

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
18 April 2011
6 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Izzo, Ruppel, Pfitzenmaier and Bianchi, Tomlinson was absent.

Approval of the minutes;

Motion to approve the minutes of the 21 March 2011 meeting made by Bianchi, seconded by Ruppel, motion carried.

Chief's Report – DeWolf updated the board on the following topics: Fundraising Calendar, Budget Schedule, Out and About, Website update and the March Run Report.

Pfitzenmaier – I want to compliment you and Kevin on the good comments we saw in our local newspaper this month regarding the District.

Treasurer's Report – Bianchi went through the Income and Expenses of the Financial Statement, highlighting ambulance income, FDAT income, utilities and the GOHS Grant. Bianchi also reported on the notes payable and depreciation.

Correspondence – none

Discussion and possible action calendar-

2011/2012 Draft Budget Comments – Pfitzenmaier proposed that the Board display conservative fiscal management by approving a “no growth” 2011/2012 budget. With a no growth budget I recommend we approve the modest firefighter salary increases proposed by the Chief and place a high priority on Fire House and apparatus maintenance and repair. Pfitzenmaier had two slides which he used to illustrate his proposal. Pfitzenmaier stated that this was not a motion, simply his thoughts on the proposed budget. I'm not trying to make a strong point here, just trying to show the consequences of our deliberation. This presentation was followed by a general discussion by the Board members on “growth” vs. “no growth”, and definitions of growth.

Capital Projects – Izzo – What my concern was, and I appreciate your thoughts Larry, we tend to gloss over new things in the budget and capital outlay. I think we need to consider it. We've never really done anything about our capital needs. What I'd like to see is for us to evaluate our needs; we need to discuss our needs. We need to offer the best emergency services we can, so that means growth, which means improvements not only in training, but in equipment.

Bianchi – I would like the Chief to prioritize these items. My point being, here's our needs list, lets prioritize it, and then we decide what we'll work on. It is difficult to do all of these things at one time because there are limitations on what we can do.

DeWolf – When I put the budget together last month, these were items that I felt we needed to work on - on an ongoing basis – which was part the overview I presented last July. On last month's budget I had \$75,000 in carry-forward and I had moved it straight right across. Why was it \$75,000? It was part of the Elgin improvements that we pulled last year. So, instead of a \$29,000 to use for capital improvements; we are actually in the hole, \$26,000. The only increases in our budget are in the leach field and a modest raise for our personnel. When we look at how to move the District forward, I agree with Jerry, we have to do it on a slow pace which we have been doing in the past. How can we move forward? Reality is, to move a business forward; we have to make a decision to move forward. How are the Board and Operations going to move this District forward?

Publication of Proposed Budget – DeWolf - I strongly encourage the Board to publish this Budget at \$1.71, realizing the mistake from last year. When you publish a Budget, you can't go up, we can only go down.

Izzo - Motion to agree to publish the proposed Budget in the Weekly Bulletin by Izzo, seconded by Bianchi, Motion carried.

Change in Treasurer Duties in Policy Manual – Bianchi - In order to clearly describe the duties of the Treasurer I submit a motion to replace the first sentence of the Treasurer duties as stated in the Policy Manual on page 6, item III Officer Duties as follows; “The Treasurer shall prepare and review all monthly budget reports with the Fire Chief; report the status of such to the Board; and make recommendations to the Chief and the Board concerning the reports. The Treasurer shall examine, as needed, the financial records to accomplish these duties.”

Ruppel – Do we need a second for discussion?

Pfitzenmaier – I’ll second it.

DeWolf – If you want to change the policy, I would recommend that you hire the attorney and HR Specialist for review. DeWolf went on to explain how changing the section above will affect three other sections of the policies. A discussion followed ending with a call for a vote.

Izzo – Call for the question, all those in favor of this motion say Aye, Bianchi & Pfitzenmaier; all those opposed ...Izzo and Ruppel. Motion failed.

Old Business –

Bill For Santa Cruz County – DeWolf – The bill we received was only for the Recorder’s Office, there will be another bill from the Supervisor’s Office for another \$4,000 to \$7,000.

Chief’s Review – DeWolf – the attorney says you are fine in filling it out and developing one, as long as you don’t make a decision until you come back [from the executive session to the public meeting] Because you haven’t made a final tally –it’s a number ranking - you can come to a consensus across, but don’t make a final tally until you come out here.

Audience Comments –

Gary Soliere - Sonoita - What I like is how the whole board worked together like a think-tank. Doug, you’re right, no matter what the Fire Department does there are people who are going to be offended. I for one always pushed the \$1.50. Reality, you do have to raise it. The folks who complain are going to be so grateful when the Fire Department shows up to their house or their neighbor’s house. I suggest you guys get together, have a meeting over at Pioneer Hall and just be honest, we gotta raise stuff. They may complain but I honestly think they’ll come around.

Annette Kelley – Sonoita Resident – I want to thank you all for being here tonight. First off I’d like to thank you for publishing the \$1.71 as tax, because what better way to get the community involved. In prevention and everything else that we do a lot of it is reaching out and trying to get them involved and what better way to get them involved than tap on their pocketbook. Going to what you had said (Pfitzenmaier) with just a few houses being built, with the economy the way it is, people are staying in town more and though we may not have an increase in properties being built, we do have an increase in people staying around, needing entertainment at a lower budget, so we have an increase in high risk low frequency events. It is the high risk low frequency that we as firefighters train for. I’d like to thank you for looking to, with prudence, of seeing the things increasing, trucks breaking down. Let us plan now for that frequency. It would behoove us to keep this at the top of our minds, to be ready with prudence to answer their questions.

Board Member Comments – Ruppel – In the time that I’ve been involved with the Fire District and went to the community and made a reasoned request for why we needed to spend the money, the community has come through for us. I believe that the community will again. They’re going to ask questions, and difficult questions, as long as we go to them with the facts as well, they’ll come through as well.

Izzo – Agenda Items need to be to Katie by 2pm on Wednesday, are there any problems with that? In the future, if the items are not to Katie in that timeline, they will not be published and we won’t consider them.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn by Ruppel, seconded by Pfitzenmaier. Motion carried.

