



# 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, January 21, 2025 / 3:00 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 Helen McNeal at 3:01 PM on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. 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, Scott Springett, Diana Christensen, and Lance Waldrop – Members. Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Assistant Chief Jayson Coil; Division Chief Buzz Lechowski; Acting Fire Marshall Kirk Riddell; 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 eight Police Officers and four firefighters who have passed away since the previous Board Meeting. Chair McNeal asked the Board to introduce themselves so that online viewers would know who was speaking, rather than call the roll.

### II. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

#### A. Introduction of new Fleet Technician I – Rhys Tarver

Chief Mezulis introduced new employee, Rhys Tarver, who will be assisting Mike Sheehan in the Auto Shop as a Fleet Mechanic I. Chair McNeal welcomed Mr. Tarver. Mr. Tarver said he was excited about the opportunity and looking forward to his career development at SFD.

### 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. December 17, 2024, Regular and Executive Session minutes
2. December 18, 2024, Special Joint Meeting with City Council minutes

*Clerk Cooperman made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented and Member Christensen seconded. There was no further discussion, and the motion was passed unanimously.*

C. Financial Report and Updates – Gabe Buldra, JVG

1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and approval of December 2024 Finance Report:

Mr. Buldra briefed the Board about the financial status of Sedona Fire District, Facility/Grounds Maintenance has been driving a lot of the overage with necessary repairs to facilities that have been taking place and last month was focused on Station 6. SFD received the Prop 207 Marijuana Tax money last month, along with ambulance collections being up and interest earnings doing well.

*Clerk Cooperman asked if 85% personnel costs were a comfortable area and Mr. Buldra responded that yes, that was fine, but if it starts creeping up, then things will need to be re-evaluated.*

2. Discussion/Possible Action: PSPRS Update 2023:

Mr. Buldra briefed the Board on the latest actuarial report from PSPRS and the unfunded obligations. Mr. Buldra briefly explained the different Tiers in PSPRS for the newer Board members. He noted that in the last 4-5 years the actuarials are showing to be more stable and there seems to be less fluctuation in the accounts, obligations, etc. As of June 30, 2024, Tiers 1 & 2 are 64.4% funded and Tier 3 is overfunded. SFD's contribution rates increased from 46.27% to 49.57% for Tiers 1 & 2, while Tier 3 contribution rates increased from 41.7% to 45.2%.

*Member Christensen asked Mr. Buldra how that compared with other Fire Districts across the state. Mr. Buldra stated that not all fire districts had elected to join, and many refinanced their pension debt at the time. Mr. Buldra stated that the fluctuations are risky, and it was his guidance to wait until things had stabilized before looking at other options.*

*Member Cooperman asked about the liability for Tier 3 once Tiers 1 & 2 go away and Mr. Buldra stated that it would be a while before that happened. Chair McNeal asked Mr. Buldra to prepare a slide for the next reporting.*

3. Discussion/Possible Action: Tentative Budget Schedule.

Mr. Buldra briefed the Board regarding the upcoming budget season, stating that for the next few weeks, staff would be working on compiling key figures and reviewing assessed value reports. There will be several meetings, including a special meeting when JVG will present a line-by-line overview to the Board on May 6. Then tentative adoption will be at the May board meeting. Chief Mezulis stated that any questions can be answered in the one-on-one meetings he has with Board members if they are stuck on an issue.

*Member Christensen motioned to approve the December Budget Report, which Clerk Cooperman seconded. There were no further questions, and the December Finance Report was approved.*

D. Staff Items:

1. December 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 Coil focused his report on climatology and wildfire science. He gave the new Board members a brief bio on his experience in these areas and then gave a detailed briefing on where Sedona stands vs. the status of the wildfires in California. Sedona has a different burning profile than California and wind is a huge factor. There are many ways to mitigate wildfires and prepare homes and businesses to better protect them. There were many details discussed, and Board members asked relevant questions of Chief Coil regarding different situations and scenarios. Member Christensen asked if there was sufficient information available in packets for homeowners and visitors.

- b. Community Risk Reduction Activities – Acting Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell
  - i. Inspection Activities
  - ii. Fire Investigations
  - iii. Notable Events
  - iv. Fire Marshal Safety Message

Acting Fire Marshal Riddell stated that CRR is busy doing assessments and giving recommendations to homeowners throughout the District. He expects January to be busy, as most of December was slower due to the holiday. The Toys-4-Tots Stuff the Bus, and the Bike Rodeo were successful again this year, with 47 bikes being distributed. He thanked the Station 4 crew for assisting.

The Safety Message was home heating safety, and Riddell noted several things that should be maintained, such as chimneys, space heaters, etc.

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

Division Chief Lechowski mentioned that the new fleet mechanic had started, and that Mechanic Sheehan is happy. They are currently covering all things fleet and finalizing work on the new engines to get them in-service.

The ambulance chassis is back from Washington state and ready to have the box put back on. It features several new additions including refurbished harnesses for the crew, UV light sanitation for containment of spread of disease, and many other features.

Peer team training continues, with the team expanding to include Dispatch.

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

Chief Mezulis reported for Division Chief Baker, who is on vacation. There has been a lot of work done on the training center, general maintenance, painting, etc.

The required OSHA training for all staff is complete. Chief Mezulis, Chief Coil, and HR have been meeting regarding the Captain's testing process, with a potential of nine candidates to test.

Chief Baker's slide outlined all completed and upcoming training.

- 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 stated that he is fielding many calls from concerned citizens about the California wildfires and is

planning a public meeting regarding preparedness for late February/early March to be held at the Performing Arts Center at the High School. He will explain about the water supply also. Chair McNeal asked who was responsible for evacuations for the rest of the District, not residing in Sedona. The county sheriffs are the local authorities with evacuation power throughout the District. Chief Coil stated that they were part of the evacuation planning process and were engaged throughout.

Chief Mezulis reviewed the incident numbers and station response times, along with the purchase orders over \$10K and the community appreciation received in December.

#### E. Board Member Updates and Ideas for Future Meetings.

Chair asked the Board members to give their input. Members Springett, Christensen, and Waldrop deferred. Clerk Cooperman stated that the Board attended the AFDA winter conference last week and she felt that a lot of valuable information was passed along. She was especially impressed with the Labor Management Relations meeting.

Chair McNeal stated that she wants to stay on the wildland issues and evacuation planning. She felt that AFDA does not offer as much for Board members as they think they do. Chief Mezulis asked if the Board wanted to receive the AFDA legislative briefing newsletters and stated he would find out what was needed for them to receive.

Member Christensen stated that SFD should plan as big a role as we can in evacuations and feels there is a need to plan for those contingencies. Chief Coil stated that SFD will still get people out of the way, as necessary and will amplify law enforcement's message, as needed. Chief Mezulis stated that the Village of Oak Creek and the loop roads are areas of concern, but Sedona PD works with the counties on those areas.

### VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Possible vote to go into Executive Session for discussion regarding purchase of proposed Station 4 site.

*Member Waldrop motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss purchase of proposed Station 4 site. Member Springett seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion was approved.*

### VII. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION

- A. Reconvene to public session with no direction to legal or staff regarding purchase of proposed Station 4 site.

Chair McNeal noted that no direction was given to the Fire Chief or legal counsel and that the Board is prepared and looking forward to the meeting on February 11, 2025, with the City.

### III. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McNeal adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

*//signed C. Cooperman, 2.18.2025//*

Corrie Cooperman, Clerk of the Board