions and additional funding from capital funds, as it is available, is being used.

Chief Mezulis stated that one of the Board members had requested to have a briefing to better understand the PSPRS system such as the one put on by the City of Sedona. He stated that he would facilitate a meeting in January for the full, new Board, or sooner, if they would rather. Member Cooperman stated that she had recently attended the City of Sedona meeting on the state of the PSPRS for the City, as she is on their PSPRS board. She stated that the briefing was an annual presentation and very helpful. Clerk McNeal stated she had just taken the online PSPRS training, and the Chief could also contact Harold Green at PSPRS.

Chair Soto motions to approve the pension funding policy as presented, Clerk McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. ELECTION OF FY2024 BOARD POSITIONS (to be seated in July 2024)

A. Discussion/Possible Action to elect new Board Positions for FY 2024: Nominations and voting for following positions:

1. Board Chair: Member Jablow nominated Helen McNeal for the position of Board Chair. Clerk McNeal accepted the nomination, there was a unanimous vote and, as of July 1, 2024, Helen McNeal will preside as Board Chair.

Member Cooperman stated that she felt it was commendable of the Board Chair to step down and allow the new Chair to be able to have time to gain experience while he continues to serve on the Board, providing guidance. Chair Soto stated that this was the way it was done when he assumed the position of Chair and felt it was best for the District to have the backup available to assist.

2. Board Clerk: Clerk McNeal nominated Corrie Cooperman to the position of Board Clerk, Member Cooperman accepted the nomination, the vote was unanimous, and Corrie Cooperman is the new Board Clerk. Chief Mezulis stated that on behalf of the staff of SFD, he thanked the Board for their collaborative energy and for putting the District before self to do what is best.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum:

1. Public Comments
2. Executive Staff Response to Public Comments

There were no requests from the public to speak.

B. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Actions:

1. May 21, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

Chair Soto made a motion to approve the May 21, 2024, minutes, as presented, Member Cooperman 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 May 2024 Finance Report

Finance Director Buldra briefed the Board on the May 2024 state of the budget and stated that SFD remains under budget, mainly due to some staffing vacancies and savings on salaries. The areas where the monthly budget is over were due to software subscription renewals and recruiting costs for IT. At this point in the year, the budget has been expended 86% and capital fund has a balance of \$3.8 million over last year at this time.

There were no further questions, Chair Soto makes motion to approve the May 2024 financial report as presented, Clerk McNeal seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Staff Items:

1. May 2024 Monthly Staff Report

a. Operations Activities – Assistant Chief Jayson Coil

i. Significant Events

a. All-Hazard

b. Emerging Issues

ii. Human Resources

a. Staffing

b. Promotions

c. Significant Issues

iii. Administration

a. Upcoming Events

b. News & Activities

Chief Coil briefed on his areas of responsibility, including Admin, which is working with the website designed to revamp the SFD website and make it more user friendly with simpler interactions and a more positive experience. He feels this should be completed in July.

The firefighter recruitment closed with 30 qualified candidates applying. Chief Coil called and spoke with each candidate. There was one firefighter resignation, leaving two open positions in Operations. An ergonomic study was done of the office furniture and new desks have been ordered and are arriving.

Operations saw the return of the crew deployed to Tucson, a rise in backcountry rescue calls, and is working with CRR to develop ways to mark trails and provide warnings about conditions and hazards.

BC Todd Miranda prepared and presented National Standard for Rapid Extraction Models (REMs) Teams for wildland fires, making it a national standard to improve the consistency and level of care that firefighters receive when injured in remote, inaccessible areas. This was presented to the heads of all federal fire agencies and many others.

Yesterday, two fires occurred outside Ruidoso, New Mexico and the whole town was evacuated. This is looking to be the worst fire in NM history, so far. Several homes have burned. While rain is predicted on Thursday and Friday, the weather could also bring dry lightning. Clerk McNeal asked what started the fires and Chief Coil stated that they are still being investigated.

b. Community Risk Reduction Activities – Division Chief Dori Booth

i. Inspection Activities

ii. Fire Investigations

- iii. Notable Events
- iv. Fire Marshal Safety Message

Division Chief Booth briefed that Inspector Brian Russell has passed the Executive Fire Officer school at the National Fire Academy.

Sprinkler and Firewise inspections are on the rise, with recent close fires spurring concern for homeowners. Stage 1 fire restrictions went into effect on June 6 and Coconino County Stage 2 will be in effect on Friday morning at 8:00 a.m. Chief Mezulis stated that this causes some difficulty when one county escalates the level, but the other does not, presenting a unique challenge, as Yavapai County is staying in stage 1.

SFD will be participating in the City of Sedona July 4 celebration and dunk tank volunteers are needed. CRR will be presenting the first ever Desert Southwest CRR Conference at Station 1, October 7-9.

Safety message – heat related injuries and illness. SFD is working with Yavapai College to obtain arm bands to monitor firefighters’ exposure to heat conditions. Member Cooperman asked how the message regarding heat related warning, etc., will get out to the public. DC Booth stated that social media and YouTube will cover most of that, but also putting information where there are other pamphlets, etc.

