



Approved by the Board, 11.14.23

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
Tuesday, October 17, 2023 / 4:30 PM

~ MINUTES ~

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to notice, a regular meeting of the Sedona Fire District (SFD) was called to order by Chairman Dave Soto at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, October 17, 2023. Executive Assistant, Kim Smathers, recorded the minutes. A quorum was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

Board Present: Dave Soto – Chairman; Helen McNeal-Clerk, Janet Jablow, and Scott Springett – Members Others Present: Fire Chief Ed Mezulis; Assistant Chief Jayson Coil (by phone); Division Chief Dori Booth; Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson; Finance Director Gabe Buldra, JVG; Attorney William Whittington; and Executive Assistant Smathers - Recorder.

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.

Chairman Dave Soto led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chief Ed Mezulis requested a Moment of Silence for the 9 Police Officers and 2 firefighters who passed away since the previous Board Meeting.

II. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS/STAFF RECOGNITION

A. Badge Pinning – New Hire Firefighters & Fire Inspector

The badge pinning was tabled at the request of Chief Mezulis, due to the shortage in uniform requirements. Chairman Soto agreed to table the motion until the November meeting.

III. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

A. Public Forum:

*Speakers are limited to three-minute oral presentations, but may submit written comments of any length for Board files. **Board Members may not discuss items not specifically identified on the Agenda. Therefore, pursuant to ARS 38-431.01(H), Board action taken as a result of public comment is limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism, or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date.***

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

There were no requests to speak.

B. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Actions:

All matters under Consent Agenda are considered by the Board to be routine (i.e. Minutes and/or signatory authority for bank accounts), and will be enacted by a single motion approving the Consent Agenda. If discussion is desired on any particular consent item, a Board Member may ask that item be removed from the Consent Agenda to be considered separately.

1. September 15, 2023, Regular & Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Board Chairman Dave Soto made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Board Clerk McNeal seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Financial Report and Updates – Gabe Buldra, JVG

1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of September 2023 Finance Report
Finance Director Buldra gave the monthly overview of expenditure and revenue, noting that the lack of wildland activity and billing is one of the drivers of the lower revenue this year. Chairman Soto

asked why there was a discrepancy in the personnel costs, as all positions are funded whether they are vacant or staffed. Mr. Buldra noted that the vacancies are funded in the budget, but the funds have not been expended and that makes up most of the underage. Mr. Buldra noted that SFD continues to run under budget in most categories.

Board Clerk McNeal asked if it was time for Mr. Buldra to have a discussion with the County regarding lack of tax revenue paid in. Mr. Buldra stated that at this point in the year, he is not concerned, the taxes typically come in during October and November, but if we don't see something within the next month, then he would reach out to the County.

Mr. Buldra noted that the ARPA funding had come through and is in, but it is accrued to last year as that was when it was requested.

Chairman Soto made a motion to approve the September 2023 finance report as presented, Member Jablow seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Staff Items:

2. August 2023 Monthly Fire Chief Report –

a. Administration – Director of Administrative Services Heidi Robinson

Director Robinson noted that the fall “sickness” season is upon us, with staff and crew being affected by seasonal maladies and Covid infections.

Administration has been given access to dashboard to post information for all staff. She noted that there is good engagement from personnel and there is a slide to enable them to make suggestions and corrections to slides.

Chairman Soto asked if the dashboard was somehow integrated to the website so that pertinent information could be linked for community access. Chief Mezulis stated that the website was the out-facing public informational site, while the dashboards are for internal use and information.

Chairman Soto asked about the hydrant slide to report hydrant usage and Chief Mezulis explained that the local water companies want to know when we are flowing water, and this is a tool for the crews to report.

Operations – Assistant Chief Jayson Coil

Assistant Chief Coil began his reporting with the significant event that he felt that with the Spinelli, Espiau, Clouch team, he finds it is better to give intent and then get out of the way, as they will produce a more inclusive product design than expected. Call volume continue to rise, showing that the fall “sick” season is upon us. SFD has already had more calls in October than all of September, most interfacility transports and EMS transports.

Chief Coil briefly spoke about El Nino weather patterns and the chance of a warmer, wetter winter.

Human Resources: There has been one resignation and two conditional offers made to IT Radio Techs. Those two individuals are in the pre-employment process, awaiting background, physicals, etc. HR and Payroll will be attending the UKG Conference.

Telecom: AC Coil stated that he will reserve comments until the purchase orders come up at the end of the agenda.

