



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 – West Sedona – Multipurpose Room

Wednesday, September 24, 2014 / 3:30 PM – Executive Session with Business Meeting to Follow

~ MINUTES ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Board Present: Ty Montgomery – Chairman; Corrie Cooperman – Clerk;
Scott Jablow, Nazih Hazime, Diane Schoen – Members

Staff Present: Kris Kazian – Fire Chief; Scott Schwisow – Division Chief; Buzz Lechowski – Division Chief;
Gary Johnson – Fire Marshal; Ed Mezulis – Battalion Chief; Sandi Schmidt – Finance
Manager; Kevin Sullivan – Fire Inspector; Brent Johnson – Firefighter; David Rodriguez –
Captain; Mark Rippy – Captain; Tricia Greer – Executive Assistant/Recorder

Others Present: William R. Whittington – Attorney; 4 Citizens

Board Chairman Ty Montgomery opened the meeting at 3:30 PM.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Vote to go into Executive Session:

1. Pursuant to ARS 38-431.03(A)(1) Personnel – Re: Possible Requirements of Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) for Fire Chief; Possible Effects on Chief's Contract; Possible Modifications and/or Negotiations to Chief's Contract regarding same.
2. Pursuant to ARS 38-431.03(A)(3) Legal Advice; and ARS 38-431.03(A)(4) Instruction to Attorney – Review recommendations from attorney regarding Possible Requirement for Fire Chief – Re: PSPRS including Financial Considerations and Alternative Options for Entering PSPRS; Possible Effects of Chief's Contract; Possible Modifications to Chief's Contract regarding same.

Mr. Montgomery moved to go into Executive Session pursuant to ARS 38-431.03(A)(1) Personnel regarding possible requirements of Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) for Fire Chief; possible effects on Chief's contract; possible modifications and/or negotiations to Chief's contract regarding same; and pursuant to ARS 38-431.03(A)(3) Legal Advice; and ARS 38-431.03(A)(4) Instruction to Attorney to review recommendations from attorney of possible requirement for Fire Chief in PSPRS including financial considerations and alternative options; possible effects of Chief's Contract; possible modifications to Chief's contract, and to add Executive Sessions pursuant to ARS 38-431.03(A)(3) and 38-431.03(A)(4) for Agenda Items III.G.4 and III.G.5; Board Clerk Corrie Cooperman seconded and the motion unanimously passed.

III. 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 reconvened the Public Session at 5:15 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Division Chief Buzz Lechowski asked all to honor the 5 Firefighters and 10 Police Officers from around the nation who lost their lives in the line of duty last month.

B. Discussion/Possible Action: Follow-Up for Executive Session Item –Fire Chief – Re: Public Safety Personnel Retirement System; Fire Chief Contract.

There was no discussion from the Executive Session.

Fire Chief Kris Kazian then requested Item #III.G.3 be moved up in the meeting, as follows:

3. Presentation/Discussion of Fire Station No. 6 Awards:

- a. **23rd Annual Excellence in Masonry Architectural Award for Fire Station No. 6 received on September 19, 2014.**
- b. **Governor's Award for Energy & Technology Innovation of Arizona Forward's 34th Annual Environmental Excellence Award received on September 20, 2014.**

Chief Kazian said SFD Fire Station No. 6 in the Chapel area received two awards this weekend. Board Member Diane Schoen represented SFD at the Masonry Architectural Awards on Friday. Mrs. Schoen commented she, along with the architects, masonry company, and contractors of Station 6, and about 250 people attended the Award presentation; she said during the ceremony, she thought of Karen Schmitt – a longtime SFD supporter who died earlier this year – and how proud she would have been for SFD to receive awards for Station 6.

Chief Kazian attended the Arizona Forward Award presentation with about 500 people on Saturday; Station 6 was recognized for its sustainability and technology innovation with the Crescordia Award; Chief Kazian said he also thought of Karen Schmitt when accepting the award. Both awards will be placed in the Station 6 lobby, but will be on display next month at the Board meeting at Station 3 in the Village of Oak Creek. SFD has also been nominated for the Coconino County Sustainability Award for Station 6 to be presented on November 1st.

Mrs. Schoen had to leave the meeting early at 5:00 PM, but noted Station 6 is near her home and she feels it has improved the lives of the citizens in her area.

C. Discussion/Possible Action: Proclamation – National Fire Prevention Week, 10/5 – 10/11/14.

Chief Kazian stated this honors National Fire Prevention Week; Mr. Montgomery read the Proclamation aloud. Chief Kazian said many activities are planned for that week in schools and other types of public safety messages.

D. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Action.

1. **August 27, 2014 Regular Business Meeting Minutes.**
2. **August 27, 2014 Executive Session Minutes.**

Mrs. Cooperman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented, Board Member Scott Jablow seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

E. Public Forum

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

Dick Fishel, West Sedona: Good evening. It's good to see you all. It's been awhile since I've been here. I'm Dick Fishel and I live in West Sedona. First of all, thank you all for your continued dedicated service to our community. I have been following by way of the minutes of the monthly meetings, and I congratulate you all for the fine work you do. As most all of you know, I have always been a strong supporter of the Fire District. And we continue to be blessed with best emergency medical and fire services in the State, if not within the entire Southwest. That being said, I do have a serious concern to bring to your attention. I have provided to each of you a copy of my personal property valuations and taxes from 2011 to 2014. I'm not a mathematical wizard, so, if I made major mistakes, let me know. I had no problem with the tax increase in 2012, in my case a 10% increase, even though my property valuation went down 5% because SFD needed to correct the irresponsible tax cuts incurred by the previous Governing Board. I even swallowed hard and bit the bullet when my SFD taxes went up 38.8% in 2013, even though my property valuation only went up 13%, because I knew it took time for some budgeting cycles to rectify past irresponsible tax cuts. But just last week, I received our 2014 tax bill and I was shocked to see that my SFD taxes were up yet another 18.5% while my property valuation went up only 12.5%. And as I looked at the last 3 years, and I think this number is right – it sounds unbelievable, but I think I checked it several times – as I looked at the last 3 years, my property valuations went up 21%, my education taxes went up 43%, but more shocking to me was that my Sedona Fire District taxes... I was shocked to see my SFD taxes... went up an astounding – and I still don't believe this – 81% in just 3 years. Now I know that tax bills do vary between property owners, so I know that we're not all the same in what we see on our statements, but I do believe that most all other SFD property owners are probably experiencing substantial tax increases as well. Now I don't resent paying taxes for the best emergency medical and fire services in the state, and after all, SFD is our only emergency medical help. But I don't want to see

us going back to the point in time when SFD was considered a cash cow and everyone agreed that the cash reserves being accumulated at that time were truly overly excessive. In the past meeting minutes of the Governing Board and Budget meetings, which I have read, I didn't see a strategy discussed about how to react quickly to reducing the SFD mil rate as the property valuations continue to rise. I assume you, the Governing Board and our excellent management team have addressed this issue. But I, and I assume most all of the vast majority of our community, do not know how this problem is being addressed and ultimately resolved. My simple request is to have you communicate to all the SFD taxpayers how you are handling this situation so we don't have another major uprising about excessive taxation as we have had in the past. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns directly to you, the Governing Board, and the management of SFD. Thank you.

F. Business

1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of August 2014 Financial Report.

Mrs. Cooperman moved to approve the August 2014 Financial Report, a second was provided by Mr. Jablow, and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Monthly Staff Report – Fire Chief Kris Kazian.

- a. Call Summary for Month and Year to Date.**
- b. Calls by Still District Summary for Month and Year to Date.**
- c. Emergency Response Times Summary for Month and Year to Date.**
- d. Regional Communications Center Dispatch Activity for Month and Year to Date.**
- e. Special/Significant Activities and Incidents.**
- f. General Update of Recent SFD Activities, Happenings, and Events.**
 - i. Ride-along Program for Sedona Red Rock High School Students.**
- g. SFD Training Report.**
- h. Community Risk Management Update.**
- i. Donations to SFD.**
- j. Update of Grant Activity.**
- k. Correspondence/Thank You Letters to SFD.**

Chief Kazian reported on August 19th, crews responded to a possible kitchen fire off Crimson View, which was caused when the terminal on a 9-volt battery and a paper clip ignited after touching; crews did a good job of responding and determining the source. Also in August, he said crews rescued two people trapped on an island in Oak Creek near Bear Wallow during monsoonal rain, without too much technical intervention.

