

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Verde Valley Fire District Held  
October 24, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Verde Valley Fire District Board of Directors was held on October 24, 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

Staff Present:

Danny Johnson, Fire Chief  
Lisa Elliott, Administrative Manager  
Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist  
Richard Lopez, Fire Inspector  
Jacob Marx, Firefighter / Union VP Local 3690  
Cody Harkey, Battalion Chief  
Jerry Sinica, Captain  
Ivan Anderson, Engineer  
Joseph Odell, Firefighter

AJ Purinton, Firefighter  
Jake McDaniel, Firefighter  
Scott Ashford, Firefighter  
Taber Buckley, Firefighter  
Genaro Garcia, Engineer  
Matt Chavez, Firefighter  
Louis Newell, Captain  
Stephen Smith, Engineer

Others Present:

Nicolas Cornelius, District Attorney (via Zoom)  
Shaun McCallum  
Friends and Family of Shaun McCallum  
Friends and Family of Joseph Odell  
Friends and Family of AJ Purinton  
Friends and Family of Ivan Anderson

**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.

Chief Johnson requested that the pledge of allegiance to the flag, the moment of silence, and agenda item 11. A, Employee Recognition, be held in the bay.

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

Board Clerk Gilboy made a motion to move the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the Moment of Silence, and Agenda Item 11. A, Employee Recognition, to the next item on the agenda and to be held in the bay. Board Member T Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**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 61 U.S. firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2023 to date.

**Employee Recognition – Recognition of newly hired Firefighters and badge pinning of employees.**

Chief Johnson thanked retired Battalion Chief Shaun McCallum for his twenty-four (24) years of service and dedication to Verde Valley Fire District. He wished him the best of luck and a happy retirement.

Verde Valley Fire District Chapter Union Vice President Jacob Marx presented Shaun McCallum with a retirement axe on behalf of the Sedona Verde Valley Fire Fighter's Local 3690.

Chief Johnson presented the Verde Valley Fire District's values and explained the importance and expectations of each value as an employee of the District. Chief Johnson administered the Oath of Office.

AJ Purinton was hired as a Firefighter and was pinned by his wife.

Joseph Odell was hired as a Firefighter and was pinned by his wife.

Ivan Anderson was promoted to Engineer and was pinned by his wife.

**MINUTES – Discussion and consideration of the minutes of the Regular Session held on September 26, 2023, and the Executive Session held on September 26, 2023.**

Board Member K Bishop made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on September 26, 2023, and the Executive Session held on September 26, 2023. Board Member T 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 25% through the fiscal year.
- Total cash in the General Fund is \$1,356,194.54 (does not include the PSPRS COP Contingency Reserve Fund.)
  - Balance sheet line items under liabilities are for payroll corrections.
- Decrease in cash of \$527,113 for the month of September.
- Negative cash flow of \$1,346,598 for the fiscal year.
- Cash flows show that they are adequate to fund the fiscal year's operations.
- FY2023-2024 Property Tax Revenues received: \$63,459.57.
- Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) Revenues received: \$5,327.23.
- Total operating-only expenditures are 5.34% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- Total General Fund expenditures are 6.5% lower than the year-to-date allocation.
- The District has collected \$63,459.57 (0.97%) of the FY2023-2024 budgeted Property Tax Revenues.
- Ambulance cash collections of \$79,246.97 and 98 billable calls in the month. Decrease of fifteen (15) calls from August 2023 and a year-to-date decrease of forty-two (42) calls compared to the same timeframe in FY2022-2023. Cash collections have increased by \$14,249.00 compared to the same timeframe in FY2022-2023.
- Total Ambulance Billing Receivables were \$586,392.71, a decrease of \$9,971.37 from the prior month.
- Crews have been deployed on four (4) assignments in FY2023-2024 to date.
  - The invoices have been submitted for all assignments.

Board Clerk Gilbo made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Board Member Peck 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 Marx stated there was no significant information to report for the month.

### **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 Lopez presented the monthly statistics:

New Permits: 4  
Complaints: 0  
General and Final Inspections: 18  
General correspondence including site visits, emails, phone calls and letters: 25+  
Plan Reviews: 2  
Preliminary Code Reviews: 0  
Car Seats: 39

Fire Inspector Lopez stated that he responded to one (1) fire in the District. He stated that Administrative Specialist Ashley Hammond is currently searching for a Car Seat Technician class to get more employees certified. He stated that he is currently building a system to keep inspections and permits more organized, and structured and getting caught up on annual inspections.

