Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District Held May 26, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on May 26, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in person at Station 31, 2700 E. Godard Road, Cottonwood, Arizona and electronically (via Zoom).

Board of Directors:
Coleen Gilboy, Board Chairman
Donald Peck, Board Clerk
Robert Brummett (absent)
Kenneth Bishop
Nicholas Brunori

Staff Present:
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager
Daniel Johnson. Fire Chief
Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist
Nate Bailey, Fire Marshal

Others Present:
AJ Purinton, retired Firefighter
Family of AJ Purinton
James Kling, Journal Extra Reporter
Rae Santos
Nicolas Cornelius, District Attorney (via Zoom)
Unknown (via Zoom)
Daniela Drake (via Zoom)

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

ROLL CALL – Board Member Brummett was absent; a quorum was present.

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

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 17 firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2026 to date.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC – None

Consent Agenda – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. **Minutes** – Discussion and consideration of the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 28, 2026 and the Executive Session held on April 28, 2026.

Board Clerk Peck made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Board Member Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- The month ending April 30, 2026 is the tenth month of the fiscal year (FY2025-2026), which equates to 83% of the year-to-date budget.
- Total cash in the General Fund is $5,160,437.81 (does not include the PSPRS COP Contingency Reserve Fund).
- 01-104001 – PSPRS COP Lease Payment Fund – The increase in the balance includes the payment due on May 1st that was paid in April. US Bank was still holding the payment as of April 30, 2026. The payment will be recoded as an expense in May when it is applied by US Bank.
- Increase in cash of $1,547,174 during the month.
- Positive cash flow of $2,755,706 for the fiscal year.
- Cash flows show that they are adequate to fund the fiscal year's operations.
- FY2025-2026 Property Tax Revenues received: $1,961,174.07
- Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) Revenues received: $112,162.04.
- The following account explanations are for items occurring within the month of April 2026:
    - Page 3 Account 01-6100-612002 Consulting Services – Ambulance Billing Study.
    - Page 3 Account 01-6100-612011 Hiring / Promotion Testing Fees – Captain's promotional process fees.
    - Page 7 Account 01-6500-654202 Boots – Returned 2 pairs of boots.
    - Page 8 Account 01-6600-667307 2015 Dodge Ram – Throttle valve replacement.
    - Page 12 Account 02-8000-854100 Firefighting Equipment – 26 SCBA cylinders and thermal imager.
    - Page 12 Account 02-8000-898000 Disbursement of Loan Proceeds – Payment to Underwriter Counsel from bond issuance costs.
- Total operating-only expenditures ONLY (excluding Contingency, Grants, Other Financing Uses) are 16.2% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- Total General Fund expenditures are 23.58% lower than the year-to-date allocation. Total year-to-date expenditures are shown on page 11 of the Monthly Financials – Detail report.
- The District has collected $7,180,490 (93%) of the FY2025-2026 budgeted Property Tax Revenues.
- For the month of April 2026, there were 103 billable calls. This is a decrease of 25 billable calls from the prior month and a year-to-date increase of 127 billable calls from the same timeframe in FY2024-2025.
- Ambulance cash collections of $68,716.49 were received. Year-to-date cash collections have increased $263,598 compared to the same timeframe in FY2024-2025.
- Total Ambulance Billing Receivables were $537,491.02, an increase of $6,615.96 from the prior month.
- For the month of April 2026, $2,842.66 was sent to collections, $0.00 was received. The total amount at collections is $244,181.49.
- Crews have deployed five (5) assignments through April 30, 2026.
    - Payment has been received for all five (5) deployments.

Board Member Bishop made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Board Member Brunori seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Chairman Gilboy requested that item 11. A, Employee Recognition, be next on the agenda.

Employee Recognition – Recognition of the retirement of Firefighter AJ Purinton.

Chief Johnson stated that he would like to recognize AJ Purinton for his time here at Verde Valley Fire District. He shared that the District is better because of AJ's dedication and service, and that he is greatly missed around the station. Chief Johnson presented AJ with his retirement plaque.

Mr. Purinton thanked the District for all they have done for him and his family throughout his time at Verde Valley Fire District.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – A report from the Chairperson on their recent activities for the District.
Board Chairman Gilboy thanked everyone who came to the Verde Valley Fair. She also thanked those who were at the Life and Fire Safety (LAFS) trailer and said it is great to have it in the community, giving kids a chance to see firefighters in a fun setting while learning about fire safety.

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

FIRE INSPECTOR REPORT – A report from the Fire Inspector, discussion, and possible action regarding current events and activities, including: Public education, fire prevention, meetings and events attended, training, permits issued and closed, significant projects, and inspections.

