

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District Meeting Held
January 24, 2022**

A Special Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on January 24, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in person at Station 31, 2700 E. Godard Road, Cottonwood, Arizona and electronically (via Zoom).

Board of Directors:

Ken Bishop, Chairman
Robert Brummett, Board Clerk
Donald Peck
Coleen Gilboy
Matthew Kaempfe

Staff Present:

Danny Johnson, Fire Chief
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager
Richard Wintermute, Captain / Union Trustee
Ivan Anderson, Firefighter / Union Vice President
Jacob Marx, Firefighter / Union Trustee
Chase Pearson, Firefighter
Spencer Young, Engineer
Scott Mattix, Firefighter (6:02)

Others Present:

Others whose names were not entered on Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board Chairman Bishop.

ROLL CALL – All Board Members were present; a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG – Those present stood and said the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC – None.

NEW BUSINESS

MOU WORKSHOP – Discussion regarding the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with representatives from the IAFF Local 3690 Verde Valley Chapter.

Chief Johnson explained that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has not been in place for a few years and that he has been working with Labor to develop the proposed document.

A history of the MOU development was provided including that the current draft was a copy of Sedona Fire District's current MOU with changes to reflect Verde Valley Fire District. Chief Johnson stated that the reason that Sedona's document was used was to help standardize things across the Valley. The agencies have already been working on standardizing items such as operations, communications, etc. It was stated that Sedona's MOU has been reviewed by an attorney.

Discussion on the definition of a Unit Member verses the verbiage in section 2.3. It was decided to revise the definition to add non-dues paying member. Board Member Kaempfe asked Staff to confirm whether or not section 2.3 was a union law.

The Board asked for a red-lined version of any changes going forward.

Discussion on Article 3 regarding grievance procedures. Chief Johnson stated that this has to do strictly with grievances on the MOU and that employee grievances are conducted through the Grievance Policy in the policy manual. It was discussed to change the title of section 3.2.2 to Level II Grievance.

Discussion on making the references to the Union consistent throughout the document. Revise to Local 3690.

Discussion on the benefits listed and the terms of "shall" versus "may". Chief Johnson stated that he asked the Union to put in what they currently have and, as things are worked through during meet and confer, they will be formalized in the MOU. He stated that he would like to budget two (2) years in advance for steps, etc. to increase long term stability in budgeting. It was stated that, if the economy crashes, the MOU can be renegotiated. It was stated that the Board has final say in all items.

Discussion on section 5.11 Employer Funded Contributions including that the highlighted items are those that will need attention as they will be negotiated through the meet and confer process, the information listed is what is currently provided. Captain Wintermute stated that references to contributions to the employee's 457 account was added as the only current option is the employee's PEHP account and that employees would like to have the option to choose between PEHP or 457 or to split them. Discussion on the PEHP accounts including the IRS regulation that does not allow a member's balance to be given to their beneficiaries upon death unless they have a surviving spouse or minor children. Board Member Gilboy asked if the verbiage could be changed to "budgeted amount" rather than listing a specific amount. Discussion on the two tiers of medical coverage including that this item will be discussed during meet and confer.

Discussion on sick and vacation accrual rates as well as the payout of excess accruals. It was noted to add verbiage to the vacation policy to exclude those in their initial probationary period from the required annual hours to be used as they are not yet eligible to use vacation leave. The years of service chart needs to be clarified so that all employees have the same understanding.

Discussion on Bereavement Leave (current policy is titled "Emergency Leave") noting that it is being updated in the policy manual. Board Member Kaempfe asked that the definition of immediate family be detailed.

Captain Wintermute explained that there is currently have a bank of donated hours titled Association Leave that is used for Union related training, activities, etc. He stated that Chief Johnson recommends separating them to use Association Leave for pipes and drums, and other items outside the norm of their duties, and using Union Leave for training that would better them and the District. Chief Johnson stated that it is education leave that will make them better at their job for this organization but that he would like to track it separately from Education Leave. VP Anderson gave an example of the conference that he attended and what he learned about workers compensation. He stated that he shared that information with the organization to educate them on how to manage their workers compensation claim and that this was something that benefitted the entire District.

Discussion on the effective dates of the MOU. Chief Johnson stated that having a two (2) year agreement is nice as it gives you a year to look at other things and allows you to strategically plan for things. He stated that the benefits are driven by the budget, he is hoping that we can look at the budget and determine the potential costs of the MOU. Board Member Kaempfe stated that he did not like the verbiage in Article 10 stating that it will automatically renew if a new MOU is not in place. Captain Wintermute stated that they are willing to work on wording with the Board.

VP Ivan Anderson stated that the worksessions with the Board on the MOU and the Policy Manual are creating history for the District; it is a big improvement. He stated that it was clear that the board read the document and he thanked them for their efforts. He thanked Captain Wintermute for all of his efforts in creating the MOU.

Board Member Gilboy stated that she thinks the MOU is amazing, the other Board Members agreed.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved:

Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager

Ken Bishop, Board Chairman

Attest:

Robert Brummett, Board Clerk

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