



# SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT

2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336  
Telephone: (928) 282-6800 • FAX: (928) 282-6857  
[www.sedonafire.org](http://www.sedonafire.org)

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Station #1 • 2860 Southwest Drive • Sedona • Multi-purpose Room  
Tuesday, November 18, 2025 • 3:00 PM

## MINUTES

### 1) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

- a. Salute to the flag of the United States of America and a moment of silence to honor American men and women in service to our country, firefighters, and police officers.

Pursuant to notice, a Regular Meeting of the Sedona Fire District (SFD) was called to order by Board Chair Helen McNeal at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. A quorum of the Board was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, proceeded with business.

Ms. McNeal led the Pledge of Allegiance and requested a moment of silence. Chief Mezulis added, for the two firefighters and eight law enforcement officers and who died nationwide since the last Board meeting.

- b. Roll Call of Board Members

**Board Present:** Helen McNeal, Chair; Diana Christensen (remote), Scott Springett, Lance Waldrop, Members. Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk, was absent.

**Others Present:** Ed Mezulis, Fire Chief; Buzz Lechowski, Division Chief; Kirk Riddell, Deputy Fire Marshal; Jeff Wassell, Battalion Chief; Sara Simonton, JVG Senior Consultant; William Whittington, Board Attorney; Tomas Montoya, BPCWS, PLLC; Scott Schwisow, Project Manager; Ellyse Deldin, Administrative Manager; Christi Weigand, Recorder to the Fire Board (remote).

### 2) PRESENTATION OF AWARDS/STAFF RECOGNITION

- a. 15 Years of Service
  - Jon King, Captain/CEP
- b. 10 Years of Service
  - Sam Frye, Firefighter/CEP

Chief Mezulis presented their noteworthy career credentials and thanked them for their service. They were unable to attend the meeting but will receive their service pins at a later time. Ms. McNeal expressed gratitude for their service on behalf of the Board, SFD, and the district residents. Mr. Waldrop also recognized and commended their service.

### 3) REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. Public Forum/Call to the Public

*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 A.R.S. § 38-431.01(I), 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.*



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- 1) Public Comments
- 2) Possible Executive Staff Response to Public Comments

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

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) Regular Meeting Minutes – October 21, 2025
- 2) Executive Session Minutes (*confidential*) – September 16, 2025

**Helen McNeal, Board Chair, moved to approve the Consent Agenda, to include the Regular Meeting Minutes for October 21, 2025, and the Executive Session Minutes from September 16, 2025. Lance Waldrop, Board Member, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no further discussion.**

c. Financial Report and Updates – Sara Simonton, JVG Senior Consultant for Gabe Buldra, Director of Finance

- 1) Discussion/Possible Action: Review and approval of October 2025 Finance Report.

Ms. Sara Simonton reviewed the October Monthly Financial Report Key points (see Board packet) and the Board presentation slides (see Board Presentation).

Ms. McNeal noted that SFD includes wildland expenses in the regular budget, yet the wildland revenue is held separate from it. She asked if it made better sense to also hold the expense from the regular budget.

Ms. Simonton responded, noting it is rollup up at the total level; however, a system delineation would allow the wildland component to easily be separated into an additional report. Ms. McNeal commented that would clarify the budget. Ms. Simonton agreed to provide the report in the budget or Board Packets.

**Helen McNeal, Board Chair, moved to approve the October 2025 Financial Report. Scott Springett, Board Member, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no further discussion.**

d. Monthly Staff Report

- 1) Operations Activities – Assistant Chief Jayson Coil
- 2) Significant Events
  - All-Hazard
  - Emerging Issues



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- 3) Human Resources
  - Staffing
  - Promotions
  - Significant Issues
- 4) Administration
  - News
  - Upcoming Events

Assistant Chief Coil was not present at the meeting. Chief Mezulis updated the Board as follows:

### Human Resources

- The IT Specialist is the only unfilled position; the recruitment process is being re-tooled.
- Three new Firefighters are excelling after completing three weeks of training.

### Administration

- Thorough reviews of JVG financial processing, contracts, ambulance billing, and policies are underway.
- Administrative processes and the Employee Handbook are being finetuned and improved.
- The Employee Handbook policy preparation is ongoing.

e. Community Risk Reduction Activities – Deputy Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell

- 1) Inspection Activities
- 2) Fire Investigations
- 3) Notable and Upcoming Events

Chief Mezulis reported that Community Risk Reduction (CRR) recently transitioned to First Due, a new cross-functional software that must be learned by staff and populated to generate data. Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell added the data is currently skewed. *Notably, due to the above-mentioned reasons, the Monthly CRR Activity Report cannot be generated until further notice.*

DFM Riddell reported two incidents that occurred in the Village of Oak Creek: a dumpster fire likely caused by a cigarette and a lithium-ion battery that exploded. The City of Sedona conducted Emergency Evacuation Siren testing earlier this month. Chief Mezulis noted that SFD previously installed a system in the canyon, it is antiquated and non-operational, and the signage may need to be addressed at a later time.

DFM Riddell reported that the Haunted Ambulance on Halloween was a big hit and he thanked the administrative staff for their assistance. He further commended the Station #4 crew for their participation.

