Minutes to the Board of Directors Meeting

FY24-25 Budget Workshop

May 13, 2024

**Chair of the board Chris Johnson calls the meeting to order at 9:05a.m.**

1. **Roll call and confirmation of Quorum.**

Chris Johnson, Russ Kolsrud, Eddie McArthur, and Ruth Ann LeFebvre are present at the meeting, the Board has a quorum.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**
2. **Call to the public.**

**Members of the public are invited to address the Board and/or submit written comments for inclusion in the minutes.**

* No Public Today.

1. **Review, discussion and possible action-FY24/25**

* Chief turns it over to JVG, he comments that we are playing catch up as we have not changed the tax rate since 2017, meanwhile inflation has crept up 25%. This budget directly impacts two of the goals in our strategic plan: recruitment and retention and impacts our goals around culture of SEFD.
* Ben from JVG presents the Tentative Budget details for fiscal year 2024/2025, with the assistance of Steven Rodriguez from JVG.
* The tentative proposed budget presented gives a comparison of the current FY23/24 tax rate of 2.72 to a proposed new tax rate of 2.99 for the FY24/25.
* Russ Kolsrud asks about the future FY24/25, we are looking at the rates and how much cash revenue are we looking at and Ben responds that if the tax rate goes to 2.99 you have approximately an additional $221,000 in revenue and if you are at 2.72% you have an approximately additional $94,000 in additional revenue.
* Ben discusses the non-tax revenue items. He wanted the Board to look at actual revenue and expenses for a 5-year average of 2019,2020,2021,2022 and 2023.
* Russ asks if we can prioritize Ambulance revenue to increase it, and Ben and Chief respond that the Board could make the number anything you want but it may not be attainable. Chief comments that we did increase our rate for transport with DHS by 1.7%, but we don’t have control over how many transports we get called on. Ben comments that there is nothing we can do for Ambulance revenue for this year. Ben reviews the rates for the different CON holders with the Board. Ambulance revenue has been left the same in the budget.
* Ben addresses the Board about Wildland revenue and typically we budget it at zero. The district has approximately $100,000 in Wildland revenue and the cost of salaries for wildland is approximately $100,00.
* Chief speaks about the districts aging equipment, the districts water tender is a 2001. New apparatus purchases have the challenge of paying for it and then waiting the 2–3-year period to receive them.
* Ben reviews salaries in the budget. The stipends are budgeted under salaries with the new budget. The Board reviews the hourly rates with JVG and look at the rates with a 5% COLA and a 6% COLA to see the differences.
* Ben explains to the Board that the members will not have as much access to the overtime this next year. Chief also comments that there will always be some overtime, even when the district is fully staffed.
* Ruth Ann LeFebvre comments about the members who attended the last Board meeting and that their request was to be as close to $16.00/hour as we can get. Chief comments that on the pay scale everyone will step up July 1, 2024.
* Firefighter Marine comments about the one time fifty cent pay raise that was given to members that were there for year as of July 1, 2023 and that no one else will benefit from that one-time bump and he will not make the same.
* Eddie McArthur asks about the tax rate and if the Board decides to increase it to 3.1% and the COLA went to 6%. Steven adjusts the rates for the Board to see the effect on hourly wages for the members.
* Chris Johnson requests information from JVG, what the rate of 3.1% would do to the average property payment and how much the rate change will cost them.
* Eddie McArthur feels that the increase is reasonable and the district provides an important service in a small community.
* Ruth Ann LeFebvre asks about plans for the Elgin property and future plans, and comments about grant money to be able to move forward with the Elgin district services on the property.
* Ben wraps up by summarizing that the goal is to get the Board the budget based on the 3.1% tax rate with 6% COLA and how it impacts the average tax payer.

*Russ Kolsrud moves to adjourn the meeting, Eddie McArthur seconds the motion and all approve unanimously.*

Chris Johnson adjourns the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

A digital copy of this meeting is available to the public at the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District, located at 3137 AZ Highway 83 Sonoita, AZ 85637

**NOTICE: The Sonoita-Elgin Fire District Board of Directors may go into executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the fire district’s attorney(s) on any of the above agenda items pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(3)**

Minutes approved by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Board Clerk, on \_\_\_\_­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ruth Ann LeFebvre Date