

DRAFT MINUTES

**MINUTES
SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026
9:30 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: Board Chairperson Tim Wilmes

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Tim Wilmes, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold (via MS Teams), Charles Vickers.

Members Absent: None

Staff: Fire Chief Rob Schmitz, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Casey, Division Chiefs Kyle Henson and Tony Van Roekel, Battalion Chief Adam Holliday, Finance Director Gabe Buldra, Office Manager Lisa Neubert

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board member David VanderNaalt

INVOCATION: Board member David VanderNaalt

I. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL

A. Board member Phil LaBarbera made a motion to approve the consent agenda item which was the Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes for January 27, 2026. Board member David VanderNaalt seconded the motion. The board voted to approve the consent agenda item. (M: Phil LaBarbera/S: David VanderNaalt; Ayes: Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold, Charles Vickers. Nays: None. Abstain: Tim Wilmes)

II. CORRESPONDENCE AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

A. Special recognition was given to Preston Kise and Jim Rough from Recreation Centers of Sun City, Josh Thompson from the Independent, and Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault.

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- B. There were no community appreciation letters for the month.**
- C. Chief Schmitz recognized the following new hires: William Sorensen, Ryan Short, Mark Crowley, Drake Thulstrup and Braiden Fresquez were hired as firefighters on January 5, 2026. He also recognized Firefighter Chris Tomaselli for being promoted to engineer on January 26, 2026.**
- D. Fire Chief Schmitz recognized the following personnel for years of service: Office Manager Lisa Neubert for thirty-seven years of service; Division Chief Tony Van Roekel for twenty-two years of service; Firefighter George Perreault for twenty-three years of service; Engineer Kevin Brown for twenty-two years of service; Engineer Chris Marin for seven years of service; Firefighter Blake Carpenter for three years of service; Firefighters Charles Lyon for three years of service; Engineer Chris Tomaselli for three years of service.**
- E. Engineer Jeff Salkeld retired on January 10, 2026, with twenty-five 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 January 2026. Board member David VanderNaalt made a motion to accept the January 2026 financial report. Board member Phil LaBarbera seconded the motion. The board voted to accept the finance report for the month of January 2026. (M: David VanderNaalt/S: Phil LaBarbera; Ayes: David VanderNaalt, Phil LaBarbera, Phil Griswold, Charles Vickers. Nays: None. Abstain: Tim Wilmes)**

B. Legal and Insurance

- 1. Chairperson Wilmes reported that there is a PSPRS bill in legislation that affects three people. This bill would allow them to DROP and/or retire without having to meet the age restrictions that are currently in place.**
- 2. The next Prop 207 fund disbursement will be in July 2026.**

C. Fire Department Operations

- 1. The report for fire department operations was given for January 2026, which included an overview of the incident counts, types, and response times.**

D. Emergency Medical Services / Ambulance Operations

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1. The ambulance operations report was presented for the month of January 2026. The report included the incident counts, types, and transport.
2. Division Chief Henson reported the following for the EMS Division:
 - a. Image Trend Workshop.
 - b. Leadership training at AFMA.
 - c. 2026 EMS Protocol update.
 - d. Q1 CE assignments in Target Solutions.
 - e. CQI module is halfway through build out.
 - f. CQI 22 cases reviewed, refusals, codes, narcotics.
 - g. Starting to review budget requests.
3. Chief Schmitz gave an update on the Treatment in Place (TIP) fee. He reported that from July 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026, there have been 1,537 TIP calls, with a billing amount of \$485,384.60. To date, \$131,460.98 has been collected and \$21,609.19 has been written off between what was billed and what Medicaid allowed. The department cannot try to collect those write-offs from the patient. Bills are sent out from our billing company and if they remain unpaid, they are eventually turned over to the collection agency we use. If they remain unpaid, at some point they are written off completely.

This current fiscal year \$80,000 was the budgeted amount for TIP collections. Thus far we have collected over \$50,000 more than what was budgeted. Board member VanderNaalt asked how the community reaction has been. Chief Schmitz stated he has received a couple of dozen complaints, but it is not that bad in relation to the fact that there have been 1,537 TIP calls. Board member Phil Griswold asked if, since instituting the TIP fee, the workload of the crews has been reduced. Chief Schmitz reported that the call volume is down approximately 800 calls compared to the previous year, but this may not be related to the TIP fee. Chief Schmitz stated that if the revenue collections are sufficient, the department could put up a low acuity unit to help offset the crews' workload.

E. Resource Management

1. Division Chief Tony Van Roekel reported the following for fleet/apparatus and equipment:
 - a. New Vehicle Project – Braun Ambulance.
 - b. New Vehicle Project - Sutphen Pumper.

