



Superstition Fire & Medical District

Phone (480) 982-4440 ~ sfmd.az.gov

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Governing Board Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2021

PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §38.431.02, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE SUPERSTITION FIRE & MEDICAL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD A MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021. THE MEETING WAS HELD AT THE SUPERSTITION FIRE & MEDICAL DISTRICT'S ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 565 N. IDAHO ROAD, APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA.

THIS MEETING WAS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC (VIA CONFERENCE CALL) AND BEGAN AT 5:30 PM.

A. Call to Order

Chairman Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance led by John Whitney V

C. Roll Call

Board Members in attendance were Chairman Kathleen Chamberlain, Clerk Jeff Cross, Director Todd House, and Director Jason Moeller. Director Shawn Kurian was not present.

Senior Leadership Team in attendance were Fire Chief Mike Farber, Finance Director Roger Wood, Assistant Chief Jeff Cranmer and Administrative Services Director Anna Butel. Also in attendance was Sherry Mueller, Human Resources Generalist and Board Secretary. Legal Counsel William Whittington attended via conference call.

1. Review and approval of the March 2021 financial reports and bank reconciliations. (BOD #2021-04-01)

Motion by Director House to approve the March 2021 financial reports and bank reconciliations.

Seconded by Director Moeller

Vote 5 ayes, 0 nays, **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Recognition of employee performance, achievements, and special recognition for community members. (BOD #2021-04-02)

Badge Pinning

Captain Daniel Elliott

Battalion Chief David Pohlmann



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April Anniversaries

17 Years of Service:

Community Risk Reduction Specialist, **Tina Gerola**

4 Years of Service:

Paramedic **Ryan Tonelli**

3 Years of Service:

Paramedic, **Michael Bigg**

2 Years of Service:

Paramedic, **Levi Unzeitig**

3. Call to the Public. (BOD #2021-04)

Due to the Covid-19 virus, the Board Meeting was a closed-door meeting to the public. A notice was posted on our website, front door, Regional Training Center and Station 264 with our conference call number and pin code if anyone from the public wanted to call in and listen to the meeting. There was no person from the public over the conference phone.

NONE

4. Consideration and possible approval of all consent agenda items listed below (BOD #2021-04-03):

- A. Board Meeting Minutes from March 17, 2021
- B. Executive Session Minutes from March 17, 2021
- C. ImageTrend Vault Contract
- D. UKG Workforce Ready Contract Amendment

Motion by Director Cross to approve all consent agenda items for April 21, 2021.

Seconded by Director Moeller and Director House

Vote 4 ayes, 0 nays, **MOTION PASSED**

5. Possible vote to go into Executive Session for legal advice pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and for instructions to legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(4) regarding the final employment contract for the fire chief position. (BOD #2021-04-04)

Motion by Director Moeller to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3) at 5:38 p.m. for legal advice and for instructions to legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(4) re: the final employment contract for the fire chief position”.



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Seconded by Director Cross

Vote 4 ayes, 0 nays, **MOTION PASSED**

The Executive Session ended at 5:43 PM

6. Public Session began at 5:44 PM. Discussion and possible action regarding the employment contract for the new Fire Chief, John Whitney. (BOD #2021-04-05)

Director House said he was pleased with the candidates they had to select from.

Clerk Cross thanked Labor and Administrative Staff for their time and efforts they put in through this process. Director Moeller also thanked everyone.

Motion by Director House to approve the contract for the new Fire Chief by the Board of Directors, and the Board Chair is authorized to execute the contract for the new Fire Chief

Seconded by Director Cross

Vote 4 ayes, 0 nays, **MOTION PASSED**

Chairman Chamberlain congratulated Chief Whitney. The Board Chair and the Clerk signed four copies of the contract. A group photo was taken of the Board and Chief Whitney and his family.

7. Discussion and update regarding the transition of leadership for the new fire chief. (BOD #2021-04-06)

Fire Chief Mike Farber stated he is pleased with the selection of the next Fire Chief, John Whitney. Chief Farber will support Chief Whitney in any way he can going forward.

Chief Farber gave an update on the transition of leadership and the progress of the Fire Chief office. The walls will be repaired and painted on May 10, 2021. The carpet is scheduled to be cleaned on May 14, 2021.

Chairman Chamberlain stated the start date for Chief John Whitney would be Monday, May 24, 2021.

