



# 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, November 19, 2024 / 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 Chair Helen McNeal at 4:29 PM on Tuesday, November 19, 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: Helen McNeal – Chair; Dave Soto, Scott Springett, and Janet Jablow – Members. Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Division Chief Jordan Baker; Division Chief Buzz Lechowski; Fire Marshall Dori Booth; Gabe Buldra, JVG; Bill Whittington, Attorney; 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 McNeal led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chief Ed Mezulis requested a Moment of Silence for the three Police Officers and four firefighters who have passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

## II. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

### A. Years of Service – Telecom Manager, Bob Motz, 20 years of service

Chief Mezulis gave an overview of Mr. Motz's service to SFD, recalling a rescue story and other highlights of Mr. Motz's career. Chair McNeal thanked Mr. Motz on behalf of the Board for all the hours of service beyond his schedule and his dedication to SFD. She wished him another 20 years of service.

### B. Badge Pinning – New Hires

1. Matt Ortiz
2. Maxwell Fischenich
3. Sean Williams
4. Chad Guth

Chief Mezulis gave a brief background on the new firefighters, explaining their experience prior to SFD and how they came to be at SFD now. He gave the pins to their family members (or station crew members) for them to pin. Mr. Guth and Mr. Williams are both legacy employees, with second and third generation SFD firefighters in their families. Mr. Ortiz was a hotshot firefighter for the US Forest Service previously, and Mr. Fischenich was a wildland firefighter in the Flagstaff area. Chief Mezulis stated that badge pinnings are going to continue to be a frequent occurrence for the foreseeable future and he was happy to welcome these four onboard.

Chair McNeal stated that she had attended the welcome potluck and was able to meet and speak with the new hires before they began their training, on their first day at SFD. She welcomed them all to SFD.

Division Chief Baker presented the second annual "Top Rung" award, explaining the purpose of the award and how it is earned. He spoke about the three-week academy that the recruits attend and the demanding schedule with testing to reinforce their knowledge. This year's group was a very tight race with a two-way tie for third

and only four points between the winner and the third-place recruits. The winner for 2024-1 Orientation Academy was Sean Williams, a third generation SFD firefighter.  
Recess was called for 10 minutes for families to take pictures at 4:45 PM.  
The meeting was reconvened at 4:55 PM.

### III. 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. September 17, 2024, Regular and Executive Meeting Minutes
2. October 15, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
3. November 12, 2024, Special Meeting Minutes

*Member Soto motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented and Member Jablow seconded. There was no further discussion, and the motion was passed unanimously.*

#### C. Financial Report and Updates – Gabe Buldra, JVG

1. Mr. Buldra briefed the Board about the financial status of Sedona Fire District, stating that overall, SFD is over budget on revenue while remaining mostly under budget on other categories, with, as always, personnel driving majority of costs. Facility/Grounds Maintenance has been driving a lot of the overage with necessary repairs to facilities. One of the newer engines also needed a lot of work on the motor, which was unexpected and expensive.

Mr. Buldra noted that the audit has been completed and that it should be ready for presentation to the Board in December. Also, JVG has been working on the much more detailed CMS report, which is a new Medicare Report that requires incredibly detailed and specific information and staff has been assisting in compiling that data.

*Member Springett motioned to approve the October Budget Report, which Member Soto seconded. There were no further questions, and the motion passed unanimously.*

#### D. Staff Items:

1. October 2024 Monthly Staff Report
  - a. Operations Activities – Assistant Chief Jayson Coil
    - i. Significant Events
      - a. All-Hazard
      - b. Emerging Issues
    - i. Human Resources
      - c. Significant Issues
    - ii. Administration
      - a. Upcoming Events
      - b. News & Activities

Chief Mezulis reported for Chief Coil, who is on Vacation Leave at this time. It was a quiet October, but Chief

Mezulis has received a lot of helpful feedback. SFD is doing what we do and doing it well. Nothing really stood out for significant incidents.

SFD staff and HR are in the final states of hiring for the Mechanic position. A conditional offer of employment has been made for the HR clerk position who should be ready to start in early December, and the IT position will be advertised again shortly. There have been two resignations and one termination. HR is working with Bob & Josh on software needs and ideas.

- b. Community Risk Reduction Activities – Division Chief Dori Booth
  - i. Inspection Activities
  - ii. Fire Investigations
  - iii. Notable Events
  - iv. Fire Marshal Safety Message

Fire Marshal Booth relayed CRR activities and numbers of inspections and investigations. There have been three fire investigations with one being taken over by federal investigators, due to the type of business. This type of investigation has more variables and Deputy Fire Marshal Riddell has been managing the details professionally.

There was a smoke alarm walk at Sedona Shadows, distributing or replacing more than sixty smoke alarms. Uptown Halloween with the Haunted Ambulance and Freddy the Firetruck as again the highly popular event. Chief Booth thanked the staff for decorating and the BC arranging coverage so Freddy's operator could be there.

Toys-4-Tots has boxes at Stations 1 & 3 and will run through mid-December, with the parade to Posse Grounds to "fill the bus" on December 10. This year there is a battle of the badges to see whether SFD or SPD can raise the most money with T4T tracking the funds.