Chief Kazian highlighted the call summary; we had 97 EMS assignments and 93 EMS interfacility transports over last year's; he said SFD was called for an interfacility recently from Cottonwood Fire as they were busy on calls with Verde Valley Ambulance; however, SFD was unable to take the transport in Cottonwood because we were too busy with calls. Mrs. Cooperman commented on the response time improvement, comparing year to date to last year. Chief Kazian said we continue to keep data collection as a high priority, and our new mobile data terminal project will help. He noted some motor vehicle accidents in remote locations can increase response times, if they are not entered as rescue calls. Also, a couple of months ago, an airplane crash in Fay Canyon counted as an aircraft assignment, even though it could have been considered a rescue, and increased those response figures.

In Training, three Firefighters – West, Carr, and Eberlein – took classes in helicopter shorthaul, which is important, as we lost one of Shorthaul Team member to retirement. Additionally, Engineer Josh Maxwell taught a good class on HazMat and the new gas monitors received through a grant that register hydrogen cyanide, which may pose more danger than carbon monoxide. Also, Captain Brian Ford finished his degree in Fire Science. SFD hosted an ICS 300 class, a National Incident Management course for managing larger incidents. Chief Kazian said Captain Mark Rippy attended a class on meeting NFPA 1851 standards relative to structure firefighting gear.

In Community Risk Management, Chief Kazian noted Safeway is readying for upgrades. Sedona Rouge's plans to add 25,000 square feet were approved; Fire Marshal Gary Johnson commented the resort is adding a new street to improve access; Tlaquepaque also received permission to expand, and a Marriott Hotel will be built near the high school. Under Grants, Chief Kazian said since this report was generated, SFD received \$26,000 from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and \$12,000 from DHS for the five HazMat gas monitors.

The Regional Comm Center continues to be busy. Chief Kazian mentioned under General Updates, staff has “Task Force 294 Tuesdays” in support of our Firefighter with cancer, mentioned in a *Red Rock News* article last week.

Division Chief Buzz Lechowski gave an update on the program with Red Rock High School and Yavapai College for high school seniors to take Firefighter I and II classes; students participate in ridealongs with SFD crews. He and Battalion Chief Mezulis were part of the Sedona-Verde Valley Firefighter Honor Guard attending the International Firefighters ceremony in Colorado Springs; this year, the 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots were honored; SFD Firefighter Marc Howard is in charge of the Honor Guard. Chief Lechowski also said Task Force 294 t-shirts are available for purchase; Division Chief Schwisow mentioned the initial t-shirt sale for the Task Force made about \$2,100 for Firefighter Powell and family. Chief Kazian reported on donations including former Board Member Liza Vernet’s generosity, and her letter of appreciation of the hard work SFD has done over the years.

G. Items from Staff.

2. Update: SFD Fire Board Election for November 2014 – Confirmation from Yavapai County regarding Cancellation of Election and Appointment of Candidates by Board of Supervisors.

Chief Kazian commented SFD received a memo from Yavapai County notifying that only three candidates submitted required petitions and with only three vacancies, the November 2014 election for SFD Fire Board is cancelled; therefore, funds budgeted for the election are no longer needed for that purpose. He stated Mrs. Cooperman, Mrs. Schoen, and Mr. Montgomery are all considered elected.

3. Discussion/Possible Action: Reallocate Funds previously earmarked for Fire Board Election for Reinstatement of Human Resources Professional position.

Chief Kazian said the Board has a request to earmark those election funds for a Human Resources (HR) professional. In the past, SFD had an HR Manager and a Benefits Coordinator; during difficult times, SFD elected to not fill the HR Manager position through attrition; the Benefits Coordinator began to function in the HR capacity, but does not have qualifications for an HR manager, although she is highly qualified as a Benefits Coordinator. Since that time, SFD brought in Division Chief Schwisow to take on Support Services and some HR roles, but even with that oversight, many facets of HR are not being addressed. An on-site evaluation of HR functions was done by a third party firm, and a summary of that report was provided to the Board; it recognizes a true need for an HR professional for an organization of 100+ employees, which need is not currently being met. He said he is presenting the Board with an opportunity to earmark money saved by not having an election into hiring an HR professional; it would benefit the district with planning, oversight, and up-to-date professional knowledge and experience. He said staff is not lightly asking for this position, but potential effects of not filling it are of significant financial concern.

