



2422 N Firehouse Lane - Huachuca City, AZ 85616

**MINUTES OF THE WHETSTONE FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING January 2021 AT 1700 HOURS.**

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

Members Present: Dave Johnson, Trevor Thompson, Steven Hasson, Rick Evans

Staff Present: Cathy Dyer, Chief Foster

Absent: None

It was determined a quorum existed.

Call to the Public:

None

Old Business:

-Discussion of Hiring Process of New Chief of Whetstone Fire District

Steven Hasson: So, with the help of Cathy Dyer, BC Foster, and Rick Evans, I put together a job announcement for the Chief's position which, if we stick to the time schedule, should be put out on this Monday the 25th. We would close on Friday, February 26th. Hopefully by the time this closes Rick will be chairperson of the board and will have had time to go through the applications and pick which ones to keep. If all goes well then March 1st, we would more actively pursue this and then on March 17th we would approve a fire chief. This is a draft and sometime between now and Friday, or if we approve it tonight with any needed modifications, it would be camera ready on Friday and we would have a copy for distribution on Monday.

Rick Evans: Just from what we talked about I've got some scribbles but nothing drastic. Looks like a very good foundation to me. In my experience, I've been through assessment centers and they've been very successful if you have everything from public presentation to dealing with a personnel issue. You get to see somebody in action and under stress.

Steven Hasson: Can you send me your scribbles tonight so I can see what you're thinking? If you give me your comments tonight then I can get my ideas to you tomorrow. I would like to put our letterhead on it and put a psa out in other places to advertise that were looking for a chief. To not only put it out but to show our citizens that we are being active in this process and have a presence. Is the board comfortable with what I've outlined? I'm not going to make a motion at this point but just a discussion item and we'll come back to this when we have more concrete items. I have 5 copies of this here for anyone who would like one.



New Business:

-Swearing in of Rick Evans

Steven Hasson: We brought Rick onto the board last week and he now needs to be sworn in.

Rick Evans was then sworn onto the Whetstone Fire Board

-Nominations for new chairperson of the board

Steven Hasson: Do we have any nominations

MOTION: I nominate Rick Evans to be the new chairperson of the Whetstone Fire District Board

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

Steven Hasson: Well Rick I'll pass the torch to you right now and let you finish the rest of the items here. Congratulations.

Rick Evans: Thank you very much. I'm very humbled that you all have placed your trust in me to appoint me to this position. It's quite a pleasure to be back.

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of the Whetstone Fire District board member handbook

Cathy Dyer: The red binders that you have on the table are the newest fire board handbooks and they are the meeting laws and the fire board guidelines that the board adopted in 2016 and there's a page for all the members in the front cover to sign that you have received it and then you need to read and look over it.

Rick Evans: In my first go around on the board we reached out to Hillside Fire Prevention and they had already done a lot of this work so we did replace the names but this book perfectly outlines how we want to run business here. So, thank you Cathy for getting us paper versions.

Steven Hasson: The goal here is that we the board minimize liability by vouching that we have read this information and, in the process, we should have a good idea what the laws of the state are and that should protect the public interest.

Rick Evans: Thank you Steve. Cathy has this book changed from my 2015 version?

Cathy Dyer: Yes, it has.



MOTION: Accept the changes to the board handbook

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of meet and confer presented to the fire board by the Profession Firefighters of Whetstone Local 5256

Danny Speer: Good evening everyone I'm the president of the Union. I was supposed to have another member here with me but due to the nature of the job he got called out to a wildfire in California. We also talked with Steve Hasson to have Fry Fire chief Mark Savage here tonight to help us with the down and dirty of what we were hoping to accomplish tonight. I'm also going to get with Dennis Ferrell who is the president of Fry's union and hopefully with their help we can get a more complete presentation together for you.

Mark Savage: I didn't bring any prepared comments but I can tell you about my personal experience as Fry Fire chief in meet and confer with local 4913. I apologize that our officers are unavailable. As soon as we got the invitation, we sent it out but we have quite a few staff members in California. The cliff notes version is that it's not a labor contract but it is a formal recognition but the fire board of a collective bargaining. My understanding is that that may have already happened with their established local. It's not binding on the board and is passed by resolution and only lasts as long as the board wants it to. From my perspective I think we were able to get a lot of incredible things done that we would not have been able to do otherwise. We opened up and cleared up a lot of communication vertically and horizontally as far as some of the big fixes we've been able to do: modify several policies, adjust our compensation benefits, and some significant schedule changes. I mentioned that this is passed by resolution and is only in place as long as the board supports it. From a more practical standpoint we have monthly labor management meetings. I'm still a union member and pay dues but I don't vote. We still get together once a month and express concerns and go over policies so when we go back to the board, we have changes to present. This is not a contract and not binding but builds a strong relationship with the board. In addition to helping us improve policies and get labor buy in, this gives us a second communication train and helps us to feel out what the personnel are feeling. I think that this has contributed to open and transparent communications. It's also helped us take some pretty big changes in stride and a case example of that was revising our pay scale. In 2016-2017 we were spending more than we were making. We sat down without accountants and our labor reps and fixed that. I'd be happy to answer any questions from the fire chief side and once again I'm sorry that our officers could be here.