The following upcoming events were discussed:

**November 21, 2025:** Rainbow Mobile Home Park Smoke Alarm Walk (rescheduled from last month)

**December 8, 2025:** Toys for Tots Stuff the Buss, Posse Grounds Pavilion from 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM

**December 13, 2025:** Toys for Tots Bikes for Tykes/Bike Rodeo

**November 23 – December 23:** Clash of Christmas Heros, Battle of the Badges (QR code to be



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emailed, also available on social media)

**November 30, 2025:** Verde Valley Softball Tournament – SFD Fire and SFD Police versus Verde Valley Allstars (Special Olympic Softball team)

f. Operational Support – Division Chief Buzz Lechowski

- 1) EMS Activities and Updates
- 2) Fleet Activities and Updates
- 3) Other Program Updates

Division Chief (DC) Buzz Lechowski updated the Board as follows:

### EMS

- New hire onboarding is in progress with a new training team that is proving effective.
- Medicare claims were latent for 40 plus days during the (federal) government shutdown. Billing has been initiated and SFD is working with the ambulance billing company to recover funds. This will result in a revenue increase, potentially by early next year.
- Effective January 1, 2026, a Medicare inflation metric will increase 2.1% for ground ambulance billing, also to be reflected in the receivables.

### Fleet

- Fleet sold a couple of SFD surplus engines. The removal of the items opens up additional workspace.
- DC Lechowski is working with Braun Northwest to initiate an ambulance remount. The cost will be presented to the Board in December (2025). The process takes approximately five months. He expressed interest in remounting an additional one next budget year.

### GIS

- SFD hosted the first GIS Summit in Arizona. Two SFD employees, Matt Spinelli and Brian Espiau, served as speakers with Esri (vendor). Products developed internally were showcased and participants were impressed. DC Lechowski commended the SFD GIS team for their innovation and hosting the Summit.

### IT

- Recruitment strategies are being retooled.
- SharePoint development is ongoing.
- Radio, building, and HVAC upgrades are in progress. The SFD boom truck was used to deploy generators, proving its purchase and multi-use beneficial.
- Radio channel licensing efforts with a third-party vendor can commence. The government shutdown affected the ability to include the FCC in discussions.

g. Training and Preparedness – Division Chief Jordan Baker

- 1) Training Report
- 2) Wellness

Division Chief (DC) Jordan Baker was not present at the meeting. Chief Mezulis provided an update as follows:



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## Training

- The Task Book process was completed. The six and 12 month evaluations will be conducted over the next few weeks.
- Chief Mezulis commended DC Baker for his work invested in the Verde Valley Training Center improvements, emphasizing his efforts with local contractors. Substantial upgrades to the facility will maximize space and improve safety to achieve an operable site. In October, the Verde Valley Fire Chiefs voted to invest \$23,000.00 out of their budget. An existing IGA, set to expire in 2027, implemented space restrictions, so financial investments in the Center have been minimized until the restrictions can be revisited.

## Wellness

- Annual physical exams begin in January.
- Equipment upgrades and maintenance were completed. New equipment purchasing is being explored.

### h. Fire Chief Report – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis

- 1) Fire District Financials
- 2) Capital Project Updates
- 3) Call Volume & Response Review  
Incident Summary and Year-to-Date Comparison  
Response Times
- 4) Purchase Orders over \$10K

## Fire District Financials

- Chief Mezulis provided an educational overview of fire district revenue fundamentals, to include different revenue sources, noting that potential solutions to address fire district funding are being discussed locally and around the state.

## Capital Projects

- The federal government opening reinitiated the radio frequency discussions.
- Meetings with LEA (Architects, LLC.) and CORE (Construction) were held to discuss Station #4 roles and responsibilities. Initial pricing is expected to be submitted within a week which will initially reflect a high number (cost) until details can be further reviewed.
- Fire Chief Mezulis, Scott (Schwisow), and Ellyse (Deldin) met with the new Slide Rock Park Director and his predecessor. Following recent modifications to the Land and Water Conservation Act, the District could potentially work in conjunction with the Park on service infrastructure improvements. The overall process has improved, grants for co-location project opportunities are possible, and a grant proposal is being drafted.

## Call Volume and Response

- Chief Mezulis reviewed the volume and response times (see Board Presentation).



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## 4) DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

- a. Possible approval of the Memorandum of Understanding for the 2024 Assistance to Firefighter's Grant and the associated expenditure of cost share funds in the amount of \$21,889.00 to support cancer screenings for the Sedona Fire District's staff.

Ellyse Deldin, Administrative Manager, explained that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) supports staff cancer screening, to include early detection. It was granted to a host agency (CAFMA) and requires a 90/10 cost share. As a partner agency, SFD would be responsible for a 10% match associated with each member who participates in the screening program. Chief Mezulis noted that the cost (\$21.9K) is within his spending authority, but wanted to publicly recognize efforts the District is making to keep employees safe and provide the Board the opportunity for discussion. The Board did not engage in further discussion.

**Helen McNeal, Board Chair, moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for the 2024 Assistance to Firefighter's Grant and the associated expenditure of cost share funds in the amount of \$21,889.00 to support cancer screenings for the Sedona Fire District's staff. Scott Springgett, Board Member, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board.**

Ms. McNeal asked clarification on the budget year. Ms. Deldin clarified that the granted was applied for in 2024. Chief Mezulis noted that it was the 2026 budget.

## 5) BOARD MEMBER UPDATES AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Lance Waldrop, Board Member, noted that promising transportation items are on the horizon.

The Cornerstone Bible Church was recognized and thanked for providing first responder support boxes to SFD on First Responder's Day. Ms. McNeal expressed appreciation for SFD and solicited input on ways to show such appreciation for the holidays.

Ms. McNeal requested that Board Attorney, William Whittington, introduce Tomas (Montoya), an attorney also assisting with SFD matters.

## 6) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 PM.

*/s/ Original signed by Corrie Cooperman on 12/16/25*

Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk

Date