Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District Held June 23, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on June 23, 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 (via Zoom)
Kenneth Bishop
Nicholas Brunori

Staff Present:
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager
Daniel Johnson. Fire Chief
Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist
Teddy Koehler, Fire Inspector
Seth Murphy, EMS Captain
Philip Graham, Acting Battalion Chief
Jonathan Pizzi, Captain / Union VP Local 3690 (via Zoom)

Others Present:
Nicolas Cornelius, District Attorney (via Zoom)
Carl Whiting, Jerome Fire Department
James Kling, Journal Extra Reporter

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

ROLL CALL – All Board Members were present; 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 32 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 May 26, 2026 and the Executive Session held on May 26, 2026.

B. **FY2026-2027 Wage Scale** – Discussion and possible approval of the FY2026-2027 Wage Scale.

C. **Resolution 2026-07 Policy Revisions** – Discussion and possible adoption of Resolution 2026-07 adopting a revised Overtime Compensation policy.

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D. **General Obligation Bond Sale** – Discussion and recognition of the general obligation bonds sold totaling $9,265,000.00.

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 May 31, 2026 is the eleventh month of the fiscal year (FY2025-2026), which equates to 92% of the year-to-date budget.
- Bank Reconciliation Summary Report
    - Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott stated that the Bank Reconciliation Summary Report has been updated to include a five-year comparison of each of the District's bank accounts, compared to the same time period in previous years. Chief Johnson stated that this is a valuable addition to the District's financial reporting. Board Chairman Gilboy stated that she appreciated the updated report and asked if the General Obligation Bond funds were at the County. Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott stated yes.
- Total cash in the General Fund is $4,685,256.91 (does not include the PSPRS COP Contingency Reserve Fund).
- 01-104001 – PSPRS COP Lease Payment Fund – US Bank had not transferred the payment as of the end of May.
- Due From / Due To accounts – Letters to transfer amounts due have been signed by the Board Chairman Gilboy.
- Decrease in cash of $92,299 during the month.
- Positive cash flow of $2,662,913 for the fiscal year.
- Cash flows show that they are adequate to fund the fiscal year's operations.
- FY2025-2026 Property Tax Revenues received: $289,337.49.
- Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) Revenues received: $18,772.92.
- The following account explanations are for items occurring within the month of May 2026:
    - Page 7 Account 01-6500-654601 Rope Rescue Supplies – Equipment requested in FY2026-2027 purchased in FY2025-2026 due to additional funds being available in Operations budget.
    - Page 7 Account 01-6500-654602 Swift Water Supplies– Equipment requested in FY2026-2027 purchased in FY2025-2026 due to additional funds being available in Operations budget.
    - Page 8 Account 01-6600-667109 2014 Rosenbauer – EGR Cooler Replacement, Air Dryer Assembly Replacement, etc.
    - Page 8 Account 01-6600-667112 2020 Pierce Arrow XT Pumper – Replace Pump Packing and Oil Pan.
    - Page 8 Account 01-6600-667113 2020 Pierce Arrow XT Pumper – Replace Pump Packing and Oil Pan.
    - Page 12 Account 02-8000-844002 Monitor / Defibrillator– Six (6) Zoll Zenix Monitors / Defibrillators with supplies.
- Total operating expenditures ONLY (excluding Contingency, Grants, Other Financing Uses) are 19.01% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- Total General Fund expenditures are 27.47% 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 $7,469,828 (97%) of the FY2025-2026 budgeted Property Tax Revenues.
- For the month of May 2026, there were 117 billable calls. This is an increase of 14 billable calls from the prior month and a year-to-date increase of 110 billable calls from the same timeframe in FY2024-2025.

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- Ambulance cash collections of $87,008.12 were received. Year-to-date cash collections have increased $261,913 compared to the same timeframe in FY2024-2025.
- Chief Johnson stated our numbers were a little low because of the AHCCCS Audit, they will show on June's financials. Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott stated the cash collections is what is being affected.
- Total Ambulance Billing Receivables were $582,270.05, an increase of $44,779.03 from the prior month.
- For the month of May 2026, $7,071.70 was sent to collections, $0.00 was received. The total amount at collections is $250,272.14.
- Crews have deployed five (5) assignments through May 31, 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.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – A report from the Chairperson on their recent activities for the District.
None

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.

