

**Minutes to Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday June 28, 2021 at 9:00 AM**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** Dorney, Garber, Johnson, Kolsrud, Webber (telephonically)
Note: Governing board members and/or attorney may attend telephonically/digitally.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes:

- May 24, 2021 Board Meeting: Motion by Garber to approve with upgrades identified in meeting, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.
- June 21, 2021 Special Meeting , tabled until next Board Meeting

Note: Note: Recordings are available should a public member request minutes that have not been posted to the website, which meets open meeting law requirements

- 4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** Members of the public are invited to submit written statements for inclusion in the minutes. No comments submitted.

5. REPORTS FROM THE FIRE CHIEF OR HIS DESIGNEE:

- Review of Service calls by zone and shifts
- *Status of vehicles:* No current issues reported
- *Status of new ambulance:* Ambulance has arrived. New lights are installed and tires currently being replaced. Vehicle is registered and insured and will be inspected by DHS to complete the registration process.
- *Status of Facilities:* Some lights being replaced, no other issues to report.
- *Administration Update:* Administrator from Palominas (Brittany) is making progress in finding and reorganizing office files and getting the office ready for a permanent office administrator.
- *Fire & Wildland Activities:* 2 SEFD personnel were sent for 14 days to help with the Telegraph Fire in Pinal & Gila counties of Arizona; 2 were sent to the Walnut Fire in Cochise County Arizona to provide overnight structure protection, and 2 were sent to provide support for the Fairway Fire near Nogales in Santa Cruz County Arizona. These are revenue generating activities and the District will be reimbursed for the support they provided.
- *Personnel Status:* Since the last meeting the District has added 1 new recruit; 2 new individuals that are completing the hiring process; and a former District employee with firefighter/paramedic experience has returned to the District. Operations Chief Meredith noted that a number of former employees have returned to the District.

- *Grants:* The District received approval for the \$30K Governors Highway Safety Grant. The grant has allowed the District to purchase new extrication equipment and safety equipment to replace the existing older and outdated equipment. The purchases included:

- Cutters and Spreaders that have internal power source. The old equipment required hoses and an external power source. A backup power source was also ordered for the new equipment. Note: Firefighters who have passed their Firefighters 1 & 2 training are qualified to use the new tools. The equipment is currently on site and fully operational. Operations Chief Meredith provided a demonstration of the equipment and how it can be used.
- New Breakaway Vests and Gloves, used when operating the extrication equipment
- Step Locks to stabilize vehicles and improved safety cones

The new equipment will allow the District personnel to use extrication techniques in a safe and efficient manner and provide the District needed equipment upgrades.

- *Other Community Safety:* The District Leadership is now participating in the CRT (Community Response Team), which is focused on providing support & resources during emergency situations within the community. The CRT Team has indicated that former Chief De Wolfe had a dedicated phone line installed at the Fire Station to assist with that emergency support. Acting Chief Buonaccorsi is meeting with the CRT Team today and will obtain additional information.

6. Monthly Financial Reports pursuant to ARS Sec. 48-807:

Vicki Rutter presented monthly financial reports to include: reconciled balance sheet accounts; updated cash flow projections; month-end fund statements, and month-end reports of financial institutions in which the SEFD maintains an accounts, General Ledger and PSPRS information. Note: Vicki Rutter confirmed that we currently have a \$142K budget surplus. She noted that the current District Leadership efforts in managing the budget, and the absence of those employees who had large salaries and benefits, may have contributed to part of the surplus. Motion by Dorney to approve monthly financials, seconded by Garber, motion carried unanimously.

7. Review, discussion, and possible action to approve purchase of SCBA Air Compressor.

Acting Chief Buonaccorsi proposed replacing the current air compressor, it's very old and outdated, and parts are no longer available. This is not a budgeted item and needs Board approval. Acting Chief Buonaccorsi obtained several quotes and selected the United Fire quote of \$55,484.04. The quote also included training for the District and the equipment will last for at least another 15 years. After a lengthy discussion the Board decided to use the budget surplus identified by Vicki Rutter. Motion by Garber to use surplus, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

8- Public Hearing on the SEFD budget for fiscal year 2021-2022:

The draft budget was posted at the Sonoita Elgin Post Office, on the SEFD website, and in the Patagonia Regional Times 30 days prior to this meeting in order to provide an opportunity for community input and comment. During the 30 days no public inputs or comments have been received by the District Leadership or the Board. The comment period has now closed.

