

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District Held
July 25, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on July 25, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in person at Station 31, 2700 E. Godard Road, Cottonwood, Arizona and electronically (via Zoom).

Board of Directors:

Robert Brummett, Chairman
Coleen Gilboy, Board Clerk
Kenneth Bishop
Donald Peck
Timothy Bishop (via zoom)

Staff Present:

Danny Johnson, Fire Chief
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager
Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist
Danny Hinds, Fire Inspector
Richard Wintermute, Acting Battalion Chief / Union VP Local 3690
Matt Robertson, Captain
Jacob Marx, Firefighter / Union Trustee Local 3690
Scott Mattix, Firefighter (via zoom)
Tucker Ihrman, Captain (via zoom)
Matthew Chavez, Firefighter (via zoom)
Cody Harkey, Captain (via zoom)

Others Present:

None

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

ROLL CALL – All Board 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 43 U.S. firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2023 to date.

ORDER OF THE AGENDA – Discussion and consideration of changing the order of the agenda.

MINUTES – Discussion and consideration of the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 25, 2023, the Executive Session held on June 27, 2023, and the Regular Meeting held on June 27, 2023.

Board Clerk Gilboy made a motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 25, 2023, the Executive Session held on June 27, 2023 and the Regular Meeting held on June 27, 2023. Board Member K Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CALL THE PUBLIC – None.

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 District is 100% through the fiscal year.
- Total cash in the General Fund is \$2,954,718.35 (does not include the PSPRS COP Contingency Reserve Fund.)
- Decrease in cash of \$47,785.00 for the month of June.
- Positive cash flow of \$999,812.00 for the fiscal year.
- Cash flows show that they are adequate to fund the fiscal year's operations.
- FY2022-2023 Property Tax Revenues received: \$63,109.71.
- Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) Revenues received: \$4,234.92.
- Total operating-only expenditures were 6.36% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- Total General Fund expenditures were 13.85% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- The District has collected \$6,185,371 (100%) of the FY2022-2023 budgeted Property Tax Revenues.
- Ambulance cash collections of \$68,175.18 and 115 billable calls in the month. Increase of eight (8) calls from May 2023 and a year-to-date decrease of twenty-three (23) calls compared to the same timeframe in FY2021-2022 Cash collection have increased \$47,620.00 compared to the same timeframe in FY2021-2022.
- Ambulance Billing Receivables increased \$19,274.86 in June 2023 totaling \$686,897.79.
- \$16.25 received from the collection agency in June.
- Crews have deployed on nine (9) assignments in FY2022-2023 to date.
 - Invoices have been submitted for all assignments. Payment was outstanding for three (3) assignments as of June 30, 2023.

Board Clerk Gilboy made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Board Member Peck seconded. 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 Trustee Marx stated there was no significant monthly information to report.

Union Vice President Wintermute stated that Union Trustee Marx will be handling the Union side of things right now while he is temporarily fulfilling the Battalion Chief position. He stated that he attended the Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) Summer Conference that was held on July 11-14, 2023.

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, and inspections.

Fire Inspector Hinds presented the monthly statistics:

New Permits: 0

Complaints: 1 – Referred to County.
 General and Final Inspections: 16
 General correspondence including site visits, emails, phone calls and letters: 25+
 Plan Reviews: 1
 Preliminary Code Reviews: 1
 Car Seat: 8 Installs

Fire Inspector Hinds stated that he has been working on moving scanned files into Emergency Reporting (ER) so that when ESO migrates all the records to their system all the files will be located with the appropriate occupancy. He stated that he is currently still working on the Fire Prevention SOPs. He stated that he attended the monthly Fire Marshals meeting, there was discussion of going to stage two (2) fire restrictions if there is not any moisture soon. Fire Inspector Hinds stated that he attended the annual 4th of July pancake breakfast in Clarkdale. He stated there was a great turnout and eleven (11) Verde Valley Fire District's employees volunteered.

Fire Inspector Hinds stated that this would be his last Board meeting as the Fire Inspector, as he has accepted a position with the City of Cottonwood and his last day will be August 3, 2023.