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- c. **New Vehicle Project - EMS Supply Vehicle.**
 - d. **Updated Pumper Pricing/Specifications.**
 - e. **E133 Tank Report.**
 - f. **M133 Paint Repairs**
 - g. **LA/MR Vehicle Grant Opportunities.**
 - h. **Auction EMS Pickup.**
 - i. **Committee Updates**
 - j. **Wear Test.**
 - k. **Helmets.**
 - l. **Water Rescue Gear.**
 - m. **Snake Removal Equipment.**
 - n. **Extrication Gear.**
2. **Division Chief Tony Van Roekel reported the following for buildings/facilities and teams/members:**
- a. **Annual Alarm/Suppression Repairs.**
 - b. **FS131 Range.**

F. Training/Professional Development

1. **Battalion Chief Adam Holliday gave the following report for the training division:**
- a. **Recruit Class 26-1 is in week 6 of the Academy. All 5 recruits are doing exceptionally well. RTO Captain O'Reilly is also doing well and enjoying the training.**
 - b. **2026 Captains Promotional Process is about to kick off. Written test in on March 6th and will wrap up in mid-April. We have 5 candidates taking the process. The process is extensive and includes a written test, Interviews, Live Tactical, and Table-Top tactical portions. At the conclusion, all who pass will be placed on an eligibility list that is good for two years.**

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- c. **New Adashi C&C (Command and Control), which is an electronic tactical worksheet that uses real time location and computer aided dispatch information to increase Incident Commander situational awareness and firefighter safety, have been added to BC131. This was made possible by a grant from the State of over \$250,000. Our full-time Command Unit personnel have been trained, and the equipment is already on the truck. Training materials are being developed for the Captains who occasionally rotate onto the Battalion Chief vehicle.**
- d. **We continue to send members through multiple regional grant funded training classes, such as Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, and Fire Officer II. We have 6 members participating in the 2026 Q1 classes.**
- e. **New Training Committee has formed and had their first meeting. They will begin department wide Tactical Hose-line management classes this Spring.**

G. Administrative/Special Projects

1. **Chief Schmitz reported that Board member Phil Griswold forwarded him an article from a fire service journal about some fire departments (east coast) billing homeowners and auto insurance companies for suppression activities at fire calls and auto accidents. This billing is directly to the insurance companies, and the citizens are not billed. Chief Schmitz asked if the board was interested in pursuing this for our department and asked for direction from the board. The board asked Chief Schmitz to investigate this issue and report back his findings. Chairperson Wilmes asked Chief Schmitz to find out if the payment reduces any monies the homeowner is entitled to from their claim.**
2. **Chief Schmitz presented a proposal for new computer equipment. The department's current computer equipment (desktops and monitors) is eight years old and will not support Windows 11. Microsoft will continue to support Windows 10 through the end of the year. The current computers are starting to slow down and make work difficult. The proposal is for \$31,328.42 and does not include tax. Chief Schmitz stated that the caveat with the quote is that it was quoted on February 19th and the first quote he received on January 23rd was for \$27,263.44. The costs are increasing dramatically due to a computer chip shortage. The same quote increased \$4,000 in approximately one month. The quote is for twenty-three computers, thirty-three monitors, and three docking stations. There is no cost for installation as that is part of our monthly service agreement with our IT company. Chief Schmitz asked that the board approve this purchase at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. Board member Charles Vickers made a motion to approve the purchase of all equipment listed on the quote at a cost not to exceed \$40,000.**

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Board member David VanderNaalt seconded the motion. The board approved the purchase of computer equipment as listed on February 19, 2026, quote at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. (M: Charles Vickers/S: David VanderNaalt; Ayes: Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold, Charles Vickers. Nays: None. Abstain: Tim Wilmes)

H. Public Education/Community Outreach

- 1. Prevention volunteer hours summary.**
 - a. The summary of prevention hours for volunteers was presented for January 2026. The total number of volunteer hours was 38 hours.**
- 2. Community relations program report.**
 - a. The report for the Community Outreach program was given for January 2026. There was a total of 170 citizens served for January 2026. Installation of lock boxes is scheduled through the middle of March 2026.**
- 3. There was a community event for the month of January 2026.**
- 4. The volunteer inspection summary report was given for the month of January 2026. There was a total of 140 inspections completed.**

I. Fire Prevention

- 1. The construction inspection summary report was given for the month of January 2026. There was a total of 23 inspections completed.**
- 2. Fire investigation reports.**
 - a. The fire investigation report was given for January 2026. There were four formal fire investigations for the month.**
- 3. Large community projects.**
 - a. An update was given on the large community projects within the Sun City District. There are currently five large community projects in Sun City.**
 - b. There was an update on the ongoing projects in Youngtown. There is currently one large community project in Youngtown.**

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. There was no executive session.**

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V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. No report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. No report.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Mayor LeVault said to keep up the excellent work and stay safe.

B. Preston Kise, Recreation Centers of Sun City, expressed concern that the decrease in call volume for the year could be related to citizens not calling for assistance due to the Treatment in Place fee.

C. USCFFA Chapter Vice Chairperson Chris Marine reported that the union is still working with PFFA (Phoenix Fire Fighters Association) to work on new ways for funding fire districts such as fire service fees for non-profit entities. He reported that labor and management continue to work through the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) process. Additionally, he reported members are participating in a smoke detector walk this Friday, February 27th.

VIII. NEXT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

A. The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on March 24, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sun City Fire Department Community Room located at 18602 N. 99th Avenue Sun City, AZ.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A. Board member David VanderNaalt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 a.m. Board member Charles Vickers seconded the motion. The board voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 a.m. (M: David VanderNaalt/S: Charles Vickers; Vote – Ayes: Tim Wilmes, Phil LaBarbera, David VanderNaalt, Phil Griswold Charles Vickers. Nays: None.)

FOR THE BOARD

Phil LaBarbera

Board Clerk

PL/lbn