Union Vice President Pizzi shared that the Local 3690 is working to develop a Union Handbook that members will be able to use as a resource for labor-related issues and reference materials. He also stated that he is working with Sedona Fire District on what the updated NFPA 1580 standards may look like. He stated that the goal is to implement any new standards in 2027, allowing members adequate time to prepare for any changes.

Union Vice President Pizzi stated that he is looking forward to working with the Board on the JPA process.

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 Inspector Koehler stated that one of the significant projects he has been working on is a C1D1 Hydrocarbon Extraction Facility. He reported that five (5) fire investigations have been completed. Of those investigations, two (2) fires occurred in Cornville and one (1) occurred in Clarkdale, which involved a fatality. He added that the regional investigation team responded to help assist with the investigation.

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 that the Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) has entered into an agreement with Jim Rounds' group, who is an economist and does work with the Arizona Legislature. He stated the agreement will allow the group to conduct an economic study on fire districts throughout the state of Arizona. Chief Johnson

stated the study will be beneficial in supporting future legislation by providing an economic impact. He anticipates the study will be completed by December 2026.

Chief Johnson also reported that Verde Valley Fire District and Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District recently participated in a joint mental health training. He recognized Captain Pizzi for coordinating the training and expressed his appreciation for his hard work in organizing the event. Chief Johnson stated the training was well received and emphasized its importance in supporting the mental health and well-being of fire service personnel.

- Human Resources
  - No Updates
- 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). Have not heard anything.
  - We were moved to the next phase for CDS FY26, requesting $430,000 for an ambulance.
  - Applied for the Gila River grant and in the process of applying for a Rural Health grant.
  - Applied for an AFG grant through FEMA.
- 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.
- Wildland Assignments / Mutual Aid
  - There was 1 wildland assignment for the month.
    - Chief Johnson stated that we have two (2) members on the Pocket Fire in Sedona.
- Out of District Calls
  - Total OOD responses to date in June: 1
    - Chief Johnson stated the resident is interested in annexing into the District.
- Legislative & Regulatory Updates
  - The Legislature has adjourned sine die, bringing the 2026 legislative session to a close.
- 2026 Fire Service Legislation – AFDA Active Engagement
  - SB1215 – firefighters; occupational disease; cancers – Passed
  - SB1216 – traumatic event counseling – Passed

Board Member Brunori asked what changes were made regarding HB 2660. Chief Johnson stated the changes allow municipalities to continue approving leaves of absence for military leave training.

OLD BUSINESS

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

Chief Johnson stated that the top eight (8) name submissions were sent to employees from both organizations for voting. The top four (4) selections were Verde Valley Fire Authority**,** Verde River Fire**,** Copper State**,** and Verde Fire & Rescue Authority**.** He stated that many employees favored Verde Valley Fire Authority because the entire service area is recognized as the Verde Valley, while others preferred Verde River Fire because the Verde River connects all communities served.

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Chief Johnson noted concerns with the name Copper State due to a similarly named ambulance company that could create issues during the Certificate of Necessity (CON) process. He also stated that Verde Fire & Rescue Authority is similar to another company's name and could cause confusion.

Board Chairman Gilboy asked whether the names would be presented to the community for input. Chief Johnson stated that he had spoken with other agencies that had used public voting and was advised that the process became divisive and contentious. Board Member Brunori stated his preference for Verde Valley Fire Authority and asked whether there had been any pushback from Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District (CCFMD) employees. Chief Johnson stated that many CCFMD employees supported the name.

Chief Johnson stated that Staff hopes to select a name at the July Board meeting so legal documentation for formation of the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) can proceed. He reminded Board members that documents outlining the JPA formation process had been emailed and requested that questions be submitted in advance for staff and legal review.

Chief Johnson also stated that the CCFMD July Board meeting conflicts with the AFCA/AFDA Summer Conference and that a joint Board meeting is being proposed for July 28, 2026. Board Chairman Gilboy reiterated her desire for public input and suggested posting the name options on the District's social media pages. Chief Johnson stated that he would explore that option.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing on Tentative Budget – A hearing to obtain public input on the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Board Chairman Gilboy opened the Public Hearing for the FY2026-2027 proposed budget at 5:36 p.m.

There was no public input regarding the FY2026-2027 proposed budget.

Board Chairman Gilboy closed the Public Hearing for FY2026-2027 proposed budget at 5:37 p.m.

Resolution 2026-08 Adopting the FY2026-2027 Budget – Discussion and possible adoption of Resolution 2026-08 adopting a budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Board Member Bishop made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-08 adopting a budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Board Clerk Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EMS Medical Direction Services – Discussion and possible approval of the International Medical Direction, LLC Agreement for EMS Medical Direction.