Chairman Soto stated that AC Coil's statement about showing intent and getting out of the way was a new concept to him and seemed like a good idea in co-existing with other divisions and he feels that this is a good direction to be headed and that he accredits the new leadership. Chief Mezulis said he believes in “from the top down” and agrees. Chairman Soto stated that he feels that there are a lot of bright individuals throughout the District.

b. Community Risk Reduction – Chief Ed Mezulis

Chief Mezulis stated that Chief Booth was in training/orientation with the new hire firefighters. He reported that Chief Booth is working with her new fire inspector, Brian Russell, who has a lot of experience and should be up to speed very shortly.

The Airport Fuel Farm is finished and passed all inspections.

Safety Message: Halloween Safety

Chairman Soto asked if the fuel farm had achieved appropriate water supply and additional access. Chief Mezulis stated that he would defer to Chief Booth, and he has no updates other than the water supply is adequate and if they continue and make infrastructure improvements, then more discussion will need to be completed regarding additional access.

c. **EMS, Safety, Development & Planning – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis reported for DC Lechowski, who is out with the New Hires. Chief Mezulis stated that DC Lechowski has been out a lot obtaining training and certifications for his position and getting them done. DCs Lechowski and Baker have created a new probationary task book and creating the onboarding with the best tools for the probationary new hires to be successful.

d. **Suppression, Preparedness, and Performance – Chief Ed Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis noted that DC Baker was out with Covid and gave his report, stating that with the rash of retirements went knowledge and skills that are necessary, so much of the past weeks have been training new instructors in various programs. SFD has 4 new NFPA 1403, Live Fire training instructors and 3 new ROHVA (off-road vehicle) training instructors.

Not only are DCs Lechowski and Baker working with the new hires to orient and train, but they are also evaluating the processes of training and content for validity and streamlining. Driver's training, TRT, etc. are also upcoming and they are dissecting and modifying those programs.

e. **Fire Chief Report – Fire Chief Mezulis**

Chief Mezulis reported that incident numbers remain about the same, as well as Station responses and response times. He reviewed the Purchase Orders over \$10K.

Chief Mezulis stated that he and Chief Booth had spoken to the Sedona Women's Group and one of their comments was how they loved following SFD on social media. The group has a membership of 40-60 women who live in Sedona and wanted an overview of the District and emergency procedures. The Chief stated that he is focusing on education around and about the District and there will be more events like this upcoming.

Board Clerk McNeal asked to be notified about events like this to accommodate Board attendance and support.

E. **Discussion/Possible Action: Possible vote to approve BAC Request to upgrade and improve AV and other meeting facilitation equipment in the multi-purpose room.**

Chief Mezulis stated that he had requested bids from three vendors in November of 2022. One vendor would not submit as he was too busy, another focuses more on new construction and declined to bid, and AVS came and gave a bid, after a thorough walk through and investigation of what is currently in place. Chief Mezulis stated that the process involved was something he did not expect and the outcome was a 2-hour meeting with Josh Clouch, Chief Mezulis and Executive Assistant Smathers to debrief his findings and recommendations for the new system. Board Clerk McNeal stated that she wondered if this was the correct time, with collections not coming in and stated she was concerned about the appearance to the public being good fiscal and financial stewards. Mr. Buldra explained that this was a capital funded item and the money is available in the Capital account. He again stated he is nowhere near concerned for tax revenue and not once have tax collections not come in at 99-100%. He stated that SFD does not need to wait for cash flow from tax revenues for this project. McNeal followed up with concerns about upcoming costs for Stations 4 & 5 and Chairman Soto asked Chief if he said he had started the process last year. Chief Mezulis stated that yes, this bid request went out in November 2022, and he can't speak to trending prices or AVS availability at a later date. Josh Clouch, IT User Technician, stated that the current system is legacy upon legacy, dating back to the newest being installed in 2014. All of it is end-of-life, and SFD will have to start piecemealing if it is not replaced. Clouch stated that he is experiencing longer times to set up before each meeting, which he should not even have to be doing, but with the dying equipment, it's taking longer and longer, each month.

Chairman Soto asked if the original equipment would go in the control room, as originally thought, or would all be out in the multi-purpose room. Clouch explained that it will all be in the ceiling and it will truly plug and play that any user can facilitate. Board member Jablow asked about repairs if it is all in the ceiling, and Clouch explained that any AV equipment repairs will be covered by the contractor, and any computer repairs will be handled by him. The new system will be a "stadium" set up with four TV screens, speakers, microphone, etc. and it is a very sound plan with warranties on everything. Chief Mezulis stated that the cost had originally caused him

concern, but he had asked another person who had just completed installations on several conference rooms to weigh in and that estimate was within 10 % of the estimated price. Chairman Soto asked if the wiggle room in the estimate vs. the purchase order was intentional and Chief stated that, knowing Clouch, he would find something better and there might be some additional charges for his preferences.

