



Sedona Fire District

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
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REGULAR BOARD MEETING

**Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Wednesday, November 15, 2017 / 4:30 PM**

~ MINUTES ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A. Salute to the Flag of the United States of America and Moment of Silence to Honor all American Men and Women in Service to Our Country, Firefighters, and Police Officers.

Board Present: Ty Montgomery – Chairman; Corrie Cooperman – Clerk; Tim Ernster, Abe Koniarsky, Dave Soto – Members

Others Present: Fire Chief Kris Kazian; Assistant Chief Jeff Piechura; Division Chief Ed Mezulis; Fire Marshal Jon Davis; HR Manager Betty Johnson; Finance Director Gabe Buldra; Executive Assistant Tricia Greer – Recorder; Attorney Bill Whittington; New Firefighters – Kevin Ahlers, Seth Gaillard, and Josh Leon with their families; Engineer Kirk Riddell and wife; Captain Jarret Tarver and family; 10 members of the public; Ron Eland, Reporter – *Red Rock News*

Board Chairman Ty Montgomery called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance; Division Chief Ed Mezulis led the Moment of Silence and asked all to honor the memory of 4 Firefighters and 6 Police Officers lost in the line of duty across the nation since the last Board meeting.

II. BADGEPINNING / INTRODUCTION CEREMONY – NEW FIREFIGHTERS, ENGINEER, CAPTAIN, AND OFFICE STAFF

Fire Chief Kris Kazian recognized today's honorees, as follows:

- Jarret Tarver received his Captain's badge today. He was hired as a shift coverage reserve on 2/11/02 and on 6/2/02, was hired as a full-time Firefighter. Jarret promoted to Engineer in 2007 and stepped up as an acting captain in 2011, 2014, and in 2027. He received 3 service awards for the 2013 Lee Mountain Rescue, 2014 Slide Fire, and 2016 Brins Mesa Rescue; Jarret received the 2005 SFD Firefighter of the Year Award. He heads-up the peer fitness program for SFD. His wife, Carrie, pinned his badge.
- Kirk Riddell received his Engineer's badge. Kirk started as a SFD volunteer in 1990; in 1992, he became an EMT, worked his way up to Volunteer Captain in 1996, and hired on as a full-time Firefighter in 2005. He received the 2010 Firefighter of the Year, Unit Citations in 2014 for the Slide Fire and for the State Route 89A incident in 2015. Engineer Riddell mentors new hires to assure probationary Firefighters are successful. His wife, Debbie, badge-pinned him.
- Jillian Olivera was hired 3 months ago at SFD as an Administrative Specialist. She was born and raised in Maui, and moved to the Verde Valley in 2004 to be closer to her grandmother. She and her husband, Jeremiah, have 4 children and a grandchild. She loves spending time with her family.
- Seth Gaillard received his badge as Firefighter. Seth grew up in Goodyear and attended NAU in Flagstaff; in summer of 2011, he became a seasonal wildland firefighter, also volunteered for the Ponderosa Fire District, and in 2015, began working for a private ambulance company. Seth lives in Buckeye with his wife, Miranda, and enjoys mountain biking and camping. His father is the Fire Chief of the Flagstaff Fire Department and previously, was the Goodyear Fire Chief for many years. Seth was pinned by his father, Mark, and his wife.
- Kevin Ahlers received his Firefighter badge. He grew up in New Jersey and joined the Marines after graduating from high school and was stationed in Japan, California, and deployed to Iraq. Kevin was honorably discharged in 2008 and was a civil contractor in Afghanistan. He then gained his fire and EMT certifications, graduating in the top of his class. Kevin was hired for the Department of Land Management in Las Vegas as a Type 2 Team Wildland Firefighter. He previously volunteered with Gilbert Fire and Rescue District. Firefighter Ahlers was pinned by his wife, Amy.

- Josh Leon received his Firefighter badge. He was born in Scottsdale, graduated from Chaparral High School, attended Scottsdale and Glendale Community Colleges where he received his Firefighter and Paramedic certifications; for 5 years, he worked in the 9-1-1 system and as a Reserve Firefighter. Josh enjoys repairing and restoring automobiles. He was pinned by his wife, Shelby, and his step-father, John.

Chief Kazian gave the Oath of Office to our new Firefighters. Mr. Montgomery declared a recess at 4:50 PM.

III. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum:

1. Public Comments.
2. Executive Staff Response to Public Comments.

The meeting was reconvened at 5:00 PM. Public comments are transcribed, verbatim, as follows:

Marcie Ellis – *I live in Oak Creek Canyon. We're across the street from the fire station. I've even had an ambulance ride and the people are wonderful. We love the fire department and all the work that you guys are doing and, of course, during the fire, you were all right there...all the fire guys. The only comment I had on the recent election...I go to OLLI. I do the Life-Long Learning and I do other classes at the library and everywhere I've been, I've seen this young man (indicating Chief Kazian) talking about the bond issue. I'm giving information. I'm from years of working for a non-profit and had to raise a lot of money. I've never done it by myself. My Board has always been there. And, I guess, my comment – and I had to say this – was that I was really disappointed not to see the Board being the one who was out there taking the arrows that some of the people shot. The Board can do that. They don't have to advocate. They can be informative. I heard a lot of bad comments about someone that I think has worked hard from what I've seen. I don't know anyone very well in the area and I'm very nervous here, so excuse me. But, this is just a comment, that should it happen again, my experience with my Board is that I can't work without the Board's support and I felt the Board was not visible and should have been, instead of letting the employee take some of the barbs and all he was doing was explaining. That is my comment. I hope you look at it for another time because we all hope that there will be good facilities in the area and lots of wonderful people like we just saw get awards and badges. Thank you very much for giving me a minute. Thank you.*

