

# **DRAFT MINUTES**

**MINUTES  
SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2023  
9:30 A.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tim Wilmes

**ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:** Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff:** Acting Fire Chief Rob Schmitz, Deputy Chief Jason Casey, Fire Marshal Jim Fox, Assistant Fire Marshal Kenny Kovac, Finance Director Gabe Buldra, EMS Division Chief Kyle Henson, USCFFA Vice President Kevin Brown, USCFFA Trustee Brandon Crossno, Office Manager Lisa Neubert

## **INVOCATION**

### **I. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL**

- A. Board member Phil Griswold made a motion to approve the consent agenda item which was the Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes for April 25, 2023. Board member Steve Arnold seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda item. (M: Phil Griswold/S: Steve Arnold; Ayes: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold. Nays: None)**

### **II. CORRESPONDENCE AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

- A. Sun City Posse Commander Dave Miller gave a report on the relationship between the posse and the department. Commander Miller reported that for 2022 the posse had:**
- 1. Assisted the department on over 3,900 calls.**
  - 2. Performed over 280 residential welfare checks.**
  - 3. Performed community safety neighborhood block watch events with fire department assistance in helping to identify smoke detector and lockbox needs.**

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4. Provided transport of family members to the hospital if requested by the fire department.

Commander Miller noted that Chief Schmitz attends the posse's monthly meeting.

- B. Chief Schmitz read a thank you letter from Chief Brian Tobin of the Daisy Mountain Fire & Medical Department. He thanked us for sending E131 as a move-up unit to their district so that all DMFD crews could attend the funeral of one of their members, Eric Flannery, who passed away from cancer.
- C. There were no promotions or new hires.
- D. Chief Schmitz recognized the following employees for years of service: Battalion Chief Sherry Hood Neeley for 24 years of service, Captains Eric Archer and Matt Lucking for 16 years of service, Paramedics Justin Bruce and Steven Van and EMTs Jessica Harris and David Wuerfel for 4 years of service, and Firefighters Trevor Berl, Anthony Haugen, and Camryn Humphreys for 1 year of service.
- E. Chief Schmitz reported that Engineer Fred Ohrt retired effective April 1, 2023, with 24 years of service.

## **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Budget and Finance**

1. Finance Director Gabe Buldra presented the financial and bank reconciliation report for the month of April 2023. Board member Phil Griswold made a motion to accept the April 2023 financial report. Board member David VanderNaalt seconded the motion. The board voted to accept the finance report for the month of April 2023. (M: Phil Griswold; S: David VanderNaalt; Vote – Aye: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold. Nay: None).
2. Finance Director Gabe Buldra presented the draft FY2024 budget. The assessed valuation for FY2024 is \$410,564,005, an increase of 5.06% from FY2023. Total revenues and expenses are \$19,541,740 with a tax rate of \$3.500. The General Obligation Bond rate is \$0.1687. The three biggest economic challenges for this year are Western States CPI at 8.5%, cost of materials and services, and employee recruitment and retention. Additionally legislative challenges are the failure of Prop 310's passage, Prop 117 and the change from full cash value (FCV) to limited property value (LPV), and commercial property assessment ration reduction which means a loss of \$175,00 in revenue. The proposed tax rate of \$3.50 will impact the average homeowner with an increase of \$18.08 per year. Major budget line items were reviewed at the May 9, 2023, workshop meeting and recapped in those meeting minutes. Board member Stephen Arnold made a motion to approve FY 2024 budget as presented. Board member Phil LaBarbera seconded the motion. The board voted (4) ayes and (1) abstain and the motion carried. (M: Stephen Arnold/S: Phil LaBarbera; Ayes: Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold. Nays: None. Abstain: Tim Wilmes)

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## **B. Legal and Insurance**

- 1. Chairman Wilmes reported that legislation has passed that will reduce Tier 2 contribution rates effective July 1, 2023, from 11.65% to 7.65%.**

## **C. Fire Department Operations**

- 1. The report for fire department operations was given for April 2023, which included an overview of the incident counts, types, and response times.**

