



**MINUTES OF THE WHETSTONE FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING 16 DECEMBER 2020 AT 1700 HOURS.**

DRAFT

Call to Order/Roll Call/Affirmation of Quorum/Pledge of Allegiance:

Members Present: Dave Johnson, Trevor Thompson, Steven Hasson

Staff Present: Cathy Dyer, BC Foster, Danny Speer

Absent: None

It was determined a quorum existed.

Call to the Public:

None

Old Business:

-None

New Business:

-Accepting the Resignation of Donna Graybill

Steven Hasson: She was our chairperson and did a wonderful job but now finds herself in a position where she needs to do other things in her life. Cathy, do we need to make a motion for this?

Cathy Dyer: Yes I believe you do need a motion.

MOTION: Motion to accept the resignation of Donna Graybill

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-Accepting the Resignation of Pamela Cohen

Steven Hasson: Pam also did a wonderful job on the board and served for three years but she is currently in the process of selling her business and relocating and she doesn't feel she should be on the board anymore because of those two reasons.

MOTION: Motion to accept the resignation of Pamela Cohen



RESULT: Five in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-Appointing a new board member- Rick Evans

Steven Hasson: Rick Evans served on the board previously for 10 years and is back wanting to serve again.

Rick Evans: I'm retired from the fire service and I gave 40 years. I was asked to be on the board and ended up staying for 10 years and worked with some wonderful people and we made a lot of good changes here and then family matters got to be too pressing and I resigned. Now all that's been squared away and I'm still living here and hope to live here the rest of my life so anything I can do to improve working conditions, fire safety, ems, hazmat, rescue, and everything else I want to do.

Steven Hasson: Anyone want to make a motion?

Dave Johnson: Do we need to put this out to the public?

Trevor Thompson: I think this is us putting it out to the public.

Cathy Dyer: Yes we've already put it out to the public in the form of our agenda and it's posted on the website. And we still have another position to fill.

Dave Johnson: Alright just making sure.

MOTION: Motion to recommend Rick Evans's acceptance onto the Whetstone Fire Board

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Trevor Thompson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

-Appointing an interim chairperson for the Whetstone Fire Board

Steven Hasson: We've discussed Rick possibly serving in that capacity and I don't mind doing it for the rest of this evening but I think maybe we should defer this until the next meeting until Rick has been sworn into office and he's a bonafide member.

*Matter was pushed to the next meeting for further discussion.

-Matter concerning the open Chief's position for the Whetstone Fire District

Steven Hasson: We had a workshop and a discussion about a need to have something to assure the public and our employees that until we have a fire chief we have 2 individuals who are taking care of business and we need to leave some assurances with the public until such time that we have a fire



chief that services are being provided for. Cathy Dyer is currently in the office manager position and I think we should place her as chief financial officer. Cathy is there anything you'd like to say or add?

Cathy Dyer: I have the description all ready and I can get that for you to look over but I don't have anything to add. I'm humbled that you trust me to fill this role and I will to the best of my ability.

MOTION: Motion to appoint Cathy Dyer as the Chief Financial Officer of the Whetstone Fire District

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-2nd Matter concerning the open Chief's position for the Whetstone Fire District

Steven Hasson: This is a similar matter in that we have Sam who serves as battalion chief and he has been acting as an interim assistant fire chief in reality and so the thought was that we take and place him as interim assistance fire chief to run things until we get a new chief and when we do that position will still be available for him to apply for if he desires.

BC Foster: I too am humbled that you guys feel that we're doing a good enough job to keep at it right now and I will keep doing the best that I can and continue to grow and be the best that I can.

Steven Hasson: I do have a caution. There seems to be a practice with the chiefs in recent times, that they weren't there 40 hours a week serving that role and sometimes took on shift work which in my mind takes away from their chief role so I would look to you if you're going to serve in this role to sort of make a commitment to be 40 hours a week and be available to everyone during that time.

BC Foster: I'm currently on 24's for the time being while we look for one more position to fill. Once we got a little more stable here I planned on stepping back. It's a lot easier to cover one position than the three that we were missing and that's the reason that we stepped into those 24 hour roles was to help ease that burden with things like overtime and overtaxing the staff because we had people who were working 3 or 4 days in a row which is unheard of and can be catastrophic to continue that. That's why we stepped into those roles. But once things get stable and everyone gets settled into their roles that was my plan.