Board Chairman Brummett and Board Clerk Gilboy congratulated Fire Inspector Hinds on his new adventure.

Fire Chief Johnson stated that he appreciates everything Fire Inspector Hinds has done for the District.

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 Attended
 - CCFMD Board Meeting
 - Chief Johnson and Board Chairman Brummett attend Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District's (CCFMD) Board meeting. Presented the JMA to CCFMD Board, CCFMD is having legal review the JMA.
 - Clarkdale Community Drowning Debrief
 - Chief Johnson and Battalion Chief Koropatnicki attended the drowning debrief.
 - Clarkdale Old Fashion Parade
 - AFDA Executive Board Strategic Meeting
 - To prepare for the Professional Fire Fighters of Arizona (PFFA).
 - AFDA/AFCA Conference
 - Securis Board Orientation
 - ADHS/AFCA/AFDA/PFFA Ambulance Rules Meeting
 - Chief Johnson stated that there has been conversation of ambulance rules rewrites that include, response criteria and designated region response times.
 - DFFM Fire District Grants Disbursement
 - Verde Santa Fe Community Meeting
 - Chief Johnson stated that he gave a year in review presentation at Verde Santa Fe's community meeting. He stated that it was a great meeting and is continuing to build relationships with the community groups.
 - VVFD Monthly Board Meeting
 - VVFD Staff Meeting

- National Special District Council
- BC Test Planning
- Human Resources
 - Currently working on a job posting for ALS Firefighters.
 - BC test being developed.
 - Chief Johnson stated that the testing process will be held on August 8-9, 2023.
- Finance / Grants
 - No updates on the SAFER Grant.
 - Chief Johnson stated that he is expecting the first round of notifications of awards to be announced August through September.
 - FY2022/2023 Audit.
- Special Projects / Other
 - Beginning the process of selecting a new collection agency, looking to include ambulance billing and out of District billing.
 - Ambulance 311 accident update.
 - Ford chassis repairs have been completed, and the box is currently being repaired. All repairs have been approved by insurance.
 - AFDA/AFCA conference
 - Chief Johnson stated the AFDA/AFCA conference was well attended by VVFD, and everyone represented our agency well.
 - CON/DHS Updates
 - Chief Johnson stated the state has defined statutory requirements of equipment that is required in an ambulance. He stated a new definition they have added is every ambulance that has a CON is required to have GPS capabilities to help detail their response times. He stated there was \$12 million allocated in the state appropriations for fire response programs. He stated there was a new program released this year that he believes has GPS capabilities and could potentially get it covered for the first three (3) years through a grant.
- Wildland Assignments / Mutual Aid
 - Three (3) requests during July but couldn't fulfill two (2) due to staffing. Trail rescue 321 has a medic unit on the Grapevine fire.
- Out of District Calls
 - Total OOD responses: 3
 - Under a current Fire Protection Service Agreement: 1
 - Billed for OOD response: 2
 - Invoices were sent and both properties have outstanding balances. The outstanding balances for these two (2) properties are \$27,314.13.
- County and State Updates
 - Coming back from recess July 31, 2023.
- AFDA Updates – Legislative updates.
 - No AFDA Board meeting in August, the next meeting will be held in September.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Vehicle Purchase – Discussion and possible approval to purchase four (4) new vehicles including upfitting as needed.

Chief Johnson stated the District budgeted \$240,000 in the Capital Fund to purchase four (4) new staff vehicles through the Arizona State Contract. He asked for the Board's permission to move forward with the purchase. Chief Johnson stated that he contacted a local dealership to see if they participated in the Arizona State Contract pricing and is waiting for their response. He stated the budgeted \$240,000 would include the upfitting of the vehicles.

Board Member K Bishop made a motion to approve the purchase of four (4) staff vehicles. Board Member Peck seconded the motion.

Chief Johnson asked that the motion be made as suggested, to include purchasing through the Arizona State Contract including upfitting as needed, not to exceed the budgeted amount of \$240,000.

Board Member K Bishop revised the motion to include through the Arizona State Contract including upfitting as needed, not to exceed the budgeted amount of \$240,000. Board Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ARPA Funding – Discussion and possible approval of the use of the American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) funds applied for from the State of Arizona.

