



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, September 17, 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 4:30 PM on Tuesday, September 17, 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; Corrie Cooperman – Clerk; Dave Soto – Members. Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Division Chief Buzz Lechowski; Division Chief Jordan Baker; Fire Marshall Dori Booth; Finance Director Gabe Buldra, JVG (TEAMS); and Bill Whittington, Attorney (TEAMS); 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 twelve Police Officers and four firefighters who have passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

II. STAFF RECOGNITION

A. Adam Deringer – promotion from Firefighter to Engineer

Chief Mezulis briefed the Board on the promotion last month, due to a resignation. He gave a brief outline of Deringer's career at SFD. Engineer Deringer spoke about his history with SFD, and the Board congratulated him on his promotion.

FIVE MINUTE RECESS CALLED AT 4:34 p.m. RECONVENED to open session at 4:37 p.m.

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. August 17, 2024 Regular and Executive Meeting Minutes

Clerk Cooperman made a motion to approve the August 20, 2024, regular and executive session minutes, as presented. Member Soto 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 August 2024 Finance Report

Finance Director Buldra briefed the Board on the August 2024 budget standing, stating that tax revenue is beginning to trickle in, and much more is expected in September and October. Seventeen percent of the budget has been expended in the two operating months and SFD is doing well in all categories, with facilities & maintenance running a little over budget due to necessary improvements to existing structures. Clerk Cooperman asked if Buldra foresaw the financial wellness continuing. Buldra stated that it is hard to tell this early in the fiscal year, but that SFD typically does a good job of managing the budget and he does not foresee any problems.

There were no further questions, Clerk Cooperman made a motion to approve the August 2024 financial report as presented, Chair 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 Mezulis noted that Chief Coil is out on a fire in Nevada. Chief Mezulis noted that we are continuing to experience more frequent, simultaneous hike-outs, which can be challenging for Ops and staffing.

HR is working on onboarding four new hires, with two having been made offers and the other two continuing their background checks, and pre-processing. The IT and HR clerk positions are still open and being worked on.

SFD is moving into the busier training season. Clerk McNeal asked about the increase in hike-outs and if SFD is doing anything to prepare for the busier fall tourist season. Chief Mezulis stated that he does not feel that this fall will be any different than the last couple of years and while they are tracking, nothing is being changed at this point.

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 including the Camp Twilight Girl Scout camp, encouraging girls to consider firefighting as a career. Booth outlined upcoming events to include the CRR Desert Southwest Conference. Chair McNeal asked for an agenda and Booth stated she would get it to her.

Fire Prevention Day/Week begins on October 5, 2024, with the theme "Smoke Alarms Working For You." There will be a kickoff on October 5 at the Cottonwood fairgrounds hosted by Verde Valley Fire District, that SFD will be participating in.

There will be a Smoke Alarm Walk at Sedona Shadows Community on October 12. Member Soto asked about what type of smoke alarms SFD would be installing. Marshal Booth stated they would be the same kind used at the previous walk, provided by the AZ Burn Foundation and the Red Cross.

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

DC Lechowski stated that he and the team were in Appleton to approve the new engines, and the engines are now in Arizona. Those engines should be here at SFD in about 2 weeks and deployed sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Clerk Cooperman asked where the engines were going to be stationed, and one is going to St 4 and one going to St 6. At the time the new engines are deployed to their stations, one of the old will go non-operational and one will be refurbished to become a backup engine.

The ambo chassis remount is currently in Washington being refit and should be back here by the last week of January. SFD had two paramedics graduate and are now on the floor. Chair McNeal asked how many of SFD staff were paramedics and Lechowski and Chief Mezulis agreed it was about 60%. DC Lechowski stated that there are about 3-4 per station per shift, depending on station.

The Certificate of Necessity has been filed allowing SFD to transport patients in ambulances. State GIS is working on overlaps and boundaries and trying to clarify the district boundaries.

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

Division Chief Baker presented the Board with the Training and Preparedness report, outlining the upcoming training for the first ever leadership academy and the upcoming onboarding of four new firefighters. The probationary firefighters from last year are coming up on their graduation and have evals scheduled beginning on September 30.

