

**MINUTES OF THE WHETSTONE FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING 25 May 2020**

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

Members Present: Steven Hasson, Donna Graybill, Pamela Cohen

Staff Present: Chief Bidon, BC Foster, Cathy Dyer

Absent: Dave Johnson, Michelle Bell

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

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

Old Business:

-None

New Business:

-Review Amendment and Discussion of Possible Action of Public Session Minutes for April 27th, 2020

Pamela Cohen: I was absent from this meeting so I had to read the paper.

MOTION: I move to approve the Public Session Minutes for April 27th, 2020

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of the resignation of Chairperson Michelle Bell

Chief Bidon: I tried calling her a couple times. She left her shirt, tablet, and a letter in my mailbox. She is resigning and thanked everybody for the time and energy and effort but at this point she cannot carry on on the board.

Steven Hasson: How long was Michelle on the board?

Pamela Cohen: Close to 4 years

Board members agreed to get Michelle a gift for her service.



MOTION: I move that we accept Michelle Bell's resignation

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

BC Foster: At this point I'll pass out the call breakdown for the year. For this year not all the calls are included because when the year started the guys weren't changing the Station number for calls. This has been corrected and I know that our program is a bit wonky so I've has been looking into getting a new program because right now we use Fire Programs and the new one is called Wildfire and is a bit more user friendly.

Steven Hasson: Anything different about the calls this month?

BC Foster: No nothing unusual.

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of the Appointment of a new chairperson.

Chief Bidon: This is where we can nominate people or choose to table this until Dave is present.

Pamela Cohen: I think we should probably table it.

MOTION: I move to table this matter until Dave Johnson is present

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

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

Chief Bidon: So what happens is a lot of fire district Chiefs work under contract because of the elections years and if someone doesn't like the fire chief they can get on the board and get rid of them, which happens a lot in Arizona. We have been fortunate that it hasn't happened down here. My contract is usually a 4 year but I've asked for a 7 year this time because if you look at the bottom of option one the retirement will be in 2028 and that will be a complete retirement.

Steven Hasson: Do we have options as to how long the contract is?

Chief Bidon: That is entirely up to the board for whatever amount of time you want. Usually my contract is 4 years and for the last 2 years I've been operating without a contract. The last time it was done was in 2018.

Steven Hasson: Would this contract be retroactive?

Chief Bidon: No I'll retire in 2028 so I'm asking for the 7 years to take me to my retirement



Steven Hasson: Are there any issues with you not having a contract for the past 2 years?

Chief Bidon: No. The contract protects the fire chief from a new board coming in and getting rid of him.

Donna Graybill: Should we wait until we have Dave Johnson to continue this?

Pamela Cohen: Yes I think we should

MOTION: I move that we continue this discussion for when Dave Johnson is back

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of the possible approval changes to the Huachuca City intergovernmental agreement

Chief Bidon: Can we table this until we do a work session please?

MOTION: I move that we continue this until we have a work session

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of the tentative budget for posting

Chief Bidon: If you look at the budget that is presented there, there is a new item that was added today. With this, you are not approving the budget because we have to have a hearing. What I'm asking for tonight is approval to post the budget because we have to have it posted for 30 days for the public to view it before we have a public hearing. But we can't go up once this is approved for posting but we can come down. Our taxes went up a little this year but things haven't changed much other than the \$80,000 for the new engine. We also have one person in paramedic school right now and due to Covid-19 they have extended classes and moved them online so in this I have \$0 dollars for that for this year. I took the training computer out because we just got new computers. I also took out \$5,000 for a training officer. The current tax rate is at 325 and the new tax levy and you look at our revenue, we went up \$11,000. Our ambulance revenue has also gone up since we went with the City of Sierra Vista. The City of Sierra Vista is charging us \$14.00 for every EMS call they bill for us, but they have done a great job compared to when we did it in house. I also took a chunk out of communications which we usually have around \$50,000 but we just bought new laptops. Our biggest cost on the budget is the employee cost.

Donna Graybill/ Pamela Cohen: Why is the budget for admin so high? That's a massive jump.

Chief Bidon: Because of Sam (BC Foster). He now holds an admin position as Battalion Chief.



Steven Hasson: Is there a certain date this has to be done by?

Chief Bidon: We have to have this done by August but it rolls out July 1st so we like to have it done to have those 30 days.

MOTION: I move that we approve this draft of the budget for posting with the corrections we got today

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

Chief Bidon: Now that this is approved we can post it on our website.

-Review Amendment, Discussion, and Possible Action of the financial reports

Steven Hasson: Thank you for adding the budget to actual on this

Cathy Dyer: We are out of the credit line now. We closed the month of April out at \$226,066.23. Our balance in the Maintenance and Operation account is \$160,183.57. And we still have around \$70,000-\$90,000 in taxes to collect that will go into the operations account.

Chief Bidon: We usually stop spending right now so things are easier on Cathy when the fiscal year ends in July.

Cathy Dyer: We closed the reserve account for the month of April \$158,597.42. We are still waiting for the invoice for the engine to come in so we can write the check.

Chief Bidon: We will write the check without the approval of the board because it was through the insurance company. We will let you guys know when we do it though.

Cathy Dyer: The volunteer pension account closed for the month of April at \$42,943.44. We also received a stimulus payment of \$6,400 for Covid-19.

MOTION: I move to accept the financial reports for the month of April

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Donna Graybill

SECONDED: Steven Hasson

Chief's Report-

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

Chief Bidon: The new engine is here and parked at 324 and we're waiting for it to get registered. And we should have the repaired engine here next week.



Steven Hasson: Are we going to put cameras on them?

Chief Bidon: Yes I will buy the cameras once things from Covid-19 settle down and I'll also look online. I want them to be sturdy and have night vision. I had a meeting with the town manager of Huachuca City and attended the council meeting and the budget hearing. The new town manager used what the old manager and the interim manager said. We didn't want to go through the bidding process again so I sat down and talked with him. The council went 7-0 to stick with us and extend the IGA and I'd like to have a work session about it to present my ideas to you guys and see what Huachuca City is open to. Huachuca City would like us to annex them and we would like that as well. And I'm working on that but we need to have this contract in place first. The reason I'm asking for the longer contract up there is because if we fail at annexation we have to wait for 2 years to go again. However the people live our service up there but we need a new sign up there because people don't like that we don't have our name up there. This year to date we had 458 calls. The town manager made a comment that he would like to have the Whetstone and Huachuca City calls broken down yearly and monthly so that's in the packet you have. The town of Huachuca City will be looking for a new town clerk and also a new financier.

Steven Hasson: I was wondering if anything new has come of the insurance difficulties fire departments were having and if that is included in the budget.

Chief Bidon: We have worker's comp insurance that starts when this one ends and it's a bit less than the current one.

Board Members' Comments: None

Future Agenda Items:

-Tabled items

Adjournment:

MOTION: Motion to adjourn the meeting

RESULT: All in favor; none opposed

MOVED BY: Steven Hasson

SECONDED: Donna Graybill

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





Whetstone

FIRE DISTRICT

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