No Motion

8. Discussion and possible approval to authorize the recognition of Fire Chief Farber for his many years of loyal and dedicated service and commitment to the District by way of presenting him with a ceremonial axe and badge set in appreciation upon his retirement. (BOD #2021-04-07)

Director House stated it is only fitting that the Board of Directors recognize the years of service by Chief Mike Farber by presenting him with the axe and badge. Chief Farber took very little time off during his 36 years of service to Apache Junction Fire District / Superstition Fire & Medical District. Director House stated it was a pleasure working with Chief Farber and he will be sorely missed.

Director Moeller agreed we should approve the axe and badge for Chief Farber.



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Chairman Chamberlain read a brief history of Fire Chief Mike Farber's career.

Motion by Director House to authorize the recognition of Fire Chief Farber for his many years of loyal and Dedicated service and commitment to the District by way of presenting him with a ceremonial axe and badge set in appreciation upon his retirement.

Seconded by Director Moeller

Vote 4 ayes, 0 nays, **MOTION PASSED**

9. Discussion and possible direction regarding the establishment and maintenance of a General (100) Fund Financial Reserve Policy. (BOD #2021-04-08)

Finance Director Roger Wood stated that in an attempt to acquire Accreditation, it requires the Board establish and adopt a policy regarding a general fund financial reserve policy. The Intent is to discuss options towards a policy that would go into effect July 1, 2021 for FY 2021 / 2022 as base fiscal year. Finance Director Wood discussed cash balance trending (in the 100 Fund) over time. He also spoke of the line of credit with Wells Fargo, and its importance as it relates to State Wildland response.

Over time, the District's tax revenue has increased. However, the slope of the financial reserve has gone down. Wages and benefits have increased. Director Wood would like a robust discussion on what amount our financial reserve should be relating to our approach to Wildland response.

Director Wood provided three possible options for a solution to the Board. The best option may be to increase the financial reserve in the same dollar amount as the increase in wages and benefits during the time frame from July to September.

Director Wood suggested that in the policy we create, we structure this as a goal. He will be discussing this further in future Board Meetings.

10. Discussion and update regarding the SWAT Agreement with AJPD. (BOD #2021-04-09)

This item was pulled from the agenda until the May 19, 2021 Board Meeting.

11. Discussion and possible approval regarding the number of Battalion Chief positions for FY 21/22. (BOD #2021-04-10)

Fire Chief Farber discussed the number of Battalion Chief positions and the number of current Battalion Chiefs, which is three. Chief Farber said it would be up to the Board if they would like to have four Battalion Chief positions or not, which he previously discussed with the Board Members. Chief Farber stated that Division Chief and Battalion Chief are the same level in our organization.



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He provided a cost analysis that explained it is less expensive to promote a Captain to Battalion Chief and hire a firefighter than to hire a civilian EMS Coordinator (which is an open position). Battalion Chief Pohlmann (recently promoted to Battalion Chief) has been assigned to the EMS Coordinator position. BC Pohlmann recertified dozens (PALS, CPR, ALS/BLS) of employees who needed recertification. Chief Farber detailed all the experience and qualifications that make BC Pohlmann an excellent person to fill this role. This left one open Battalion Chief position and Captain Williamson was temporarily promoted to Battalion Chief to fill that open role.

Clerk Cross discussed the marijuana tax in relation to the PSPRS employment. It is possible that some departments may consider moving civilian positions over to PSPRS.

Chairman Chamberlain stated she did not recall having a discussion or meeting on this subject in the past. Chief Farber said he recalled the meeting was in December 2020 with all the Board Members. Chairman Chamberlain agrees that BC Pohlmann is well qualified for the position. The budget has three approved Battalion Chief positions. Last month, she recalls that Chief Farber said we did not have anyone qualified to take one of those positions and the educational requirements needed to be changed.

Chief Farber explained that we didn't have anyone interested and qualified (with the appropriate educational degree) to move in to one of the BC positions. There was some confusion between Chairman Chamberlain and Chief Farber about the open BC position, and whether or not we have or do not have any interested and qualified internal candidates to fill that open slot. Chief Farber gave further explanation on Division Chief and Battalion Chief, which are essentially the same position. Chief Farber stated his intention was to keep everything transparent for the the Board and the tax payers.

Clerk Cross explained that because we had a need for an EMS Coordinator, and BC Pohlmann was qualified and able to recertify those that needed recertification, Chief Farber put him in that role due to the immediate need. Clerk Cross further stated that we had two openings and it is not necessarily a permanent placement for BC Pohlmann, but due to the business need, Chief Farber assigned BC Pohlmann to the EMS Coordinator position. The Board will need to make the determination to have four BC positions, or if we want to stay with three, which will then force the Board to decide what to do with the EMS Coordinator position.

Chief Farber stated that the amended budget shows three Battalion Chiefs and one Division Chief.

