

**FRY FIRE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
December 28, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Huish called the Regular Meeting of the Fry Fire District Board to order at 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members in Attendance: Joseph Huish, Board Chairman
 Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
 Thomas Tucker, Board Member (electronically)
 Norman Sturm, Board Member

Board Members Absent: Robert McMurtrie, Board Member

Staff in Attendance: Mark Savage, Fire Chief
 Diana Jones, Billing Supervisor
 Ben Archer Clowes, JVG (electronically)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Mr. Huish led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Sturm gave the invocation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr. Huish reminded board members that they shall declare any conflict of interest. No board member declared a conflict at this time.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Huish opened the call to the public at 6:01 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Call to the public closed at 6:02 p.m.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

a. Retirement recognition for Battalion Chief Johnathan Popp

Chief Savage presented Battalion Chief Johnathan Popp a retirement axe for more than 20 years of service with the Fry Fire District in many different roles. Chief Popp's wife and daughter (Karen and Katelyn) were also recognized for their support over his career.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. Review, discussion and possible action on the monthly financial report for November 2021.

Ben Archer Clowes from James Vincent Group (JVG) gave a PowerPoint presentation reflecting the financial reports for November 2021. Mr. Huish asked about the November PSPRS costs. A discussion followed. The board reviewed the warrants for the month and there were no questions.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to approve the November 2021 financial reports. Mr. Andersen seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting on November 23, 2021.

Mr. Andersen made a motion to accept the Regular Board Meeting minutes of November 23, 2021. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion Carried.

- b. Approval of Minutes for the Board Executive Session on November 23, 2021.

Mr. Andersen made a motion to accept the Board Executive Session minutes of November 23, 2021. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion Carried.

- c. Review of monthly response data provided in packet (no action required).

Chief Savage gave a brief description of the monthly response data provided to the Board.

No action was taken on this item.

COMMAND STAFF'S REPORT

Chief Savage reported E366 is back from Cummins in Tucson for repairs, and Mr. Ayers is working to repair some air leaks on it. WW Williams has been unable to diagnose the transmission shifting problem with E365 so we will be retrieving it from Phoenix. The transmission was recently rebuilt so any repairs should be covered under warranty. E361 has been out of service for a few weeks pending the replacement of a few injectors; Mr.

Ayers should have it back up and running once he gets the rest of the parts. E3651 is out of service today with an alternator issue but should also be back in service as soon as the rest of the parts arrive tomorrow.

We are continuing to look forward to taking delivery of the new Type 1 engine. Spartan seems to have fixed the airbag and ABS issues that were presenting problems. Meritor is doing a final inspection in California and hope to send it our way soon.

CORE is continuing to make progress with Phase 2 of the remodel on station 365. There have been a few delays that may push the completion past February 28, 2022. The current issue involves some high points in the new concrete pad. The concrete company was unable to grind them down and will be removing and replacing a few sections. The building in Hereford housing our temporary administrative office was sold to Copper Queen Community Hospital. Chief Savage reached out to their CEO and requested an extension on our lease through March 31, 2022 to make sure we have time to get moved back into station 365. Copper Queen Hospital has been incredibly responsive and supportive.

We supported our “final” planned COVID-19 Booster Outreach Event with the Cochise County Health Department on December 11th and provided Moderna Booster shots to approximately 245 people whom we had previously vaccinated.

Canyon Vista Medical Center (CVMC) and Copper Queen Community Hospital (CQCH) continue to shift into and out of crisis status, with CVMC routinely going on STEMI divert, which has resulted in at least a few of our heart-attack patients being flown to Tucson for treatment. Hospitals across the county are expecting a post-holiday surge in COVID-19 patients and struggling to maintain service capacity.

CVMC received approximately 10 Paramedics under a FEMA request last week and is planning to add them to their ER staff. The county is anticipating several nurses to follow.

Chief Savage is continuing to work with CVMC and CQHC regarding transport refusals for low-acuity patients in the event they can only accept moderate to high-acuity patients.

We have had some COVID illnesses recently in our unvaccinated employees. We have not seen a significant impact on staffing yet thanks to some personal integrity, our screening process and the requirement for a negative PCR test to return to work. We will continue working to minimize internal exposures and provide a safe workspace for all of our employees.

