SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT

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

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Station #1 • 2860 Southwest Drive • Sedona, AZ • Multi-purpose Room
Tuesday, May 19, 2026 • 3:00 PM

MINUTES

I. 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, May 19, 2026. A quorum of the Board was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, proceeded with business. Ms. McNeal led the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was held for the five firefighters and nine law enforcement officers that died nationwide since the last Board meeting.

B. Roll Call of Board Members

Board Present: Helen McNeal, Chair; Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk; Diana Christensen, Scott Springett, Lance Waldrop Members.

Others Present: Ed Mezulis, Fire Chief; Jordan Baker, Division Chief; Kirk Riddell, Fire Marshal; Gabe Buldra, JVG Director of Finance; Tomas Montoya for BPCWS, PLLC.; Scott Schwisow, Project Manager; Christi Weigand, Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief; Ellyse Deldin, Administrative Manager. Jayson Coil, Assistant Fire Chief and Buzz Lechowski, Division Chief, were absent.

II. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS/STAFF RECOGNITION

Badge Pinning: Daniel (Danny) Robinson, Fire Inspector

Chief Mezulis provided Fire Inspector Robinson's professional background at the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Casa Grande Fire Department. He welcomed Mr. Robinson to the Sedona Fire District. Charles Dowdy from the Arizona Office of the State Fire Marshal pinned Fire Inspector Robinson.

III. BUDGET WORKSHOP

A. Discussion/Possible Staff Direction regarding the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget.

The board tentatively adopted the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget of $27.76 million, an increase of $1.7M (6.5%) from last year. The increase is driven by healthcare, COLA, step, higher capital funding, equipment, and medical supply costs. Notably, healthcare was initially projected to be an 18% increase. The tentative budget reflects a 22% increase, due to enrollment changes and is expected to be the top end of any increase.

B. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Public Hearing Date – June 16, 2026, Regular Board Meeting

Helen McNeal, Board Chair, solicited input on the Budget Public Hearing date and time. It was confirmed for June 16, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. Diana Christensen, Board Member, noted that she would not be present.

SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT

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

IV. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Possible approval of the Proposed Sedona Fire District Fiscal Year 2027 Budget.

Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk, moved to approve the Proposed Sedona Fire District Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. Diana Christensen, Board Member, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no further discussion.

V. 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.

1) Public Comments

2) Possible Executive Staff Response to Public Comment

Members of the public were not 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 – April 21, 2026

2) Special Meeting Minutes: Budget Workshop – May 6, 2026

Lance Waldrop, Board Member, moved to approve the Consent Agenda, to include the April 21, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes and the Special Meeting minutes from the May 6, 2026, Budget Workshop. Helen McNeal, Board Chair, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no discussion.

C. Financial Report and Updates – Gabe Buldra, Director of Finance

Mr. Bulda reviewed the April 2026 Monthly Financial Report (see the Board packet and presentation). April total revenue was $5.1M, over budget by $757K, driven by property tax collection by approximately $750K and $314K in non-levy revenue. Expenses totaled $2.6M in April, $81K over budget, driven by personnel overtime expenses, prepaid health insurance costs, and vehicles and equipment. Chief Mezulis noted that overtime expenses were due to growing SFD families and multiple injuries. Year-to-date (YTD) revenues were $25.3M, over budget by $1.9M, a notably good variance. Property tax collection year to date is over by $817K, stronger than seen in past years. Non-levy revenue is $1.1M over budget, driven by wildland, ambulance revenue, and interest income. Expenses totaled $20.1M YTD, right at budget. The District has expended 84% year to date, with 16% remaining. The cash position was up $2.1M over the same time last year. Other assets increased by $3M. Total liabilities increased, due to accounting accrual adjustments and pension liability.

SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT

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

1) Discussion/Possible Action: Review and possible approval of the April 2026 Monthly Financial Report.

> **Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk, moved to approve the April 2026 Monthly 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 – Jayson Coil, Assistant Fire Chief

Chief Mezulis updated the Board for Jayson Coil, Assistant Fire Chief, as follows:

Chief Mezulis noted that Assistant Chief Coil is on assignment at the Seven Cabins Fire in New Mexico, which likely started following a tragic medical fixed wing aircraft that crashed, killing four individuals on board. The fire was reported at 16K acres.

<u>Human Resources/Staffing</u>

- The pending firefighter resignation is official.
- Danny Robinson, Fire Inspector, is on board and attending classes to achieve certifications.
- Firefighter recruiting has resulted in 23 applicants thus far, with potentially up to 50. The second RAM event occurred last Saturday and had a successful turn out.

<u>Administration</u>

- Heavy focus has been placed on "truing" up the budget.
- Staff met with the County Elections Departments (Coconino and Yavapai) to learn the process.
- The policy manual update is approximately 92% complete.
- Staff are tweaking the business end of the SharePoint rollout.
- Staff are working on the cleanup and "unwinding" of decades of work which has been complex and time consuming, but much needed. They are solidifying infrastructure.