Rick Evans: Thank you chief. Do any of the board members have any questions?

Chief Foster: I think that this is a great step toward a great partnership and I'm excited to build this relationship because I remember being in the ranks and talking about this kind of thing so this is incredibly exciting to me.



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Michelle Speer: We're excited about it. Being able to present it to the board and get an idea of what we're looking for so hopefully you guys feel the same way so we can continue in this direction.

Danny Speer: Our goal is definitely to have a working relationship with the upper management and the firefighters. We want to do what's best for our community in the long run. If we can all work better together across the board and if we create that foundation then we can continue to progress as a district.

Rick Evans: My time in Tucson was amazing because of the relationship we had with our local union and the IAFF. The training and the research were incredible. Thank you guys and congratulations. There's no action needed at this time but thank you to everyone for the presentation.

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of reaffirmation and reclassification of the former battalion chief and officer manager positions

Rick Evans: Does any member of the board have any comments?

Steven Hasson: Coming into this meeting my thought was that we send the message to the general public that we have people in charge here and have confidence in those people in charge here and even though we don't have someone holding the title of chief we have someone serving in that capacity. We made a motion to call this person interim chief and I understand that that was incorrect and that person should be called acting chief. We also said that Cathy should have a position in agreement with what she does here and that's where it stands. In respect to Sam and his current position, and he's welcome to apply for the chief's position, but once we have a chief and if that is not him then he will go back to being a battalion chief.

Rick Evans: As you said we looked at what Cathy is doing and the title of office manager didn't even bring to cover it. The level of work she's doing we changed the description of her job and in the next cycle of budgeting we are going to look and adjust the rank of positions, payroll, and benefits. Thank you to the both of you for helping to hold things together and for your trust in us.

MOTION: Motion to affirm that Sam Foster is currently the acting chief of the Whetstone Fire District and to retain Cathy Dyer's title of chief financial officer

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of public session minutes from 16 December 2020

Rick Evans: Just a few things I'd like to correct. The meeting actually started at 1800 hours not 1700. and under accepting the resignation of Pamela Cohen we have a typo where we said five in favor when



it should have been three. One last one thing- to change the spelling of assistance to assistant in the fire chief section.

MOTION: Motion to accept the public session minutes with stipulated corrections from 16 December 2020

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson

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

Cathy Dyer: Hopefully all of you had time to read the packet that was emailed to you. I'll do a rundown unless you have any questions. The beginning balance in December was \$238,526.11 in the maintenance and operation budget. Total payables were \$106,480.96. We received \$47,909.04 in ambulance revenues and real-estate tax and a few other things. The ending MNO balance was \$179,954.19, thus, beginning January with that same balance. The reserve account balance began in December at \$54,694 and ended at \$54,761.81. The receivables were only interest which was \$57.81. The volunteer pension account began December at \$43,132 and ended with \$43,160.52. Again, we only received interest on that account which was \$28.52. We have an upcoming patent in February for the type 3 of \$51,417.73. That is our annual payment for that engine. We do have an outstanding invoice with the town of Huachuca city so we should be receiving the payment for the extension to the contract for those three months. We will be at the beginning of the first quarter at \$102,500 so we should be receiving that and that will help offset some of the expenses. In march I think we're supposed to get back together to consolidate more with the contract but I haven't heard from the staff there on that one. I don't have anything else and anything pressing Chief Foster will present in the chief's report.

Rick Evans: By procedure we don't approve the financial reports, we just accept them. Are we doing okay financially?

Cathy Dyer: Yes, we are well within the black and in speaking with Lt Speer we have collected just over half of our real estate revenue and still have about \$200,000 to collect. And we only have five months to finish out the fiscal year so a good amount of that should carry over into the capital account

MOTION: Motion to accept the financial reports

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Trevor Thompson



-Chief's Report:

Chief Foster: We finished off the year with 1306 calls and I printed off the charts for you guys and I know we had some issues with documentation but we've been going through and fixing those. It breaks down your calls for December as well. We had 96 calls total for both stations: 62 from 321, 26 from 324, and 10 not specified. We're pretty much following the trend for the year with a slight drop in calls for the month. Vehicle maintenance has mostly been preventative but there are a few vehicles going out for repair. M322 is having charging issues with the shore line. M324 is having battery issues. Our ladder truck is not in the best of shape. I found out today that it has an oil leak, and possible hydraulic leak, and the PTO is not reliable. Some of these we knew about and have been trying to get them fixed. The big one was the water pipe way and we were hoping to get it under warranty with the company but we've been arguing back and forth saying no we didn't mess with it. For the time being with the shape it's in, we're taking it out of service. We had a couple of the bay doors go out and we had two go out and needed total replacement. They are old and all 6 of them are the same age. We have a 3rd one that's showing signs that it's about to go out too. So, we went and called up the company and they gave us a quote for the 2 that went out: it does exceed the \$5000 so that will need board approval. I have it in the packet here for you guys to look at: total sum of \$5640 for those two. I do think that we're going to end up replacing them all pretty soon but what I'm hoping is that we won't have to replace all of them before the next fiscal year. The other ones really aren't showing the same signs as that 3rd one so I'm hoping that they can carry us through to the next budget cycle. Michelle has been putting out for the grants. She went off to training and has built herself a great support network. We're looking at going for SCBA's, cardiac monitors, Danny has been doing some work with the wildland and ppe grants, some medical devices, and we do need to be aware that some of these are matching grants so there may be a bit of an upfront cost that we would need to pay as well but in reality, we're compounding out money with these. In total we're putting in for four grants?

Michelle Speer: We're putting in for three grants. The AFG grant, the Arizona governors of highway and safety grant, and then one through the department of forestry and fire management. We're pretty hopeful. Two of the cycles are open and they close February 12th so I'm in the process of writing some narratives and collecting quotes right now.

Chief Foster: Onto the generator, I know you guys had approved me for the purchase of the generator and I've been doing some looking around and I've really been on this company Gruber, and they're the ones that came out and did the assessment. I've been on them about the quote they gave us for about \$5000 which ended up being for a commercial generator which isn't what we want because we have a residential generator. I explained to them that it's not running the whole building and what they've got going on is for a commercial property they want a commercial generator. but they're working on a quote for us. I spoke with him on Monday and he said he'd probably have something by Thursday. I do have another few I'm looking at and if we can get as close to an exact replacement, we're probably looking at around \$4000 but there's a couple other brands out there that are a little pricier too. My hope with sticking with Generac is taking the old one out and plugging the new one in and we don't have to worry about anything else. I looked for the same one and couldn't find it so it will probably end up being something far from Generac. That's the one thing stopping us from making the purchase right now. We were looking also at how we wanted to go about replacing the beds in the bunk rooms. I was talking



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with my officers and Cathy and we came to the conclusion that if we're doing that and doing it for quality we may want to wait until a little further on in the grant cycle to see where we're at for making a purchase. It is a little pricey for us to dive into and we want quality items we might want to wait. We've also been looking at some fitness equipment and I think that's something we will be able to do. I have some quotes here for you guys in the back of your packet. I don't think it's going to be a problem to get these guys what they need. COVID-19 seems to be rearing its ugly head in our county right now. Our guys are still following CDC recommended precautions and we're screening out guys every day and taking advanced isolation precautions when needed. The staff has been directed to use masks when dealing with the public, out in public, and of course in the field. The supply chain for PPE is trucking right along. I was talking to Gina from the hospital and she said that SAEMS has some money they're looking to give out so I'm getting with her on that. I want to do some mitigation planning in case we have an outbreak here and I'll get with chief Savage on what he's implemented and the CDC has resources to help with that as well. We did have one person fall ill with COVID-19. He was showing signs here at work and he was sent home. It has been a while since that and no one else has shown any symptoms. Connor has been working real closely with Chiricahua Health and he's been trying to get us set up to be a POD for the COVID-19 vaccine and were looking at logistics for about a month. Chief Savage you guys already have your pods open right?

Chief Savage: Yes, we've had several pods across the county for first responders and we have a few booster pods coming up as well.

Rick Evans: Thank you. I know that things have been slow but I'm glad to see that we're moving in the right direction. And thank you Michelle for your work on the grants.

Board Members' Comments:

Steven Hasson: I have a few. One is to Cathy: as part of receiving this product here do you have something you need us to sign for it?

Cathy dyer: Yes, the front cover.

Steven Hasson: I see that we have several things that need repair around the building like the doors and the generator. Are these things that we could submit to whatever insurance we have on the building?

Chief Foster: Are talking about the electronic keypads on the doors not working?

Steven Hasson: No, the bay doors

Chief Foster: Oh okay. So that would fall more under warranty when they were purchased but they've been here a long time. But we can look into that and see what the policy says.

Steven Hasson: My last thing is about the beds. The beds we have are deplorable and Cathy said we have money so why are we not moving forward with this?



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Chief Foster: So, we really don't want to shoot ourselves in the foot on the funding for the grants in this next cycle. If we are not able to get the beds this cycle it can be budgeted into the next cycle but we don't want to take away from the rollover which is going to go into the account that we're going to be going into for our matching.

Steven Hasson: I really think that we owe it to our staff to provide first class accommodations.

Rick Evans: What you will get from me is a commitment to give you the safest and best career we possibly can. We're never going to cut corners just to save a buck: we will always strive to give you the best we possibly can.

Future Agenda Items:

-None

Adjournment:

MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1900

RESULT: Three in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Trevor Thompson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

Minutes Recorded By:
Hannah Sovar-Knox, CEP