W. Spring – *Good afternoon, Board Members. About 6 months ago, I sat in a Sedona City Council meeting in which a lady who lived up some place south of the Midgley Bridge talked about her experience and ended up she was playing Bridge with some friends of mine. She had a heart attack, and the response time – because of traffic – was 35 minutes to get to her and then, coming back down, they were driving on lawns and everything else and it was pretty hair raising, she had apparently a second heart attack in the vehicle. I know your typical response time is 5 or 6 minutes, something like that. But, I wonder... and we're looking at this now – a group of us. I represent several dozen people, who are having real concerns; when we watch Andante at 89, and I've sat through 3 and 4 cycles of the light, just to get someplace. I'm from Wisconsin and went to a Badger party at the end of Soldier's Pass. I live in west Sedona – 35 minutes to get there. And if you guys have done any study – you know, kind of a fiduciary obligation to look... this is a real big issue for a lot of us people because as you all know and I know, about 90% of the calls are strokes and heart attack, etc. and running response times in high traffic, like during movie week, when people are walking right out in the middle of the road or bicycle week, or taco week, or... we have 30-some festivals a year planned... to look at response times. Getting to some of the more difficult areas like Soldiers Pass, that's all our latest big traffic study and all kinds of ways to ameliorate the problem. But to just to do it – the fire and EMT during some of those bad times to see what effect it has on response times. I would think that would be a Number 1 priority for the Board and the department. Chief Kazian requested the name of the woman in the above referenced incident to verify the 35 minute response time.*

Jeff Piechura – *Dear Dwight, at your request I offer my apologies for posting to the Sedona VOC Facebook page... that's their website... comments relating to you and your team creating a forged document that appeared to be official, and was used by you and the Arizona Liberty in this year's Sedona Fire District bond election to inform voters. Sincerely, Jeff Piechura.*

B. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Actions:

1. October 18, 2017 Regular Board Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented; Board Member Tim Ernster seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

C. November 7, 2017 Bond Election:

1. Presentation/Discussion: Fire Chief's Perspective of Bond Election.

Chief Kazian shared thoughts and ideas on the bond process. He then read the following prepared statement:

Good evening and let me start by saying thank you for everyone who has taken an interest in Sedona Fire District over the last 6 months. Thank you to the 2007 and 2017 Citizen Advisory Committees who both worked diligently to understand the long term capital needs of this agency. The complexities of the funding needed for those projects identified. I would also like to say thank you to this Governing Board for having the courage to consider a General Obligation Bond as a fiscally responsible way to spread out costs to taxpayers for upcoming decades to meet our long range capital goals and needs. I would also be remiss to not mention a big thank you to all of the Sedona Fire District staff who work day in and day out to serve our amazing community. Without their dedication, passion, and professionalism, much of the things we are so successful at would simply not happen. And, lastly, and equally important, I would like to say thank you to all the voters of Sedona Fire District for your participation in this process.

The purpose of my addressing you all today is to help clarify where we go from here, now that the bond results are in. I would also like to clarify a few misconceptions that were deployed during the election. I think there may have been some people with facts confused or maybe a political agenda was such that there was intent to misrepresent facts. Election laws made it difficult for me to address these issues at the time. With the election behind us, I think it is only fair for the public to be informed on where things truly are.

Sedona Fire District staff with the help of the Citizens' Advisory Committee who met nearly a dozen times – made a recommendation to the Governing Board after studying the issues at great length. Most of the expenses outlined in the \$17.9M bond proposal were for buildings – replacement and significant repairs which are typical things found in a General Obligation Bond. We also talked about the need for Telecommunication equipment upgrades and fire apparatus replacement.

Starting with the buildings, the costs that were used were truly just estimates and not quotes as we do not have engineered drawings. The figures were used as ballpark to help develop the total costs. We engaged with a company named Core Construction who has worked on dozens of fire stations in Arizona and around the country. They have worked successfully in providing these estimates to other fire districts and came highly recommended by my peers. Their involvement in this process in no way, shape, or form would guarantee them a contract with Sedona Fire District. This was clearly stated in multiple open meetings to Core Construction and to the Board and the Citizens' Advisory Committee by me. No contracts, no promises, no quid pro quo agreement was made for any of their involvement by me or to my knowledge, anyone on this Governing Board. It simply didn't happen. Our only goal is to maintain the ability to perform critical functions to best serve our community.

Fire stations operating at maximum efficiency play a great role in reducing costs and response times. Our older buildings have outlived their planned, useful life and are costing more to maintain and are not functioning to our needs which was highlighted in the Citizens' Advisory Committee report.

We heard questions about why we do not staff existing stations, which are, essentially, garages – one in the Canyon is barely large enough to fit an apparatus, much less personnel. We continually look at our operations model and make sure we effectively utilize those buildings if and when possible. To staff them at this time is not feasible. I want you to know that SFD has made attempts at using volunteer and reserve personnel, and they've been unsuccessful on multiple attempts.

Telecommunications part of the bond – that's how we communicate on emergency scenes talking to one another or to dispatch via radio. The current system and equipment are aging and need to be upgraded. There are currently areas where the radio does not work. Some might think we just snap our fingers and fix it. But it is not that simple and certainly, not that cheap given our topography and limitations of where towers are located and where they can go and the coverage areas. During the election, some – with no fire service knowledge –

suggested a solution of leasing equipment instead of buying it – while this is certainly an option that may work in other communication business models – according to our Telecom Manager – the 2-way public safety radio system is a completely different model and leasing is not a good option.

By our estimations, if we were to go out and lease a network, we would experience a considerably greater cost to you – the tax payer and potentially be less reliable. In fact, our proposed system improvements have the ability to cost less and create better reliability for our emergency responders. If leasing was a better option, don't you think we probably would be doing that now?

