

**All minutes approved by SEFD Board of Directors
On Monday, Sept. 28, 2020.**

June 22, 2020

July 27, 2020

August 24, 2020

August 27, 2020

September 22, 2020

**Minutes to the Regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday, 22 June 2020
0900**

Call to Order

Roll call – Johnson, Archibald, Webber, Dorney were present. Bahti was absent. Also present: Chief De Wolf, Goodwin, Sink, Rutter, Bennett and several members of the public.

Pledge of Allegiance

Call to the Public & Budget Hearing; four members of the public addressed the Board on the topic of the Budget, Nancy Belt, Anita Kay, Kathe Prentice (employee) and Gary Soliere. The specific topics were regarding a payroll increase, a decrease in the ambulance income and the fact that the total income needed increased by \$29,000. The Board and the Chief responded to the questions...

Nancy Belt – main points – Payroll expenses have gone up \$48,756; was curious if that was for raises or a new hire **Concerned why would we take a valuable commodity that we currently have, eliminate it, then train more to replace it.**

Gary Soliere – main points – **concerned** grant opportunities slowing down due to this COVID issue; are you eliminating a medical position?

Kathe Prentice – If the ambulance is making \$280,000 a year does it make sense to get rid of a paramedic?

Anita Kaye: main points – **concern over removing trained personnel for new hires; understand that we train here, that turns us into a revolving door. I understand this, that's what I do in my business.**

Based on the Concerns from the Call to the Public, the Chief responded as follows: Chief ~~the start.~~

Training: SEFD is a place where people join, get trained, then go to larger departments. We use grants to **go off set that situation.** The grant position that is closing was part of the process of getting from one paramedic per shift to two paramedics per shift. **The grant allowed us to keep a full time paramedic and also covered ½ the pay for a medical coordinator while we filled those additional medic positions, which took firefighters and trained them as paramedics.** Those positions are now filled, and the grant ends November 30, the associated 1.5 positions (**paramedic and medical coordinator**) will be eliminated.

Ambulance income has decreased—we're seeing a decrease in the number of transports as people don't want to go to a hospital—due to the COVID-19 issues. We had seen an increase in ambulance income over the previous years, however this current fiscal year has not followed that trend. We've seen a 15-20% decrease in transports, therefore income. We felt it would be appropriate to decrease the anticipated income for next fiscal year.

Payroll expenses – **The increase is due to a part-time position changing to a full-time position and to bring 2 EMT/Firefighter positions above minimum raise. The grant that is expiring on Nov. 30, 2020 covered 1.5 positions. SEFD had a medical director who held a part-time position since the creation of the fire district. the grant enabled us to have a fulltime the medical director So the grant will eliminate 1 ½ positions but the medical director will remain as a fulltime employee. The District was already paying for ½ of the position and now will be increasing our salary budget to include the other half that was covered by grant.**

WJ2

**Minutes to the Regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday, 22 June 2020
0900**

While discussing the question was raised Regarding the salary increases in the budget. Per the Chief and Chris Johnson it was noted that the Board's function is to set policy, adopt a budget, make sure we operate within that budget, and hire/fire a chief. Per Reba Webber, the Chief had decreased the costs of insurance costs to fund the salary increases. IF for some reason the Chief needed the approval of the Board to increase the budget and the tax levy then the Board would have been involved in the personnel issues.

Review and approval of the minutes to the meeting of 26 May 2020: Motion to approve was made by Sue Archibald, seconded by Annette Dorney; Discussion – Dorney, I did find a spelling error, on page 2 changing the word “tone” to “done.” Motion was passed unanimously.

Chief's Report – May –

- 57 runs, year to month is 258, 27 simultaneous calls and 15 helicopter transports.
- We still have 4 open grants out, DFFM for \$220,000 for a Fuels Treatment Grant (should hear sometime in August), AFG grant for \$120,000 for an ambulance, GOHS grant for \$42,739 for extrication equipment and a 555 Fitness grant for new exercise equipment.
- Palominas IGA – going well, we're expecting our new engine in August, but an increase of COVID-19 activity may delay that yet again.
- Brenda Tranchina of HR Specialists spent 5 hours with the Officer staff going over performance evaluations – what they are, how to do them and why they are important.
- We are on schedule for a final budget meeting to be held on June 30, 2020 where the Board will adopt a final budget for FY2021.