EMS Captain Murphy explained that changes to state EMS regulations, including requirements for operations across state lines, make the agreement beneficial. The agreement would provide medical direction, bloodborne pathogen exposure review, continuing education, assistance with DEA licensure and ongoing regulatory compliance, and future opportunities to develop a paramedic training program. He noted that the program provides 24/7 access to medical direction and is currently used by other fire agencies.

Board Member Brunori asked how the proposed agreement would differ from the District's current agreement. EMS Captain Murphy stated that the District would continue using its current records system while receiving medical oversight through a new medical direction provider. He added that staff would have 24/7 access to physician consultation.

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Chief Johnson stated that many hospital systems are moving away from providing prehospital coordinators, making this an opportunity for the District to stay ahead of those changes. He added that the agreement would provide a dedicated medical director and additional support services.

Board Member Brunori asked about establishing a District paramedic training program. Captain Murphy stated that as the organization grows, it could develop its own hybrid or in-person paramedic program.

Board Chairman Gilboy asked whether Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District (CCFMD) has an agreement with IMD. Chief Johnson stated that CCFMD does not have an agreement with IMD but currently operates under Honor Health's medical direction, which the District would also receive through this agreement. He noted that costs are based on call volume and will increase slightly when the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) is formed.

Board Chairman Gilboy asked about medication storage. Chief Johnson explained that a Pyxis inventory system would be installed at Station 31 to securely store and track medications and supplies. He added that the system would monitor inventory, assist with restocking, and replace expired medications at no additional cost to the District.

Board Clerk Peck made a motion to approve the International Medical Direction, LLC Agreement for EMS Medical Direction and Addendum to Professional Services Contract effective July 1, 2026. Board Member Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Radio Assessment Proposal – Discussion and possible approval of the Radio System Needs Assessment proposal from Mission Critical Partners.

Chief Johnson presented the proposal from Mission Critical Partners for a Radio System Needs Assessment.

Board Member Gilboy asked about available options within Arizona and whether environmental conditions in the state, particularly heat, would be a concern. Chief Johnson stated that while heat is a consideration, it does not significantly impact radio infrastructure. He noted that Phoenix has implemented similar systems. He added that heat primarily affects equipment cabinets, which can be addressed through mobile cooling units attached to communication enclosures.

Chief Johnson stated the proposed system would be more robust than a standard Wi-Fi camera system and would meet 911 and P25 communication standards.

Board Member Brunori asked about the evaluation timeline. Chief Johnson estimated approximately six months to assess system coverage and infrastructure across the service area. Board Member Brunori further asked whether physical transmission testing would be conducted. Chief Johnson stated that LTE failover testing would be included, and that radios have already been tested in similar conditions, including Department of Public Safety (DPS) service areas where radio coverage is limited.

Chief Johnson also stated that the District is now utilizing Starlink as part of its communication infrastructure to support connectivity in areas with limited or unreliable coverage.

Board Member Bishop made a motion to approve the Radio System Needs Assessment proposal from Mission Critical Partners totaling $42,080. Board Clerk Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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.

Property Negotiations – Discussion and possible approval for the Fire Chief to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of property; the Board may vote to go into Executive Session regarding the negotiations for the purchase or real property pursuant to A.R.S § 38-431.03. A.7. for discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body in order to consider its position and instruct its representative regarding negotiations for the purchase, sale or lease of real property.

Chief Johnson stated that the Board may vote to go into Executive Session for items 12. A, Fire Chief Employment Agreement, and 12. B, Property Negotiations.

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 5:54 p.m.

The Board resumed Public Session at 6:30 p.m.

RECONVENE INTO PUBLIC SESSION

Fire Chief Employment Agreement – Discussion and possible approval of the revised Employment Agreement with Daniel Johnson for the position of Fire Chief.

Board Member Brunori made a motion to approve the Fire Chief's Employment Agreement with the changes as discussed in Executive Session. Board Member Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Property Negotiations – Discussion and possible direction to Fire Chief to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of property as discussed in Executive Session.

Board Member Peck made a motion to approve Chief Johnson to enter into negotiations for the acquisition of property as discussed in Executive Session. Board Member Brunori seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda.
None

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ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Submitted By:

Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist

Approved:

Coleen Gilboy, Board Chairman

Attest:

Donald Peck, Board Clerk

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