

**Minutes to the Regular Meeting of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District  
April 20, 2009**

**Meeting Called to Order** by Ron Izzo – meeting is being recorded

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call of Members** – All Board Members are present. Also present are: Chief DeWolf, Goodwin, Bianchi, Venos, Prentice, Kelley, Solier and Daniels.

**Approval of Minutes** – Minutes of March 16, 2009. A motion to approve the minutes with corrections as noted by Rutter was made by Ruppel. Seconded by Rutter. Motion carried.

**New Business** –

**Treasurer's Report** – There isn't a Financial Report, there are still problems getting the bank reconciled. Payroll is not up to date. There are still issues that Katie is working on with the payroll service, until I can get the bank reconciled, and until the payroll correct, I will not prepare a Financial Report.

There an issue with the County Treasurer on our taxes. We called and request the payoff on our line of credit. The gave us the payoff – we asked for it a few days out, adding interest so we could get a check to them. For some reason they took their money and paid the line of credit off to Chase Bank and paid themselves back with our check. Rutter explained the circumstances behind the issue with the Santa Cruz County Treasurer's office and what was being done to resolve the problem. The Board and Chief DeWolf discussed possible action regarding this issue. DeWolf will talk with the County Attorney and the County Treasurer and report back to the Board.

**Chief's Report** –

**Fire** - As you know we do have a fire working at this time. It is up to a couple hundred acres, there are no structures threatened at this time. We have our type-6 engines and our tender on it; there are two-10 person hand crews on it; the Forest has control of it. I have a chase truck at the Abbey monitoring the fire.

**Izzo** – Where's the fire?

**DeWolf** – Apache Springs Ranch.

**Rutter** – What started it?

**DeWolf** – No idea. Our next concern would be Singing Valley area and Greaterville, depending how far east it actually comes.

**Izzo** – Isn't Apache Springs in our District?

**DeWolf** – yes, but it's still on the Forest side of the road. One side is District, the other is Forest Service. One side is Pima County, one side is Santa Cruz.

**Annual Auction** – We had an awesome auction, a huge success, good response from the community and from the folks who attended the event. We'll probably clear around \$21,000 after expenses.

**Run Report for March** – We ran 27 calls in March, 21 daytime, 6 nighttime; 12 in zone 1; 6 MVC, 15 Medical, 4 Wildfire, 2 Public assists; we had 5 walk-in patients; 16 transports (7 helicopter, 9 ground).

**CON** – CON will be issued May 12 as long as no one contests it.

**Water Storage** – Our new 40,000 gallon water storage tank is up. We'll begin drilling this coming week & then install the pump. By the next board meeting we should have our new water storage facility operational.

**Board Policies** brought up by Rutter – I have not completed these yet.

**Correspondence** – none

#### **Discussion and Possible Action Calendar –**

**Board Policies** – Rutter – tabled to next meeting.

**Draft Budget** – While waiting for copies of the budget to be made, the Board and Chief DeWolf discussed the mutual aid agreement recently signed by Ft. Huachuca's Chief Baylor. They also discussed the prospect of obtaining money through appropriations courtesy of Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford's to be used for Water and Communications projects within the District.

**Budget** – DeWolf – What we have done is put together our budget taking a look at our assessed value – we've dropped our levy rate from \$1.50 to \$1.40 per \$100 assessed value. Chief DeWolf ran through the budget in a nutshell, and then asked for questions from the board. There were questions or comments concerning the following topics; fundraising, salaries, R & R Grant, and the tender purchase.

**Parker** – Have you looked at how our wages compare to hourly wages of other districts' firefighters?

**DeWolf** – Yes, the salaries are commensurate – what you need to remember is that our personnel are paid at a 12 hour shift rather than 24 hour shift. If our personnel were working 24 hour shifts, their salaries are right on track. This year the staff is getting a raise, a clothing allowance and a paid vacation.

**Parker** – The assessed valuation – how much did that go up?

**DeWolf** – 11%. There is some concern that Pima County will drop 4%.

**Rutter** – Can you comment on the 8% increase?

**DeWolf** - It will be 8% with a \$3.25 cap.

**Rutter** – When will we know?

**DeWolf** – Anytime between now and September.

**Izzo** – to recap the budget schedule –

May 7 – Posted and placed in the newspaper

June 15 – Public hearing

July 20 – Final adoption by the Board.

#### **Audience comments –**

**Jerry Bianchi – Sonoita**

1. A couple meetings ago we talked about using the letters to the editor to promote the District; over the past few weeks there have been a number of great examples of this kind of positive promotion on the district.
2. Public access to board information – It is impossible to follow what is going on without something to follow along with. I am glad to hear that there will be a projection or a handout to follow in the future.
3. Grants – I heard about a grant obtained by Tombstone recently. There are grants out there.

**Gary Solier – Sonoita**

**On the CON** (to DeWolf), you said people could vote against it? Like the Concerned Taxpayers?

**DeWolf** – Any resident can protest the CON. What we have going for us is that the providers of our area have all been issued a letter of our progress; we've talked to all of them. Even if it goes to a hearing, it will just prolong the process. Rural Metro/Kords wants us to have the CON for our area.

**Tender** – Gary asked questions referencing the tires, type of axel and trucks ability to go anywhere.

**DeWolf** – Yes, with a good driver the tender could go anywhere.

**Solier** – Also, you should look into contracting with William Lorta and Reese Midland.

**Pete Daniels – Elgin**

**Salary Schedule** – The Chief is doing a really good job at staying in the middle of providing the best compensation he can and still leaving room to go to a twenty-four hour schedule – 2, 4 or 5 years down the road. Moves like this will be dependent on the numbers (call load). To move to 24 hour coverage you'd have to go to 3 shifts. So, what the Chief was saying, and I hope nobody tells him, I don't think he explained it real well, he's discussed this with me, what he's trying to do is to save himself that cushion, so that when he has to go to 24's he can do it and still retain all the people he's got, and is not in effect cutting his wages.

**Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn by Ruppel, seconded by Rutter. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.