Financials – The financial documents for the month of May 2020 were presented by V. Rutter. There were no unusual transactions this month; no questions were asked by the Board. Motion to accept the finances as presented was made by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and possible action on updating the HR Policy manual – tabled to June 30, 2020.

Discussion and possible action on distribution of Dorney's questionnaire – tabled to July Board meeting.

Discussion and possible action on Resolution #2020-0622 – Call to Election – Chief De Wolf read the resolution to the Board. This is a requirement by statute; motion to approve was made by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, motion carried.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn was made by Dorney, seconded by Archibald, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on 28 Sept 2020, , Board Clerk.
Reba Webber

Minutes to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday, 27 July 2020
0900

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – All Board members were present (Bahti, Johnson, Webber, Archibald and Dorney)
Also present were Chief De Wolf, members of staff, and members of the public.

The meeting began as usual in the training room of the fire house. There were, however, too many individuals present for COVID-19 compliance with regards to limited numbers people in a defined space so the meeting was moved to the engine bay. Unfortunately, there is no sound system in the bay for recording meetings; the single recording device was located on the Board Chair's table and did not catch everyone's comments. The required use of masks also interfered with being able to understand what was being said.

Call to the public – Chaplain Mike Wright spoke a prayer over the board, department and public present. There were no others who asked to speak.

Approval of the minutes to the meetings of June 22 and 30: Motion to approve the minutes by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, discussion...

Dorney, correction change minimum wage to wage and typo at end of second line

Webber – Suggested that the minutes needed to clarify the concerns of the public and she was not ready to approve the minutes without some Archibald amended her motion to table approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 22 to the next meeting.

Minutes of 30 June 2020 – correct Weber to Webber – motion to approve by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

Report from the Fire Chief – *All computer/overhead viewing was not available due to having moved the meeting to the bay. We ran 41 calls in June. The Ambulance transports are down; they are down across the state due to COVID. There's a pretty even spread to date between the crews with regards to calls. GRANTS – we were advised that we were denied the Fuels Mitigation Grant; the FEMA Ambulance grant is still out; the Fitness Equipment grant is also still out. Archibald – does the FEMA one require a match of any kind? Chief – it is a five percent match. Archibald – How about the fitness one? Chief – no match at all. Archibald – any idea when we'll here on the FEMA one? Chief – generally August. With FEMA and all they're doing right now it could go a little longer. The IGA with Palominas is going well. All three shifts (SEFD) have been down to the burn tower (at Palominas). We're going to start going down on a quarterly basis with our career and volunteer personnel. Their new engine has been slowed down again due to COVID, they have a reduced staff now. We're still hoping to take delivery in August. We have new masks for our face shields for our personnel (structure) which were designed by one of our career personnel. The Department of Corrections which generally comes around and helps will not be back in Sonoita until after the new year. The only other thing I have is with the vacancy of the Ops Chief position, the three Captains have stepped up and are covering the role and some of the shifts through August. Then we'll start addressing that and seeing how we're going to go forward after that. Archibald – Did we go up to the Bighorn fire? Chief – we did, we spent 14*

Minutes to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday, 27 July 2020
0900

days up there. We billed out right about \$43,000. We've had a couple little fires around here. Our engine boss is on his second honeymoon, he married a gal from Wisconsin so they're back there fighting mosquitos and doing another wedding for her family. He'll be back around the 14th so we'll be back up and running then. The crew on the Bighorn spent most of their time up on Mt Lemmon. There are pictures up on Facebook and Instagram.

