

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 23, 2023

Board member Chair Chris Johnson calls the meeting to order at 9:00a.m.

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

Chris Johnson, Ruth Ann LeFebvre, Eddie McArthur and Russ Kolsrud are present and the Board has a quorum. Robert Garber is absent.

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

* No members of the public were present to address the Board.

1. **Approval of the Minutes from past meetings.**

* Russ Kolsrud comments on the dictation of the wording: “need to increase tax rate” in agenda item number 6, bullet point 4. The Board discusses using the language, “possible need to increase the tax rate” as an edit.

*Russ Kolsrud makes a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting October 25, 2023, and Eddie McArthur seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.*

1. **Reports from the Fire Chief.**

* FY23/24 Audit with Walker & Armstrong onsite was accomplished in 1 day, end of December they should be ready to present their findings.
* James Vincent Group is present today and will be presenting the monthly financial and reconciliation reports.
* September was a very busy month, one of the busiest in many years. The district responded to 78 incidences: 38 EMS calls, 4 Fire Calls and 36 service calls. Zone 1 had 43, Zone 2 had 7, Zone 3 had 9, Zone 4 had 1, and Zone 5 had 17. A shift responded to 37 incidences, B shift responded to 26, C shift responded to 13. Rodeo comprised of 11 of our total incident number.
* The Fire districts in the county are continuing the conversation about dispatch options and ensuring with have the best quality available. Nogales has their own dispatch system which is separate from everyone else in the county.
* We had one new recruit start the process in September, and the position for Captain/Paramedic has closed and we have 6 applicants.
* Chris Johnson comments about the county dispatch is potentially unreliable and asks what is the back-up? Chief comments that the backup would probably be another PCAP system.
* District has two new full-time members: Ramon Leyvas FF/EMT is a new hire that has been assigned to B shift and has Driver Operator certification and Jeff Binder PM has been with us in a temporary capacity and accepted an offer of a full-time permanent position and is currently in fire academy and is assigned to B shift.
* Engine #822 is in the put back together stage and waiting on one part for completion and will have back before the end of the year.
* Utility 819 was purchased not financed. Everyone will go through the training course to be certified on the UTV before it starts being used.
* Under the district’s CON, we will have upcoming state regulations including GPS in the ambulance and instant reporting. We will probably be asking for an extension to meet those regulations.
* Legislative session is closed for 2023 and no new items.

1. **Presentation and Approval of Monthly Financial Reconciliation and Reports pursuant to ARS Sec. 48-807 including: reconciled balance sheets, month-end statements, month-end balances at all institutions and county accounts, revenues and expenditures and the cash flow projection report.**

* The district made the transition to James Vincent Group for our accounting on October 1st, and Ben Archer Crowes is here to present the information.
* Ben Archer Crowes explains to the Board that the JVG takes care of accounting for 24 fire districts in the state of Arizona.
* JVG will be presenting the financials at each Board meeting and presents them on the screen in a format that is the easiest to understand. Chris Johnson wanted clarification on the district’s use of QuickBooks and ask if JVG will continue to use information from our QuickBooks and Ben responded that they will.
* Ben explains that the largest difference is, we do year over year versus month over month due to tax revenue distributions and we are helping Board members to monitor the cash for the district more effectively.
* Board members discuss that they like the drill down of a full summary versus a rolled-up summary for the monthly financial Board Meeting presentation.

*Eddie McArthur makes a motion to approve the September financials and Ruth Ann LeFebvre seconds the motion and Board members vote unanimously to approve the September financials.*

1. **Information item-update on the new website since launch.**

* We will be making updates to information and pictures on the website, this will be ongoing.
* Ruth Ann LeFebvre is requesting an update on the Board member polos and if we can get that done and then take pictures for the website in matching shirts.
* Chris Johnson asks if there is an app we can download for First Due, no there is not an app for the phone for the community.

1. **Update on referral to AZ Attorney General’s office of investigation regarding department claim with former chief.**

* No update at this time.

1. **Information item- Strategic Planning Process 2023-2026.**

* External stakeholders’ meetings: we hosted 1 external stakeholder meeting on this last Saturday and we had a great turnout of residents, representative from Air Evac., representative from Corona Fire and many others. Today’s meeting, we will have over 25 people attending including a representative from State Fire, CEO from Holly Cross, and representative from Nogales Sheriff’s department and many more.
* The internal stakeholder’s meetings will start on October 27th and run into December.
* Everyone attending is filling out a survey to gather more information. Ruth Ann LeFebvre comments and is curious what points came up on Saturday’s external stakeholders meeting. Chief responds that the points brought up were about tax rate, incidences we respond to, firefighter pay scale, access to water, fire hazards, and dispatch. We will have the data and everyone will have access. The post card invite went out to all of Sonoita and Elgin community and business owners.
* Ironwood strategic solutions facilitate the meetings both external and internal stakeholders’ meetings.
* The Board had a discussion of potential future mailings and communication to the surrounding communities, and Chris Johnson wants to clarify the difference between the CON and the District coverage. Chief clarifies the difference and points out that everyone we invited lives in the orange area of the district map.
* Eddie McArthur comments on the need to move forward jointly if we send out additional mailings, working with Patagonia in the future if we want to reach out to that community.
* Chief clarifies that this is just a discussion, and we are not considering, exploring or thinking about expanding our district.
* The Board continues with a discussion on South32 and the impact of the mine as it opens and increases it’s staffing. Our district holds the CON for the mine and has a responsibility to respond to an incidence. The Board asks the Chief to reach out and continue the communication with South32.

1. **Review, discussion and possible action-approval of updated IGA with RRMFD.**

* The Board quickly reviews the revision and proceeds to approve.

*Russ makes a motion to approve the updated IGA for Rio Rico and Eddie McArthur seconds the motion and the Board votes unanimously to approve.*

1. **Review, discussion and possible action-Fire Chief first year evaluation.**

* The review will be done in executive session.
* Chris Johnson clarifies with Chief that he would like his review to proceed in executive session, and Chief responds correct.

1. **Consideration of agenda items for future meetings.**

* Update to conversation with Patagonia Fire.
* Any contact that can be made for Attorney Generals Follow-up.

*Russ Kolsrud makes a motion to move into executive session for the Fire Chief first year evaluation, Eddie McArthur seconds the motion and the Board unanimously approves at 10:27 a.m.*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS AT 10:27 A.M.**

*Russ Kolsrud makes a motion to end the executive session at 11:30 a.m. and Eddie McArthur seconds the motion and the Board unanimously approves to end the executive session at 11:30 a.m.*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS AT 11:30 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 or view the minutes on the website: https://sefd911.org.

**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