November's safety message was about Holiday Safety. Kitchen fires and turkey friers being common fire starters around the holiday season. Unattended candles are also a hazard at this time of year. If you do not have, purchase a fire extinguisher to have on hand. Make sure turkeys are thawed before attempting to deep fry.

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

DC Lechowski briefed the Board on a large-scale EMS drill that SFD crews and others rotated through. It dealt with airway management and how it is handled. There is a way to "paralyze" the patient, using two of the three drugs for lethal injection, which allows EMS personnel to maintain an airway that otherwise cannot be kept open. It is very delicate and SFD is trusted to do it, so practice is essential.

Three new committees have been formed to assist Chief Lechowski, improve safety and service in several areas, and drive training endeavors.

Chief Lechowski noted that SFD now has a great core group of experts training in in-house academies and the feedback received is excellent.

Captain's assessment center planning is on-going for Spring assessment center.

There have been changes in protocol with dispatch and Chief Lechowski is working with our dispatch center to ensure industry standards and professionalism standards are being met within our area.

Start Moving On Counseling had the first ever Administration and Support staff geared visit to SFD. They came with therapy dogs and talked to a good portion of Admin and support staff and will continue to do so.

Two brand new engines have arrived from Appleton, WI and are being upfitted now. There will be a "push-in" ceremony scheduled for each when they are ready to be put into service. The ambulance is being refitted now in Chehalis, WA, and the Type 6 is in Boise and will be ready for pickup after the new year.

Chair McNeal asked for an update on IT and Chief Lechowski deferred to Chief Mezulis.

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

Division Chief Baker noted several training activities that took place in October, with the new hire academy, Drivers Training, and OSHA required training all being completed, or close to, in October.

Upcoming training includes hands-on Drivers Training at the airport, the captains task book evaluations taking place prior to the spring assessment center, and live fire training at the Training Center in Cottonwood, AZ, which Chief Baker invited the Board members to attend.

Wellness continues to produce quarterly newsletters, and they completed the Functional Movement Screenings for the new hires. He also relayed that the SFD basketball team have triumphed over SPD and the attendance and money raised for the event were the highest ever. Chief Baker stated that he hopes it will become an annual event again.

An SFD wellness committee member has offered to learn to repair our wellness equipment in order that the company that was doing maintenance and repairs could be let go, saving that expense to the District.

- 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 relayed incident numbers and response times with Chief Mezulis stating that while the numbers have improved a little, he does not think travel times are going to adjust without infrastructure changes to roads, etc.

Cottonwood, AZ has hired a new Police Chief, and a new City Council has been seated so Chief Mezulis can go back to them to renegotiate the dispatch center contract, with SFD being more of a partner than a customer. Chief Mezulis has had several meetings with newly elected county officials in both Yavapai and Coconino counties. He is building the relationships which are needed. Yavapai County is close to completing their dispatch consolidation study and one or more centers may end up in the Verde Valley.

Chief Mezulis has been working with Contractor Schwisow to realign his focus from facilities repairs and updates, to what is needed on the tower sites to assist Bob. Justin Broos and Jonny Dicken continue their online study activities, while being able to assist Bob more by taking care of things that he would have been solely responsible for.

E. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible approval of the submission of the Keep Your Pets Fire Safe grants to the Arizona Community Foundation.

Chair McNeal noticed a vendor and product called a rescue retriever while attending the AFDA Conference in July. It is a device that is placed where a pet would hide during times of stress and has flashing lights to alert firefighters that a pet might be in that location. Chair McNeal worked with Chief Booth in exploring a partnership with the Sedona Humane Society to get them bought and installed. The project grew to include the Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition and the Sedona Community Center.

The grant is ready for submission, in the amount of \$9600. Chair McNeal will be asking the City of Sedona to declare a “Keep Our Pets Fire Safe” week with a walk to give away and install the rescue retrievers. The Humane Society will be giving away the devices to anyone who adopts a pet, and the community center will give them away to anyone who needs one.

Chair McNeal asked that the Board support the grant submission and made a motion of Board support and submission of the grant. Member Jablow and Springett both seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Possible vote to go into Executive Session for real estate matters pursuant to ARS §38-431.03 (A)(7) and legal advice pursuant to ARS §38.431.03(A)(3) re: Joint City Council/Fire Board follow up meeting regarding land swap for Station 4 new construction.

Member Soto motioned to enter Executive Session to real estate matters pursuant to ARS §38-431.03 (A)(7) and legal advice pursuant to ARS §38.431.03(A)(3) re: Joint City Council/Fire Board follow up meeting regarding land swap for Station 4 new construction. Member Jablow seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion was approved.

**VII. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION**

- A. Reconvene to public session with possible direction from Board Chair to Fire Chief regarding follow up meeting with City of Sedona regarding Station 4 relocation/re-build alternative sites.

Chair McNeal noted that the alternatives had been discussed and agreed upon by the Board and that she has directed the Fire Chief on leading the discussion with the City Council regarding such alternatives at the next Board meeting/City Council meeting held at Sedona Fire District on December 18, 2024.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Chair McNeal dismissed the Board activities briefing and adjourned.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair McNeal adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

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Corrie Cooperman, 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: