

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
15 March 2010
6 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Izzo, Tomlinson and Rutter present. Parker and Ruppel were not present. Also present were; Chief DeWolf, K. Venos, K. Goodwin, G. Soliere, J. Bianchi, D. Meyers, L. Pfitzenmeier, R. Cardillo, and M. Parrilli.

Approval of the minutes;

February 16, 2010 – motion to approve by Rutter, seconded by Tomlinson, motion carried.
February 22, 2010 – motion to approve by Rutter, seconded by Tomlinson, motion carried.

Chief's Report – DeWolf updated the board on the following topics:

- the Budget Schedule
- Election Schedule
- Firefighter I & II Class – 22 students
- Run Reports
- Calendar of Events
- CON Update
- Legislative Report

Treasurer's Report – All bank accounts have reconciled, all the accounts have been adjusted. For February we received \$19,955.40 for Santa Cruz County taxes and \$3841.38 for Pima County taxes.

Correspondence – none

Discussion and possible action calendar-

Signatory Letter for Bank Accounts. This is a formality the banks have asked for because we elect board positions each year. They asked that it appear in the minutes that the signatories are Vicki Rutter and Chief DeWolf. We will do this every year after you elect the new officers in December.

Izzo – we don't need a motion, it will be taken care of.

Public Comment - Izzo; I strongly feel we should have a better opportunity for the public to participate and access in the discussion at the board meetings. After relaying a couple examples to the board and audience, Izzo made a motion to allow people to sign in and identify a particular agenda item, then before a vote is taken on a particular subject, the chair reads from the list and allows people to address that agenda item for a 3 minute maximum time before a vote is taken, so individuals have a right to speak on each agenda item. So, I would like to propose in the form of a motion that we adopt that same process here and do so immediately. Seconded by Tomlinson. Any discussion?

Rutter – Did you get a chance to speak with Donna?

DeWolf – Everything is fine. You can call at the beginning, the end or both or on a particular item.

Izzo – What we would do is allow people to sign in for a specific agenda item and we'll allow them to address that item and will continue to have a call to the public at the end of the meeting. Public can address at that time any item under our jurisdiction.

DeWolf – The board cannot comment on anything that is not on the agenda or is not a personal insult.

Presentation of the Budget - Chief DeWolf presented the board (and on the projector screen) with the budget worksheet, with levy rate calculations of \$1.40 and \$1.50 next to our current fiscal year budget.

Bianchi – with just a few minutes to review the two budgets, there's a few confusing things. As I look at the \$1.40 and \$1.50 the only difference is in the revenue, there is no change in expenses. I've heard we're going to add 2.5 people by payroll looks like it went up 57%. I don't understand why it is going up for 2.5 people. In terms of the total expenses they've gone up 32%. Also, I request of the board a hardcopy of the treasurer's report and budgets. I don't see a rationale given for the increases we're getting and what alternatives would be proposed if we didn't go with the budgets as prepared or presented. Economic situation in general; the state is proposing cuts in pay and in programs, yet we are proposing a substantial increase. Having a job is the important thing. I would strongly encourage the board to maintain our current budget for one year to give the taxpayers here a little slack.

Soliere – Question on the number of people on the truck before it leaves the station. I know you're going to have paramedics on staff, I know you pay your EMTs \$25-30,000, so I'm curious what you pay your paramedics.

DeWolf – NFPA Standard state you need to have 6 personnel on scene within 5 minutes of arrival. Our paramedics are our captains; they get \$35-40,000.

Meyers – Why can't we hold the levy at \$1.40 for the next year? Also, what are the other district's rates?

Parrilli – 1. SAFER Grant – is that for full time hire or training & equipment? 2. What is the status of the CON? Why are these people needed to be added? 3. If the majority of the calls are medical emergencies, you must consider converting firefighter positions to medical.

Izzo – Chief, do you have an answer for the other districts?

DeWolf – Yes, Tubac is \$1.83; Rio Rico is \$2.92; Whetstone is \$2.95.

Rutter – Is there anyone in the state that is as low as we are?

DeWolf – There are about a half a dozen of us that are under \$1.75. The SAFER Grant is for hiring. This grant is for 2 years of 100% pay, after that we have to cover them for 1 year. All our people are cross-trained, either EMT or paramedic. The Firefighter I & II class will get first responder training.

Izzo – Any other discussion on the budget.

Parrilli – he didn't answer my question.

Tomlinson – Yeah he did. What question didn't he answer?

Parrilli – If they are dual qualified why do we have to hire extra people for a medical call out? Why don't we just convert firefighters to medics? I want that question answered a pretty simple question.

DeWolf – All our firefighters are EMT Basics or paramedics.

Tomlinson – do you need the other 2.5 to fulfill the staffing for the extra hours that we're generally closed right now?

DeWolf – Yes.

Tomlinson – Is that good enough?

Parrilli – No.

Tomlinson – I don't think it ever will be.

Venos – who's going to answer the medical calls where all the firefighters are on the wildland fire?

Parrilli – You set your priorities and you suck it up just like...

Izzo – you're out of order Matt, we can't have that kind of dialog going on. A question was asked and answered. Is there any more discussion on the budget?

Rutter – I have a few comments...see addendum to the minutes for a copy of Ms. Rutter's statement.

Izzo asked Chief DeWolf to review the budget schedule in the power point presentation.

General Call to the Public –

G. Soliere – Joseph has mention trying to keep it at \$1.50, I guess the board dropped it down to \$1.40 last year, if it goes back up to the \$1.50 it's only going to be \$33.00 a year for me. As long as he doesn't go over the \$1.50 I say go for it.

J. Bianchi – I'm a little confused about the base year to calculate the levy rate. I think we are going about it bass-ackward. I'd like to see numbers prepared that way. (Rutter clarified how this was done.)

D. Meyers – After hearing a little more discussion on the budget and what other fire districts are charging for their services, I think we’ve got a bargain and I don’t see anything wrong with doing it at \$1.50 if we can balance everything out, sounds like a bargain to me.

M. Parrilli – after the original SAFER Grant whenever that was I can’t believe you’ve gone back to the well and done that again, it amazes me ‘cause here we go, piling it higher and deeper.

Board Member Comments –

Izzo – I’d like to thank everyone for coming. It really helps us to make prudent decisions on your behalf.

Adjournment – motion to adjourn by Rutter, seconded by Tomlinson, motion carried.

Katie Goodwin, Administrative Assistant