



MINUTES OF THE WHETSTONE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING 22 June 2020

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

Members Present: Steven Hasson, Donna Graybill, Pamela Cohen, Dave Johnson

Staff Present: Chief Bidon, Cathy Dyer

Absent: None

It was determined a quorum existed with four board members present.

Call to the Public: No Public present due to Covid-19

Old Business:

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of the appointment of a new chairperson

Pamela Cohen: I will go on record to say that I do not want this position. I nominate Donna Graybill.

Steven Hasson: I second that nomination.

Chief Bidon: Any other nominations for chairperson?

MOTION: I move to appoint Donna Graybill as our new chairperson

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Pamela Cohen

SECONDED: Steven Hasson

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of renewal of the Fire Chief's contract

Donna Graybill: Has everyone had a chance to look at this contract? Okay I have as well, and I think that we need to have an executive meeting as I have a couple questions.

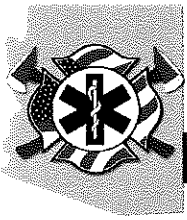
MOTION: I move to go into an executive session to discuss the renewal of the fire chief's contract

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Pamela Cohen

*At this time, Chief Bidon was asked to step out of the room and the recorder was turned off



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*Following the executive session, Chief Bidon was called back into the room and the regular board meeting was resumed at 1738

Donna Graybill: So the board has a few questions regarding your contract. It was written by an attorney?

Chief Bidon: My contract was approved by an attorney. He approved the first one and I haven't changed anything in it. It mimics the contract I had at Northwest Fire which was written by an attorney. I simply modified that one to fit Whetstone and sent it to the county attorney.

Donna Graybill: We would like to have the county attorney come and sit in on a meeting to answer all questions because most of us are still very new at this and we want to make sure we are understanding everything properly. The contract references a policy manual quite a bit, so Cathy, we were hoping that you could provide us with that so that we know what they're talking about. We also have a few clarification questions that we are going to write up for you or Cathy to answer. We'd like to see your salary changes over the years and you haven't had a performance appraisal since 2009 and we may need to write that differently and get you a new appraisal. We also had a question regarding the first addendum regarding the wildland pay.

Chief Bidon: I am a salary employee so I don't make hourly wages so I don't get paid overtime.

Donna Graybill: We also need to add in here about your employment with the hospital so that Whetstone is your primary source of income and not your sole source. What is the best way to get ahold of the county attorney?

Chief Bidon: It's changed so I need to go back and look at who approved my contract and get ahold of them.

Cathy: The hardcopy of the policies aren't updated but we have digital copies. I've been putting together an employee manual but the operations position is still under construction.

Dave Johnson: The issue that I see is that a lot of the language in here is predicated on specific products.

Donna Graybill: When should we expect to see an updated version of the policies?

Cathy: I'll get you what I have so far.

Chief Bidon: We're currently trying to put everything on the server which has been difficult since not everything is digital right now.

Donna Graybill: So when is a realistic date for that?

Chief Bidon: I'm not sure. Once we have everything together we need to send it to Zamora so he can put it on the server.



Donna Graybill: Until we have the proper policies and procedures we can't really approve your contract because the references hold no meaning.

Dave Johnson: Cathy can you see that all of the products in the policies are things that we have?

Chief Bidon: We have been trying to keep up with all of the mandates, both state and federal, which has been very difficult because things are constantly changing.

Donna Graybill: So is it feasible of us to ask for this? Is there some way that we can help you with this? The faster we can get this up to date the better.

Chief Bidon: All the firefighters are tasked with different policies so everyone is working on it right now. I'll get with BC Foster and we'll pull it all together.

Donna Graybill: Any further discussion on the chiefs contract?

MOTION: I move that we table this discussion until we have the proper materials to obtain clarification on the items we discussed

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of the Possible changes to the Huachuca City Intergovernmental Aide Agreement

Chief Bidon: I had put out three options: a twenty year, a fifteen year, and a ten year. My concern is that we need to see which way Huachuca City wants to go and then settle on one option. I think that they're more set on the ten year contract because they're hoping to be annexed but if we fail at the annexation we can't try for another two years. I'm trying to provide them the most comprehensive contract I can so that they can plan ahead for their budget. I still need to add something about annexation into the contract and have options for if it fails. We need to make sure that if the annexations succeeds that we are still compensated in the time that it takes for it to take effect and for the taxes to be acknowledged. It's a long process.

Donna Graybill: So when is Huachuca City hoping to make a decision on this?

Chief Bidon: As soon as I'm done with this I'm going to send it to all of you and we can vote on it. Our contract ends in December of this year so we need to have it done by then. And I'd like to get longer than three years because a career firefighter doesn't want to be here because if we lose the contract then we could lay off half the district. I want to do this right because I want the annexation to succeed on the first try; the sooner the better.



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Pamela Cohen: Would we have to rent the station from them?

Chief Bidon: We're renting it now but I'm not sure if or how that would change. I'm looking into grants to build or fund fire stations and look at moving where the station is to decrease response times. We do have to be careful where we put it because certain groups will fight it and we don't want to waste money. At this point I'd say we table this until I can get this back to you with all of these amendments and recommendations. The attorney also looked over this.

MOTION: I move that we table this discussion until we have the updated contract

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson

New Business:

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of the public session minutes from May 26, 2020

Donna Graybill: Any questions or discussion?

