

**FRY FIRE DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
September 16, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Nash called the Regular Meeting of the Fry Fire District Board to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

Board Members in Attendance: Arthur Nash, Board Chairman  
Bess Banister, Acting Board Clerk  
Robert McMurtrie, Board Member  
Gilbert Gil, Board Member

Board Members Absent: James Barnett, Board Clerk

Others in Attendance: Maria Gordon, Administrative Manager

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE**

Mr. Nash led the pledge of allegiance and Mr. Gil delivered the invocation.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Nash opened the call to the public at 7:01 p.m.

There was no one to appear before the board at this time.

Call to the public closed at 7:02 p.m.

**FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT/SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS**

Maria gave Chief Miller's report to the board in his absence.

Maria reported that the District has been awarded another wildland fuel reductions grant for approximately \$45,000. These funds are in addition to the ones we received last fiscal year to help reduce fuels in and around the Ramsey Canyon area. As a reminder for the board, we pay for the work using the Department of Corrections' inmates, and then we get reimbursed by the State Forestry Division.

Chief Miller participated in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security "Operation Firestorm" tabletop exercise, in Tucson, with several of our county

officials on August 28<sup>th</sup>. The exercise involved the major wildland fire in Ramsey Canyon and the use of the Arizona Rapid Response Team from the Homeland Security Division.

When our crew that was deployed to California was returning on September 3<sup>rd</sup> the guys noticed it was using a lot of oil. They took it to a repair shop and we flew them back, as the repairs were going to take over a week. Repairs needed included a front gear housing, radiator, fan, and fan housing covers. The final cost is going to be just under \$11,500. We got word today that the truck is ready and the crew that we currently have assigned to a California fire will pick it up on their way back home.

Also, at the request of Interim Chief Ron York, Sierra Vista Fire has moved all their personnel back into their stations, and we have done the same. This move was prompted, according to him, to help track his overtime budget. He also cited the amount of Sierra Vista Fire personnel that have left the department to seek employment elsewhere. Mr. McMurtrie stated that the board and council just had a meeting, approximately a month and a half ago, and that both agreed that the organizations would not move backwards, but would in fact strengthen the current inter-governmental agreement. He stated that he can't help but feel this is a step back. He would like to have more discussions on these actions. He would also like that if in the future there are any discussions to re-integrate, that the board be included in that decision. Mr. Nash stated that was an operational decision and that we will let Chief Miller handle it. After some discussion, it was understood that Mr. McMurtrie wasn't trying to interfere with operations, but wanted the board informed prior to any action going into effect and allow for open communications regarding the working relationship between the two agencies.

We had 773 responses for the month of August.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **A. Review, discussion and possible action on the monthly financial reports for August 2015.**

Maria explained to the board that the Cochise County Treasurer's Office has reverted to sending out the reports on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month; therefore, we did not have the reports as of today's meeting. We will have the financials ready to present at next month's meeting. Maria stated that with her best projections, the District is still not in credit line as of the end of August, but will be drawing from the credit line in September. October should be a large tax credit month for us, so our hope is to be able to pay off the credit line balance in October.

Mr. Gil made a motion that the board tables the financial report until October's board meeting. Ms. Banister seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0  
Motion Carried

B. Review and discussion for the warrants issued for the month of August 2015.

Mr. McMurtrie asked who the vendors CEIS, Pitney Bowes and Spillman were, and what was purchased from them. Maria explained that CEIS is Cindy Elbert Insurance Services and they are our vehicle and liability insurance carrier, Pitney Bowes is our postage machine company and Spillman is the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), and we pay them on an annual basis for the software on all of our laptops, computers, etc.

There were no further questions regarding the month's warrants.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular board minutes of August 19, 2015.

Ms. Banister made a motion to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 19, 2015. Mr. McMurtrie seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0  
MOTION CARRIED

### **BUSINESS AGENDA**

A. Arizona Fire District Association Report

There is nothing new to report since last month. The report is as follows:

Legislative planning agenda

- PSPRS reform
- Property tax Limitations (tax rate cap adjustment tied to inflationary index)
- Prop 117 impacts and potential fixes
- TPT (taxes on purchases)
- Fire District Study Committee

The AFDA Board has agreed to co-locate the 2016 Summer Conference with the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) Southwest Leadership Conference. The joint conference will be held July 11-16, 2016 at the Renaissance Hotel and Conference Center in Glendale Arizona.

B. Presentation on Sierra Vista Fire Department pay scale/salaries vs. Fry Fire District pay scale/salaries

Mr. McMurtrie requested that staff put together a comparison of the pay scales for both Fry Fire and Sierra Vista Fire at last month's meeting. Maria gave each board member a copy of the comparison and explained the differences between the two. The most notable differences are the amount of steps for each pay scale, as well as the percentage available per each step. Fry Fire has a 10-step, up to 5% per step; Sierra Vista has a 21-step for Firefighters, 16-step for all other ranks, with 2% per step. The District has a lower starting salary across the board, but closes the gap within a few hundred dollars at the top-end, with the exception of the Battalion Chief scale which is approximately \$3800 less on the top end.

Maria stated that the District has not been able to budget for pay for performance step increases in the last four or five years, but we have been able to give cost of living adjustments for the last two years. We are aware that we have started a compression of personnel's wages, but have not had to cut pay, give furlough days, or lay-off any personnel. Mr. McMurtrie stated that he was unaware that our employees have been stagnant in their pay raises and wants us to see what we can do to look at giving raises. He doesn't want the newer employees stuck in their salary for the indefinite future and stated that he would rather we look at layoffs, as opposed to personnel never receiving a raise. Mr. Gil stated that layoffs should be the last thing we look at, and that with our declining budget, we have done the best we can in keeping personnel whole. Mr. McMurtrie stated that layoffs should be a last resort, but that we should look at our options to lift the pay step freeze. Maria explained that Chief Miller was hoping to come to the board in January with information to possibly give raises, but at this time, we will have to see where our ambulance revenue is, due to the recent de-integration with Sierra Vista Fire.

There were discussions on raising the tax rate, and the consequences of doing so, as well as the potential increases to the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS), increases to health insurances, etc. All board members agreed that we will hold off and see what affects the de-integration has on our ambulance revenue before making any decisions.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Executive session. Discussion of pending or contemplated litigation with the Copper Queen Hospital regarding patient transports. No action will be taken during the executive session.

Maria stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.

## **ACTION ITEM**

A. Discussion and possible action to approve the Cochise County Mutual Aid Agreement.

Maria explained that this agreement will be updated every few years so that any new agencies, or agencies no longer wishing to participate, may opt in or out at that time. As with the old agreement, we only send units and personnel if we are able to do so, we are not required to do so, at the request of the agency having jurisdiction.

Mr. McMurtie made a motion that the board approves the Cochise County Mutual Aid Agreement as presented. Mr. Gil seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0  
MOTION CARRIED

**REQUESTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. McMurtie rescinded his request for the PSPRS board responsibilities to be added to next month's meeting (this request was originally made in August). He asked that Chief Miller update the board on how the training has been updated as a result of the incident we had in April when a probationary firefighter did not complete his task book. Chief Savage informed the board that quarterly check-offs of the book had been implemented, but we will see if the de-integration plays a role in how this is done. Mr. McMurtie also requested that Chief Miller give an update on the affects of the de-integration. He stated that it doesn't need to be an agenda item, and could be done during the chief's report to the board.

There were no additional questions/comments/requests from the board for future agenda items.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Banister made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:36 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. McMurtie.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

DATED THIS 18<sup>th</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2015.



Bess Banister  
Acting Board Clerk  
Fry Fire District Board