

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District  
Meeting Held March 24, 2020**

A Regular Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on March 24, 2020 at 3:00p.m. at the Verde Valley Fire District Station #31, 2700 E. Godard Road, Cottonwood, Arizona.

Board of Directors:

Ken Bishop, Chairman  
Donald Peck, Board Clerk  
Thomas Rhodes (via telephone)  
Coleen Gilboy  
Gary Svider

Staff Present:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief (via telephone)  
Kyla Rolfes, Fire Inspector  
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager  
Philip Graham, Captain  
Daniel Hinds, Captain

Others Present: Daniel Elliott

**CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Bishop.

**ROLL CALL** – All members were present; a quorum was present.

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

**MOMENT OF SILENCE** – **A moment of silence for firefighters who have lost their lives.**  
A moment of silence was observed for the 4 U.S. firefighters who lost their lives last month.

**ORDER OF THE AGENDA** – **Discussion and consideration of changing the order of the agenda.** No action.

**MINUTES** – **Discussion and consideration of the minutes of a Regular Meeting held February 25, 2020.** Board Member Gilboy made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 25, 2020. Board Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC** – None.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS** – **Discussion and consideration of the financial report for the previous month (including ambulance billing).** Administrative Manager Elliott reviewed the written financial reports:

- The District is 67% through the fiscal year.

- No interest revenues were received for February due to a change at the Yavapai County Treasurer's Office. They are anticipating that all interest revenues will be entered in March.
- Total cash at the end of February: \$1,845,570.01.
- Positive cash flow of \$181,342 year to date.
- \$99,298.38 of Property Tax Revenues received in February.
- \$12,094.00 of Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) revenues were received in February.
- Some of the individual expenditures in February.
- Total expenditures are 16.37% under the year to date allocation.
- Total operating expenditures only are 12% less than the year to date allocation.
- Ambulance collections and call volume as well as the change to the Ambulance Billing Report.
- Payments received for wildland assignments.

Board Member Gilboy asked questions regarding the following:

- The overtime expenditures being really high. Administrative Manager Elliott explained that due to a number of employees being out for workers compensation and FMLA issues as well as having a shortage of Reserves to cover shifts, the District is having trouble maintaining minimum staffing requiring. This has caused the overtime budget to be high. Staff is anticipating that the overtime budget will be over at the end of the fiscal year. The District is anticipating that the COVID-19 virus will cause additional overtime expenses. A Reserve academy is underway with 8 Reserve candidates. They are expected to be shift qualified in May. The addition of the new Reserves will help the overtime budget.
- Is the District's unemployment taxes based on a percentage of payroll or reimbursement of expenses? Administrative Manager Elliott stated that it was based on a percentage of payroll.
- Bank service fees are extremely high. Administrative Manager Elliott explained that the District had to add the ability to accept credit card payments due to various insurance companies paying ambulance billings via credit card. Board Member Gilboy asked if the fees can be charged back to the accounts. Administrative Manager Elliott stated that Staff can look at the possibility of charging the patient; however, insurance companies have contractual rates that they pay and she doesn't believe they will pay the processing fee but it can be looked in to. She stated that Staff will need to bring a change to the Fee Schedule to the Board for the addition of a credit card processing fee, or increasing fees to cover the credit card processing fees.
- Is the number of membership fees normal? Administrative Manager Elliott replied yes.

Board Member Gilboy made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Board Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – A report from the Chairperson on his activities for the District for February.** Board Chairman Bishop reported that he attended a meeting with Chief Moore and Yavapai County regarding the COVID-19 virus. Chief Moore stated that there are meetings scheduled twice per week with the County. Testing kits are being obtained to test first responders, health care providers, etc. Because testing kits have not been available, the reported numbers are low. When they are available, we will see numbers increase. Updates will be sent



out daily. Two (2) executive orders from the Governor were issued. The first is to relax HIPPA regulations to allow our responders to be notified if a patient that they have transported is confirmed with COVID-19. The second was to remove the ability of cities / towns and counties to mandate quarantine (lock down in your home), the Governor is the only office that can make this order.

Board Chairman Bishop reported that he and Chief Moore met with Jim Elmer and Chief Kim Moore of Verde Valley Ambulance Company regarding "combining" the Verde Valley Ambulance Company with Verde Valley Fire District. He stated that they are in the very early stages of discussion but are looking seriously at the options. He stated that it looks like a good possibility. He stated that there will be more information available later on. Board Member Gilboy asked for clarification on what Board Chairman Bishop meant by combining the agencies. Board Chairman Bishop responded "combining as one department." Board Member Rhodes stated that if discussions are being held regarding combining the two agencies, there should be a committee from each agency that is involved in the discussions. Board Chairman Bishop stated that when they get to that point yes, it will be very much in front of the Board. Board Member Rhodes asked "when do we get to that point?" Chief Moore stated that the Chairman said "eventually." He explained that none of this is in the forefront at this point. The agencies are currently talking about how they can share services and use the Ambulance Company to take care of our folks. He stated that Board Member Rhodes asked (at the last meeting) about what it would look like letting the professionals do the job instead of us (VVFD). They are taking a look at that as one of the options. They are looking at information to bring to both Boards from Daisy Mountain, Superstition Fire and Medical, Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, and other agencies that have an ambulance service working with / coexisting with the fire department, but not as one. What the Board Chairman spoke to was maybe eventually, down the road if all that worked out or there was a possibility of coming together. That would be long term down the road, possibly 3-4 years or even longer than that. Right now, they are looking at what Board Member Rhodes presented originally, which was what would it look like to coexist with the Ambulance Company and have them service our customers with us. Board Member Rhodes stated that he feels this is something that we would want to pursue but feels that the conversations are happening without his knowledge and the rest of the Board's knowledge and asked what the rest of the Board Members think. Board Member Gilboy stated that she thought that information was coming to this meeting, that's what the Board asked for, not to combine them but to separate the services. Board Chairman stated that they are looking at more of a joint services / shared services. Board Member Gilboy stated that she feels that it needed to be talked about as a Board. Board Chairman Bishop stated that they are gathering information from other departments that have done on how they did it, the mechanics of it, and then look at our feasibility. Board Member Gilboy stated that she felt that if Verde Valley Ambulance Company efficiently had a system, let's give them their system. She is surprised to hear that they are talking about combining them. Board Chairman Bishop stated that this could be a long time off. Board Clerk Peck stated that it is something they should be able to look at but would like to be informed of what is going on so there are not things happening that the Board is not aware of. Board Chairman Bishop stated that Chief Moore is gathering information and then they would do a presentation to the Board to determine what direction they can go. Board Member Rhodes stated that Ken (Board Chairman Bishop) has appointed himself as the committee to represent the Board. He stated that he is glad that we are having talks and that this is something that will take a long time. He is getting the feeling that he (Board Chairman Bishop) and Jim Elmer are going to decide how this is going to work and then come tell the Board and he does not feel that



this is how we (the Board) proceeds with this. Board Chairman Bishop stated that he and Jim Elmer will come up with ideas and that will be presented to the Board. Board Member Rhodes stated that it needs to be put on as an agenda item for the Board to discuss. Board Chairman Bishop stated that it was in the very early stages and he is waiting to see how it goes. Board Member Svider stated that he was getting that we're looking at sworn and non-sworn personnel; having all civilian personnel on the ambulance yet working together. In other words, taking our fire personnel off of the ambulances and putting civilian personnel on the ambulance and operating out of the same fire station. He asked if this was correct. Board Chairman Bishop stated that they hadn't really gotten to that point yet but that was probably the way it would work. He stated that you can't take some of the ambulance crew and make them firefighters. Board Member Svider asked if that would be a single function ambulance. Board Chairman Bishop stated "hopefully."

**BOARD MEMBER REPORTS – Reports from the members of the Board on their activities for the District for February.** None.

**UNION REPORT – A report from the District representative of the Sedona-Verde Valley Firefighters Association on current events and activities for the past month.** Chief Moore reported on the information that he has discussed with Union Representative Ivan Anderson including the Craig Tiger Act. Chief Moore explained the Craig Tiger Act and the requirements of the Act.

Chief Moore reported that revisions have been made to the existing MOU. It has been sent to local IAFF personnel in Phoenix for their review and recommendations. It will be brought to the Board for review / approval when complete.

**CHIEF'S REPORT – A report from the Fire Chief on current events and his activities for December and January, including, but not limited to: Public relations, meetings and events attended, incident call volume, specific incidents and training.** Chief Moore asked if there were any questions regarding his written report. None were asked.