Steven Hasson: We were looking at a gift for our outgoing chairperson last time, right?

Chief Bidon: I think we should wait until Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted so people can come and see her getting the plaque.

Donna Graybill: I think that we should have it made and sent to her.

*Everyone expresses agreement with Donna Graybill

Cathy: Do we still want a letter of appreciation and have everyone sign it?

*Everyone expresses agreement with Cathy

Donna Graybill: Maybe instead of sending it to her we could have the guys go over and deliver it in person

*Everyone expresses agreement with Donna Graybill

MOTION: I move that we approve the Minutes from the May board meeting

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Dave Johnson



-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of approving the budget for the 2021 fiscal year

Steven Hasson: Chief Bidon has presented us with all the information needed to comprehend the language, we held a public meeting, and have followed all the timelines required by law.

MOTION: I move that we approve the Budget For the 2021 Fiscal Year

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Pamela Cohen

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

Cathy: I know sending them out via email can be a little confusing but if you have reviewed them and don't have any questions I'll just give you a breakdown of the account balances. We closed the operations account for the month of May out at \$168,470.16. Our current balance to date is \$113,141.82. We have a lot of changes with the outstanding warrants, the IGA, and some deposits coming up. Once all of that is done, you all can vote what you want to move. We closed the reserve account for the month of May at \$154,005.71. The only big expense for the account is for the new engine and I spoke with the delivery company and we should get the engine within the next week. It was delayed because they found a brake cylinder problem and had to fix it. We closed out the Pension Relief Account out at \$42,992.50 for the month of May.

MOTION: I move that we approve the May 2020 Financial reports

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Dave Johnson

SECONDED: Steven Hasson

Chief's Report-

Information regarding the following topic(s) presented by the fire chief:

We ended the month of May with 553 calls for service and E324 is in service and they've been operating on it for about a week now. We are still waiting on the engine that was involved in the accident to return. We've already talked about the Huachuca City Contract. I had to spend about \$1,008 to reprogram all of our radios because sea-com changed how they're dispatching us. Canyon State will be the ones doing the radios. We try not to spend any money starting June 1st because it makes it easier for Cathy to balance out the books but we didn't have a choice with the radios. The new hire testing will start the first week of July so hopefully we'll get those positions filled and then Sam and I can go off shift. We do have one person on the Bighorn Fire finishing his Engine Boss task book so when he comes back we should be able to send our trucks out and generate some more revenue.



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Firefighter Dickey and BC Foster have been working on getting our Fire Academy started back up and we're following the CDC recommendations. We also need to think about when these meetings are opened to the public again that we will need to provide them masks. The brush truck is at the city yard getting its pump replaced. I also have a fire chief evaluation form that I can send to Cathy and she can send it to you guys.

Donna Graybill: I was still wondering about the dashcams.

Chief Bidon: I'm not going to purchase them until after we close the accounts up so I don't mess up the accounts. I'm also looking at buying body cams for the firefighters when they're on calls. As the Chief I have some concerns for the safety of my personnel that I feel body cam footage will give me the desired outcome for change that I'm looking for.

Donna Graybill: What is your limit of funding?

Chief Bidon: \$5,000 which I am happy with.

Steven Hasson: What can you use that \$5,000 for? \

Chief Bidon: It's so I can purchase things without going to the board. The \$5,000 is per incident but I use it per month. And it shows in the financial reports as expenditures. When I spend the money I use the District credit card and there are receipts so everything is accounted for.

Donna Graybill: What are your guidelines for the employees attending the board meetings?

Chief Bidon: It's encouraged but not mandatory.

Steven Hasson: A question about mutual aid and reimbursement. We have an individual at a fire, so what's happening with that?

Chief Bidon: Yes. So he is on a state fire so the state will reimburse us. When it's a large incident and we're called we get reimbursed. If we get called by a neighboring department for mutual aid we aren't reimbursed.

Board Members' Comments:

Donna Graybill: Who is responsible for the website.

Cathy: Valerie maintains the website and when we send her information and she gets time, she updates it. I emailed her a while ago and she updated a few things and I know that a lot of updates are needed. Zamora was going to take it over but I'm not sure as of right now.



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Donna Graybill: When will he take over?

Chief Bidon: We need to talk to him about that.

Donna Graybill: What about Facebook? Who is the administrator?

Chief Bidon: Melissa is.

Donna Graybill: Did we put out for new board members?

Cathy: It is on our website but we need to put it out on our Facebook page and maybe in the paper.

Donna Graybill: We did have a husband and wife express interest.

Chief Bidon: We can only have one sit on the board because family members can't sit on the same board together. They also need to live within the Whetstone District Boundaries and if we annex Huachuca City then residents there can apply as well.

Donna Graybill: Do we have a map of those boundaries?

Chief Bidon: There is one up in the captain's office but we need to add in the portions of lower Huachuca City that are now a part of it.

Donna Graybill: What about the board bi-laws?

Cathy: It was in the email.

Donna Graybill: Are patients given an option in where they're transported?

Chief Bidon: Yes we can take them to Benson or Canyon Vista and on some occasions we go as far as Bisbee or even Tucson.

Future Agenda Items:

-Tabled items, possible new board members

Adjournment:

MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting 1837

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed



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MOVED BY: Steven Hasson
SECONDED: Dave Johnson

Donna Graybill

Minutes Recorded By:
Hannah Sovar-Knox, FF/CEP