Acceptance of the Preliminary June 2020 Financials – *Again, there were no PowerPoint slides available due to the location.* Financials were presented by MS Rutter. The financials are preliminary and would remain so until the Annual Audit was completed. At the pleasure of the Board the presentation was shortened to a minimum. One item of note that was mentioned was the fact that we've not received all of our projected tax monies as of the end of June. SEFD usually gets our full tax amount, we're at 98.4% for Santa Cruz and Pima County was at 97.3% which is again a little low. There were no unusual expenses in June. The total unbudgeted income helped to bring us up to an overall income for the year. **Webber** – we had quite a jump in internet provider. **Webber** – yes, we added a new internet provider and kept the old one, so we have two. **Johnson** – Well after a wild year, we end up \$6,500 in the green, which is not bad out of a million and a half budget. **Rutter** – and again that's because of the unbudgeted items. With the budgeted items we didn't do so good. **Archibald** -we didn't have any wildland. Motion to accept the financials as presented was made by Dorney, seconded by Webber, motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and possible Action on HR Policy – Brenda Tranchina – One of the things we had talked about at the conference in Laughlin to eliminate the use of the pronoun he throughout the manual – to change the references of He/She to the member. Johnson had subsequently submitted a couple other changes. (#1,2,3)

- Grammatical – reference to a tow that should be a “two”. Tranchina – we can correct that.
- 2. Bullying & retaliation – there's a “he” in that section, replace with member. Concern for use of the word retribution. Tranchina - We can substitute the word retaliation for retribution.
- 3. Keep complaints confidential. Tranchina - You asked to keep complaints confidential, there can be no guarantee of confidentiality.
- **Archibald** – so once this is approved everyone will get a copy. **Chief** – yes, there are hardcopies available in the Day Room, the Admin's office, my office and we will also be sending out section on the policy manual on a monthly basis to make it easier to review.
- **Dorney** - Page 189 – typo... think psychologues should be psychologist.
- **Webber** – page 188 the change was you removed the acronym EAP. What is EAP? **Tranchina** - Employee Assistance Program. **Webber** – you've changed this to district's health care insurance. **Archibald** – Is that different than workmen's comp? **Tranchina** – Yes.

Minutes to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Monday, 27 July 2020
0900


- **Webber** – On page 191, there's a note there that you wanted that removed, the section about paying for refreshers? **Chief** – Yes, we don't hold them here anymore. That's a holdover from when we were completely volunteer.
- **Webber** - On page 118, it looks like the change is regarding using a recording device to record individuals without permissions. This includes a second section with personal devices as well. **Tranchina** - Yes. **Webber** – is there a reason why we didn't have this before. **Chief** – HR Policies are updated based on issues that happen all over the state. **Tranchina** – policies are tweaked based on things that come up in other districts over the year. Motion to approve the policy changes was made by Webber, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and question on questionnaire – Dorney. (This was a questionnaire that had been put together several months ago by Annette Dorney that we've been tabling it since the COVID issue came up. A short survey on the performance of the Board and fire district.) How does everyone feel about it? Archibald - it might be time to do it. Webber – fine with me. Johnson – I'm good with it. It was decided to move forward with sending out the questionnaire.

Question from the floor Johnson agreed to hear - Gary Soliere – do you still have the HAZMAT classes here. Chief – yes, all structure firefighters have to do a refresher. Soliere – Once every two years. Chief – Yes.

Discussion and possible action regarding Annual Review of Chief De Wolf – Archibald – I move we move to executive session for the Chief's review. Seconded by Webber. Discussion – I'd like to invite Brenda in for the first part of the discussion. **Tranchina** – Mr. Chairman, let it be known for the record that the Chief was provided with a 24-hour notice as required by statute and he has elected to by written notice to have the matter discussed in executive session. Johnson – Okay. Vote motion approved unanimously. Board is adjourned to executive session. The Board held the executive session in the vacated training room. Upon going out of executive session (in session for about 2.5 hours) the executive session was adjourned and the regular Board meeting resumed. At the opening of regular session, the Board was cautioned to remember that discussions in executive session were confidential.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn was made by Archibald, seconded by Webber, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on 28 Sept 2020,  Board Clerk.

Reba Webber

Minutes to the Regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
August 24, 2020
0900

AGENDA:

A. Call to Order. At 0905

B. Roll Call of Board Members

Chris Johnson, Reba Webber, Kurt Bahti (he left about 0940), Annette Dorney, and Sue Archibald (left about 1100) all present. Brenda Tranchina, Staff and members of the public also present.

C. Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to call to the Public, Chris Johnson gave the following notice:

1. Privacy: One of the districts highest priorities as an organization is to respect the privacy of it's members, employees and volunteers. This means that we will not comment on private information on its members, especially when it's related to their job or function in the district.
2. Speculation: The district will not act on speculation or rumor, especially in personnel matters, except to research for confirmation if we have reason to believe it's relevant, confirmable, actionable, and related to job performance. The district will only act on data that can be confirmed. Actions taken will be subject to the Privacy restrictions.
3. Open meetings – Call to the public: An individual public officer may respond to criticism, ask staff to review an item or ask that an item be placed on a future agenda, but he or she may not dialogue with the presenter or collectively discuss, consider, or decide an item that is not listed on the agenda. A.R.S. § 38-431.01(H); Ariz. Att'y Gen. Op. I99-006.

Call to the Public. Limited to 3 minutes

1. Chaplin Mike Wright – spoke a prayer over the board, department and public present.
2. Gary Soliere – revisited the past history of SEFD and how Chief DeWolf accepted the Chief position when no one else would. How SEFD had membership dues that more than half the community didn't pay, so decision was made to form a district. Chief has brought in a large number of grants and funding to keep the district taxes down. He wanted to thank Chief DeWolf for all of his hard work.
3. Nancy Belt – Her comments relate to #6. Her daughter filed a complaint 2 years ago and has heard nothing. As elected officials, the Board has a responsibility to respond to complaints.
 - She is an employer and she would investigate any complaint made against her employee. Also, she recognizes doesn't get first-hand information about complaints, but she feels that since the Chief is a high-profile person, complaints need to be investigated.
 - What is the basis for Chief's review? Do you talk to personnel and ask what they think of the Chief and how he is doing?
 - What are you going to do about these allegations?
4. Jordan Cox – Discussed how SEFD used to have a lot of volunteers and now SEFD doesn't seem to have them and the staff seems thin.

What is the Board doing about the succession plan, replacement of personnel ie BC leaving, captains leaving and poor moral? Why is it so bad?

Why can't a volunteer be on the Board? He has been asked several times to be on the Board, but he would have to quit volunteering. He feels this needs to be revisited. Chris Johnson will check with the attorney, but he feels that it may be a conflict of interest.

****Add this to the Sept agenda

Minutes to the Regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
August 24, 2020
0900

Sue Archibald expressed concern about South 32 mine adding a road to by-pass Patagonia and sending all the traffic through Sonoita. She expressed concerns about the increased traffic and the effect on SEFD.

Cpt Meredith states that he is aware of this and knows a contact with South 32 mine and will pass that information onto Acting Chief Buonaccorsi.

*Kurt Bahti left just prior to the end of the Chief's report about 0940.

Monthly financial reports and consideration of district financial matters pursuant to A.R.S.§48-807: Vicki Rutter

- Financials were presented by Vicki Rutter. Financials are preliminary and would remain so until the Annual Audit was completed.

Sue Archibald motioned to accept the financial report. Reba Webber 2nd. Motion carried unanimously.

Update -SEFD Board Questionnaire – Admin - Due to recent events and Admin's schedule, the distribution of the questionnaire has been postponed.

Update - Elections – cancellation of elections – Chief/Admin - We should receive the official notice of the ability to cancel the elections before the end of the month. This is a technicality and may or may not arrive prior to the August Board meeting. Not an issue to discuss or approve, just a point of fact. Admin) No update

Discussion and possible action on the appointment of Jon Buonaccorsi as Acting Chief for the duration of Chief DeWolf's medical leave; discussion and possible action on the associated compensation in the position of Acting Chief.

