

## SEFD Board Packet

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7 April 2021

- Agenda
- Minutes – 22 March 2021
- Public comment - Parrilli

### Miscellaneous

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- none

# Agenda

## **PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §38.431.02**

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District (SEFD) Board of Directors (SEFD is governed by a five-member Board pursuant to A.R.S. §48-803.B) will hold a meeting on Wednesday April 7, 2021. The meeting will be held in the Meeting Room at the Fire House at 3173 N. Highway 83, Sonoita, AZ. The meeting is open to the general public and will begin at 12:00 pm. Local time.

The following agenda items are scheduled for consideration by the SEFD Board of Directors at the board meeting. Action or decisions may or may not be taken on any or all items. Agenda items may or may not be considered in the order listed:

**DUE TO COVID-19  
FACE MASKS ARE REQUIRED**

### **Roll Call**

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Call to the Public**

In light of the anticipated meeting length, covid-19 restrictions, and meeting venue, we are canceling the call to public for this meeting. Members of the public are invited to submit written comments for inclusion in the minutes

### **Approval of Minutes:**

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 meeting

### **Action Items:**

1. Review, discussion, and possible action to appoint a SEFD resident to fill the open position on the SEFD Local Pension Board with the appointment to be effective immediately.
2. Review, discussion, and possible action regarding how the minutes for the SEFD board meetings are taken, drafted, approved, and posted.
3. Review, discussion, and possible action regarding concerns over the costs of investigations as reported by the SEFD accountant and various rumors and misinformation in the community.
4. Review, discussion, and possible action for preparation and presentation of list and documentation for vendor and personal service contracts.
5. Possible executive session for legal advice. Pursuant to ARS Sec. 38- 431.03(a)(3), the SEFD Board may vote to go into executive session for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney for SEFD regarding handling of a personnel matter where the fire chief may be a witness.

**NOTE – EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO ARS SEC. 38-431.03(C).**

## Agenda

6. Review , discussion, and possible action to designate a Board Member to be the point of contact for a personnel investigation where the fire chief is likely to be a witness.
7. Possible executive session for legal advice. Pursuant to ARS Sec. 38- 431.03(a)(3), the SEFD Board may vote to go into executive session for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney for SEFD regarding submission of a claim or claims with SEFD's insurance carrier regarding unauthorized payments made to former fire chief.

**NOTE – EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO ARS SEC. 38-431.03( C).**

8. Review, discussion, and possible action regarding potential insurance claim or claims for loss related to unauthorized payments made to former fire chief.
9. Possible executive session for legal advice. Pursuant to ARS Sec. 38- 431.03(a)(3), the SEFD Board may vote to go into executive session for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney for SEFD regarding potential for further investigation regarding unauthorized payments and internal controls.

**NOTE – EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO ARS SEC. 38-431.03( C).**

10. Review, discussion, and possible action to request SEFD investigator undertake a supplement to the investigation that established the unauthorized payments to the former fire chief including to examine the internal process and internal controls in processing payments.
11. Possible executive session for legal advice. Pursuant to ARS Sec. 38- 431.03(a)(3), the SEFD Board may vote to go into executive session for discussion or consultation for legal advice with the attorney for SEFD regarding potential referral to the County Attorney's Office regarding unauthorized payments to the former fire chief.

**NOTE – EXECUTIVE SESSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO ARS SEC. 38-431.03( C).**

12. Review, discussion, and possible action regarding referral the matter of unauthorized payments to the former fire chief to the County Attorney's Office for review and potential recovery of payments.
13. Review, Discussion , and possible action regarding the SEFD 2021-2022 annual Budget with Chief Buonaccorsi

**Governing board members and/or attorney may attend telephonically/digitally.**


***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).***

## Agenda

The undersigned hereby attests that a copy of this meeting agenda was duly posted at the following locations:

- A) Sonoita Post Office – 3166 N. Highway 83, Suite 1, Sonoita, AZ
- B) [WWW.SEFD911.org](http://WWW.SEFD911.org)

Governing board meeting agenda dated and posted: 4-6-2021. At 1000 Local Time

By  Kathy L. Goodwin, Admin.

**Minutes to the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Monday, 22 March 2021**  
**0900**

*Please note: During the meeting feedback affected the recording made to capture the meeting minutes. The feedback appeared to be coming from the microphone on the lectern. It faded in and out and had bad sound, affecting the capture of the discussions for this meeting. These minutes reflect the discussions that could be captured.*

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call** – Present: Dorney, Garber, Johnson, Webber

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Call to the Public** – (Due to Covid there was no verbal call to the public. The Public is welcome to submit a written letter to the Board.)

**Approval of Minutes:**

- January 29, 2021 – Motion to approve as corrected by Webber made by Dorney second by Garber, motion carried unanimously.
- February 23, 2021 – motion to approve as presented by Webber, seconded by Dorney, seconded by Garber, motion carried unanimously.

**Fire Chief's Report** – Key points noted by acting Chief Buonaccorsi included the maintenance issues with the two older ambulances and a need to seriously look into replacement options for them; and we've ordered the spreader and cutter as a result of the extrication equipment Grant we received.