Chairman Soto moved to approve the BAC Request to upgrade and improve AV and other meeting facilitation equipment in the multi-purpose room not to exceed \$102,000.00 as requested in Requisition #9895. Board Member Springett seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible vote to approve BAC Request for tough books for EMS purposes.

Chief Mezulis stated that these are planned replacements of EMS tablets for patient care reporting and an Update of 5-year-old computers. Assistant Chief Coil noted that they are end-of-life and unable to be supported and do not support upgrades or updates to software. The data is at risk, and these are best price at Government contract national pricing. Josh Clouch stated that he is receiving more tickets to resolve, as the old tablets continue to be used. Chairman Soto asked about delivery dates and Clouch stated he would need to check with Brian Espiau about a specific date. Board Clerk McNeal asked why they were still running Windows 10 and Clouch stated that they will continue until January when Windows 11 is installed. Member Jablow asked for clarification on the bar code scanners and Clouch explained that they are built into the bottom of the keyboard and scan IDs with a laser scanner.

Chairman Soto made a motion to approve the BAC Request for purchase of tough books for EMS purposes in the amount of \$69,338.99 to CDW-G, as requested in Requisition #9855. Board Clerk McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

G. Discussion/Possible Action: Possible vote to approve BAC Request for new data network devices and Wi-Fi upgrades.

Chief Mezulis explained that this was a planned radio upgrade, but not the totality of the overall upgrade, with the Wi-Fi also being part of the foundational building block of the entire system. Assistant Chief Coil stated that there were three CORE recommendations from the third-party vendor who evaluated the SFD current system. This request with the data network devices and Wi-Fi were recommended as the current system is unsupported. Chairman Soto remarked that it was convoluted and very involved and Chief Mezulis stated that he really wanted to commend Bob Motz because his concern really is the impact on the taxpayers and this recommendation will give SFD the bandwidth to keep up with technology.

Board Clerk McNeal stated she would like to know where we stand with the \$750K that was set-aside and Mr. Buldra reported that this was only the second purchase made in that set-aside.

Chairman Soto stated that SFD is behind the curve on this, and it is needed, it seems like it can't wait any longer.

Chairman Soto moved to approve the BAC Request for new data network devices and Wi-Fi upgrade in the amount of \$167,362.31 as requested in Requisitions 9891, 9192, and 9893. Board McNeal seconded the motion, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

H. Discussion/Possible Action: Accept resignation of Board Member Gene McCarthy position and discussion of timeline to fill position for duration of term.

Chief Mezulis noted that due to recent medical events, Mr. McCarthy made the decision to take the time to heal and that he appreciated the strength it took to make that decision. Chairman Soto followed up, stating the resignation was delivered on September 22, 2023. Chairman Soto noted that Mr. McCarthy has a long road to recovery, but he is getting better by day. The Board has a 90-day timeline to go through the process of filling the position.

Chairman Soto made a motion to accept the resignation of Board Member McCarthy, Clerk McNeal seconded, there was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Chairman Soto offered that Member McCarthy will be missed.

Chairman Soto followed the vote with discussing policies on filling the vacancy and stated that a notice had been drafted for immediate release to the Red Rock News, the SFD website, and the usual posting place outside Station 1. Clerk McNeal asked that the release to the newspaper have a deadline date. Interviews for

interested parties will take place the weeks of November 6-16, 2023, depending on interest generated and applications received. Mr. Whittington advised that no motion was necessary, and this could be by consensus. Chairman Soto polled the Board for consensus, and it was agreed unanimously.

I. Board Member Items:

Discussion of Fire Board Members Fire District related activities since the last Board Meeting:

Scott Springett: One-on-one with Fire Chief generated good ideas; billpay.com training tomorrow; working on ideas for partnering with community center for program activities, i.e., Meals On Wheels, etc.

Helen McNeal: Participated in one-on-one with Fire Chief; enjoyed and participated in Welcome potluck for new employees. Usual business of signing checks, paying bills, etc.

Janet Jablow: Also attended potluck and meet & greet of new employees, check signing, bill paying, upcoming one-on-one with Fire Chief.

Dave Soto: Working with JVG on billpay.com training for Springett; met with Chief and Labor regarding the Board vacancy process; expecting Need to Meet invitation for 1st Quarter evaluation of Fire Chief; working with Yavapai County Firewise with mitigations and getting word out to the communities, along with VV Fire Chiefs.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Soto adjourned the meeting at 5:56 p.m.

Original signed by Dave Soto, Chairman 11.14.23

Helen McNeal, Clerk of the Board

SFD Multipurpose Room is accessible to the handicapped. In compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, those with special needs, such as large print or other reasonable accommodations, may request them by calling 928-282-6800.

Posted by: Kim Smathers

Date: 11/15/23

Time: 1:00 p.m.