

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District**

**19 April 2010**

**6 pm**

**Call to Order**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call** – All Board members present, as well as numerous members of the public, most of who did not sign our meeting roster, Chief DeWolf, K. Goodwin, BC Venos and several firefighters were also present.

**Approval of the Minutes** of the meeting of 15 March 2010 – motion to approve by Rutter, seconded by Ruppel, motion carried.

**Chief's Report** – Chief DeWolf presented the board with information on the following topics:

- Budget Process Schedule review
- Election information for Rutter & Parker
- Firefighter I & II Class update
- 2010 Firewise Campaign
- March Run Report
- Legislative update
- Santa Cruz County CON Update

**Treasurer's Report** – a Balance Sheet and the Financials were presented to the board (and copies were available to the public) both financials and the balance sheet. There were no questions from the Board.

**Correspondence** – none

**Discussion & Action Calendar** – Draft budget for publication... Audience members were invited to comment on the draft budget and either Chief DeWolf or a board member made clarifications.

**Chief DeWolf** made the formal presentation of the 2010/2011 Draft Budget for Publication, reviewing each line item. The Board Chair asked for questions from the Board prior to opening up comments from the audience. There were none.

**J. Bianchi** – thanks for the handouts. Had a comment on the budget process – from his past experience, showing goals and costs involved in the process. What are we trying to accomplish – how does the budget relate to the goals.

**Alan West** – the budget (Tubac's) – relative to the number of people served – is 5-6 times less than what we have here. I don't understand why we have 2 ambulances – concerned with losing money in transports – how do we come up with \$248,000 when we'll probably be losing money. I think you're overstaffed. This doesn't make any sense.

**Carl Hamel** – Concerned with a tax increase.

**Matt Parrilli** – wanted clarification on the new SAFER Grant; CON, what is the date of transfer, what are the boundaries, what is the property tax statement.

**Sue Downing** – Given the current state of affairs, I really feel that the board should hold the fire dept to more responsibility in the budget. I see the department on a trend of empire building. I think the ambulance service is unnecessary, you have one of the best departments as far as equipment – that’s outrageous - they’ve been extravagant in their purchases and how this department has grown – I think it’s unnecessary. As a taxpayer I think you need to keep them responsible and actually cut budgets not raise them.

**Jim Rolly** – I ask that the board hold the budget to the same as last year.

**Bill Schock** – I believe that this community is hurting, hurting badly – everyone is having to cut back. I honestly believe we should have a budget that’s below last year. This community, revenue wise, is suffering. We need to figure out how to do with less.

**Tom Rogas** – Given the fact that this is proper tax-based and we’re in trouble here for the next 5 years as the real estate market craters, our main source of revenue comes from assessed valuations. Making hard choices, that’s what’s necessary if you’re going to be responsible, if you’re going to be accountable.

**Gary Soliere** – I do have a solution; on your fuel tanks when you order fuel, is it metered off or do you buy the whole load. You board people were elected by the community, so go with your heart and your mind.

**Steve Getzwiler** – I’m wondering if all these monies aren’t used, is that coming back or if they’re not utilized, how does that come back? I think this district is growing faster than it really needs to.

Chairman Izzo asked for additional comments from the Board at the end of the public discussion. Then began a general discussion by the board on the draft budget, where cuts could be made, why some couldn’t be cut and personal feelings on the levy rate.

Motion was made by Rutter to accept the budget for publication for the public meeting in June. This was seconded by Ruppel, but died after discussion. A substitute motion was made by Izzo to delay improvements to the Elgin Site and carry forward the \$51,000 sufficient to keep the tax levy rate at \$1.40 for that to be redistributed to debt services. Everything else would stay the same. Seconded by Tomlinson. Motion carried unanimously.

Izzo then called for Audience comments not related to the budget... (those below had signed in to speak at this time)

**Carl Hamel** – none

**Alan West** – It’s the transportation – it’s an unnecessary expense, but to duplicate what Tubac Ambulance is doing is unnecessary.

**Izzo** – the action of this board was based on the information that Tubac was going to submit a request to release their CON whether we took it or not, and that there were other agencies that were interested in taking it; so when we were notified to that affect, we said we’d like to take it. Tubac started this process.

**West** – You’re overstaffed – you don’t need the transport. I’m an engine captain; I work for other departments and make them a lot of money. We have that capability of going on wild fires if we train people and staff. And get that type 6 engine out of dodge. We’ve never done that and I don’t understand why. That’s the life blood of southern Arizona. I was wondering - what’s the

board position as to why you haven't sent people to training to become wildland firefighters to go on federal projects.

**Ruppel** - I would like the Chief to address the training issue.

**DeWolf** – we have 24 state certified firefighters and we do have an engine boss.

**Board Comments** – none

**Adjournment** – motion to adjourn by Ruppel, seconded by Rutter, motion carried.