Mr. Montgomery said SFD has not had an HR Manager in some time, although we did try to briefly outsource it, which was a failure. He understands there will be a salary study of the position, but is concerned about the open-endedness of the proposal; he said we have a set amount of money and have to fund the position in future years. Chief Kazian said the \$49,000 is for one-half a year, and the position would not be filled until around January; Mr. Montgomery said he wants to table this issue for a month. Mr. Jablow said he tends to agree that additional funding would be necessary. Chief Kazian said \$100,000 for the year would be inclusive of benefits. Board Member Nazih Hazime commented if we table the issue for a month, it will push out getting the position for another two months and he believes it is critical to fill. Chief Kazian said we are in the process of an Administration salary study and an HR professional will be included. Mr. Montgomery remarked an HR professional could be a six-figure position or less according to responsibilities, and it is hard to make a decision without all necessary information. Mr. Jablow asked staff to provide legal expenses related to HR issues from the past few years, saying that money could go to HR instead of legal. Chief Kazian said he would do his best to provide that information, although he is unsure it can be gathered in a month, as some issues were handled by the insurance carrier and paid by the premium. Mr. Jablow said he knows it is important to the organization, but the cost must be justified to the taxpayers. Mrs. Cooperman said because we did not have a knowledgeable HR person, we “squeaked by” on some issues that could have produced significant legal fees and that is a risk. Chief Kazian clarified he believes our HR Assistant is highly capable and qualified in benefits coordination. He said staff would provide a better justification and bring it back to the Board.

- 4. Discussion/Possible Action: Labor/Management Agreements.**
 - a. SFD Board Resolution #2014-05, Regarding Labor/Management Process.**
 - b. Memorandum of Understanding for IAFF L-3690 Sedona Chapter – FY 2015.**
 - c. Memorandum of Understanding for Admin./Support Employees Association – FY 2015.**

Chief Kazian said staff would like to table a decision on the Resolution and two Memorandums of Understanding as we received legal comments requiring management to continue dialogue with labor. Firefighter Brent Johnson, Vice President for the Sedona Chapter of Local 3690, commented labor and management have been working closely; he recognized Local 3690 Chapter President – Captain Dave Rodriguez, and labor representative, Captain Mark Rippy, for their work in this substantial process; he said there are adjustments and decisions to be made about the legal opinions. Firefighter Johnson stated he believes we will have a successful agreement in the next month.

- 5. Discussion/Possible Action: Resolution #2014-06, Compliance Amendment to Sedona Fire District Profit Sharing Plan.**

Chief Kazian commented Resolution #2014-06 was presented through Mass Mutual to be in compliance with Federal legislation regarding same sex marriage; the recommendation from legal is the Board approve this Resolution with the two top boxes selected, as provided. Mr. Whittington commented pension specialist attorney, Chuck Whetstine felt it needed to be done for legal compliance. Chief Kazian clarified this is regarding the DOMA decision, and although marriages are performed in states where same sex marriages are legal, they are not recognized in Arizona. Mr. Whittington said this issue was challenged in the Ninth Circuit court recently. *Mrs. Cooperman moved to approve Resolution #2014-06, the compliance amendment to the SFD profit sharing plan; Mr. Jablow seconded, and it was unanimously passed.*

- 6. Discussion/Possible Action: Presentation of Community Paramedicine Program.**

Battalion Chief Ed Mezulis said the Board has a draft proposal on Community Paramedicine through collaboration with Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH), fire districts, and Verde Valley Ambulance; he said co-development of the pilot study will best serve our community. Chief Mezulis surmised the draft document is about 80% completed. Some of the program is specific to Sedona involving public health risk management education. He said during the last five months, staff has collected SFD data specific to individuals we transported, not those individuals taken by private vehicle to the hospital. He said we average 25 patients (approximately, although the information needs more study and review) a month that fall under the Center for Medicaid/Medicare targeted group of COPD, CHF, sepsis, diabetes, and other illness. He said if we include Verde Valley Medical Center's (VVMC) information, it may be upwards of 40 patients a month; this is substantial for our district and EMS providers to have an impact on our citizens' healthy lives and being able to stay home, rather than in the hospital. As pre-hospital medical providers, SFD would be walking "in step" with the rest of the nation. Data collection has identified NAH training and education requirements for medics and training SFD wants; some of our medics already began the training and will finish in November. The intent is to roll out a pilot study in January to follow sepsis and COPD discharge patients, which would be about six patients per month for SFD; it was decided the best model for the pilot is to have a designated community paramedic follow the patients through the 30-day course to see improvements and have one-on-one dialogues; for primary care providers with which we work, the medic would be the single point of contact.