- c. EMS, Fleet, Telecom – Division Chief Lechowski
 - i. EMS Activities and Updates
 - ii. Fleet Activities and Updates
 - iii. Other Updates

Division Chief Lechowski reported on his areas of responsibility, beginning with showing a heat map of related areas of incidents provided by GIS. These are becoming SFD’s bread and butter calls, and more information, better prepared. The complexity and duration are becoming a factor in planning and preparation.

Telecom – Chief is coming up to speed with Telecom and the team is coming together, with the new hires. Bob is ready to move forward with the Zetron installations and has had meetings with them to prepare.

Fleet – presenting a new chassis refit of an ambulance tonight for approval. The two Type I engines are in manufacturing stage now and there is possibly a 110-120 delivery.

EMS-50th anniversary of EMS, Open House was great success and Chief Mezulis wants them to continue. Chief Mezulis stated that he wanted the Open House’s to be anchored to something, would like to bring back the Health Fair, etc., but the feedback received reminded him that the events matter, and he thanked everyone who helped coordinate and staff.

Chair Soto asked if the data from GIS was being used to look at increasing staffing. Chief Mezulis stated that he is constantly recognizing the in-house talent that SFD has now, and that everything is being evaluated to make informed decisions. With the aforementioned increase in complexity of hike outs increasing, and traffic patterns changing (changing response plans), everything is on the table, and everything is being looked at.

- d. Preparedness & Training – Division Chief Jordan Baker
 - i. Division Updates and Activities
 - ii. Training Report

Chief Mezulis presented the report of Division Chief Baker, as he is on VL to celebrate his son’s graduation. While the list was long, Chief Mezulis noted that the BC task book update will be released on July 1. There will be a Captain’s test in the Spring and a leadership academy.

Arizona Fire School in September and blue card training continues.

Wellness- new rack systems are being purchased to keep weights off the floor, helping to reduce injuries and workers comp claims.

The Active Assailant training after action report was sent out to Board members. A good job was done designating deficiencies, which will continue to be improved upon.

Snake training was reported by the Captain of the snake “rescue” team, David Rodriguez. Dr. Novack (NAU) provided a video identifying local wildlife and the ways to handle, depending. New snake tongs, buckets, and chaps were purchased for the teams to facilitate and reduce hazards and chances of being bitten.

- e. Fire Chief Report – Fire Chief Mezulis
 - i. Call Volume & Response Review
 - a. Incident Summary and Year-to-Date Comparison
 - b. Station Responses
 - c. Response Times
 - ii. Purchases over \$10K
 - iii. Community Thanks & Appreciation

Chief Mezulis reported on the usual slides, comparing incident numbers and response times, purchase orders over \$10K, and thank you's received from the community. He also updated that the City Manager has received all the documentation for the Station 4 rebuild and that he has requested that the subject be put on the City's agenda for discussion. Station 5 is still being looked at by the State Parks Department but have been sent the plans and information from 2005, and 2017, including blueprints and architectural drawings.

E. Discussion/Possible Action: Discussion and possible approval/signing: IGA with Cottonwood Dispatch Center.

Chief Mezulis stated that the contract has expired, but there has been no channel to negotiate with Cottonwood. Requests have been made to retool the contract and model the Prescott Regional Dispatch Center, making the regional agencies served partners and not customers, and clarifying how the money paid by these agencies is being used. Contract is being extended by 1 year to facilitate Cottonwood filling the open vacancies so this can be negotiated.

Chair Soto stated that the IGA had not been included in the packet and he wants to table until next month and then review. Chief Mezulis stated that he would get the IGA to them for review.

F. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible approval of BAC request to replace Ambulance Chassis Remount, in the amount not to exceed \$233,000.

The Board Action Communication request for an ambulance chassis remount was presented for approval. The ambulance box is still good, but the chassis is wearing out, and the remount is still more cost effective than buying a new ambulance. New state requirements are being considered and addressed and the old chassis will be brought back in-house to sell locally.

VIDEO recording stopped here, at 5:40 p.m., lost sound.

Chair Soto motions to approve the Ambulance chassis remount in an amount not to exceed \$233,000, as presented. Clerk McNeal seconds the motion, there is no further discussion, and the motion passes unanimously.

G. Board Member Items:

1. Discussion: Board Member's Fire District Related Activities Since the Last Board Meeting.

Scott Springett – had one-on-one with the Fire Chief, still working on learning billpay.com, and communicating with residents. He went on a field trip to scout illegal campsites.

Helen McNeal – Active Assailant training was good job and enjoyed the EMS Open House, encouraging more of those activities, PSPRS training online, and the usual, BillPay, meet Chief, etc.

Janet Jablow- the usual and also talking to neighbors.

Corrie Cooperman-waylaid from the EMS event by accident

Dave Soto-spending time in other areas, mainly Yavapai Firewise, EMS week Open House, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve on this Board.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Soto stated that it is his pleasure to say, for the last time, this meeting is adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Helen McNeal, Clerk of the Board

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