- Confirmation that Jon Buonaccorsi was presented with the 24-hour notice...
- *All persons present at an Executive Session are hereby reminded that A.R.S. §38-431.03 imposes strict confidentiality requirements on discussions that occur in Executive Session. Generally, such discussions cannot be revealed to non-board members, unless necessary to carry out the purpose of the statutory provision that specifically permits an Executive Session. The Open Meeting Law provides for a fine of up to \$500.00 for violating this confidentiality requirement and requires that this admonition be given.*

Chris Johnson – Chief appointed Jon Buonaccorsi as Acting Chief in his absence. The Board is here to confirm that it is acceptable to the Board. They will go into an executive session to discuss salary for taking on the extra duties.

Sue Archibald motioned that Board go Executive Session. Reba Webber 2nd. at 0959. Motion carried unanimously.

Chris Johnson stated as a reminder: *All persons present at an Executive Session are hereby reminded that A.R.S. §38-431.03 imposes strict confidentiality requirements on discussions that occur in Executive Session. Generally, such discussions cannot be revealed to non-board members, unless necessary to carry out the purpose of the statutory provision that specifically permits an Executive Session. The Open Meeting Law provides for a fine of up to \$500.00 for violating this confidentiality requirement and requires that this admonition be given.*

Per Chris Johnson, Sue Archibald left at 1100 during the executive session.
Executive session adjourned at 1115.



SONOITA-ELGIN FIRE DISTRICT

"PROUD PAST STRONG FUTURE"



Special meeting at **9:30 a.m., on Thursday, August 27, 2020.** Minutes

1. **Call to order.** – at 0930
2. **Roll call.** – Chris Johnson, Kurt Bahti, Annette Dorney, Sue Archibald, and Reba Webber. Donna Aversa present electronically.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. Motion to move into executive session for legal advice by Sue Archibald. Annette Dorney 2nd, motion carried unanimously at 0933.
5. Back in regular session at 1123.
6. Chris Johnson stated as a reminder: *All persons present at an Executive Session are hereby reminded that A.R.S. §38-431.03 imposes strict confidentiality requirements on discussions that occur in Executive Session. Generally, such discussions cannot be revealed to non-board members, unless necessary to carry out the purpose of the statutory provision that specifically permits an Executive Session. The Open Meeting Law provides for a fine of up to \$500.00 for violating this confidentiality requirement and requires that this admonition be given.*
7. Chris Johnson action - to confirmed that department has been put on notice for potential legal action on separation of employment ~~in a~~ ^{and a} hostile work environment. The Board authorized the attorney to evaluate and report back to the board. Sue Archibald so motioned. Annette Dorney 2nd motion carried unanimously.
8. **Adjourn** – motion to adjourn made by Annette Dorney. Kurt Bahti 2nd, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on 28 Sept 2020, Reba Webber, Board Clerk.

Reba Webber

Address: 3173 Highway 83. P.O. Box 322 Sonoita, AZ 85637 **Phone:** (520) 455-5854 **Fax:** (520) 455-5361

Website: www.sefd911.org

Fire Chief Joseph M. DeWolf

**Minutes of the Special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Tuesday, 22 Sept 2020
0930**

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Bahti, Webber, Archibald, Dorney and Johnson. Also present, Mike Wright and Katie Goodwin.

(complete set-up of computer for audio/video connection with D. Aversa)

Opening Prayer by Mike Wright

Board Chair reminded those attending that anything discussed in executive session was confidential.

Possible executive session regarding legal advice regarding letters received by the Board from members of the public. Motion by Sue Archibald, seconded by Webber. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive session ended at 11:45

Back in session 11:50

Johnson - We want to address what we decided in executive session so I am looking for a motion. Sue Archibald - I move that we direct the Chair to write a letter in regards to Mark Bennett complaint, letter he sent to us. Seconded by Webber, Motion carried unanimously. Johnson – so we're going to be responding in kind with a letter. Is there any other motions that we want out of there? Webber - Not today.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn by Webber, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on 28 Sept 2020, , Board Clerk.

Reba Webber