As for the apparatus costs, the life span of SFD fire trucks are typically between 15 and 18 years. We also expect our engines to be used as an effective and reliable reserve engine at the end of its useful life. We utilize a reserve engine when there are units out of service for preventative maintenance, unexpected breakdowns, or if we have a unit assigned to a wildfire. It is pretty much best practice to have a reserve engine. I heard some people actually say that having a reserve engine was living above our means.

Having a capital plan that looks forward, creates a responsible financial impact to the budget and establishes a plan for funding these projects is not only responsible it is a best practice and should be mandated. The capital improvement plan of the late 2000s and early 2010s were essentially abandoned by the Great Recession and previous Board actions. Coming off a 43% decrease in Assessed Value and considerable decrease in the Mil Rate while much of the capital reserve fund was being spent on operations, our problem was being compounded significantly – before my arrival.

As I started my career as the Fire Chief of Sedona Fire District, we were at a crossroad that really created a challenge how to maintain services, fund and staff Station 6 – which the Governing Board directed me to build, shortly after the recall election, deal with the passage of Proposition 117, it simply would have been impossible to do that without increasing the Mil Rate and the tax levy at least not without reducing services, which we have discussed at every single budget meeting and the Board has told him not to cut services.

The question of the bond and all its projects were aimed at enhancing public safety. While some things, like fire apparatus and telecommunications, may more directly impact operations and the public having facilities that function effectively and operate efficiently, certainly have a direct effect on quicker response and enhance working conditions. I think you can agree the concept of having a fire station capable of housing modern day fire engines certainly has an impact on safety and response and having a maintenance repair facility that can fit current apparatus helps to improve responses as well.

The concept of using a Bond to pay for long-term capital needs was designed to spread out the cost of these projects over a longer period of time. The cost of the projects being financed over 20+ years would certainly have incurred interest. During the election, some people publicly said they do not like to pay interest. Personally, I concur with that statement in my personal finances. However, when I – like most people – make major purchases, essentially capital purchases, such as a car or a home – paying interest is a fact. In SFD's case, interest costs on these projects will come in one form or another; they would have been in the bond or it will be in the lease purchase process. If you are not familiar with that term... a lease purchase is, essentially, like a mortgage. If we took the advice of some who spoke during the election, their suggestion was to raise taxes to the \$3.25 cap and save up enough money to pay for the projects. Let me be clear – this method would significantly raise your Fire District taxes far greater than already experienced and greater than with the bond. The thought proposed by some would be to save up all that tax money collected today and pay cash for a capital project designed to last 50 years. This would mean today's tax payers would be paying lock, stock, and barrel the entire cost while many would likely not see the return on their investment during their lifetimes.

I need to clarify that Sedona Fire District was not affiliated with either of the groups you may have heard from during the bond process. We were not on either campaign, not in the finances of either side, and not in the motives behind their existence. Both campaigns were stand alone and developed their own marching orders by whoever was steering either group. Where each side got their information or what was sold as factual has perplexed me. I heard lots of comments that stated the information was garnered from public documents – and, therefore, they must be true. What I can tell you is that there were many comments made that were simply not true or certainly did not accurately reflect the truth. I will clear up some misinformation in a few minutes. What I must assure you is there was never a breach of objectivity by Sedona Fire District. There was no special treatment

being given, promised, inferred, or implied to either group. Any future SFD business will be completely independent of involvement or lack thereof to one side or another. Our commitment is, and always will be, to serve our community with full disclosure, honesty, transparency, and always doing what is best for the community – looking long-term and to assure best value is provided in any project we start and finish.

As the Fire Chief, my job is to lead the organization and assist the Board's mission by performing the day-to-day operation of the fire district and to assure we are able to meet our goals and objectives.

I would like to now take a moment and do a little housekeeping of some things espoused to be the full truth and spoken with conviction. As we all have likely heard the term – Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics, I think we can apply that principle here.

As the Fire Chief, I am very busy and the last thing I am looking for is more work. Building fire stations takes a lot of time and, frankly, I would prefer to be using my time to influence the leadership and grow the soft skills and succession plan for our great organization to be successful, not chasing around a general contractor to assure they are doing their job. I do not need to have my name emblazoned on a plaque for the next 50 years to show my grandkids – what I need to do is assure that we have the appropriate staffing, training, facilities, apparatus, and telecommunication ability to successfully serve our community over the next 50 years – long after I am gone.

There has been much said about the engineer's report that SFD commissioned specifically to look at the feasibility of Station 4 renovation versus tear down. There were plenty of comments made during the election that the report was buried because staff did not want anyone to see it. Let me assure you the report was discussed in an open meeting and posted with all the documents in accordance with each Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting we held – as documents are for every public SFD meeting. In reading the report, the engineer clearly states in his conclusion that it may be well worth building a new fire station when compared to renovation costs of the current structure. Why would we hide this report? I'm not sure.

All projects identified in the capital improvement plan and bond question were to extend current life of existing buildings, where practical, and replace those where it was not. Things like remodeling projects – and who does not see these sorts of projects happening in any building that is 20 or 30+ years old? Buildings get tired, finishes get worn and broken, new work efficiencies are developed, and SFD would like to engage our workforce in these types of work environments. Redesigning stations where sleeping quarters were literally built in closets where there is no heating or air conditioning ducts, public spaces that do not meet Americans With Disability code requirements by today's standards, all seem to be for the good of the public in one form or fashion.

There was lots of talk about SFD foregoing capital projects to pay for lavish salaries and benefits. I can tell you, in the last decade, the majority of our funding decisions have some connection to the Great Recession and recovering from that, as well as actions of past Boards. However, specifically, about the 30% increase in salaries that was sold as the truth in the election, I will tell you that on my arrival, salaries had been frozen for a few years, and morale was terrible. A concerted effort was made to increase moral and deal with frozen salaries; simply put, we needed to maintain our work force and assure salaries were in compliance with market value and benchmarking with inflation.

Did you know that in 2012, a starting Firefighter/EMT at Sedona Fire District was making \$13.71 an hour? Today, the starting hourly wage for that same employee is \$15.23 an hour. Yes, a starting firefighter – with extensive mandatory certifications and education – trained to save lives – begins their career at cents above the new proposed minimum wage. Also, take into consideration inflation and how that plays into this change in hourly pay – and we are basically pacing with the same Social Security increases many of our residents have experienced. To be transparent, SFD, like most public safety agencies, utilizes a 7 step system that will allow an employee to get to top pay. That firefighter/EMT after 6 years of service to SFD will be making \$20.41 an hour when they reach the top step. You should note, essentially, this is the last raise they will get unless they promote, get a cost of living adjustment, or salary scale adjustment which is approved by the Governing Board. As the Fire Chief, I do not have any authority to change that scale or approve COLAs.

In the past 6 years, we have been working to increase the funding of capital projects. We have purchased 2 new engines, refurbished 1 engine, bought 3 new ambulances, and we are refurbishing an ambulance as we speak. We have built a much-needed fire station, developed a conscious plan to prioritize necessary capital projects, and

develop a plan going forward to schedule the remaining needed projects over the next 10 years. We have also worked diligently to enhance our completion of telecommunication and IT capital projects. All of this is expensive and all of it takes time. This is why we have been ramping up the amount of money designated for capital each year when we budget. Someone once said, we have done nothing since I've been the Chief for capital planning and that is nonsense.

This brings me to another point. I have heard that the increase of the levy and the budget under my leadership – affectionately termed Kazian's Watch – is "out of control". I have just shared with you that salaries were frozen, there was little to almost no capital spending going on, and we just came off the Great Recession and previous Boards electively reducing the levy and who spent most of the reserves. This was a recipe for disaster. The only place was to go up with the mil rate and the levy. I think when you really take a look at the 10 year analysis of the Sedona Fire District and our levy – the taxes – you will see that the levy has only increased a total of 3.6% over 10 years, and the overall budget has only increased 6.3%. We've increased service, we've added a station, we've added operational personnel. I think you can see that is tracking pretty reasonably. It really puts things in perspective and paints a much different picture. However, if you choose to grab a point at the lowest of the low, and only look from that point forward, I certainly think you do have a different picture, which was presented. A good example of this is – I looked at a concerned citizen's tax bill from 2008 and the SFD tax was \$1,052 and in 2017, it was \$1,076 – our service level has greatly improved over those 10 years – and in the end – the taxes for that same house increased less than \$25 over a 10 year period. Again, there was a dip in the middle, but over 10 years' time, that's pretty good. Remember, for me, we either closed fire stations, cut staffing, reduced services, or increased taxes, and that process was done with all the Boards – each and every year, they approved those budgets. Not just me.

As the Fire Chief, I expect to be the target of many complaints and criticisms. Quite frankly, it goes with the territory. What I would not expect would be people attacking my personal character and the passion in which I serve our community. To be called arrogant, out of control, lacking leadership, fiscally mismanaging the district... those are reckless and borderline libel/slandorous statements to my character and credibility. They are unmerited and in some cases, the opposite of what has really happened under my leadership. I have devoted my last 6 years to making tough decisions for our employees when it comes to salaries and benefits. I worked to develop a sustainable solution path for us to follow while also realizing that employee satisfaction is real. Remuneration to employees for hard work, dedication, and professional services they put forth each and every day must be recognized. This is not always easy for myopic, number-oriented individuals, but I am steadfast in my quest for assuring salary and benefits are equitable with the public safety market and sustainable for the future. Under my watch, we have lowered vacation and sick leave accruals, reduced holiday pay benefits which has saved in excess of \$100,000 annually, not replaced employees who have left, consolidated dispatch operations saving nearly \$400,000 annually, utilized an outside financial management firm at a third of the price we were paying, and only added employees where there was a demonstrated functional need. Overall, our employee count is down. At its highest, we had 118 in FY2009 and at the end of FY2017, we had 93 employees. I do recall there being talk about the employee count exploding under Kazian Watch; I think you all can see that is not the case.

We've also heard things like Station 6 goes on less than 1 call a day – while that may be accurate in the calls that originate nearest Station 6 – what we call the still district – that only tells part of the story. Station 6, in fact, responded to over 700 calls throughout the District including the 225 calls nearest their station in 2016. Station 6 is a very valuable asset in our response capabilities. It has always been designed to operate as it is operating today. Some may recall that we originally had 3 bays slated for this station and I reduced it to 2 bays for cost saving purposes under Kazian Watch and we completed the project under budget. To clarify another statement I heard, at no time was it ever deemed to be an ambulance-only station. That was never a plan.

I want to be clear – I asked numerous times to try and explain things, answer questions, and try to build better communication with what appeared to be an engaged and concerned group of citizens. The only responses I got were to "please don't contact me" or an ultimatum to meet under terms and conditions that had potential to conflict with election laws and did not seem to have a motive for healthy discussion. I still do, and always will, hold the offer to meet with anyone who has a question or who would like to learn more about the Sedona Fire District.

So how will we move forward? Maybe a surprise to some... but the Bond election was truly not about what people thought we needed or did not need. It was how to fund those needs. The question really was about what would be the best fiscal funding option – a General Obligation Bond – to be used to fund these needs. In the end, none of the needs were erased with the outcome of last week's election. It has only shifted us to consider other funding options. Many seemed to think if the bond was approved, we would get a Brinks truck backed up to the station and I, as the chief, could spend the \$17.9M anyway I wanted! In fact, we would have simply had access to essentially a line of credit that would require Board approval to access any funds for capital projects over the next 10 years. We would not, in fact, have any obligation to spend it all and there were hopes we would be under budget on project estimates and not have had to utilize all the money.

We will need to work with staff and the Governing Board to best determine how we go forward. We must replace the current Station 5 and we have set a plan into motion with Arizona State Parks to build a station at Slide Rock. To further confirm, Arizona State Parks is excited for the project on their property. I have been told the NEPA environmental study has been, essentially, completed and the joint venture has a green light from state parks.

Station 4 still has significant issues – it still cannot fit a modern day fire engine even with renovation – it still has significant cracks in the apparatus floor, still has the bowing wall, still has parts of the building over our lot line, it still does not facilitate a quick and safe access to the apparatus bay for firefighters, etc. How long this is all acceptable is yet to be determined. An exciting thing with station 4 - through the help of Supervisor Matt Ryan, we recently cleared up a considerable hurdle with SFD transferring the Quit Claim Deed for the land under Station 4 that used to belong to Coconino County at no cost to the tax payers, making further projects a little easier.

Will we need to attempt another Bond? Will we need to raise the Mil Rate? What can we cut from the budget to free up funds? Those are all things we will look at going forward through the budget process. I have a \$5,000 spending limit. I can do only do so much without Board authority. So, my carefree spending and ability to fiscally “mismanage” stops at \$5,000. We will need to talk with the Board to get their thoughts as we look at the budget going forward. I suspect we will likely be before them to have these sorts of talks in January 2018 as we begin our budget process and capital improvement planning.

All of that withstanding, I have taken an oath to serve each and every one of you – even the ones who have threatened my job. I can tell you I could not be more proud of my service to this community. We have accomplished great things in the time I've been here and we have more great things on the horizon. I believe I may be one of the longest tenured Fire Chiefs in Sedona's 60 year history. I say that not as a brag, but as a sign that this community has lacked tenured leadership and stability for a long time. Continued turnover of leadership just because some folks are out there lobbing grenades is not a healthy solution. I will look to duck and cover, where needed, and lead through challenging times. I will be at the front line navigating the tough times and appreciating the smooth sailing times. That is what a leader does. I always have and always will have my door open. I love talking to the community and sharing what is happening at Sedona Fire. But what I will not do is allow people to sabotage the hard work of the last 60 years or perpetuate lies and mistruths about Sedona Fire District. I will be at any HOA, every small group that wants me to talk, every coffee clutch – wherever I am asked, I will attend and talk to people and share what we do so well.

Our records are open and we love to share with people who want to learn more. I have nearly 28 years of fire service experience coupled with an Assistant Chief who has 38+ years – I believe between the two of us...we know what we are doing. Those who have never worked in the fire service business cannot read “Fire Districts for Dummies” and then expect to be the Fire Chief overnight – it simply does not work that way.

I want to end with a few thoughts – I hope my conviction and passion are felt by all. I hope that while bullying seems to be in vogue for some folks in government, I will not back down. I can also assure you I will not run our local government via Facebook or Twitter. I cannot be responsible for spending my days and nights trolling social media for comments or looking for angry citizens voicing their thoughts on an unofficial method of communication. I will only be responding to concerns that are funneled through the proper channels – through District emails, face to face conversations, public record requests, or through public comments at Board Meetings. I cannot tell you the number of hours that have already have been wasted chasing down red herrings and straw man arguments on social media. I can assure you I will continue to serve all of you with a smile and with the same excitement that I had on my first day here in 2012. I am honored and humbled to work with such

great people in such an incredible community. We will always be here to serve when dispatched to a call and our mission will never stray – Safe, Friendly, and Dedicated service to each and every one of you each and every day.

Chief Kazian asked if Board Members had comments or questions about the election; they responded as follows:

Dave Soto – *First and foremost, thank the Citizens' Advisory Committee that was put together – people who live in our community, people like you and I and from our audience out there. It was a process that I was unaware of its complexity and enormous amount of work it takes to do until I got involved with it. Unlike our first speaker, as she suggested the Board needed to be more involved. I can say that this Board Member was – I had an opportunity to speak to what I consider the most affluent, social business group there is here in Sedona and met a lot of fine people on both sides of the cause. It was an opportunity that I was glad to be able to do. I also got a chance to sit in on some of the League of Women Voters forum that they had, and again, met a lot of people there both pro and con – both had their reasons for beliefs, and so, I could only respect that. The amount of the bond – without a doubt – was a lot of money. It was reduced down from what was documented if we were to do everything – \$26M, we reduced it down to \$17.9, still a lot of money. I'm not so sure what amount would have been the magic amount that everybody would have been happy with. Possibly, that never would have been because I don't think, based on what I saw, was ever the amount of money was the question. It got very quickly to the point of management styles and personalities, and somehow, somehow, numbers were twisted around and for every number that was twisted one way, it could have been twisted the other. It was an eye opener, to say the least. But what amazed me most was the fact that the voters of the community were able to speak up via the vote, and vote the way they felt and that's the way this system works. My hat's off to the victors – those against the bond. Although I wish it would have been the other way – but as the Chief related to... there's always Plan B and Plan C and we have to regroup and figure out how we are going to accomplish those things that need to be done. So, this Board member feels that kicking of the can down the road, as has been described to those before us, we gave it our best shot to stop that and the voters voiced their opinion otherwise. So, we will continue to work hard, as you said, Chief. I appreciate everything you did. The Board, I think, recognizes that. I don't speak on behalf of the entire Board. Maybe they will speak up. And I look forward to working with those that were against the bond. There is value to their point, there's always checks and balances, and I also look forward to work more with our written media we have here in Sedona. Some of their timely report writing, I had to take with a grain of salt. Let that be as it may. But I do look forward to moving on and working with you, Chief, through whatever process we come up with as a group. Thank you.*

Tim Ernster – *The voters have spoken and it was a strong message; it was not really a close election, based on my experience with local elections. And so, I think we have something to learn from the process. But I'm really disappointed that... especially at the front end of this process, that there was so misinformation and flat-out lies about the district and about personnel in the district. And I think it was very misleading. In fact, some of us did go out to talk to neighbors and try to answer their questions and even at the very end of this process, I had people questioning where the Chief lives or questioning, asking how come he made so much money? Why does he make more than the Phoenix Fire Chief – all false information, and with a little bit of research, and I'm sure you're capable of doing that because there's some talented people out there in the audience...you knew that, ok, so, they were just flat-out lies. And that's really unfortunate. You know, it's one thing to oppose the bond – I get that – to oppose it on the grounds of maybe we can't afford it or that maybe some of the projects aren't necessary. I totally get that. But to actually spread lies about staff, and not just the Fire Chief, but other people...another person sitting here at the table. So, I'm really disappointed in that. I would like to make a couple of comments about our Chief. First of all, Chief Kazian, I worked in local government for 39 years and during that period of time, I interacted with and supervised a number of Fire Chiefs both in local government and now, here, we work with you. Some of them were very outstanding Chiefs and some of them were not so good. But I do have to say that during that 39 years of local government and interacting with fire chiefs both in local governments and in districts – not only the Sedona Fire District – you are one of the finest Fire Chiefs that I've ever known during the entire 39 years. And I say that not just based on the fact that I'm on the Board here and we are more or less your supervisors. I say it because when I was City Manager, we had to work very closely on a number of issues such as the Slide Fire; we were out traveling around the district, up in Flagstaff at meetings, working together on that, trying to coordinate City, Fire District, and Forest Service resources. And whenever there was an opportunity to come up with a better way to provide a service by working with the City or the City working with the fire district,*

you were all for it. I think you're an outstanding Fire Chief, and I hope you stay here and have a long career in this district. The other thing I'd like to say is...through this process, I think I received a letter a couple of weeks ago claiming that the Citizen Bond Committee was involved in some sort of collusion, and there may have been some kind of illegal activities going on, what I would suggest to you, if you have any evidence of that, I'd suggest that you provide that information to the County Attorney's office or the State Attorney General, if you have proof that there was any sort of collusion with this district, I think we would all feel the same way. If the law has been broken, then you need to do something about it and just don't make these allegations unless you are going to follow through and provide some documentation that it's true. So, I would encourage you to do that. That's how the process works. Thank you for your service, Chief.

Corrie Cooperman – I am disappointed in the results of the bond because I did think it was the best financial mechanism to pay for some of the pressing needs – especially the structural pressing needs of our district. I wanted to clear up a misstatement that was made by people who were opponents of the bond. They frequently said that 2 people on the Board were against the bond, and I can only speak for myself, I did vote No for the bond, but I voted No because I thought that a smaller size bond would be more effective and meet most of the needs of the district and be more acceptable to the public. But, I was very much for the bond, and it was disappointing to see the opposition use that No vote to say that I was against it. I think in retrospect, it might have been good for the Board to first vote on how many of us wanted the bond to be the funding mechanism and then, secondly, to vote on the size and, perhaps, if we pursue a bond in the future that might be a way to go about it. Secondly, there's been quite a bit of publicity about how the proponents of the bond were funded and certainly our Red Rock News ran a very large front page article about their funding source. As you may know, the Board and staff can't be involved in any kind of political action committee, but there was a political action committee formed to support the bond. There was also quite a bit of money spent to oppose the bond with full-page ads in the paper and cards mailed out, and what concerns me, is that we don't know where that money came from; there was one citizen's name and then also, the organization called Arizona Liberty, but they did not form a PAC, so we don't know the source of that money and how much of it came outside of the district or perhaps, even outside of the state. And I'm concerned about, also, the one person...the one citizen whose name was on most of the advertising against the bond, I'm concerned when one person's wealth can be used to try and manipulate a whole citizenry of our district. And thirdly, I'd also like to echo Board Member Ernster's appreciation of our Fire Chief – I've had the pleasure of working on budgets as a nurse/manager earlier in various times of my career, I also worked for a small business running their entire financial operation, and so, I have some background working with budgets, and I can tell you that Chief Kazian's acumen with fiscal management is quite extraordinary. And I suspect that really is superior to many Fire Chiefs. You bring that ability to our Board and the reason the levy hasn't gone up more than... what was it...3-point-something percent over the last 10 years is because of the cost-cutting measures that Chief Kazian has instituted. With that, Chief, I want to thank you for the strong fiscal management of our district and for your dedication to keeping the budget as low as possible without cutting services, which we all know is so critical, that we continue to have high quality services and the well-trained firefighters that we do, and the excellent administrative support that backs everybody up.

Abe Koniarsky – I would like to echo everything that's been said before me. I agree with everything that has been said and I'd like to add something else – I've been in city government for over 30 years as a finance director, and I've dealt with a lot of fire chiefs, police chiefs, and I, as the newest member of this Board, have got to say that I enjoy working with this Chief because he's transparent, and he's the most fiscally conservative Chief that I've known for a long time. Everything is being done correctly, he makes sure his staff is conservative, and I find that is something this community needs. Way back many years ago, I helped Don Harr in his election, and we spoke about the fact that people need to be conservative; he is conservative; he is doing his job. And I must commend the members of the previous Board who hired him. He is excellent and we appreciate everything that he does and we appreciate you for picking him. I am disappointed the way the election went. I wish there had been less misinformation. It's something that should not have been used. We should have used real facts, but the deed is done. We have to work with the way things have gone. And people have spoken, and we will survive. And I need to commend the Chief for doing an excellent job.

Ty Montgomery – *Kris, you have the Board's full support on everything you've done, we appreciate everything you did during the bond process.*

2. **Review/Discussion/Possible Action on Canvassing of the Election Results of the General Obligation Bond Election held November 7, 2017, pursuant to A.R.S. §16-642.A.**
3. **Review/Discussion/Possible Action Certifying the Result of Special Election pursuant to A.R.S. §16-646.**

Chief Kazian said the Board packet will help the Board walk through the formalities of these 2 items. Mr. Montgomery read the following Canvass into the record: *Pursuant to ARS §16-646, the Governing Board of the Sedona Fire District canvasses the results of the District's election held on November 7, 2017, and will vote to approve the results of the election, which were verified as of November 9, 2017. Total votes cast from both Yavapai and Coconino counties for SFD election were 5,937; the number of registered voters in the district is 12,791. The number of rejected ballots from all precincts was 39. The number of votes for the bond was 2,593 and the number of votes against the bond was 3,337. Certification of Election Results was signed by the Yavapai County Recorder Leslie M. Hoffman and Elections Director Lynn A. Constabile on the 9th day of November, 2017.*

Mr. Montgomery then moved to approve the Canvass of Election and to certify the results pursuant to ARS §16-642 and 16-643, as presented; Board Clerk Corrie Cooperman seconded and upon a call for the vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

4. **Discussion/Possible Action: Purchase Order #11122 in the amount of \$31,877.50 to Yavapai County Elections for the November 7, 2017 Special Election (Bond).**

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve Purchase Order #11122 in the amount of \$31,877.50 to Yavapai County Elections for the November 7, 2017 Special Election; Mr. Ernster seconded and it was unanimously approved.

D. Staff Items:

1. Financial Report and Updates – Finance Director Gabe Buldra.

a. Discussion/Possible Action: Review & Approval of October 2017 Finance Report.

Finance Director Gabe Buldra referred to the October Financial report (available on line) and said the property tax revenue was \$5,145,000 ahead of where we were in tax collections from last year. Non-levy revenue was at \$324,332 and we were over budget by \$136,000 and the predominant factor for that being our ambulance transportation revenue which is over budget by \$138,000 for the month; much of that is being attributed to increased volume out of the Village of Oak Creek. On the Expense side, personnel expenses for the month were at \$924,000; budgeted was just over \$1M, so under budget by \$134,000. Under Vehicles and Equipment, we were \$47,000 and budgeted for the month was \$88,982; we are trending under budget in this category year-to-date as well and predominantly on fuel costs, as well as vehicle repair and maintenance expenses. Utilities and Communication were at \$35,062; Meetings and Training at \$7,500; Managerial costs for the month were at \$83,280 and, finally, Capital and Contingency Expenses were at \$28,644. Our total expenses for the month were \$1.1M – budgeted for the month was \$1.4M – so, we were under budget. Year-to-date revenues were at \$7,029,000 with property taxes being the “lion’s share”; the previous year’s comparison was more in line with budgeted and projected because our tax revenue is based on historical collection average. Total expenses year-to-date are at \$4,794,000 and budgeted at \$5,941,000. Personnel continues to trend under budget; vehicles and equipment is under budget, but it seems we will have upcoming costs to bring that more in line with budget. Utilities and Communication are under budget at \$52,452; Utilities and Communications were at \$52,452 and Managerial expenses were at \$393,000; Capital and Contingencies are at \$329,000; there is no expense out of contingency this year; we have lowered that threshold and thus far, have not needed it, but will continue to monitor through the fiscal year. Year-to-date expenses as a percentage were at 28% of total expenses to date. Personnel, being our predominate expense, was at 80%; Operations and Managerial were at 6% and Capital Expenses are at 7%. Chief Kazian asked Mr. Buldra to address the 80% for personnel expenses; Mr. Buldra said, typically, around the state and the nation, fire agencies’ largest expenses are always for personnel. Mrs. Cooperman asked about the Capital and Contingencies at 7%; it could be helpful to point out SFD is building its capital funds, as that is one of the district goals; Mr. Buldra confirmed same and said SFD ended the month of October with \$7,395,000 in total cash in all funds; compared to last year, there was only \$5,086,000; the PSPRS

refund payout was mandatory and we have used most of that credit, so this is a true year-over-year cash balance and a nice increase for capital funding.

The Board will see that other assets at the end of the month were \$13,238,000 compared to \$12,715,000 last year. There were some purchasing of apparatus and equipment last year, and another unfortunate thing is our receivable balances have risen both on ambulance and wildland; because of the amount of wildland deployments across the nation, the State of Arizona is out of money to pay for wildland and now must wait for reimbursement by the Federal government to pay on invoices. Mr. Buldra added we anticipate having Jay Park with Walker Armstrong next month to present the audit report. *Mr. Ernster then moved to approve the October 2017 Finance Report; Mr. Soto seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.*

2. October 2017 Monthly Fire Chief Report – Chief Kris Kazian.

a. Incident Counts by Station.

b. Call Summary and Response Times Year to Date.

c. Rescue Incidents.

d. Community Risk Management Update.

e. SFD Training Report.

f. Donations to SFD.

g. Update of Grant Activity:

i. Pulse Point Grant–Verde Valley-wide Notification for Activation of CPR/AED.

ii. Scholarship from Yavapai County Board of Supervisors for SFD to attend Arizona Wildfire Academy in 2018.

h. Update of Recent/Upcoming SFD Activities, Incidents, and Events.

i. Over the Edge Special Olympics Fundraiser – December 9, 2017.

ii. Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center.

iii. Correspondence/Thank You Letters to SFD.

Chief Kazian reported, overall, SFD is very busy and up about 25 calls over last year at the same time; average response time was 6 minutes 15 seconds and for the month of October, response time was 5 minutes; however, that includes multiple arson fires set at the same time in the same area to which the crews responded, skewering the response time down. October was the third month this year with more than 400 calls. Under backcountry rescue, it is interesting to note year-to-date we are at 96 compared to total backcountry responses last year of 67. Mrs. Cooperman noted the kind of training SFD provides crews allows them to perform well in those backcountry rescues. Assistant Chief Piechura said according to the Forest Service, Sedona has about a 30 to 40% increase in hikers and in many of those cases, hikers are ill prepared, and we see a lot of dehydration incidents. He pointed out we do have residents that call SFD for backcountry rescues – not all tourists. Mrs. Cooperman said there has been an uptick in the number of bicycles on trails, and asked if SFD is seeing more bicycle accidents associated with the need to call 9-1-1; Chief Piechura said there were 4 bicycle incidents in the last month. Chief Kazian said he would not expect to see decreases in backcountry rescues and believes it will be a continuing trend.

Under Grants, SFD received \$1,400 for training at the wildland fire academy with no match associated. We applied for a grant with Pulse Point Foundation for \$20,000 including for Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), such as are available in public places in Sedona; this would be for a mapping app to notify via cell phone CPR-trained individuals near a patient to request they go to the scene to help, while at the same time requesting response from SFD crews. This program began in California, and is spreading internationally; it is attributed with over 1,000 saves, so we would not be the first community to do it. This is a regional grant for Verde Valley agencies using the same dispatch center; SFD Firefighter Josh Wells wrote the grant.

This month, we have added new reports showing incidents in stations' still districts (area nearest the fire station), as well as total responses, which are typically more. He explained the blue bars on the chart indicate the number of still district calls and the actual calls to which the crews responded is in tan. Mrs. Cooperman noted this information will be very helpful to have and hopes we continue to use it to track statistics. The other new report shows number of incidents by time of day – including many night time calls.

Under Community Risk Management, Firefighter Eric Walter transferred to CRM as a Fire Inspector/Community Paramedic for the Community Integrated Paramedicine (CIP) program; he is starting to help more with fire inspections. A chart shows we are steadily increasing in compliant fire protection systems – fire alarms and fire sprinklers. Also, CRM started a dialogue with the City regarding landscaping codes to adopt fire safe-friendly codes, rather than having dense planting of brush and trees around houses. Chief Kazian said CRM has ramped up inspections and is leveraging technology; Administrative Assistant Carla Dufort is using her skills in CRM, which directly correlates to the division’s success. Fire Inspector Walter is sharing time between CRM and also the CIP program. Fire Marshal Jon Davis said there are over 2,300 commercial occupancies in the fire district; last month, we performed 212 inspections, although they were not all unique occupancies, as that included follow-ups.

Under Training, SFD hosted an event, “Stop the Bleed”, similar to CPR programs, to train individuals how to stop bleeding; in AED boxes around town, there will be compartments with tools and equipment to help stop bleeding, such as compression supplies and tourniquets. Two personnel, Captain Ralph Kurtz and Firefighter Millan Zorita, completed their Task Books, which is a requirement to promote to the next level and qualifies them to act in that role; it is very rigid and structured training. SFD received \$183 in donations last month. He reminded all the December Board meeting would be held on the second Wednesday, December 13th, to honor Christmas week.

Under Communications, Assistant Chief Piechura said FireStats is now on-line. The national standard for call processing using Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols allows a response mode – “Code 3” with lights and sirens for critical patient or non-emergency, “Code 1”, which reduces risk to everyone on the streets. The national standard for Code 3 is 2 minute call processing; Cottonwood Communications Center was 90% at 2 minutes and 15 seconds. And in the prior month, they were 2 minutes 22 seconds and year-to-date, the Center is 1 minute 58 seconds. The Center is constantly trying to improve and enhance. Mrs. Cooperman said it is great to hear because call processing adds to the overall time it takes for SFD to get to the person in need; she thanked Chief Piechura and commented she is glad the Board approved the FireStats purchase. Chief Kazian said SFD will participate in the fundraiser for Special Olympics called “Over the Edge” on December 9th to rappel off a building in Phoenix; Sedona’s Police Chief and Commander will also participate. Included with the “Thank You” letters this month is a letter from the State regarding the large number of wildland fires this year – exceptionally more than average, which has tied up funding to wait for Federal reimbursement; Mrs. Cooperman asked if there is any concern about the Feds not refunding money. Chief Kazian answered, no, but there will be a wait; a couple of years ago, a “prompt pay” bill passed to help mitigate agencies having cashflow problems waiting on reimbursement.

3. Discussion/Possible Action: Approval of 2018 SFD Fire Board Calendar.

Mr. Montgomery asked about any concerns with the proposed 2018 Fire Board calendar. As there were none, *he moved to adopt the 2018 Fire Board calendar, Mrs. Cooperman seconded, which unanimously passed.*

IV. FIRE MARSHAL’S SAFETY MESSAGE

Last month, Fire Marshal Jon Davis talked about heating systems and having working carbon monoxide detectors. This month, he is reminding all that heating fires are the second leading cause of home fires. Fixed and portable space heaters including wood stoves are involved in 74% of fire fatalities. Nearly half of all American homes use alternative heating and half of home heating equipment fires occur in December, January, and February. Combustibles should never be placed within 3 feet of space heaters or wood stoves and they should never be unattended. When purchasing, look for models that shut off automatically when tipped over. Remember that having a working smoke detector cuts your chance of dying in a home heating fire by 50%.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Corrie Cooperman, Clerk of the Board

:tg