Fire Marshal Bailey presented the monthly statistics:

New Permits: 1 Solar
Complaints: 2 total – 0 Invalid, 1 – Referred to County
Inspections: 19 (New and Existing)
General correspondence, including site visits, emails, phone calls, and letters: 52
Occupancy load reviews: 0
Sprinkler Rough-in: 3
Preliminary code reviews: 3 PARS Town on Clarkdale
Residential Knox box installs: 2

Fire Marshal Bailey reported that plan reviews are in progress for the new Circle K project in Clarkdale. He also stated that he participated in a construction meeting with Yavapai County to discuss the proposed development on Loy Road in Cornville.

Fire Marshal Bailey noted that he and Fire Inspector Koehler recently conducted a fire extinguisher training class for the Cottonwood-Oak Creek School Staff. He reported they had two (2) fire investigations, one in Clarkdale and one in Cornville. Fire Marshal Bailey stated that he attended the International Association of Fire Chiefs Community Risk Reduction (IAFC CRR) Leadership Conference in Glendale and stated that it was a valuable conference with great learning opportunities.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT – A report from the Fire Chief, discussion and possible action regarding current events and his recent activities, including: National Line of Duty Firefighter deaths; meetings and events attended; human resource updates; finance and grant updates; special projects/other updates; wildland assignments and mutual aid; out-of-District calls; County and State updates; AFDA updates; and other potential updates.

Chief Johnson reported on items from his report including:

- Meetings and Events
  - AFDA Legislative Updates
  - AFDA Monthly Meeting
  - Verde Valley Mayors and Managers Meeting
  - Arizona Fire Service Institute (AFSI)
  - AZBOR Problem Statements Meeting
  - AFDA/DFFM Meeting
  - PFFA Convention
  - Copper Canyon Fire Board & Staff Meetings
  - Verde Valley Labor Management Meeting
- Human Resources
  - Firefighter Hiring: New Verde Valley firefighters have completed their training academy.
  - Firefighter applications have closed to establish another hiring list.
- Finance / Grants
  - Firehouse Subs grant was submitted for turnouts.
    - The District requested $ 20,531.27 from Firehouse Subs to purchase four (4) sets of turnouts (jackets and pants).
  - We were moved to the next phase for CDS FY26, requesting $430,000 for an ambulance.
  - In the process of applying for the Gila River, Rural Health, and AFG grants.
  - Budget processes and MOU negotiations are underway.
- Special Projects / Other
  - Go Bond
    - We are in the early stages of research and negotiations with Clarkdale Jerome School on the adjacent property.
  - Communication Research
    - We received the Mission Critical Partners proposal to evaluate our radio infrastructure. We are reviewing it now. If we decide to proceed with them, it will be procured through state contract.
- Wildland Assignments / Mutual Aid
  - There were 0 wildland assignments for the month.
    - Chief Johnson stated that they did get a call for a fire in Buckeye, but the District was unable to staff it.
- Out of District Calls
  - Total OOD responses to date in May: 0
- Legislative & Regulatory Updates
  - The 57th Arizona Legislature, 2nd Regular Session convened January 12, 2026.
  - Bill activity this week: 1,998 bills posted: 125 passed, 64 signed, 61 vetoed, 125 session days.
- 2026 Fire Service Legislation – AFDA Active Engagement
  - HB2641 – PFAS; firefighting foam; prohibition
  - SB1135 – death benefits; burial costs
  - SB1136 – workers' compensation; death benefits; remarriage
  - HB2402 – ambulance services; certificates of necessity
  - SB1235 – EMS reciprocity; compact
  - SB1216 – traumatic event counseling
  - SB1215 – firefighters; occupational disease; cancers
  - SB1538 – workers' compensation; PTSD; midomafetamine treatment
  - HB2876 – public bodies; executive sessions; agenda
  - HB2795 – small modular reactors; zoning; approval

- AFDA Upcoming Events
  - June 4, 2026 – AFDA Board Meeting (TEAMS) – 10:00 a.m.
  - July 13, 2026 – AFDA Annual Membership Meeting – AFCA / AFDA Leadership Conference
  - July 14-16, 2026 – AFCA / AFDA Leadership Conference

OLD BUSINESS

Joint Powers Authority (JPA) – Discussion and update regarding Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District.

Chief Johnson stated that Staff has been working on the JPA process. He shared that one of the first items that needs to be finalized is the name of the Authority. He stated that 38 name submissions were received and that Staff will meet with Labor to help finalize the selection. He explained that a finalized name is needed in order to complete the legal documents associated with creating the JPA.

Chief Johnson stated that Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority has the most recent fire authority agreement with updated legal revisions. He has been reviewing their agreement and using it as a guide to develop what a similar agreement would look like for Verde Valley Fire District. He noted that it is a large document and stated that he will send it to the Board Members in advance for review to help them understand the content and language of the agreement. He also shared that he is working on a "cheat sheet" that will break down each section to help provide a clearer understanding.