The CDC is now recommending booster shots. We are rolling their recommendations into some of our higher-risk activities including out-of-district wildland assignments and training, where we anticipate higher than average exposures in areas less conducive to social distancing and / or masking, regular screening and quarantine. We are also continuing to lean toward safety with public interactions and large-scale events.

Our wildfire activity has been limited; most of our fire calls lately have been related to warming fires or smoke checks.

The first federal appropriations bill failed to pass; however, we are still optimistic the funds we requested through Senator Kelley's office may be approved next month. His office appreciated our letter of support. This year's AFG cycle has been extended through January 21. Chief Savage anticipates having our application for vehicle-based routers in within the next few weeks. We received the final private payment on our 2018 grant, which we will be working to close out over the next month. The Douglas crew is continuing to perform fuel reduction work under one of our 2021 grants.

Chief Savage continues to serve on the Southeast Arizona Communications JPA Board and with the committee working to update the IGA and Bylaws. Battalion Chiefs Billy Seamans and Joshua Meeker are finalizing a proposal for the Cochise County Board of Supervisors next month for the county-wide Fire Station Alerting project. We remain optimistic that the county will see fit to allocate a portion of the American Rescue Plan funding they received to support it.

We received a Request for Proposals from the Town of Huachuca City for emergency services. The deadline for submissions is February 1. We anticipate submitting at least a few options for their consideration.

Chief Savage has a meeting scheduled tomorrow with Whetstone Fire Chief Robert Jarvis to discuss their responses into our CON in Huachuca City. Chief Savage will request they cease and desist from responding an ambulance into our CON absent an actual mutual aid request. As discussed previously, not only is this a violation of our CON, but it is resulting in Huachuca City residents being billed needlessly for emergency responses that they have already paid for under the existing IGA. We're confident that we'll be able to develop some options that will allow them to continue providing appropriate emergency responses, minus the extra charges.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Vaccination Policy / OSHA Covid-19 Plan update.

Chief Savage stated there is nothing new to report with either the OSHA or CMS rules as far as Arizona is concerned. The federal OSHA requirement has been reinstated for 26 other states. Our Vaccination Policy continues to remain on hold pending the CMS Appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The CMS Appeal is on the expedited docket with a hearing scheduled for January 7, 2022. The opinion will probably be published a few weeks after that, which may be ahead of the Regular Board Meeting for January 25, 2022.

No action was taken on this item.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review, discussion and possible action regarding Covid Vaccination Incentive policy.

Chief Savage stated the goal of the policy is to reward employees who are doing what they can to help us continue to protect our organizational resilience while providing incredible services to our community. The long-term concerns are the policy and financial impact. Mr. Huish said after reviewing the policy the COVID-19 vaccinations fall into the group of recommended vaccines for employees; therefore, he does not see the value of incentivizing the Covid vaccine for personnel as it is already recommended by the CDC. Mr. Tucker disagreed stating the ramifications of a loss of personnel for during illness and / or quarantine is not acceptable for essential workers and that it's inappropriate to compare the Covid-19 vaccine to other vaccinations mid-pandemic. A discussion followed.

No action was taken on this item.

b. Review, discussion and possible action regarding compensation study results.

Chief Savage reviewed the updated 2021 Pay Parity Study that was shared with the Board, reflecting our salaries and benefits compared to several comparable fire and EMS agencies. Our cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) have kept our starting steps within 2-3% of the 75th percentile target established by the Board in 2017; however, our top steps range from 3-12% below. Mr. Sturm would like to focus more on taking care of our senior employees. Mr. Andersen asked Ben Archer Clowes how we set annual COLAs. Ben Archer Clowes stated JVG traditionally uses what the Social Security Administration sets for COLAs. Mr. Huish mentioned other benchmarks, specifically the modified Consumer Price Index. A discussion followed.

No action was taken on this item.

REQUESTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

There were no requests from the board members.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Andersen made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:01 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Sturm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.
DATED THIS 29th DAY OF DECEMBER 2021.

Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
Fry Fire District Board