Also, a potential benefit for a pilot program would be for grant funding. Mesa Fire received a \$12.5 million grant for its program; they had a four year trial as innovators of the program in Arizona; now, other agencies do not require that long a study. Running the numbers on the cost of a pilot study using six patients a month with sepsis and COPD, based on SFD data, and basic overtime rates, would cost about \$2,000 a month – which includes four, two-hour visits for each patient at off-duty rates; however, there will be opportunities for patient visits by on-duty medics. Chief Mezulis said he is not asking the Board for a vote on the pilot program today; he is just providing a "skeleton" of the program and his investigations of potential costs for a trial run.

The pilot could show if it is beneficial to patients, and/or if it is affordable. VVMC approved a contract with Yavapai Regional Medical Center in Prescott for Accountable Care Organizations (ACO), and once hospitals enter ACO status, patient billing changes and there are financial incentives to reduce readmissions to hospitals including through community health; Chief Mezulis asked, who better to provide care to our citizens than us; third party vendors will be interested in these programs, and not debating whether they could provide as good care as SFD, but questioned if we want a third party vendor to provide those healthcare services to our patients.

Chief Lechowski asked Chief Mezulis to explain what home visits would entail. Chief Mezulis said as part of the hospital discharge procedures, a patient with sepsis from Sedona would be asked if they want to participate in the SFD community paramedicine program; if so, VVMC would send a secure email to make an appointment with the patient; our paramedic would visit within 24 or 48 hours of discharge, depending on how we format, to make sure patients understand prescribed medications, do an initial home safety inspection, and the next week, schedule another visit; the potential is, if in the second week, a relative is with them and they do not require a visit, we would hold a phone conference with them. After 30 days, if the patient is recuperating appropriately, we would give them a certificate and survey. We are also starting preliminary work with primary care providers and hospice to develop a new level of trust and understanding of what our medics can provide. Chief Mezulis said, ultimately, our goal is to help patients more fully enjoy good health in our community.

Mrs. Cooperman stated she started her nursing career as a public health nurse in California, and the home visits she used to make as a nurse no longer happen; she thinks the concept of this program is very exciting to help our citizens have good post-hospital outcomes; she asked about the revenue stream. Chief Mezulis answered everyone is interested in that, and currently, different lobbying groups are talking to DHS about changing legislation; he plans a visit to DHS to discuss opportunities to bill for home healthcare visits; currently, we are allowed to bill at our lowest rate, which is Basic Life Support transports at \$1,200; he said that is far too high to bill a patient for a medic to come to their home; he wants to negotiate our lowest rate with DHS to be around \$85; that times four visits per month for 30 patients is a substantial revenue stream. Also, there is the possibility of other revenue with legislation change, hospitals becoming ACOs, and grant funding. Chief Mezulis said, additionally, community paramedics could pick up other duties, such as what TIPS volunteers provide at \$7,000 per year and help with EMS training, reducing the amount of teachers we bring in.

Mr. Montgomery said he provides transitional medicine and looking at such a program in the Verde Valley because there is a transitional care code for Medicare paying \$180 to follow patients out of the hospital for the first 30 days; so, if SFD could contract directly with the hospitals through ACOs, that is a revenue potential; also, Mr. Montgomery said he would call Dr. Harry Alberti, Chief Medical Officer of VVMC to see if there is interest in partnering with SFD; Chief Mezulis said he and Chief Lechowski have spoken to Dr. Alberti specifically about partnerships, and they were referred to a Community Care coordinator. Chief Lechowski suggested Mr. Montgomery and Chief Mezulis meet with Dr. Alberti together to discuss possibilities. Chief Kazian added there are other pilots besides the Mesa grant, such as Rio Rico Fire, and across the country; staff wants some understanding of the latitude the Board would allow to continue to explore this. Mr. Montgomery commented there are also possibilities with nursing homes for this program, and it would be great if we can provide more service to our community without spending more money. Chief Kazian commented no action is needed now, but Mr. Montgomery and Chief Mezulis could give a presentation on their findings in January.

H. Item from Board Chairman Ty Montgomery.

1. Monthly Update: Fees for Legal Services Provided to SFD.

No update was provided by Mr. Montgomery.

IV. FIRE MARSHAL'S SAFETY MESSAGE

Fire Marshal Johnson said Fire Prevention Week will be held next month; we are highlighting the "silent sentinel"—smoke detectors. Each SFD truck has smoke detectors, and if needed, crews can install them. He asked all to check their smoke detectors once a month and change the batteries at least once a year. Chief Kazian said there was a recent recall of one model of Kitty brand alarms; check Google for more information.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Corrie Cooperman, Clerk of the Board

:tg