

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
28 February 2011
6 pm

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call - Present at 1800 – Ruppel, Bianchi and Pfitzenmaier; Izzo arrived at 1825; Tomlinson absent.

Approval of Minutes of the 24 January 2011- Motion to approve by Bianchi, seconded by Pfitzenmaier, motion carried.

Chief's Report – Information on the following topics was presented by Chief DeWolf

Fundraising Calendar

Out & About – meetings attended by Chief DeWolf

EMS Runs for January – monthly totals

Budget Schedule

1996-2010 Year Results

Building Permits

Election Invoice

Elgin Land update

Treasurer's Report –

Balance Sheet – Bianchi presented the Balance Sheet to the Board advising that the numbers were not accurate due to the fact that the Pima County and Santa Cruz County Treasurer's Funds from June 2010 had not yet been transferred to the correct fiscal year and because the January tax data had not been moved from the Pima County & Santa Cruz County Treasurer's accounts into the Wells Fargo Account. The correct SCC Treasurer amount should read \$28,989.73; the correct Pima County Treasurer's balance should read \$5,579.03. The total current assets are \$327,443.45. The net income (loss) should read \$27,282. 75.

Financial Sheets – Bianchi presented the Financial Report to the Board, noting that he had no concerns except for the ambulance income. He also mentioned that we were not getting a lot in donations. This lead into a long discussion on where donations are currently allocated within the general ledger, and why this was done. Board Chair Izzo asked that all of the income was noted separately under an income/restricted income column in the future. Bianchi asked for any other questions, the only one that arose was why Buildings & Grounds was so high? Bianchi stated that the majority of it was the septic system.

DeWolf – Part of that is the septic system, and some of it went into the additional plumbing work that was done in the bay.

Izzo – Are we still with the pumping plan?

DeWolf – Twice this month.

Ruppel – this is one of the things that Chief DeWolf and I have discussed. I think we should get a Perc test done right away, so we can get a legitimate bid and plan what it will cost to put in a field.

Bianchi – the last comment I would like to make is that I've been trying to get these statements to the Board Members by Wednesday before the meeting, so you have a chance to look at the things, or if you have questions you can email them to me. But that is really, I think for Katie that is a time pressure.

Goodwin – It's not a time pressure as far as the bank statements, they are normally here by the end of the second week, the timing issue is the correct deposit time for the Pima County and Santa Cruz County Treasurer's data, you may not have it by that date. So, if you put out the report based on the day you do the bank statements, it could be inaccurate by the time you do the Board meeting, because the funds are not in the right category. So you're putting out false documentation.

Bianchi – Would the board like me to continue to try to get them out the Wednesday before the Board meeting.

Ruppel – We still need to see them.

Bianchi – We'll do our best job Katie.

Pfitzenmaier – Can we put the numbers back on the spreadsheet?

Ruppel – Any other comments on the Financials?

DeWolf – If I may make a comment. Jerry made a comment about doing an analysis, that's truly stepping outside of the Treasurer's supposed to be doing. If a Board Member wants an analysis, that should be brought to my attention and I will make the analysis.

Ruppel – I think the Board needs to have an ongoing relationship with the Chief and his staff to answer those questions whenever possible. The Chief and his staff are an invaluable source if we're willing to use them.

Discussion and Possible Action Items...

SEFD Website – I'd like to see for myself, if people would like to contact a board member, there's no way for the public to do that. I'd like for myself and anybody else that wants to have it, if they want to contact me, they can contact me at jbianchi@sefd911.org, it will go to Katie, and that keeps me out of having to do the recordkeeping, and then Katie can say hey this person has a question for you. I would like to have my name on there.

Izzo – Why is this on the agenda?

Bianchi – We're trying to discuss something and if it is not on the agenda we can't discuss it.

Ruppel - Is there any issue with open meeting laws with doing that?

DeWolf – You guys have blown it for the night.

Izzo – Why does this take board action to do this?

Bianchi – If we want to discuss it, it has to be on the agenda.

DeWolf – are you talking about personal emails or a District one that we control?

Pfitzenmaier – this is why it's on the agenda, 'cause you're getting into work load with Katie.

Bianchi – When we get into keeping records if it doesn't come to the District.

Goodwin – All you have to do is keep a copy of it – either print it out or save it on the internet. Then you can put it in a binder and give it to me, put it in a binder and keep it at home, so that it's accessible by anyone. I honestly don't want to be the person who receives your email and hands it off to you again. That's not my thing. The only problem with the email thing; it would have to be accessible by our IT

people, in the case that there was an issue that arose and we had to go in and get a copy of it digitally. But it also makes your computer liable for seizure should some problem arise from inappropriate conduct or legal issue. The law would be allowed to come in and seize your personal computer as evidence. Keep in mind that because it is District communication it is now District property.

DeWolf – the concern I have is we don't know when any of you are going to walk away. If we have your information on the website, you still have access to District communication, and we're legally responsible for those communications. How about if we set up – on a trial basis – a board email on a District computer, any board member can come in and sit down to one of our computer and check it. If no one uses it, we'll shut it down.