- Operations Chief Meredith discussed new hires, departures and promotional changes within the department. That information is attached to these minutes.

**Financial Report** – Rutter presented financial information for the month of February 2021 to the Board, including the Balance Sheet, the Profit & Loss Statement and the Cashflow Forecast. There was a motion by Dorney to approve the Financials as presented, seconded by Webber, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rutter then presented some of the expenses to the district that are directly related to the investigation at the request of Board member Garber. Per Ms. Rutter's calculations:

Chief salary, taxes & benefits = \$44,502  
Acting Chief salary = \$13,878  
Sink salary & benefits = \$28,371  
Attorney = \$22,046  
Investigation = \$26,749  
HR Specialist (believed to be part of the 2019 investigation)= \$4,830\*\*  
PSPRS Attorney = \$805  
Auditor \$5,400  
Total costs to the District relating to the investigation = \$146,581

\*\*Ms. Rutter stated that she believed this was due late billing by the HR Specialist.

Chair Johnson noted that the investigation is over, and we are expecting an additional bill from the Auditors, and expect it to be \$2,100-2,500. Johnson noted that the Board is currently trying to recover overpayments made to the former Chief, and that the largest expense was for salaries. Garber noted the public perception is that a lot of money has been spent and the categories make it clear what exactly was spent on salaries. He noted that the public perception was it was all one lump sum, and if you take that lump sum and you look at what we're trying to recover, it doesn't make sense financially. The breakdown of expenses makes a little more sense, since most of the expense was for salaries.

**Community Survey** – Dorney noted this was not a current priority and tabled until next meeting.

**Replacement of the Fire Chief**- Chair Johnson is pursuing a short-term solution with the Palominas Fire District. Johnson noted that it will take months to hire a new Chief, and we still need a relationship with the current Acting Chief Buonaccorsi.

**New Internal District Policies**- Operations Chief Meredith presented some new Internal District Policies that will provide guidelines and is a starting point for addressing Medical Services to the community when there are insurance and referral issues involved. The Policies included:

1. **SEFD Financial Hardship** – this policy notes that an operational decision will be made on a case-by-case basis as to the financial hardship of the patient being treated.
2. **SEFD Gratuitous Services** – this policy refers to services we can provide for the community without the fear of the patient being billed full ambulance charges.
3. **Treat and Refer Agency Application** – SEFD will be submitting an application to become a Treat and Refer Agency with the Arizona Department of Health Services. This will give the District the authorization to assess a patient and refer them to an alternative solution other than transporting them to a hospital. There will be also be a reduced fee for this service.

**Chain of Command** – Acting Chief Buonaccorsi presented the revised Chain of Command chart that reflects recent the changes in staffing that include the removal of the Medical Operations Chief position. Motion to approve as presented by Dorney, seconded by Webber; motion carried unanimously.

**Board Vacancy Timeline** – The Board vacancy timeline is currently posted as a 60 day schedule one the Board has 90 days to appoint a new member. Webber asked that the schedule be revised for 90 days, allowing applications to be accepted until April 30, 2021. Board members agreed, and Ms. Goodwin will update the schedule and repost it.

**Draft Budget Presentation** – Acting Chief Buonaccorsi presented a DRAFT budget to the Board and briefly discussed most of the line items. Buonaccorsi asked for a study session to be held for more discussion about the proposed changes. All agreed to meet at 12PM on April 7, 2021.

**Executive session for Legal Advice with the attorney for the District, Donna Aversa, regarding the audit report of PFD IGA payments and compensation paid to Chief De Wolf.** Motion made by Webber to go into Executive Session, seconded by Dorney; motion carried unanimously. Open Session ended at 10:58 AM.

**Action related to Executive session-** Board is back in open session at 1205 – Chair Johnson reminded everyone that Executive Session discussions are confidential. Based on the Executive Session Johnson noted that there is no motion at this time but that the Board is going to continue to work with the SEFD District Attorney regarding the District insurance coverage to offset the investigation expenses, and depending on that response, may need to refer the issue to the Santa Cruz County Attorney's office. Johnson noted that this would be on the agenda for Board consideration and discussion at the next Board meeting. Johnson confirmed that that next meeting would be the one on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Webber, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on April 7, 2021 by \_\_\_\_\_, Board Clerk.  
Reba Webber

According to the Recording of the Meeting of April 7, 2021, the summarized minutes as prepared by Reba Webber, Board Clerk, were accepted unanimously. The signed signed copy has been requested but not turned in by time of posting.

Kathy L. Goodwin  
Administrative Assistant of the District

April 7, 2021

Memorandum For: The Board of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District

Re. Written comments to be included in the Board meeting minutes as provided for in the April, 2021 posted agenda.

Request that at the next regularly scheduled board meeting, the Board provide a financial accounting of monies spent thus far on any and all investigations alleging misconduct on the part of any member of the Fire Department. The scope of the accounting to include fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.



Matt Parrilly  
Sonoita