Minutes of a Joint Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District and the Board of Directors of the Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District Meeting Held March 31, 2026

A Joint Special Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors and Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District was held on March 31, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in person at Station 31, 2700 E. Godard Road, Cottonwood, Arizona and electronically (via Zoom).

Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors:
Coleen Gilboy, Board Chairman
Don Peck, Board Clerk
Robert Brummett
Kenneth Bishop
Nicholas Brunori (via Zoom)

Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District Board of Directors:
Josh Maxwell, Board Chairman
Jon Huey, Board Clerk
Danna Quinn (via Zoom)
Ed Gee (via Zoom)
Matt Peterson

Verde Valley Fire District Staff Present:
Danny Johnson, Fire Chief
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager
Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist
Teddy Koehler, Fire Inspector
Jacob Marx, Firefighter (via Zoom)
Cody Harkey, Battalion Chief (via Zoom)
Spencer Young, Engineer
Robbie Weigele, Firefighter
Zach Morgan, Firefighter (via Zoom)
Tucker Ihrman, Captain (via Zoom)
Matt Poe, Acting Captain (via Zoom)

Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District Staff Present:
Kerrie Tarver, HR Coordinator
Misty Weatherford, Administrative Assistant
Daniel Elliott, Battalion Chief (via Zoom)
Rob Jennings, Fleet Manager (via Zoom)
Nate Bailey, Fire Marshal
Rob Young, Engineer (via Zoom)
Patrick Moran, Firefighter / Union VP Local 3690
Salvador Unale, Firefighter (via Zoom)
Taylor Hammond, Captain (via Zoom)

Others Present:
Nicolas Cornelius, District Attorney (via Zoom)
Vytautas Starin, Verde Independent Reporter
Unknown Attendee, (via Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District (CCFMD) Board Chairman Maxwell.

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.

MOMENT OF SILENCE – A moment of silence was observed.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC – None.

NEW BUSINESS

CCFMD Board Chairman Maxwell opened the floor for discussion regarding the possible adoption of CCFMD Resolution 2026-02 and VVFD Resolution 2026-04, authorizing the initiation of the formation of a Joint Powers Authority between the Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District and the Verde Valley Fire District.

Chief Johnson stated that both Boards have Resolutions prepared to approve the Joint Powers Authority (JPA). He explained that the only differences between the Resolutions are the District name and the Resolution number. Chief Johnson clarified that the proposed Resolutions do not finalize the JPA, but authorize Staff to begin finalizing the JPA structure and create all supporting documents for consideration by both Boards.

Chief Johnson noted an anticipated start date for the new entity of July 1, 2027. He stated that the purpose of this meeting is for the Boards to review the proposed Resolutions and ask questions. He added that the Districts' attorney, Nicolas Cornelius, is present to address any legal questions regarding the documents.

Chief Johnson stated that if the Boards decide to adopt the Resolutions, each District will need to make individual motions to approve its respective Resolution.

Mr. Cornelius stated that Staff is presenting the formal Resolutions authorizing Staff from both agencies to move forward with developing the necessary mechanisms and processes, and to report back to the Boards on the status of those efforts and their findings. He emphasized that this is only the first step, and that many items will need to be addressed moving forward, including seniority, pensions and retirement accounts, payroll and wages, the transfer of assets to the JPA, and the establishment of a new Employer Identification Number (EIN).

Mr. Cornelius stated that he has worked on several JPAs within the State of Arizona and was involved in drafting the first JPA in the state. He noted that the process has evolved over the years and is now more refined and focused.

Chief Johnson asked if the Boards had any questions for Mr. Cornelius or himself.

CCFMD Board Clerk Huey asked how future Board meetings would be conducted as Staff begins working through these processes, specifically whether the two agencies would begin holding monthly joint meetings. Chief Johnson responded that he does not believe it is necessary to begin monthly joint meetings at this time. He stated that joint meetings would more likely begin within the next six months, as the documents near finalization, particularly when discussing the JPA structure and governance.

CCFMD Board Clerk Huey asked Mr. Cornelius whether any other agencies in Arizona that have formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) have experienced obstacles with PSPRS during the process. Mr. Cornelius stated that during the first JPA in 2015, there were several delays involving PSPRS, VFIS, and the Department of Revenue, as these entities had not previously encountered a JPA structure. He noted that while Arizona Revised Statute § 48-805.01 had been in place for a long time, the use of JPAs was new at that time. Mr. Cornelius explained that improvements have been made to the process, including the ability for JPAs to obtain a .gov email address, which simplifies functions such as processing fingerprints for new employees. He stated that once the JPA is established as a legal entity under statute, the assets and liabilities of the participating districts are transferred to the JPA, and employees become employees of the JPA moving forward. He further noted that the entities involved are now familiar with JPAs, allowing the process to occur more efficiently.

Chief Johnson stated that the Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) has amended legislation to further streamline the process and ensure that a fire authority is recognized as a legal entity under the State.

CCFMD Board Clerk Huey stated that he wanted to ensure that any employee going through the retirement process during this transition would not experience any delays.

CCFMD Board Clerk Huey made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-02 Authorizing the Initiation of the Formation of a Joint Powers Authority with Verde Valley Fire District. CCFMD Board Chairman Maxwell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VVFD Board Member Bishop made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-04 Authorizing the Initiation of the Formation of a Joint Powers Authority with Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District. VVFD Board Member Brummett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Submitted By:

Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist

Approved:

Coleen Gilboy, VVFD Board Chairman

Attest:

Don Peck, VVFD Board Clerk

Approved:

Josh Maxwell, CCFMD Board Chairman

Attest:

Jon Huey, CCFMD Board Clerk