Steven Hasson: I think that this is really important to morale and to send the message to the public and especially to our neighboring Huachuca City that our fire chief or interim chief or interim assistant fire chief is there if the need arises.

MOTION: Motion to temporarily change the position of Battalion Chief to Interim Assistant Fire Chief, so moving Sam Foster with the position

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Trevor Thompson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson



-Allegations against former fire Chief Pete Bidon

Steven Hasson: There are allegations that when he left, former chief Bidon took some of the workout equipment with him and that he still has his department computer which has sensitive matters on it. This information has been requested and has not been returned. I'd be glad to write a letter with the board's approval that would request the equipment unless he says that it's his. Just so if it is in fact our equipment we stay responsible for it.

Sam Foster: So I do have an inventory list that I was asked to do of the contents of what was in the chief's office and in the chief's truck. I was also asked to do the Huachuca City support truck and some of the firefighters got that together and brought it to me but I have yet to go through that stuff. I have not seen the computer. I am aware of the weight equipment that's in question and I know that he did come and pick up everything that was his that he kept here and he was open about that when it happened and it was a little bit shocking because he came in without warning. I know that some of that was his but I believe that Cathy was saying that we have invoices for some of the stuff that's not in there now. I was going to call and ask him about that but I have yet to make contact with him so I don't know if you want to table this until I have a chance to do that.

Dave Johnson: Let's do that. Let him make contact before we do anything.

Steven Hasson: I agree. We'll defer the matter until Sam speaks with him because I want to keep it friendly but we do have a responsibility here to have it back if it is in fact ours.

*Matter was tabled until a later date

-Posting for the Fire Chief Vacancy to include a position description, qualifications, expectations, and posting requirements

Steven Hasson: My thought was between now and the next meeting, so sometime in mid-January we would have, for publication, all the requirements for a chief. And we would broadcast with the idea to start interviewing candidates in mid-February. As a goal we want to be in a position to distribute that product in 30 days.

Rick Evans: If we don't meet again until after the holidays I won't officially be seated and I want to be able to contribute.

Steven Hasson: I'm sure that by between now and the next meeting you can have everything done to be official. We want to be able to construct and put out to the public what we want in terms of qualifications, salary range, background, and such to be able to start interviewing candidates within 30 days. I just want to have something to look at at the next meeting so we can look it over and make potential changes.

Trevor Thompson: Why don't we table this until the next meeting since we are not taking any action on it right now.



MOTION: Motion to table this matter until the next meeting where action can be taken

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Trevor Thompson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

-Matter of the firefighters beds

Steven Hasson: We asked the firefighters to evaluate their beds and they told us that they were in desperate need of replacement.

BC Foster: It's not that they are old but they're incredibly worn out and we really do need to get them replaced.

Steven Hasson: So they've looked at a few different options and that's what you're presenting?

Danny Speer: Yes that's right. So you guys have folders in front of you. What I did was work with what former chief Bidon was doing which was with a website that caters specifically to firefighters and makes things a little more heavy duty. The first three there have kind of a basic metal frame from lowest price to midline and they have some storage underneath and then there's a little bit better quality one that's got better storage. I've got three different companies who make similar products and the price ranges are all right there within the same area for those beds. Then what I had to get was the quote was a water bed and that's in there for you. I was surprised to see that people still make those. So that was in there for fun. I also looked at a couple different mattresses and I talked to a couple different crews as to what is gonna hold us over the long term and what is gonna support us. What we've purchased in the past was the \$89 bed frame and the \$100 bed and box spring and they're honestly meant for children. The first one is from the same company, fire department furniture, and it's one of their higher quality mattresses but it's actually still mid-range quality across the board.

BC Foster: So this bed is separate from the mattress right.

Danny Speer: Yes so the frame is separate from the mattress and we'd have to purchase them separately.

Dave Johnson: Do you have a recommendation for us? Having researched this extensively your advice is good.

Danny Speer: My recommendation is one of the two wooden frames, I don't recommend the metal ones. I do recommend one with storage under it to help the crews store their bedding and such under it. I think we're gonna get a lot longer term life out of them. The metal frames we have now are bent and twisted and the wheels have snapped off.

BC Foster: Do any of these carry warranty?