Bianchi – I'm just trying to provide a way for the taxpayers to communicate with the Board.

Izzo – there's a problem, once it is on the District website, it becomes District business. My concern with an email is if no one comes in and answers it, it will be worse than if we didn't have it.

SEFD Auction – DeWolf - at the last meeting I was asked to contact the District's Attorney for her opinion. The auction is squelched – due to taxpayer's money. However she did encourage to continue the formation of the firefighter's association and to let them do the auction themselves. She encouraged us to hand over the breakfast fundraising and any other fundraising to that association.

Even if the association was formed we could not do an auction by April. I also had concerns with myself being involved with the association; there are no problems with that. I would like the board to encourage me to push forward with the association to hold an auction, maybe for an Oktoberfest.

Izzo – My feelings on you helping with the association, I choose to call it an auxiliary, is okay, you should not be directing or running it, but the decision making should be with another group. Just avoid conflict. A technical advisor.

Pfitzenmaier – The formation of an auxiliary or association has been discussed for weeks now, where are they in their discussion or planning.

DeWolf – Actually, they have a rough draft of their bylaws and articles of incorporation. I'm hoping we can have everything done in the next 60 days.

Bianchi – Where would their funds come from?

DeWolf – That's the problem with starting a new organization is you have no money. We'd have to ask for seed money. That's why I'd like to have them to have the breakfasts – it would be instant income. Do the Busy Bees care, is it transparent?

DeWolf – There will be issues. All they will be doing is reporting to another board.

Pfitzenmaier – I would think the explanation could be easily crafted to where it would make perfect sense to them. It is just a different flow of the same business.

Izzo – I think we have to be careful in not having any employee soliciting donations for the auxiliary.

DeWolf – Actually, they can solicit as many donations as they want as long as they are not doing it on District time or in District uniform.

Board Meeting Financial Discussion Format – Pfitzenmaier - I put that on the agenda because I was concerned about the notion that line items had to be listed individually on the agenda in order for them to be discussed during the financial discussion. That seems oppressive to me. If tonight's discussion of the financial agenda is an example of what we're allowed to do, then I'm comfortable with that.

DeWolf – it is not. What we did tonight was violate open meeting law. It is the way we've been doing it for a good number of years...a lot of it depends on how sticky you want to get . If it is not on the agenda you cannot ask about it.

Ruppel – what if we put on there, we're going to discuss line items one through forty-nine?

DeWolf – These items on our agenda are too broad. They have to be specific, but try to leave it pretty liberal until a time comes that we have to adjust ourselves. The best interest would be that each of you comes and talks to me so we can get it worked out, in order to move forward.

Bianchi – The one thing you said that I have a little trouble with is that everyone goes and talks to you. Can each Board Member go to you and talk to you without violating open meeting law?

DeWolf – Yes, providing that I do not go back and talk to Larry about what Jerry said.

Ruppel – That has been an ongoing challenge with almost every board we've ever had – having Board members who were willing to spend the time to talk to the Chief and educate themselves on the issues.

Izzo - I think if we try to be specific on what we put on the agenda we'll be all right.

DeWolf – If you don't mind I'd like to bring up the agenda report form. What this is a form that allows the board members to list the items they'd like to have on the agenda. It will allow us to move the meeting along as well. It has the name of the Board Member, the title of the item and the reason why we want to discuss it. That will help us fill out the agenda and let the public know what we're talking about. We will get these out to the Board Members before the meeting so you all know why we want to discuss the item.

Izzo – Mr. Izzo read the Board policy on setting the agenda. After that all was agreed that Katie would send it out the Monday before the Board meeting, return to Katie by Wednesday, so Katie can get the agenda to Ron by Wednesday pm, and will post the agenda on Friday around 10 am.

Audience Comments –

Debbie Stoner – Palominas Fire District - I am the Board Chairperson for the Palominas Fire District. A lot of these issues we've been dealing with and if you email the Chief from your personal computer, that falls under that same law. I would encourage you guys to get an email specifically for you for your District. You can save them all on line, check into it more. I agree with you, the public needs to have a connection to you. Yes, he is the Fire District, representing both halves, but you have the purse strings. And that's a big responsibility. The main reason I came here is to Rah Rah your Chief. I wish he lived in my District, we would have him. I want you guys to really pay attention to what he brings to the table. Thank you for letting me come speak. It's nice to see that other Districts are in similar situations.

Board Member Comments –

Pfitzenmaier – I've been trying to determine the tax participation of those members living within the Fire District. I received a listing of all the taxpayers of the Fire District. Unfortunately that document does not break out whether or not that tax ID number is paying a fire tax. Nor when you go to the website (for that ID number) does it identify whether or not a fire district tax is being paid. It lists the gross roll-up of taxes paid. So the next step is to determine a place to go to get a breakout that someone who is on the tax rolls is in fact paying Fire Tax. We're not tax police, we're trying to find someone who may have slipped through the crack.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn by Pfitzenmaier, seconded by Bianchi, motion carried.

Minutes approved on _____ March, 2011.