



MINUTES OF THE WHETSTONE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING, May 19th, 2021

Note the May 19th minutes include:

- Reconstruction of the February 23, 2021, special meeting minutes and approval action
- Reconstitution of the March 12, 2021, regular board meeting and approval action
- Reconstruction of the regular board meeting minutes for April 21st, 2021, and approval action
- Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2021

Call to Order: The Whetstone Fire Board convened at 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Trevor Thompson, Bruce Harris, Rick Evans and Dave Johnson – Steve Hasson absent.

Staff Present: Sam Foster and Cathy Dyer

Conflict of Interest: Board Members attested they had no conflicts that would preclude their participation.

No old Business:

Call to the public:

Lance Amatouilly called to the board's attention his wife was critically ill on the night of December 23, 2020. He determined to the Whetstone Fire Station 321 for assistance, arriving here about 1:30 A.M. No one was at the station to administer aid and so he took her to the hospital and fortunately she survived the transportation ordeal. Mr. Amatouilly expressed concern that no one was present to assist his wife. Chairperson Rick Evans advised that the fire district would evaluate the situation and report back our findings.

Steve Usrey was also present and asked to speak. He is a member of the Whetstone Water District. He called to the board's attention the fact the water agency is housed in a building owned by the Whetstone Fire District. The water district has occupied this structure for several decades by way of a contractual agreement with the fire district that is set to expire in April of 2022. The water board leadership would like to continue a lease agreement while they search for funds to build a new facility. They need lead time to determine a course of action in the event the fire board does not intend to renew their contract. They are seeking an understanding of the board's thinking as soon as possible. The board agreed to address this matter in an upcoming special session.

Fire Chief's Report:

Acting Fire Chief Sam Foster provided the fire chief's report. He offered information about call volume statistics, status of the effort to inventory fire district items, status of the stations, staffing issues and training activity. He said there was a problem with the cardiac monitors. They are outdated and it is hard to get parts for them. The district is seeking a grant to replace them and meantime the Sierra Vista Fire District has lent us one of its monitors.

He said the new generator had been ordered but not installed. He noted the fire station's overhead doors have been repaired and are fully functional. Sam said the district has always relied upon bottled water for potable water purposes because the tap water is not drinkable. He said bottled water is expensive and so the staff is experimenting with the installation of a water filtration system operated by Culligan Water Company. If the filtration system works it will cut down significantly on water costs and provide





staff with a safe source of drinking water. Sam noted the bed frames and mattresses have arrived and are in use and also certain gym equipment had been ordered to compensate for pieces removed by the former chief. He concluded his remarks noting the training and testing processes underway to improve staff's fire protection proficiencies. Dave Thompson made a motion to accept the chief's report and seconded by Bruce Miller and unanimously approved 4/0.

Fire Board Chairman's Report:

Rick Evans provided a IGA status update advising that he was in the process of compiling comments provide by board members. He suggested a special meeting for purposes of reviewing the agreement and determining what provisions should be added or subtracted for the current agreement.

Old Business:

Reconstruction of February 23, 2021, special meeting minutes and approval action:

Chairperson Rick Evans advised that the special meeting minutes from the February 23, 2021, board meeting needed to be reconstructed due to malfunctioning recorder equipment. Rick said his notes indicate this was the evening the board interviewed Bruce Harris for the open fire board position and after discussion the membership voted to approve his appointment. Trevor Thompson made a motion to appoint Mr. Harris to the board and seconded by Steve Hasson and unanimously approved 4/0. Because this was a special session - held solely to consider this board appointment there were no reports and the board adjourned within the hour.

Trevor Thompson made a motion to accept the reconstructed minutes based on the information provided and seconded by Dave Thompson and unanimously approved 4/0.

New Business – review, amendment, discussion and possible action regarding:

A. 2019 – 2020 Audit presentation by a representative of the Saunders Company LTD. The board exchanged a telephonic communication with an accountant representing the Saunders Company. The representative said the fire district's financial statements and all underlying information were subject to three different audit standards to insure the integrity of district funds. The company has provided an audit report reflecting its findings. The evaluation found no deficiencies, no policy or procedure weaknesses, no variations. Everything evaluated was found to be in compliance. In summary: the fire district is in good shape. Staff is following all of the district's policies, procedures and the financial statements are accurate. Trevor Thompson made a motion to accept the audit report and its findings and seconded by Bruce Harris – unanimously approved 4/0.

B. Lease contract or renting options at the Whetstone Fire District Building currently occupied by the Whetstone Water District. After discussion and taking into account the earlier presentation by Steve Usrey - the board determined to address this matter at a future special meeting.

C. Regular Meeting Minutes for April 21st, 2021. Rick Evans noted there was a need to recreate what occurred that evening due to loss of the digital recording device. The following items were addressed at the meeting.

- Trevor Thompson had made a motion to accept the fire board's March 12th meeting minutes and seconded by Steve Hasson and approved unanimously 5/0.
- A discussion about the Huachuca City IGA – this was an informational item.
- A discussion concerning the process for assessing the fire chief candidates – this was an information item.