### **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
  - Budget Development Process Meeting VVFD/CCFMD
  - National Night Out Camp Verde
  - CCFMD Firefighter Oral Boards
  - Verde Valley Fire and EMS Chiefs Association
  - AFDA Board of Directors Meeting
  - CCFMD A-Shift Station Visits 81
  - Meeting with Tribal Leadership YAN
  - Meeting Action Ambulance
  - Out of Office Murry Spur Fire (OK)

- Went to Oklahoma with Firefighter Ethan Wright to volunteer at Murry Spur Fire Department.
  - Town of Clarkdale Leadership Meeting
  - Firefighter Wellness Meeting
  - CCFMD Board Meeting
  - CCFMD Staff Meeting
  - Arizona Fire Service Institute (AFSI)
  - PFFA/AFDA Legislative Meeting
  - Verde Valley Fire District Board Meeting
  - VVFD Staff Meeting
  - National Special District Counsel
  - Halloween Events (Camp Verde/Clarkdale)
- Human Resources
  - Annual Firefighter physicals have begun.
  - Securis annual claims audit.
    - Chief Johnson stated that the District's worker's compensation claim numbers are low, but we have three (3) of the highest claims in the Securis pool.
- Finance / Grants
  - No updates on the SAFER Grant.
  - FY2022/2023 Audit
    - Audit is ongoing, and fieldwork and site visits are complete. Hoping to have the audit presented at the November Board meeting.
  - RFP for collection services is almost complete.
    - Chief Johnson stated that Administrative Manager Lisa Elliott has been working on the RFP for collection services. The RRP is currently being reviewed by legal.
- Special Projects / Other
  - DFFM State Appropriations for Fire District grant process.
  - Engine and Tender replacement specs have started.
  - Staff vehicles were ordered. No ETA for delivery yet, looking for options for emergency lighting installations.
  - Centerville soil remediation has been scheduled:
    - Blue stake 10/9/23 – 10/11/23
    - Setup 10/31/23
    - Excavation 11/2/23 – 11/7/23
- Wildland Assignments / Mutual Aid
  - Captain Ihrman and Engineer Sandoval are on a pre-po in California.
  - VVFD Crews assisted on the PNF-controlled burn on October 11 – 12, 2023.
- Out of District Calls
  - Total OOD responses for September: 0
- County and State Updates
  - Chief Johnson presented the working draft of the 2024 Legislative agenda. He stated top priority is removing the cap and fully funding the Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT).
  - Chief Johnson stated that the JLBC Finance Advisory Committee is projecting the State will end the current fiscal year with a \$400M shortfall, as opposed to the \$10M surplus projected when the budget was adopted.
- AFDA Updates – Legislative updates.
  - AFDA Board Meeting scheduled for November 2, and December 7, 2023.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Deannexation Public Hearing – A hearing to obtain public input on the deannexation request for parcel number 406-15-466F located at 840 E House Mountain Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326.**

Chief Johnson stated the public hearing notice was mailed to the Craypsers via certified mail and emailed.

Nicolas Cornelius stated he saw a copy of the email correspondence between Chief Johnson and the Craypser residents confirming they had notice of the public hearing.

Board Chairman Brummett opened the Deannexation Public Hearing at 5:46 p.m.

There were no requests to speak from the public regarding the deannexation request.

Board Chairman Brummett closed the Deannexation Public Hearing at 5:46 p.m.

**Resolution 2023-13 – Discussion and possible adoption of Resolution 2023-13 amending the boundaries of Verde Valley Fire District by removing parcel number 406-15-466F located at 840 E House Mountain Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326; the Board may vote to go into Executive Session for legal advice pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03. A. 3. regarding the same.**

Chief Johnson stated the Board has the option to go into Executive Session for legal advice.