**FIRE INSPECTOR REPORT – A report from the Fire Inspector on current events and activities for December and January, including, but not limited to: Public education, fire prevention, meetings and events attended, training, permits issued/closed and inspections.** Inspector Rolfes, referencing her written report, noted the following:

- Meetings attended. Those highlighted included:
  - Meeting with Cottonwood Fire and Medical Department to develop a Contractor Packet.
  - Site visit with Yavapai County Official regarding a non-permitted business that was operating.
  - Yavapai County for preliminary code review.
  - Two (2) fire extinguisher trainings held in conjunction with Cottonwood Fire and Medical Department.
- The Verde Valley Life & Fire Safety (LAFS) spring program has been cancelled due to school closures.
- 17 car seats were distributed and 4 car seats were inspected / re-installed in the month of February. Car Seat Technicians held a car seat clinic at the Yavapai Head Start in Clarkdale on February 24. Technicians from Sedona Fire District and Cottonwood Fire



and Medical Department assisted with the clinic along with Firefighter Steven Stack and Fire Inspector Rolfes.

- Permits Issued. It was noted that fees for non-profits are waived.

Board Member Rhodes asked about the fire extinguisher training at the Sanctuary at Sedona. Fire Inspector Rolfes reported that the Sanctuary requested the training after they had a tractor fire on their property.

Board Member Gilboy asked if the permit data for 2019 could be added to the Permit & Inspection Report. Fire Inspector Rolfes explained that she did not have the data as fees were not being charged at that time.

## NEW BUSINESS

**PURCHASE ORDER – Discussion and possible approval of the purchase and set-up / installation of a computer server and associated software licensing.** Administrative Manager Elliott explained that the motion made by the Board at the February 25, 2020 Board Meeting, was unclear whether or not Staff could move forward with the purchase of the server. This agenda item is to approve the purchase of the server so that it can be in service prior to the purchase of new financial software. The purchase includes the server and required operating software. She noted that after last month's Board Meeting, she contacted Sunstate Technology (the District's IT provider) to explain the delay. They obtained new quotes for the equipment and the revised price is now approximately \$3,000 less.

Board Member Gilboy made a motion to approve the purchase and set-up / installation of a computer server and associated software. Board Clerk Peck seconded.

Board Member Rhodes asked how we chose to take the amount that we are short out of the New Station Construction fund. Administrative Manager Elliott explained that at last month's meeting, the Board had asked, within the Capital Projects budget, where would those additional funds come from to fund the purchase of the server because the IT Network Upgrades account only had \$5,000 budgeted in the fiscal year. It was explained that within the New Station Construction account budget, there were \$373,177 that would not be used in the current fiscal year so the Board could approve the additional \$15,509.48 to be used in the Capital budget because the New Station Construction would have available funds. Board Member Rhodes stated that he did not remember the Board discussing taking the funds from the New Station Construction, he does remember talking about Capital, and does not want to see them "nickel and dime" the New Station Construction fund and use all of the monies. Chief Moore stated that it was an option; the funds didn't necessarily have to come from the New Station Construction account. The Board could choose, in the next budget, to go forward with that amount, it would be moved over. The largest account was chosen to show that funds were available in the budget that would not be spent, not specifically taking away from that project. Chief Moore explained the new Capital Program and the work that Staff is doing to inventory all equipment and evaluate useful life, etc. Board Member Rhodes asked why the necessity of new servers was not identified when the District's computers, etc. were evaluated a few years back. He hopes to be able to get to the point where any IT equipment that is needed is able to be discussed during the budget process. Chief Moore stated that the Capital Program should take care of these surprises. The motion passed unanimously.

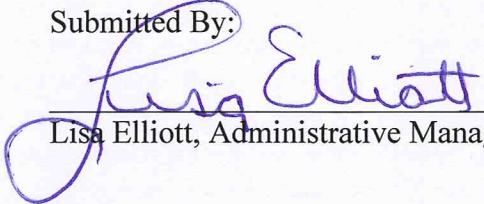
**FY2020-2021 BUDGET – Presentation and discussion of the FY2020-2021 preliminary budget information.** Administrative Manager Elliott reported that the development of the budget is running behind however, information is being received and Staff hopes to get back on schedule prior to the April Board Meeting. To do this, the Budget Committee meeting needs to be scheduled as soon as the remaining information has been received. She reported that the health insurance pool was increasing health insurance premiums by 10% and dental insurance premiums by 3%. Vision and life insurance premiums were remaining the same.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda.**

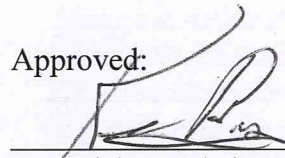
- VVAC / VVFD services discussions.
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

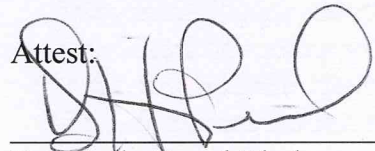
Submitted By:

  
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Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Bishop, Chairman

Attest:

  
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Don Peck, Board Clerk