Ready Rebound assessed 70 employees and were impressed with the general fitness of our personnel. Two new members have joined the wellness committee.

Member Soto asked if the four new firefighters will fill all the current vacancies and Chief Mezulis answered that they will.

Chair McNeal asked about the agenda for the Leadership Academy and DC Baker stated he would provide it to her.

- 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, purchase orders over \$10K, stating that overall, our numbers are up from last year, with some areas being under last year's.

The staffing committee has determined that one of the new employees will be stationed at Station 6 for more intensive training and to evaluate the productivity of this type of situation.

Response times remain pretty level from last year.

IV. POSSIBLE VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- A. Executive Session for personnel matters pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(A)(1) for discussion of materials provided for Chief's evaluation and discussion of Fire Chief's performance for the fiscal year (annual appraisal) and legal advice pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(A)(3) regarding same.
- B. Vote to go into Executive Session for real estate matters pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(A)(6)(7) and legal advice pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(A)(3) re: Joint City Council/Fire Board meeting regarding land swap for Station 4 new construction. Question and answer session.

III. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION

- A. Discussion/Possible Action: Board Feedback on Fire Chief's evaluation for Third Quarter, as discussed in Executive Session.

Chair McNeal noted that the Board is pleased and happy with the Chief's performance and that they look forward to seeing things progress in the future.

- D. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible approval of BAC for stucco work at Station 1 in the amount of \$66,978.49 bid by Hale's Construction.

Chief Mezulis explained the need for the bid and the problems associated with the walls and drainage. He stated that SFD has worked hard to obtain other bids, but contractors are not willing to work on projects this extensive and Hale's was the only bid received. Member Soto asked if the bid was released to the geographical areas and Chief Mezulis stated as far as Prescott and Flagstaff with no results. Soto stated that this could be perceived as Hale's being the only "game in town" and as such, they could charge whatever they wanted and wondered if a contractor from Tucson or Phoenix would bid. It was then stated that anybody that lives in Sedona, trying to get anything done, understands the problem. People coming from further would have to house and feed employees, and then the costs increase exponentially. Clerk Cooperman stated that she felt that due diligence was done, and this local company has a very good reputation.

Clerk Cooperman made a motion to accept the bid from Hale's construction in the amount of \$66,9778.49. Member Soto seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous, and the motion passed.

E. Board Member Items:

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

Dave Soto – had a relatively quiet month and watched the landscaping project at Station 1 which looks very nice. He stated that they are often asked about Firewise and drought-resistant plants and would like Station 1 to become a model for xeriscaping and Firewise, using such plants. He will be representing Firewise at the October 5 Fire Prevention Fair.

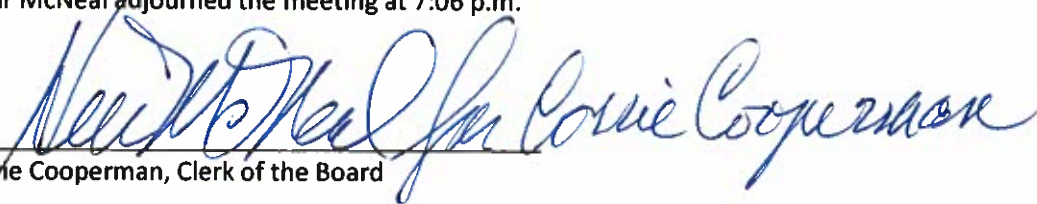
Corrie Cooperman- Clerk Cooperman worked with the Board Chair on the Board Handbook and the fire chief evaluation.

Helen McNeal – McNeal is leading the revision of the Board handbook and worked on the fire chief evaluation form. She visited Station 3 and State 5 informally, speaking with personnel. She also attended the 9-11

Memorial and pancake breakfast, remarking that there was a good turnout. She specifically mentioned the Station 6 personnel and thanked them for their hard work and creating such a welcoming atmosphere.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McNeal adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.


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:

