



Note: These Minutes were approved by the Board on 10/19/17.

Sedona Fire District

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
Telephone (928) 282-6800 FAX (928) 282-6857

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

**Station #1 – 2860 Southwest Drive – Sedona – Multipurpose Room
Wednesday, September 21, 2016 / 4:30 PM**

~ MINUTES ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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; Battalion Chief Buzz Lechowski; Fire Marshal Gary Johnson; Finance Director Gabe Buldra of the James Vincent Group; Human Resources Manager Betty Johnson; Tricia Greer, Recorder to the Board; Billing Specialist Kris Ahern and Clerk Amy Hedman; Attorney Bill Whittington; Families and SFD crews of new Firefighters, Engineer, and Captain; other community members

Board Chairman Ty Montgomery called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

II. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

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.

Mr. Montgomery led the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence.

B. Badge-pinning Ceremony of new SFD Firefighters, newly-promoted Engineers and Captains.

Chief Kazian said it is a special occasion to promote personnel and to bring in 3 new Firefighters; he introduced each one and administered the ceremonial Oath of Office:

Captain Rodrigo Sanchez – Joined SFD in 2002, received paramedic certification in 2005, was the 2006 Firefighter of the Year, promoted to Engineer in 2008 and awarded a Unit Citation for heroic actions at the Bear Mountain rescue operation for DPS Medic Bruce Harrell who died in the line of duty; Captain Sanchez attended Yavapai College for an Associates degree in Fire Science, served on the Technical Rescue Team, SFD Safety Committee, a SWAT Medic, participates in Public Education programs in elementary schools, and co-instructs vehicle extrication classes. Captain Sanchez has five children. He was pinned by his wife, Tanya.

Engineer Andrew Johnson – Was hired at SFD as a Firefighter/EMT in 2008 and in 2011, Andrew completed paramedic certification, earned an Associates in Fire Science in 2007, and is working towards a Bachelors at Northern Arizona University; Engineer Johnson served on TRT, on EMS and Personal Protection Committees, and as a member of the Honor Guard. Andrew was pinned by his wife, Nicole; they have two daughters.

Firefighter Justin Purcell – He and his wife, Amber, live in Surprise with their two children; Justin served in the Navy from 2004-2006 and was an EMT/Wildland Firefighter with the Forest Service; he earned a Bachelors degree from Arizona State University and enjoys a variety of outdoor activities. Firefighter Purcell was pinned by his mother.

Firefighter Nathan Strouse – A native Arizonan who enjoys fishing, hiking, and travel, Nathan was a Firefighter with Bullhead City Fire and a medic at Abrazo Scottsdale Hospital; he has an Associates in Fire Science and is finishing a paramedic program. He was pinned by his wife, Jillian; they are expecting their first child.

Firefighter Adam Derringer – A Sedona native, he graduated from Sedona Red Rock High School; Adam received his firefighter/EMT certifications as well as HazMat; in 2015, he was a Reserve Firefighter with Camp Verde and Rimrock, completed an Associates with Honors in May of 2016, and lives in the Village of Oak Creek; he is an avid mountain biker and outdoorsman, and is engaged to his fiancé, Connie. Adam’s grandfather, Bill Blanchard, a charter member of Sedona-Oak Creek Fire District from 1957 and who was also Fire Chief of Red Rock Fire District from 1972 to 1978, pinned his badge.

Division Chief Jeff Piechura distributed the probationary helmet shields to the new Firefighters.

C. Discussion/Possible Action: Proclamation for National Fire Prevention Week – October 9th through 15th, 2016.

Fire Marshal Gary Johnson said National Fire Prevention Week always includes October 9th and commemorates the great Chicago fire. Board Member Dave Soto read aloud the Proclamation. *Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the Proclamation, Mr. Ernster seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.*

D. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Action:

- 1. August 17, 2016 Regular Board Meeting Minutes.**
- 2. August 17, 2016 Executive Session Minutes.**

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as submitted, with a second by Board Member Tim Ernster; the motion was unanimously passed.

E. Public Forum:

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

There were no requests to speak.

F. Business:

- 1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of:**
 - a. August 2016 Financial Report.**

Finance Director Gabe Buldra presented the August financial report (available on www.sedonafire.org). Mr. Buldra is learning more about SFD and working with staff for the last month. Property tax revenue for August was \$21,610; non-tax revenue was \$235,083 and the rest of the budget was based on taking the total amount divided over a 12-month period; he said as we go into budget development next year, we will work on matching the expenses to the period in which they occur to reduce budget variances for month over month. Our total expenses for the month were \$945,676 which was under budget by \$375,026. Year-to-date, total revenue is ahead of budget at \$570,652, which is \$117,000 over and the property tax component of that, which is very low at this point, will increase in the September/October time period. The overall variance of \$117,000 on revenue is due to wildland and actual timing on ambulance billing being ahead of the 12 month projection. Mr. Buldra commended the Operations and Administrative/Billing staff for working hard to improve ambulance billing systems.

Chief Kazian congratulated Billing staff members, Kris Ahern and Amy Hedman, for more efficiently billing. Mr. Buldra said total expenses year-to-date are right around \$2.4 Million, which is \$163,000 under budget; we are at 15.6% of budget and should be at 16.67%. As most fire agencies around the country, the majority of expenses are in personnel at 81%. We ended the month with \$2.5 Million in all funds compared to \$2.23 Million in the prior year. He informed the Board SFD would be undergoing its annual audit beginning October 31st; Finance Specialist Pam Wester has been working hard to get the files ready and books closed for the auditors. Chief Kazian said a Board Member would be interviewed by the auditor. *Mr. Montgomery then moved to approve the August 2016 Financial Report, Mrs. Cooperman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.*

- 2. Monthly Staff Report – Fire 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.**
- h. **Update of Recent/Upcoming SFD Activities, Incidents, and Events.**
 - i. **Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center.**
 - ii. **Wildland Fire Activity.**
 - iii. **Recognition Award to SFD from the Wellness Council of Arizona on 9/22/16.**
 - iv. **Smoke Alarm Installation at Sunset Village on 10/15/16 in conjunction with Local 3690 and the American Red Cross.**
- i. **Correspondence/Thank You Letters to SFD.**

Chief Kazian reported the following:

- SFD continues to track call numbers which are trending about the same as last year.
- Response time average was 5 minutes, 58 seconds.
- There were 7 backcountry rescues.
- Significant incidents included a lightning strike on Northview Drive, which traveled through a house in cabling and blew out part of a wall. Also, there was a large fire on August 28th in a villa at Seven Canyons, which is estimated to be between \$1 Million to \$2 Million in damage; the fire was very advanced by the time of arrival of the B Shift crew at 4:00 AM. Although Seven Canyons provided upgrades to its water system, this was a defensive fire and crews were unable to enter the building due to ratio of fire to water supply; at least 50,000 gallons of water were pumped; cause of the fire is tentatively listed as accidental. Chief Kazian stated our ladder truck was used and helped keep fire from spreading to neighboring villas and was definitely a useful resource.
- Unfortunately, we have been denied many of the grants for which we applied this year, but staff continues to search for and apply for funds. Staff is re-tooling the \$500,000 regional grant for radio/communications.
- We have received about \$1,400 in donations for the 9/11 Memorial since the Dedication Ceremony.
- Under CRM, the new Marriott Resort is getting ready to open, and the CVS store is also near completion.
- He asked all to review the Training report to see the large amount of training our members undergo.
- Chiefs Kazian and Piechura reported on the recent in-house leadership conference for Captains and Battalion Chiefs, where expectations were discussed and how we, as a team, can move forward; the Chiefs stressed the importance of service to our community and dealing with challenges and solutions. Chief Piechura talked to the officers about policies, vision, direction, and delivery of service; it was a very positive interaction.
- The 9/11 Dedication ceremony was a great event with more than 500 people in attendance. Over \$90,000 was raised and the entire Memorial plus the ceremony were completely funded from donations with no tax dollars spent. The Board congratulated staff and the 9/11 Committee on a job well done. Chief Kazian thanked Mr. Soto for his hard work and for the beautiful podium and bell stand he created; he said the Memorial is a great addition to our community and a testament of support of SFD by the community and for the first responders.
- Some of our Honor Guard members attended the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Colorado Springs. Division Chief Ed Mezulis pointed out there was no cost to the district for this and the members paid for expenses through hard work and fundraising.
- All our Firefighters have returned as of today from wildland fires. SFD has generated about \$75,000 in revenue during this wildland fire season with \$55,000 budgeted and more coming.
- Human Resource Manager Betty Johnson told the Board SFD would be receiving recognition from the Wellness Council of Arizona, which honors healthcare providers and businesses who improve the health of employees and families. Chief Kazian and HR Specialist Keona Freeman will attend the ceremony. SFD is receiving this award due to our Trend Neutralizer healthcare program (which will soon receive a new name through an employee contest) saving the district and employees close to 10% on premiums.
- CRM in conjunction with the Red Cross, Local 3690, and Sedona Verde Valley Firefighter Charities will visit homes in Sunset Village Mobile Home Park to check smoke detectors and replace batteries and/or the alarms.
- Chief Kazian noted the Board would be asked to sign Certificates of Appreciation for our SFD crews to thank them on First Responder Day this month.

G. Items from Staff:

1. Discussion/Possible Action: Confirmation from Yavapai and Coconino Counties regarding Cancellation of SFD Fire Board November 2016 Election and Appointment of Candidates by Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Montgomery announced SFD received notice of the Fire Board election cancellation for November, as there were two vacancies and only two candidates. There will be no charge from Yavapai, but Coconino County has billed SFD for a \$50 cancellation fee. Dave Soto and Tim Ernster were appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Discussion/Possible Action: P. O. #01319 to FireStats LLC for Consulting Services in the amount of \$9,500 for start-up and \$900 monthly with a full Fiscal Year 2017 impact of \$17,600.

Chief Kazian stated “data is King” and having the information helps us make good decisions, which is critical for emergency services. Chief Piechura said as part of his environmental assessment of SFD, he asked questions about what we do and how well we do it, and discovered there was a void in reporting; he said under the current reporting system, response times are averaged which makes it hard to assess the performance of the response system. He said Chief Kazian is a proponent of accreditation, which is a system that defines how organizations continuously improve, and to review how we do our business and how processes perform; SFD needs tools of measurement to define what we are doing and how well we are doing it; in our search for a system to replace the system we formerly used called Vinelight, which went out of business about 2 years ago. Our data reporting system, FireHouse, is where we store raw information of calls on a daily basis, but which only provides averages and creating reports is cumbersome and inefficient. Staff heard about a “canned” package called FireStats, an analysis tool to dive into our data and report how well SFD responds. Although this need has been discussed on a regular basis, no funds were budgeted this year, and staff is seeking Board approval to fund FireStats through Board contingency. Mrs. Cooperman said because of her lack of understanding of the need and system, she asked for more information and the Chiefs shared the FireStats video demo with her; she was impressed with the system as a great tool. Mr. Soto asked if there would be a cost savings in the difference between FireHouse and FireStats; Chief Piechura responded SFD has to keep FireHouse as that is the repository of our data, which would be pulled out and sent to FireStats to organize into a report format, as it is web-based; so, this would be an added cost.

Mr. Soto asked if it coordinates with dispatch or is totally separate; Chief Piechura responded it is totally separate, and is an analytic tool. Mr. Montgomery stated his concern with information is “garbage in/garbage out”, and if we do not know our times are correct from the Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center, how would we know this analysis gives accurate times. Chief Piechura said the data sets from Cottonwood are automatically downloaded into FireHouse and whatever the CAD is registering, we receive; processing time – the amount of time from when dispatch picks up the phone to the time the call goes out – has a measurable time stamp which we can use to get an evaluation of how long it takes and using standard deviation of all other data compilation to figure out the dispatch performance piece; he said we must manage the inconsistency of how crews respond “en route” from station to station, to get better automation in play. Chief Kazian said this system allows us to see why it took 7 minutes on a call by drilling down into the system to see what was going on in that area in the same time frame, explaining response times are longer to calls in remote areas; this is our ability to create a report and accountability for our officers on crews’ responses. The current system is extremely cumbersome and requires manual compilation of data; FireStats allows users to easily access information – the cost savings in time will be beneficial.

Mrs. Cooperman added the mapping component of the system was impressive; it breaks down how fast our crews are getting to each area. Mr. Ernster asked why this system was not included in the recommended budget; Chief Kazian said staff knew a data analytics tool was needed, but FireStats was not on our “radar”; we discovered it through happenstance in discussion with another Fire Chief; SFD then got the demo; he said Vinelight had a fairly decent dashboard, but they ran out of investor funding and folded; SFD was left with no data analytic opportunities; his budgeting philosophy is to use the contingency, as needed, for items that make us operationally better. Mr. Montgomery asked how many departments use FireStats; Chief Piechura said we would be the 11th organization, and they will max out at 20 because this is a “concierge” data management system and the owner wants to keep the service quality high and have good working relationships with customers.

Mr. Montgomery said the agreement provides no “out” during the first year; Attorney Bill Whittington responded, “except for breach”.

Chief Piechura was at the National Fire Chiefs Association conference in San Antonio and talked to nine of the customers utilizing FireStats; they all had extremely positive comments about the system. This is the “Charlie” version after having Alpha and Beta tests. Mrs. Cooperman said we would be able to break down data to specific apparatus and areas where response times need help; she believes it would contribute to response time improvement and help with accreditation. Chief Piechura said FireStats’ owner has been in fire department statistics for 15 years, and this system has been developing over the last 5 years.

Battalion Chief Buzz Lechowski said this would replace the now-defunct Vinelight program, which required a large amount of manual manipulation for users to mine information; this system efficiently provides information and also, helps with mapping, which is now done manually by our GIS Specialist. He said the other piece is with the dispatch center to know incorrect data points and isolate those to see the overarching response time.

Mr. Ernster moved to approve Purchase Order #01309 for the consulting services agreement with FireStats, LLC of Nevada City, California for a startup cost of \$9,500 and \$900 monthly with a full FY 2017 impact of \$17,600 to be funded from Fire Board Contingency Account for the remainder of this fiscal year and then funded by program funds at a base cost of \$10,800 in subsequent fiscal years; Mr. Soto seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Update: Arbinger Group Organizational Assessment in Leadership Training – Parts 1 and 2 on October 24th and 25th.

Chief Piechura updated the Board regarding the organizational assessment/training by Arbinger; the Board’s portion is October 24th and 25th from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Station 1. He sent out a survey yesterday to employees and will email the Board’s survey tomorrow. Mrs. Cooperman commented we have been planning this for a very long time, and it is good to finally have it on the calendar.

4. Discussion/Possible Action: Department of Health Services General Rate Increase Application.

Mr. Buldra said in reviewing Board Minutes, he saw there was a requested rate increase of a set dollar amount and wanted to seek approval to apply for a general rate increase. Agencies do not set their own rates for ambulance operations; the Department of Health Services (DHS) sets our rate based on what we want to recover from a cost perspective. Last year, SFD had about \$2 million in collectible ambulance revenue, and of that, about \$3.6 million in expenses was reported, which means a net loss on ambulance operations; but with that net loss, there are a lot of current expenses the district would carry regardless of ambulance operations; for example, Sedona Fire District has chosen not to bill our residents for services (however, we do bill Medicare and private insurance companies). He plans to show that those expenses borne by the district are not for things SFD seeks from reimbursement from ambulance charges, but for additional service above and beyond normal district operations. He said DHS looks at many factors in determining a fair and appropriate rate and only allows an organization to receive a 7% rate of return.

Mr. Buldra stated many fire districts within our region are too small to compare from an ambulance standpoint. He provided comparable rates of other agencies. On behalf of SFD, he will submit the application to DHS for review; after review, they will let us know if it is either administratively complete or they have more questions; once we respond, DHS will look at the substance for their analysis phase. There will also be a public comment period. He said the entire process takes about 6 months and we would expect about \$90,000 in increased revenue; it has been four years since SFD received any rate increase. There is also an annual inflation rate increase which SFD is not currently taking advantage. Mr. Buldra recommended the Board authorize this application without a set amount for general rate increase.

Mr. Montgomery asked about the previously made motion in January 2016; Chief Kazian stated the Board made a motion that Mr. Buldra believes was not adequate based on the analysis he provided in the Board’s packets. Also, because of previous staff time constraints, this application was not made. Mrs. Cooperman asked why Mr. Buldra was requesting a lower rate than 3 out of the 4 comparables; Mr. Buldra replied he got the data from the last 3

years and came up with this amount, although it might not be the final number; additionally, Verde Valley Ambulance Company is nearby and charges a much lower rate than other agencies. **Mr. Montgomery moved to authorize staff to file a general rate increase application with Department of Health Services; Mrs. Cooperman seconded and the motion unanimously passed.**

H. Items from Board Members:

1. Monthly Update: Fees for legal services provided to SFD – Ty Montgomery.

Legal fees for August were \$4,300 and we are on track for the budget year-to-date.

2. Update: Shared Services Committee – Dave Soto.

Mr. Soto said the last Shared Services Committee meeting was “spirited” with many issues. The Committee explores shared options for the good of all Verde Valley agencies. He noted Chief Mezulis made a good, well-received (with a few exceptions) presentation regarding community paramedicine. Another key item was a shared Fire Marshal position, which would reduce our cost; the fire code we use is the same as most districts in the area. There was a little concern expressed regarding where the Fire Marshal would be “housed”, but the Committee discussed having the Fire Marshal spend a few days in each agency weekly. Chief Kazian said the discussion was to see how this might work fiscally and operationally; currently, SFD has a fire marshal and fire inspector, and as hard as they work, they struggle to keep up with the amount of inspections needed. A new Deputy Fire Marshal is coming onboard on November 1st to replace Gary Johnson when he retires in January. The Fire Marshal would possibly be shared with Copper Canyon Fire (formerly Camp Verde). Discussion is currently taking the “temperature of the water”, and is worthwhile to continue to explore the interest level and work out details; this will fall on both Fire Chiefs and an IGA as the governance piece. There is also a fleet services proposal for shared resources. Mr. Montgomery encouraged the Chief and Committee to continue looking at options.

3. Direction to Staff: One Year Progress Report on the Cottonwood Public Safety Communications’ quality of service provided to Sedona Fire District – Corrie Cooperman.

Mrs. Cooperman asked for this item to be included on the Agenda as SFD is approaching the one year anniversary of decommissioning our dispatch center and joining the Cottonwood Communication Center; she felt it was a good opportunity for the Board to hear how that transition is going, especially as 3 of the Board Members were not on the Board at that time. She said it was financially imperative to make the change to Cottonwood and our previous subscribers were leaving our center. If SFD had not moved, it would have faced a large amount of money for the upgrade of our outdated dispatch consoles, and Cottonwood’s facility was built as very state of the art with modern equipment and appropriate staffing, which all led to the move. Chief Kazian wanted to put Mrs. Cooperman’s request on the Agenda so other Board Members could weigh in before staff researches the report.

Mr. Ernster asked when staff anticipates having a report ready; Chief Kazian said this project has been delegated to Assistant Chief Piechura who hopes to have information ready for the November Board meeting. The one year anniversary is this week, which will give us a good benchmark. Chief Piechura asked Cottonwood for their numbers to look at in Firehouse and get a sense of what was happening before the switchover and in the following year, as well as what the standard provides relative to guidance. Mr. Ernster said he was not only interested in the quantitative study, but also in the quality of service and how the two agencies are working together beyond quantitative. Chief Kazian said one of the concerns was shifting from our primary PSAP dispatch center to a secondary system with potential dispatch delays; he said the report will try to see and compare that piece.

Mrs. Cooperman said she is interested when Mobile Data will be on line, and pointed out the district spent a lot of money on the MDTs and is concerned they are not yet operational. Chief Kazian assured her he is also concerned and it is a high priority. Mr. Montgomery said he would be interested to know what specifically is working and how to fix what is not. He understands there was a steep learning curve for the new center and it was a painful process. Chief Piechura said since he began at SFD he has worked with Battalion Chief Lechowski and the Cottonwood Public Safety Comm Center Manager, Marie Carpenter, and issues and relationships have improved; this is being accomplished through more communication and having dispatcher ridealongs with Battalion Chiefs in our district to understand our geographical challenges. He said Ms. Carpenter wants to do a good job, as do all her dispatchers. Chief Lechowski is the main SFD contact with the dispatch center and he said a large majority of

our responses are handled very well by the Center. He said Ms. Carpenter is aggressively handling PSAP transitional issues and will go to her partner agencies if calls are transferred inappropriately. Chief Kazian added staff would be remiss if we said as a PSAP that SFD never mishandled a transfer, even though we had an amazing dispatch center; it is the nature of the business. He believes having the report ready in November is “doable” with a 30 day window to get FireStats up and running.

III. FIRE MARSHAL’S SAFETY MESSAGE

Fire Marshal Johnson said it is actually Fire Prevention month – not week – as we make the rounds of the schools promoting the message – which for the third year in a row is smoke detector awareness. He pointed out this is not the only time of year we promote this message; Firefighters and CRM staff regularly talk about fire safety at schools and community events. He pointed out although Fire Prevention Week commemorates the Great Chicago Fire, many do not know at the same time, there was a much bigger fire in Wisconsin, which took up to 2,400 lives compared to a few in Chicago, and a contributing factor was drought; the Wisconsin fire continued to burn until it got to Green Bay and rains came. He wants our community to think of ways to be proactive against challenges from the outside that could impact us – for example, we live in an urban interface. He said one community at a time can make a difference, and pointed out the smoke detector program supported by the Red Cross and local Firefighter Charities and Union.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Original signed by Corrie Cooperman

Corrie Cooperman, Clerk of the Board

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