Danny Speer: I don't remember but the mattresses should. There is a warranty on there but I didn't check what it was. I'll get that information to you guys. My recommendation is one of the two wooden ones. As far as mattresses go I think we're looking for a hybrid type of mattress with memory foam and springs for more support.

Steven Hasson: Cathy do we have the money for this?

Cathy Dyer: I was talking with Danny earlier when he was researching these and I'll have to pull up the line items and see where we are. It is always a purchase that can be made out of the capital account because it is technically station equipment but I don't know if that's something you want to consider since it is getting a little lower with just under \$50,000.

Sam Foster: I would just ask for you guys to consider that we have some things that we're gonna have to find grant money for or purchase ourselves like SCBA's and cardiac monitors. That's on your agenda there. I would suggest that we table this until we check to make sure that funds are in place for this. I do understand the need for these beds because I sleep on them too and there is a definite need for them so I don't want to put this off for too long.

Steven Hasson: Why don't we, at the next meeting, have a recommendation out of these options for a mattress and frame and any other things that need to go with them as well as a statement from Cathy saying that we have the funds available to make this purchase.

MOTION: Motion to table this matter until the next meeting

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-Repairing/Replacing the backup generator at Station 321

BC Foster: So this came up a few months ago and in speaking with the company they advised that it would be cheaper to repair it than replace it. We had a crack in the cylinder head. In the future we need to make sure we have regular maintenance done because it was an oil issue that caused it to overheat and crack the cylinder. I thought that the company was providing the PM's and nobody here knew that we were supposed to be doing it but I'll put something together so this won't happen again.

Dave Johnson: So was that something in the contract for the generator that they would come out and do pm's?

BC Foster: So what it ended up being was just a yearly service and I'll take the hit on that one because I knew that we had a generator and it ran a propane combustion engine and I never even thought to look in it.

Trevor Thompson: So it's owned by the station and not contracted out?



BC Foster: Yes and unfortunately this is outside of warranty.

Cathy Dyer: So we tried to set up the appointment every year but it was difficult to get someone to come out because this specific generator has someone coming from phoenix to service. There just aren't any generator technicians near us. Of course they will come and I'm sure they would be fine if we set up a more routine schedule with them. The cracked head was actually discovered when they came out to do the preventative maintenance. I asked them why it cracked because they had scheduled it on their recommended schedule and they said it just happens.

Danny Speer: When it happened, it was at night and the main power went out which shuts off our main radios which is how we hear calls. Luckily my phone was on and I heard a call go out for the other station and I woke up and everything was off. So this is a huge deal because without our main radio we won't hear the calls.

Dave Johnson: How big is this generator?

Danny Speer: I'm not sure of the exact numbers.

Dave Johnson: And were still with the same company?

BC Foster: Yes. I haven't really thought about switching companies to be honest because we needed ours to be propane.

Cathy Dyer: The generator is 120-240 volts and 141 amps.

BC Foster: Another thing is that everything else like the breaker box is from the same company so if we switch we would need to make sure that it works with their equipment.

Trevor Thompson: Do they have a timeline for fixing it?

Cathy Dyer: They're just waiting on our approval. The service technician has already been out here once and run through the beginning stages of pm.

Trevor Thompson: So 4 grand to fix it and it's no longer under warranty or 6 grand to replace it with a brand new warranty?

Cathy Dyer: I didn't actually get a quote from them on a replacement. You did?

BC Foster: I thought I had seen one.

Cathy Dyer: \$1400 was the pm fee. Then they provided \$4000 and some change for the repair cost. He was going to try to get me a quote for the replacement before this meeting but last I spoke with him he didn't have it yet.



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Rick Evans: I used to be an electrical and I could run some tests on it and I could make sure its operating right.

BC Foster: I think we're gonna need to do some more research on this

Steven Hasson: Do we want to defer this until the next meeting?

BC Foster: We can't wait on this because if we have another power outage we could potentially miss calls without the main radio working. If you wanted to approve the purchase of this with the condition that we do more research to make sure that this won't break down again and that it will work for everything in this building.

Rick Evans: How about we set a spending limit for this so we at least have something to go on when we do make a concrete decision.

Steven Hasson: What do you think you'll need in the way of money to make this happen?

BC Foster: If you could at least approve \$7000 that would cover the purchase of a new one if that's what we decide to do.