The confusion continued between Chairman Chamberlain and Chief Farber and the discussion went on for several more minutes.

Director House stated he believes Chief Farber did everything within his purview, it was in the budget, this was day-to-day operations to keep the organization running smooth and efficient, and Chief Farber used his judgement to fill that position. Director House did not think Chief Farber has overstepped his boundaries, nor has he betrayed the Board in any way. Director House believes Chief Farber made a good decision in what he did.

The Board agreed and approved four Battalion Chief positions.



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12. Discussion and update on hiring Firefighters for the Safer Grant and maintaining staffing levels and an update on the future hiring list. (BOD #2021-04-11)

Fire Chief Farber talked about staffing levels and currently for Suppression. We are currently at 89 on staff. Chief Farber said we made an offer for a firefighter recruit (Fire Academy starts on July 6, 2021) and this person will make 90, which is what the SAFER Grant requires. There are two people retiring at the end of June and two more retiring in September, 2021, therefore, Chief Farber made offers for two more firefighters to keep the required level of 90 firefighters. These two will be included in the new fiscal year budget in July 2021 (FY21/22) and will be attending the Phoenix Fire Academy starting on July 6, 2021.

The Board and Chief Farber discussed the future and other opportunities for Firefighter Recruits to attend different Fire Academies such as Mesa and Gilbert going forward.

No Motion

13. Policy review for possible approval at the May 19, 2021 Board Meeting. (BOD #2021-04-12)

- 1044 – Member Speech, Expression, and Social Networking
- 1051 – Work Schedules
- 1052 – Special Leaves
- 1053 – Earned Leave

The above previously approved policies had slight verbiage changes for the Board's approval in the May 2021 Board Meeting.

No Motion

14. Reports (BOD #2021-04-13)

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

Fire Chief Mike Farber

- Update on Thunder Mountain Middle School Purchase
- Update on the TRWC Communications Tower
- Update on Gold Canyon East Homeowners Association on wildland fire precautions
- DR Horton Agreed to set aside 2.5 acres for a new fire station located at Ironwood Road and Warner
- Meeting with the County Board of Supervisors for Cares Act COVID money
- Payroll & AP/AR Desktop Procedures



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Acting Assistant Chief Jeff Cranmer

- Review of recent fires
- Review of recent motor vehicle crashes
- Review of recent regional and quarterly training
- State wildland training
- One Firefighter Recruit at the Phoenix Fire Academy
- UTV Training for Wildland Training
- Hydraulics and hose training at the Regional Training Center
- A-Shift multi-company ladder training
- April Pools Day on Saturday, April 17, 2021

Administrative Services Director Anna Butel

- Board Calendar (May 2021 – December 2022)
- DEMA approved \$14,225.10 (Award Package 2)
- UKG – Walk Through on Build/Required Training
- Lenel Software Upgrade (Windows 10 next Wednesday) Database should migrate to new version without issue

Presumptive Cancer Legislation Update

- April 14th Governor Ducey signed legislation to further protect firefighters by expanding workers compensation for diseases presumed to be a result of their job demands.
- Senate Bill 1451 strengthens the presumption that a firefighter's cancer diagnosis is work related thereby ensuring that more firefighters are eligible for workers compensation.

WebEx Meetings

- SFMD purchased WebEx software and cameras back in 2020 during the height of the pandemic for the board room
- Going forward all meetings are recorded, and paused and muted for executive sessions
- The meetings have been pre-scheduled out for the 3rd Wednesday indefinitely
- The link, phone number, meeting ID, and password will remain the same month over month.
- The link, phone number, meeting ID, password, and Tech Support will be posted on the website and on the Agenda.
- For those having difficulty – Tech Support can be reached at 480-982-4440 x141 for assistance.

Finance Director Roger Wood

S1298 – Fire Districts Pension Liability Financing

- Bill was signed by the Governor; the bill has an emergency clause which means it goes into effect immediately.
- Will begin working with financing firm(s) to research opportunity, process, benefits.
- Will update Board as effort progresses.
- Targeting early fall for placement of Certificates of Participation (COPs).



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15. New Business / Future Agenda Items. (BOD #2021-04-14)

Add agenda item #10 (SWAT Agreement with AJPD) to the May 19, 2021 Board Meeting

16. Announcements (BOD #2021-04)

Chairman Chamberlain would like to schedule a meeting to review SFMD Bylaws

17. Adjourn (BOD #2021-04-15)

Motion by Director House to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 **p.m.**

Seconded by Director Cross

Vote 4 ayes, 0 nays. **MOTION PASSED.**

Governing Board Approval:


Board Clerk Jeff Cross
Sherry Mueller