

Minutes to Special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire
District
Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 12:00 pm

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Dorney, Garber, Johnson, Webber, and District's Attorney Donna Aversa present

Call to the Public – Call to the Public is cancelled due to the COVID restrictions. Members off the public are invited to submit written statements.

Approval of the minutes to the meeting of March 22, 2021: Motion by Dorney to approve the revised minutes, seconded by Garber. Motion carried unanimously.

Action item #1 – Resident to fill open position for Local Pension Board: Motion by Dorney to appoint Kathleen Crocket to the Local Pension Board, seconded by Webber. Motion carried unanimously.

Action item #2 – How minutes are taken, drafted, approved and posted: Item was tabled until next monthly meeting.

Action item #3 – Costs of investigation/Community information: Motion by Webber to go into Executive Session for discussion and review of additional information from the District's Attorney, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously. Entered into Executive Session at 12:12 pm.

Board is back in Public Session at 13:10 pm. Note: Executive Sessions are confidential pursuant to ARS SEC. 38-431.03

Item #3 Regarding concerns over costs of investigations, community information: Motion by Garber to issue a press release, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously. Chair Johnson will issue a public statement.

Item #4 – Review, discussion and possible action for preparation and presentation of list and documentation for vendor and personal service contracts: Per District's Attorney and Board, contracts will now be required for 3rd party vendors. Acting Chief Buonaccorsi identified 2 vendors that would require contracts, IT support and Bookkeeper. He will resolve the issue.

Item #5 Executive session for legal advice regarding a personnel matter where the fire Chief may be a witness: Motion by Dorney to go into Executive Session, seconded by Garber. Motion carried unanimously. Entered into Executive Session at 13:15 pm.

Board is back in Public Session at 13:47 pm. Note: Executive Sessions are confidential pursuant to ARS SEC. 38-431.03

Item #6: Appoint a Board member to be the point contact for a personnel investigation where the fire chief was a witness: An allegation was made of a potential violation of SEFD policy, which the Board is obligated to investigate. I Motion by Johnson to appoint Garber as the Board contact and Ops Chief Meredith as the point of contact for personnel, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously

Item #7 Executive session for legal advice regarding submission of claims with our insurance carrier: Motion by Webber to go into executive session, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously. Board entered into Executive Session at 13:52 pm.

Board is back in Public Session at 14:20 pm. Note: Executive Sessions are confidential pursuant to ARS SEC. 38-431.03

Item # 8 & 9 & 11 Regarding Possible Executive Session for legal advice regarding insurance claims related to unauthorized payments to former Chief De Wolf, the potential for further investigation regarding internal controls, and referral to the County District Attorney regarding the overpayments: Motion by Dorney to go into Executive Session, seconded by Garber. Motion carried unanimously. Board entered into Executive Session at 14:27 pm.

Board is back in Public Session at 14:40 pm. Note: Executive Sessions are confidential pursuant to ARS SEC. 38-431.03

Item #10 Regarding supplement to investigation that established the unauthorized payments to the former fire chief including to examine the internal process and internal controls in processing payments: Motion by Dorney to engage SEFD's investigator Katherine Baker to investigate how payments not authorized by the SEFD Board were paid to Chief De Wolf and were processed, and designate Chairman Johnson to be the point person with the investigator and Acting Chief Buonaccorsi to facilitate the investigator's access to information, access to SEFD members and scheduling of any interviews, seconded by Garber. Motion carried unanimously.

Item #12 Regarding referral of unauthorized payments to the county attorney's office for review and potential recovery of payments: Motion by Dorney to refer the former Fire Chief to the county attorney's office and direct SEFD attorney Donna Aversa to initiate the referral and facilitate providing SEFD information to the county attorney's office, seconded by Webber. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget study session – The Budget study session was dedicated to discussion between the Acting Chief and board members directly related to the proposed budget. The Board elected to have a special budget study session on April 19, 2021 at 0900.

Adjournment: Motion by Webber to adjourn, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 16:15pm

Minutes approved by Reba Webber, Board Clerk, on 5/29/2021
Reba Webber date