9- Review, discussion and possible action regarding SEFD Resolution approving and formally adopting the SEFD annual budget for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Acting Chief Buonaccorsi confirmed that the budget contains an item for the Compressor and that it will now become a Capital Reserve Fund in order to provide for future equipment replacements/purchases. He also confirmed that the budget contains a 7% salary increase for all Firefighters and Captains. First motion made by Garber to approve and adopt the 2021-2022 draft budget, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously. Second motion made by Garber to approve the 7% salary increase for the Firefighters and Captains, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

10- Review discussion and possible action regarding adoption of a Resolution adopting a policy providing individual Board members have reasonable access to SEFD administrative records.

This Resolution is being proposed to make it easier for Board members to obtain District records/documents in a timely manner, without having the record keeper seek approval from the District Leadership team. Historically this has been an issue due to lack of policy and certain employees understanding of the legal rights of the Board. It is a “stop gap” measure until the Fire Board Policies can be updated to include a formal policy. Motion by Kolsrud to enact the resolution providing Board members with access to all District documents/records, seconded by Garber, motion carried unanimously.

11- Review, discussion, and possible action regarding adoption of a Resolution adopting a policy providing for verification at least annually that employees are receiving accurate pay and benefits:

Chair Johnson noted this should be an additional task on the annual Audit, done by Walker and Armstrong. Johnson will confirm that Walker and Armstrong have the capability, and adding the task to the District contract/agreement with Walker and Armstrong. Motion by Garber to adopt the policy for annual verification of employees pay and benefits with Walker and Armstrong, seconded by Kolsrud, motion carried unanimously.

12- Review, discussion, and possible action to consider hiring a CPA/bookkeeping firm to provide bookkeeping services to SEFD and process for selecting a CPA/bookkeeping firm:

Hiring an outside firm was a recommendation out of the recent Internal Controls Investigation, as a result of the bookkeeping issues with the former Chief's salary and

benefits. The District Leadership team would like the Board to make a decision on whether the District bookkeeping will be handled by an outside firm or handled in-house, and then the Leadership team be responsible for the hiring/contracting of a firm or personnel. Chair Johnson noted that the Board should be able to look at any responses to a RFQ since they have a fiduciary responsibility to the District. The Board agreed that the Leadership team would handle the final hiring or contract process. Operations Chief Meredith volunteered to develop a cost benefit analysis for the Board for selecting a “firm vs. employee” and presenting that analysis at the Board meeting on 7/26.

13- Review, discussion, and possible action to initiate the search process for a full-time SEFD fire chief including approving a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for professional recruitment firm:

Garber volunteered to draft a list of qualifications to start the process of a RFQ and provide it to the Board at the July 26 Board meeting. Chair Johnson asked that the input from the public should be added as part of a selection process. Garber will include selection process criteria in his report. No other action taken.

14- Review, discussion and possible action regarding status of pending insurance claim for financial loss: In progress, no updates to report, no action taken.

15- Review, discussion and possible action regarding referral to Santa Cruz County and Sheriff's Office: In progress, no updates to report, no action taken.

16- Future agenda items.: The Board may request items to be placed on a future agenda for discussion and consideration at the regular board meeting or future date:

Dorney requested that PSPRS (Public Safety Personnel Retirement System) be included in the monthly Board Meeting Agendas. Chair Johnson announced that there is an opening on the PSPRS Board to replace a former community member. The PSPRS Board is separate from the Fire Board, and meets quarterly reviewing applications for retirement. The Board is made up of community members, representatives from the Fire District, a Fire Board member, and lawyer. Details on the announcement will be included on the SEFD Facebook page.

17- Adjournment: Motion by Kolsrud, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

NOTICE: The Sonoita-Elgin Fire District Board of Directors may go into executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the fire district's attorney(s) on any of the above agenda items pursuant to A.R.S.§38-431.03(A)(3).

Minutes approved by Reba Webber, Board Clerk, on 7/27/2021.
Reba Webber date