MOTION: Motion to approve a \$7000 budget for the repair/ replacement of the generator

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-Chief's Report:

BC Foster: You've got your November total and your yearly total for call numbers. We had 3% of calls being fire related and we've been seeing a lot more trouble breathing calls and I'm tracking which ones are possibly Covid related so we can track possible exposures for our guys. We've also been seeing a lot more service calls lately for the same people around here. You can also see the call breakdown for the individual stations: 50 from 321 and 36 from 324. We had our engine in the parade which I think all of you were there for and we had a couple of our gals from the Christmas committee, Samantha and Delilah came up with the theme they wanted to go with for decorations and everyone did a great job with making that come to life and we got second place. We got a lot of good feedback in the town and it seemed like people were cheering us on and I'm seeing a lot of positivity from the community. We're still pressing forward with our Christmas food and toy drive and we've gotten donations pretty regularly including one from the former sewing club from Quail Ridge RV Park. They dissolved earlier this year and donated their left over funds to us and we are incredibly grateful for that. we can't do the pancake breakfast this year due to covid19 so that is a bit of a monetary hit for us so I'm really glad to see more monetary donations this year so we can still proceed with things. We'll be assembling the boxes on the 19th and delivering on the 20th for the food and toy drive. If you guys want to be part of that you are more than welcome. I finished scoring the captains tests last night and I let the guys know where they



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had placed but I'm going to wait until after the lieutenant's testing to decide shift placements so I should have that by the end of next week.

Steven Hasson: So we now have three captains?

BC Foster: I believe so but nothing is official yet. All their scores are within the limits we set so three people made the eligibility list for captain and they would be Kenny Spencer, Danny Speer, and Don Dickey.

Dave Johnson: Congratulations to all of them.

BC Foster: We got help from Bisbee Fire Chief Castillo and Chief Dever from Sierra Vista and that's greatly appreciated and it helped us to create a very different testing process and it was very objective in scoring. Firefighter Denny has completed his orientation and began shift work earlier this month and he actually began looking at some quotes for some weight equipment for us to look at. He's taking it to heart and putting in a lot of work into it. Our new hire testing should be soon and we have had varying levels of applicants express interest. One guy has his EMT and is currently in fire 1&2 and he is the closest to full time and we've made exceptions on the fire 1&2 but we don't make exceptions for EMT. We started carrying C-PAP devices on the ambulances, and Michelle worked very hard on getting them for us. It's an excellent tool to have in our toolbox.

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of Public Session Minutes from 23 November 2020

MOTION: Motion to approve the minutes from 23 November 2020

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Steven Hasson

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of the Financial Reports

Cathy Dyer: Beginning balance for the maintenance and operations account was \$245,50.61 for the month of November. Our total payables for that month was \$139,136.78 and we did receive \$132,672.28 in revenues and resources. We have no credit line interest and we haven't touched the credit line. Our ending balance was \$238,526.11. We're sitting nice right now, we're in the black, and everything is running smoothly. I don't have any large expenses to come out of this account except for the invoice for the type three which is due in February and is a \$51,000 payment.

Dave Johnson: When we did the budget we accounted for lieutenants and captains but we did not have those positions at the time but now we will so will this be an encumbrance on the budget?



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Cathy Dyer: No because like you said we already accounted for them. The budget line has been set for payroll and will be within that range. The reserve account balance for November started at \$54,649.95, total receivables were in interest at \$44.05 so we closed out the month with \$54,694.00. That account is reserved for capital purchase reserved for equipment and is geared for and tied to your 5 year plan for purchasing equipment. So if we purchase the generator that's where it would come from. The volunteer pension balance began at \$43,112.46, we received \$19.74 in interest, and ended the month with \$43,132.00. You've got all your required budget and financial reports attached and the Cochise County treasurer's report emailed to you. We're still in the middle of our current audit season and it's been a very slow process because everything has been remote so it's been a challenging and interesting process. It is in the works and we will hopefully have our reports by the end of next month. If you have any questions let me know.

MOTION: Motion to approve the financial reports

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

Board Members' Comments:

-None

Future Agenda Items:

-None

Adjournment:

MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1904

RESULT: Five in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Trevor Thompson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

Minutes Recorded By:
Hannah Sovar-Knox, CEP