## **D. Emergency Medical Services / Ambulance Operations**

- 1. The ambulance operations report was presented for the month of April 2023. The report included the incident counts, types, and transports.**
- 2. Chief Kyle Henson gave the following updates on the Emergency Medical Services/Ambulance Operations division:**
  - i. Two CQI meetings; trends getting better on stroke patients.**
  - ii. Budget preparations – Image Trend, new inventory software (OPIQ).**
  - iii. Move to FS131 from ADM complete for both EMS Chief and EMS Coordinator.**
  - iv. Renewed AMB billing contract for 3 years (locked in current rate).**
  - v. Preparing for new reporting process for NEMSIS (National EMS reporting database).**

## **E. Resource Management**

- 1. Chief Schmitz requested that the board approve the purchase of a single cab, 1-ton diesel engine maintenance vehicle for the department's fleet mechanic. This vehicle will have box fabrication for the bed and will have an on-board compressor and crane. The current maintenance vehicle does not allow for various on-site repairs due to equipment limitations. Chief Schmitz asked the board to approve \$115,000 plus taxes and fees. Board member Stephen Arnold stated that the amount should be increased to \$127,000 due to the economy and supply chain issues and made a motion to approve the purchase of a fleet maintenance vehicle not to exceed \$127,000. Board member David VanderNaalt seconded the motion. The motion carried. (M: Stephen Arnold/S: David VanderNaalt; Ayes: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold. Nays: None)**
- 2. Chief Schmitz reported the following for fleet/apparatus:**
  - a. L131 has remained out of service due to ongoing electrical issues. Sutphen sent a tech out last week for the third time since its return to the district to replace the remaining parts that haven't previously been replaced in an attempt to locate the root issue. On Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Fire Mechanic Ramos**

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and the Sutphen Tech felt confident they finally identified and repaired the problem. Our crews will continue to test out the aerial operation to confirm consistent operation before placing it in service.

- b. We have been communicating well with Sutphen and H&E regarding the ongoing box weld issues and repairs on all Sutphen pumpers. BC Van Roekel and H&E's top tech assessed each unit for status updates on all previous repairs and current conditions. Videos and pictures were sent to Sutphen for assessment and a resolution. All parties have agreed that E131 and E133 need some minor repairs, but neither are in a critical state. We found that E132 had received a heavier duty set of repairs and held up well. Sutphen has flagged the new pumper in their production line and intends to reinforce the box frame during the manufacturing process.
- c. The graphics package was confirmed for the new fire pumper we anticipate being complete at Sutphen in July/August 2023.
- d. Rosenbauer supplied a few pictures of what the chassis/cab of our new ladder tender will look like.
- e. With the climbing temperatures we've had a run of recent AC issues with our fleet, but Fire Mechanic Ramos has been able to find parts and make repairs with minimal out of service time.
- f. Fire Mechanic Ramos successfully completed his EVT certification for Aerial Fire Apparatus, which is one of the more difficult tests. Many of his EVT peers have been impressed with how quickly he's been able to progress through the certifications after starting with none in October 2022. He's currently only one fire apparatus test and three ambulance tests from being completely certified. He's also been able to update his ASE certifications during this time.
- g. BC Van Roekel and Fire Mechanic Ramos are preparing to complete annual pump tests on all fire pumpers utilizing our test pit at Station 131. We're discussing the feasibility of offering this service to outside agencies as a way to bring a little revenue into the district.

### **3. Chief Schmitz reported the following for buildings/facilities:**

- a. We are still in the process of acquiring quotes to have the parking lots resealed at the Administration building, FS132, and the street parking at FS133.
- b. We are in the process of acquiring quotes to rehab the shower doors at FS131 and FS132.

## **F. Training/Professional Development**

1. Battalion Chief Holliday gave the following report for the training division:

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- a. Second quarter training April – June is as follows: Target Solutions – sexual harassment; EMS hazard awareness; Haz Wop #2; NFPA 1001 SCBA; hearing conversation. MCS (minimum company standards) – ladders. Westside Training – Wildland/urban interface; Mayday training. BC/DC Training – Wildland/urban interface. Battalion training – Tactics – IAPS; drivers training (classroom and course); natural gas training (classroom).
- b. Pre-academy for our next four new hire firefighters starts on Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. They are Recruit Class 23-2.
- c. Recruit Class 23-1 graduates on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are happy to add these five new firefighters to our ranks.

## **G. Administrative/Special Projects**

1. Chief Schmitz reported that he and Chief Casey met with Dave Lewis of ESCI two weeks ago. AFMA and Buckeye Valley Fire District are working on their data collection. The board asked that ESCI provide a status update in July if a meeting has not been scheduled with the board by that time.