- Discussion about surplus inventory: staff is recommending certain equipment no longer needed be surplus and available to others through auction process. Trevor Thompson made a motion to proceed with making certain fire district equipment surplus and thus available for public purchase through bidding procedure and seconded by Dave Johnson with a caveat that staff look at the possibility of refurbishing certain equipment at station 324 rather than discarding it – motion approved unanimously 5/0.
- A need to increase the budget amount the fire chief may spend to acquire an emergency generator – Dave Johnson made a motion to increase the budget limit and second by Bruce Harris and approved unanimously 5/0.
- Trevor Thompson suggested certain changes to the meeting agenda format based on information he acquired by attending a fire district association workshop. He provided a copy of a format for the board's consideration. Steve Hasson made a motion to have the board test drive the proposed format for a three-month period [until August 19] and seconded by Dave Johnson -unanimously approved 5/0.
- Financial report presentation: Trevor Thompson moved to accept the financial report and seconded by Dave Johnson – unanimously approved 5/0.
- Sam Foster provided the chief's report and the board accepted the report as stated.
- Board member comments
- Future agenda items: the following items were proposed for future board consideration. Development of a property disposal policy, setting up an election for clerk of the board position, meeting with the Whetstone Water Board to determine lease contract or renting options associated with a fire district building an setting up an audit presentation.

Dave Johnson made a motion to accept this reconstructed recollection of the March 12th board meeting and seconded by Trevor Thompson approved unanimously 4/0.

D. Election of Board Clerk: Dave Johnson nominated Trevor Thompson to serve in the clerk capacity and seconded by Rick Evans – unanimously approved 4/0.

E. Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2021.

The meeting minutes are as follows:

The Whetstone Fire District Board convened at 6: 00 P.M. on Wednesday May 12 for purpose of attending to two items, these being: review of the Intergovernmental Agreement [IGA] the District has with Huachuca City for fire suppression services and other fire related activities and establishing a new date for testing the fire chief candidates.

All board members were in attendance, although Trevor Thompson was present telephonically. Rick Evans called to the board's attention that he had met with the Huachuca town manager and briefly with the town's mayor about the current IGA that is scheduled to expire in the near future. He said that the current agreement had been constructed hastily and it has provisions that are outdated, ill-advised or pose certain obligations the district cannot fulfill due to resource limitations.

Rick said that we should have received a copy of the current IGA by email. He would have us review that document. He said Huachuca City representatives have already made changes to it that they would like to see incorporated into an updated version. Rick asked the board to review the town's changes and see if there is need for further modification. If so, he would have us add





our input and timely. He said if board members intend to make for changes – would we please do so by the next board meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 19.

Rick said he will incorporate our changes upon receipt. Then we can review all the added comments and determine whether the document is sufficient in scope and purpose, if not, we will continue the updating process until the board is satisfied with its contents. Then we will send the updated document to the city for their further review. We will continue this back-and-forth review process until we have mutual agreed upon product that can be forwarded to the attorneys for their input and then adoption by both parties.

The goal would be to have a product ready for adoption by the end of June. If we are not able to meet this timeframe, Rick has been advised the town's leadership is receptive to extending the current IGA agreement.

The second agenda dealt with amending the fire chief testing date. The four fire chief candidates are not able to meet the present testing date. If we wish to assure their participation then we need to adjust the date to a time certain that works for all of them.

Cathy Dyer has been in contact with the candidates and advises they are all available for testing purposes June 28 and 29. Rick noted that it has been a challenge developing all the components of the assessment process and procuring volunteers and thus extending the testing date will also be beneficial to the testing development process.

Dave Johnson made a motion to extend the chief candidate testing dates to June 28th and 29th and seconded by Steve Hasson and unanimously approved. There being no further business, Dave Thompson made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Steve Hasson and unanimously approved. Adjournment 6:30 P.M.

Trevor Thompson made a motion to accept these meeting minutes and seconded by Dave Johnson – unanimously approved 4/0.

F. Complied Board and Staff comments and concerns regarding the Huachuca City IGA draft contract. Chairperson Rick Evans encouraged every board member to review the draft contract and furnish their comments for compilation. Sam foster advised he intended to provide comments. Rick advised: if the board is not able to timely construct and agreement acceptable to all parties the Huachuca City leadership is amenable to extending the agreement date. Rick noted he has made an effort to have the Cochise County attorney participate in construction of the agreement but has yet to receive a return call so he has taken the initiative to contact an attorney schooled in Arizona fire district matters to serve as a legal backup. Trevor Thompson made a motion to table the IGA discussion to the May 25th board meeting and seconded by Dave Johnson – motion carried 4/0.

G. Fire Chief Candidate's Assessment Center Status Update/ Addition of Essay Questions to the process. Chairperson Rick Evans suggested the addition of four essay questions to the assessment center process to gain an understanding of each candidates thought process and capacity to express themselves in a written format. Dave Johnson made a motion to add four essay questions to the fire chief candidate assessment process and seconded by Bruce Harris – motion carried 4/0.

Items H.I. J. – these items were tabled – Dave Johnson made a motion to table them and seconded by Bruce Harris – motion carried 4/0.

K. Cathy Dyer provided the April 2021 Financial Report: She passed out the financial report and provided details on certain line items. She also noted how the bidding process was proceeding on items the board had surplused. She said the district has received a large chunk of tax revenue to





Whetstone

FIRE DISTRICT

2422 N Firehouse Lane - Huachuca City, AZ 85616

support the operation. Cathy expressed her satisfaction at the audit findings. Trevor Thompson made a motion to accept the financial report and seconded by Rick Evans – motion carried 4/0.

Future Agenda Items:

A special board meeting was set for May 25th to review the draft Huachuca IGA and also to discuss the Whetstone Water Board's contract concerns.

Board Member Comments: Chairperson Rick Evans noted there is a need for us to determine why the fire station was not open for business on December 23rd when a family needed our assistance.

Trevor Thompson made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Rick Evans – motion carried 4/0.

Approval of meeting minutes 7/21/21