Nicolas Cornelius stated that the Craypser's property is not a single contiguous boundary property in the District and if the deannexation request is approved it will create a hole in the District. He stated the outstanding balance of out-of-district responses is large and the District currently does not have a way to collect those funds. Nicolas Cornelius mentioned creating holes in the District could cause liability issues with whether or not the District is responsible to respond. He referenced the lawsuit that is currently taking place where an out-of-district resident did not receive medical emergency services and is suing that district.

Nicolas Cornelius stated that the Board represents Verde Valley Fire District and the taxpayers of the District.

Chief Johnson asked Nick Cornelius what the suggested motion would be if the Board denied the deannexation.

Nicolas Cornelius stated that Board Chairman Brummett should ask if anyone on the Board wished to make a motion to approve Resolution 2023-13.

Board Chairman Brummett asked the Board if anyone would like to accept Resolution 2023-13.

Board Chairman Brummett stated hearing none, Resolution 2023-13 was not approved.

Nicholas Cornelius suggested that the District send the Craypsers a letter stating that at the Board Meeting held on October 24, 2023, the Board held a public hearing, there was no public comment regarding the deannexation request, the Board did not accept Resolution 2023-13 and that it was deemed denied.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Fire Protection Service Agreement – Discussion and possible approval of a Fire Protection Service Agreement to provide fire suppression, emergency medical, and ambulance services to 2105 East Peak Ridge Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326, parcel number 406-18-005A.**

Chief Johnson stated that the District has received one (1) letter from a resident to join a Fire Protection Service Agreement (FPSA) that cannot annex into Verde Valley Fire District.

Board Member T Bishop made a motion to approve the Fire Protection Service Agreement to provide fire suppression, emergency medical, and ambulance services to 2105 East Peak Ridge Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326, parcel number 406-18-005A. Board Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Cell Tower – Discussion and possible approval of or direction to Staff regarding the Maverick Towers LLC proposed lease agreement.**

Chief Johnson stated the District has received a proposed lease agreement from Maverick Towers LLC to install a 4-carrier cell tower at Station 32 in Cornville. He stated Maverick Towers provided the terms for the potential lease agreement, which are included in the Board's packet. He stated the lease agreement has not been reviewed by the District's attorney.

He stated that cell towers themselves can be contentious. He stated in the past there was a proposal for a cell tower in Cornville that received a lot of resistance from the community. He stated that the location of that proposed cell tower was a main concern of the community residents. He stated that he is comfortable with the location at Station 32 for this proposed cell tower. Chief Johnson stated that the cell reception, LTE, and data coverage is very poor in Cornville for public safety. He stated the District would benefit from this cell tower to better support our equipment that relies on data.

Chief Johnson stated that the District can request Maverick Towers LLC to run reports that would show data coverage it would offer and any obstacles we may run against. He stated the District can also purchase any public safety infrastructure we need, and they would install it on the cell tower.

Chief Johnson stated that this proposed cell tower could bring some challenges to the Board from the public. He stated that this cell tower will have to be approved by county zoning and get approval from the county. He stated that he has had conversation with the county supervisor informing him of this proposed cell tower. Chief Johnson stated that he will attend the Cornville Community Association meetings to inform the residents of this proposed cell tower and the importance of it for public safety.

Board Chairman Brummett asked if this agenda item was for discussion. Chief Johnson stated yes.

Chief Johnson stated that he has negotiated these agreements before and is familiar with the process.

Board Clerk Gilboy stated that this proposed cell tower agreement will cause the public to be very vocal of their concerns to the Board.

Board Chairman Brummett asked what the public's complaints about cell towers are. Chief Johnson stated complaints received for the previous proposed cell tower were location, cell towers spontaneously combusting, that cell towers are full of oil, and radio waves. He stated that he had not heard of a cell tower spontaneously combusting and that cell towers are not full of oil. He stated that they are full of wires and cables for infrastructure but no flammable liquids. He stated there are studies that show your cell phone puts off more radio wave frequencies than the actual cell tower.

Board Member K Bishop stated he did not see any problems arising from the proposed cell tower.

Board Member Peck made the motion to direct staff and authorization for the Fire Chief to negotiate the terms of the proposed Maverick Towers LLC lease agreement. Board T Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Electronic Board Packets  
Cell Tower

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved:

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Ashley Hammond, Administrative Specialist

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Robert Brummett, Board Chairman

Attest:

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Coleen Gilboy, Board Clerk

DRAFT