Chief Johnson stated the Arizona Governor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting Office (OSPB) allocated \$20 million of federal funding for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery funds (SLFRF) to be used to assist Arizona Fire Districts with their COVID-19 response.

He stated the remaining monies left over from the COVID-19 funds that were not applied to the workers' compensation pools were available for fire districts to apply for based on their net accessed value. He stated that Verde Valley Fire District was eligible to apply for \$309,891. He stated that this is one-time funding, and the District is requesting to give each current full-time employee a \$4,000 retention bonus when the funds are received.

Board Member Peck asked if each employee would receive the full \$4,000 or if there would be deductions.

Chief Johnson stated that the District must follow all tax and payroll laws for deductions. He stated that he does not believe PSPRS would be a deduction from it but is currently awaiting confirmation.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked if we have received these funds yet and if the District is guaranteed these funds.

Chief Johnson stated that we have not received the funds yet and are guaranteed the funds. He stated that the funds would not be allocated until the District received the funds.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked the total cost the District would be spending.

Chief Johnson stated the estimated cost is \$229,740 including the estimated payroll taxes.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked if employees who have not completed their probationary period would be eligible.

Chief Johnson stated for the employee to be eligible for the bonus the employee must complete their probationary period.

Board Chairman Brummett asked if this bonus would be for all new employees moving forward.

Chief Johnson stated the District could look at the success of the program but currently is not comfortable building a bonus in every pay cycle.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked if this funding was a one-time fund, and where the remaining funding would go.

Chief Johnson stated yes, and the remaining funding would go into the District's General Fund.

Board Member T Bishop made a motion to approve the payment of a bonus of \$4,000 to all current full-time employees from the American Rescue Plan Act funds when received. Board Clerk Gilboy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Johnson thanked the Board for approving and supporting the motion.

Paramedic Recruitment – Discussion and possible approval of the use of a recruitment bonus to assist in the recruitment and retention of Paramedic Firefighters.

Chief Johnson stated the District is preparing to post a job posting for paramedic firefighters. He stated that comparing to other Districts and organizations statewide, our starting paramedic firefighter pay is low. He stated the District would like to offer a \$4,000 recruitment and retention bonus to new paramedic firefighters in this hiring process after they complete their probationary period. He stated that this \$4,000 recruitment and retention bonus would come out of the ARPA funding the District is receiving.

Chief Johnson stated that we are competing with districts that are offering larger recruitment and retention bonuses. He stated we are unable to compete with these larger districts but sees this \$4,000 recruitment and retention bonus to be beneficial during the hiring process.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked if a current firefighter employee was to become a paramedic if they would receive two (2) bonuses.

Chief Johnson stated no, the current employee would have already received their bonus.

Board Chairman Brummett asked if the new hire was not a paramedic, they would not receive the bonus.

Chief Johnson stated the District is currently only recruiting paramedics.

Board Clerk Gilboy asked how many positions we are hiring for.

Chief Johnson stated that we are looking to establish a list for potential vacancies.

Board Member K Bishop made a motion to approve the use of a recruitment bonus to assist in the recruitment and retention of Paramedic Firefighters in the amount of \$4,000 after successful completion of the initial probationary period. Board Member Peck seconded the motion.

Board Clerk Gilboy confirmed after the successful completion of the initial probationary period.

The motion passed unanimously.

Employee Disciplinary Matter – Discussion and possible action regarding an employee disciplinary matter; the Board may vote to go into Executive Session regarding the employee disciplinary matter 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 there is the opportunity to go into Executive Session to discuss an employee disciplinary matter. He stated the employee being discussed has received twenty-four (24) hour notice for the Executive Session.

Board Member K Bishop made a motion to go into Executive Session for item 11.D. Board Member Peck 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 the Executive Session to take minutes.

The Board entered Executive Session at 5:55 p.m.

The Board reconvened Regular Session at 6:16 p.m.

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 6:17 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved:

Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist

Robert Brummett, Board Chairman

Attest:

Coleen Gilboy, Board Clerk