Chief Johnson stated that he and Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott have begun contacting entities that the District conducts business with to identify any steps needed to support the JPA transition and the transfer of accounts and services.

Chief Johnson stated that he is also creating a roadmap so that Staff and Board Members understand what needs to be done, what is currently happening, and the overall process moving forward.

Chief Johnson stated that both the Verde Valley Fire District Board and the Copper Canyon Fire & Medical Board will need to create and approve the structure of the Authority Board as well as the bylaws. He further explained that the Authority Board will need to be established prior to the formation of the Authority itself, as it will be responsible for approving the budget and completing required preliminary actions.

Board Member Brunori asked how many members would serve on the Authority Board. Chief Johnson stated that it would be a five-member board.

Board Chairman Gilboy asked whether the community would be involved in selecting the name. Chief Johnson stated that he was unsure if the community would select the name. He stated that he believes the name should represent the community as well as have buy-in from the membership. Chief Johnson further stated that the Board would have the final vote on the name selection.

Board Member Gilboy asked whether the date referenced on the Board agenda for the Joint Special Meeting should be updated from June 12, 2025 to March 31, 2026. Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott confirmed that it should be March 31, 2026 and stated that staff will update the Board agenda.

Board Chairman Gilboy asked whether the Board would receive the roadmap before the June Board meeting. Chief Johnson stated that he would provide it to the Board soon.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum of Understanding – Discussion and possible approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3690 Verde Valley Chapter for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

Chief Johnson stated that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) redline version is included in the Board packet. He stated that there are minimal changes, which include updated dates, fiscal year dates, a 3% wage scale adjustment, a 3% COLA, an increase of $3.00 per hour for paramedics, and the addition of compensatory time. Chief Johnson stated that this MOU will be in place for one year, as it will need to be addressed again once the Authority is formed.

Board Member Bishop made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3690 Verde Valley Chapter for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Board Clerk Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY2026-2027 Tentative Budget Adoption – Discussion and possible adoption of the FY2026-2027 Tentative Budget.

Chief Johnson stated that the District is required to adopt a tentative budget and post the budget for at least twenty (20) days prior to the public hearing and adoption of the final budget. He stated that there have been minimal changes between the Budget Committee meeting and the proposed Draft Budget presented at the April Board meeting.

Chief Johnson explained that staff had been waiting for several items to be finalized before completing the tentative budget. He stated that the capital-funded expenditures have now been finalized. He also noted that there were several EMS budget items that needed to be finalized due to changes with DHS and DEA license requirements, along with finalizing the health insurance premiums. He stated that those items have now been completed and incorporated into the tentative budget.

Board Clerk Peck made a motion to adopt the FY2026-2027 Tentative Budget. Board Member Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ambulance Billing – Discussion and possible direction to Staff regarding ambulance billing matters; the Board may vote to go into Executive Session for legal advice pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 A.3 for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body.

Fire Chief's Performance Evaluation – Discussion and possible action regarding the annual performance evaluation of the Fire Chief; the Board may vote to go into Executive Session for the annual performance evaluation of the Fire Chief pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 A.1. for discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee, or employee of any public officer, appointee, or employee of any public body regarding the same.

Fire Chief Employment Agreement – Discussion and possible action regarding the Employment Agreement with Daniel Johnson for the position of Fire Chief, the Board may vote to go into Executive

Session regarding the Employment Agreement of the Fire Chief pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 A.1. for discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee, or employee of any public body regarding the same.

Chief Johnson stated that the Board may vote to go into Executive Session for items 12. A, Ambulance Billing, 12. B, Fire Chief's Performance Evaluation, and 12. C, Fire Chief Employment Agreement.

Board Clerk Peck made a motion to go into Executive Session. Board Member Brunori seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Johnson requested that he attend the Executive Session. He also requested that Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott attend to take minutes, and Nicolas Cornelius for legal advice.

The Board entered Executive Session at 5:33 p.m.

The Board resumed Public Session at 6:24 p.m.

RECONVENE INTO PUBLIC SESSION

Ambulance Billing – Discussion and possible direction to Staff regarding ambulance billing matters.

Fire Chief's Performance Evaluation – Discussion and possible direction to Staff regarding Fire Chief's Performance Evaluation.

Fire Chief Employment Agreement – Discussion and possible direction to Staff regarding Fire Chief Employment Agreement.

Board Chairman Gilboy stated that there were no actions to be taken.

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

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Submitted By:

Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist

Approved:

Coleen Gilboy, Board Chairman

Attest:

Donald Peck, Board Clerk