## **H. Public Education/Community Outreach**

1. Prevention volunteer hours summary.
  - a. The summary of prevention hours for volunteers was presented for April 2023. The total number of volunteer hours was 176 hours.
2. Community relations program report.
  - a. The report for the Community Outreach program was given for April 2023. There was a total of 240 citizens served for April. Installations of lock boxes are scheduled through the end of May 2023.
3. There were two community events for the month of April 2023.
4. The volunteer inspection summary report was given for the month of April. There was a total of 111 inspections completed.

## **I. Fire Prevention**

1. The construction inspection summary report was given for the month of April 2023. There was a total of 46 inspections completed.
2. Permits issued and revenue report.
  - a. The permit and revenue reports were presented for April 2023. There were 12 permits with a revenue of \$50,867.16.
3. Fire investigation reports.

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a. The fire investigation report was given for April 2023. There were no formal fire investigations performed.

4. Large community projects.

a. An update was given on the large community projects within the Sun City District. There are currently four large community projects in Sun City.

b. There was an update on the ongoing projects in Youngtown. There are currently four large community projects in Youngtown.

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Board member Phil Griswold asked that the chairman disband the committee that was recently formed to investigate social media and communications with the community for the time being. Board members Phil Griswold and Stephen Arnold were both assigned to the committee. Mr. Griswold reported that after doing some research, the committee feels there are potential issues and costs with monitoring social media sites for threats and/or inappropriate comments. More research will need to be done on this subject.

**V. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A. There was no executive session.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Mr. Wilmes discussed items for display on the community room walls. He would like to see a plaque with the names of every member who has worked for the Department since 1989, when the department began directly employing staff. Other items include pictures of board members, fire chiefs, and moving the volunteer service plaques from the hallway to the community room.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

A. Chief Schmitz recognized audience member MCSO Captain Brian Stutsman and Posse Commander Dave Miller. Board member Stephen Arnold asked the chairman that the agenda be modified to include "special recognition" as an item under "Correspondence and Special Recognition". Chairman Wilmes directed Lisa Neubert to make this addition to the agenda template.

B. Sun City resident Karen Miller asked the following questions:

1. What is the 5% raise and step alignment? – Chief Schmitz explained that there was no 5% raise this year, rather a \$2,000 raise to each to each step. He explained that there currently is a 10% increase between the second to the last and the last step on each pay line. This was reduced to 5% and the other 5% was spread across the lower steps on each pay line to increase the entry level wages.

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2. **Why is there no penalty for those who leave to go elsewhere? – Chief Schmitz gave a history on employment contracts. The City of Phoenix, who owns the regional training academy, will not allow any agency who requires employment contracts to participate in their training programs. Additionally, the bulk of the expense of training personnel is their salary, which is not something the department can recoup.**
  3. **Why is there an increase in fire prevention income? – Chief Schmitz explained this was because the fire prevention bureau knows what projects and fees are upcoming for the next fiscal year and increased their income budget line to include these monies.**
  4. **Why is there a 30% increase in supplies budget? Chief Schmitz explained it is due to inflation and supply chain issues driving up costs.**
  5. **What happened to the \$42 pension bond monies? Chief Schmitz explained COP bonds and that this money went to pay down the district’s PSPRS unfunded liabilities. The money is not money the taxpayers are assessed for. It is money the district pays back through its budget. It is basically a loan to pay off unfunded pension liabilities.**
- C. USCFFA Vice President Kevin Brown thanked the board for the wage increase. He reported that four members will be attending the PFFA conference in Tucson next month. He mentioned Fred Ohrt’s retirement as Fred was a vital part of the department’s union for many years. He also reported that he is excited that in October there will be nine booters in the field and there will be a lot of training going on with crews. Lastly, he wanted to thank the department’s mechanic Izaac Ramos for all he does to keep the fleet up and running.**

## **VIII. NEXT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

- A. The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on June 27, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sun City Fire Department Community Room located at 18602 N. 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue Sun City, AZ.**

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Board member Phil Griswold made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 a.m. Board member Stephen Arnold seconded the motion. The board voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:21 a.m. (M: Phil Griswold /S: Stephen Arnold; Vote – Aye: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold. Nay: None)**

**FOR THE BOARD**

**Stephen Arnold  
Clerk of the Board**

**SA/lbn**