<u>Other</u>

Helen McNeal, Board Chair, asked if SFD has staff or equipment assigned to any Arizona fires. Chief Mezulis stated no, emphasizing the importance of ensuring mandatory staffing so that Sedona's needs are prioritized. Battalion Chiefs review staffing for two to three weeks in advance and adjust regional resource availability based on crew status and life event schedules.

2) Community Risk Reduction Activities – Fire Marshal Kirk Riddell

Fire Marshal Riddell updated the Board as follows:

Fire season is ramping up. The Village of Oak Creek and the Chapel area are getting involved. Two Fire Wise presentations were recently conducted with the Highland HOA and Atlas Springs.

<u>Activity Report and Inspection Activities</u>

- The CRR Activity Report counts were reviewed with the Board (see the Board presentation).
- New employee onboarding is ongoing for the new Fire Inspector who is attending classes to obtain certifications.

<u>Fire Investigations</u>

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

- One fire investigation occurred at the Oak Creek Country Club which resulted from oily rags placed in a hamper in a closet. The alarm and sprinkler heads were activated.

Notable and Upcoming Events

- CRR attended the Sedona Celebration of Spring event and featured Freddy the Firetruck.
- The Wildland Preparedness resulted in 23 total tons and 105 drop offs, in which 20 tons were from VOC.
- A Fire Wise event was held with the Les Spring HOA.
- Fire Marshal Ridell presented before and after pictures of a residential Fire Wise cleanup, a result of the community work CRR is performing to increase fire safety in Sedona.
- Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are effective May 21, 2026. Fire Marshal Riddell reviewed the restrictions with the Board.

Chief Mezulis commented, explaining that SFD receives public calls regarding fire restrictions. He emphasized that SFD covers national forest, two counties, unincorporated areas, and the city of Sedona. Thus, the District collaborates with emergency managers and the counties to determine the proper restrictions.

3) Operational Support – Division Chief Buzz Lechowski

Chief Mezulis updated the Board for Buzz Lechowski, Division Chief, as follows:

EMS Activities and Updates

- Division Chief Lechowski participated in the Arizona Burn Foundation's rim to rim Grand Canyon hiking fundraiser. The hike was 20.4 miles and was completed in 11 hours and 18 minutes.
- SFD continues to navigate the DEA narcotics mandates. Notably, only 12 states have the ability to comply. SFD may have to obtain a DEA number which is costly. The District currently uses a modular system that is more efficient and easier to track.

Fleet Activities and Updates

- A 2014 engine is undergoing a complete rebuild and was an unplanned expense.
- The ambulance remount has been rescheduled for July.

4) Training and Preparedness – Division Chief Jordan Baker

Training

- Two six-month reviews were completed. Notably, one individual scored 100% on the written exam and the practical evaluation.
- The Engineer Position Taskbook is in its final stages with an estimated completion date of July 1st. The Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, and Battalion Chief Taskbooks have all been revamped within the last three years and the organizational goal is to revamp them every 6 months with standing committees.
- The first phase of Blue Card training, a company officer led training, was completed. Instructor let training at Station #4 is phase two, and in the third phase, SFD will incorporate hands-on structure training at the Uptown future Station #4 location, currently a bank building.
- Two new hires recently completed water tender training. The training was implemented a couple of years ago, is provided after six months of employment, and certifies individuals to take the water tenders in and out of district for emergency response.
- The second RAM event had 16 new individuals, 3 from the previous event, totaling 19 participants.

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

Wellness

– Solve Global continues to conduct onsite visits to help reduce workplace injuries.

Other

– Division Chief Jordan Baker commended Deputy Fire Marshal Wesbrock and Fire Inspector Robinson on their impressive representation of SFD at the Verde Valley Fair. He further commented they did an excellent job educating and interfacing with the children.

E. Fire Chief Report – Fire Chief Ed Mezulis

1) Fire District Financials

Focus and discussions regarding financials are ongoing during the budget process.

2) Capital Project Updates

– The first radio racks have been constructed and are shipping. Radio equipment will be pre-positioned at Station #2. SFD is still waiting on FCC frequency mods and approvals. Slight delays are likely, due to the federal shutdowns. Infrastructure upgrades continue (see Discussion/Possible Action section).
– One generator installation at Station #4 remains before the generator project is complete.
– All air conditioning fixes and installations and code concerns are completed.
– A "walk and talk" meeting for potential Station #5 locations is scheduled with the Forest Service. Several areas will be explored.
– The Station #4 asbestos mitigation is completed. The District received 60% drawings. A meeting to review plans page by page is scheduled for June 2nd. In July or early August, CORE is expected to provide the GMP. The "golden shovel" ceremony is anticipated to occur in October. Thus far, the Station #4 project is still on track for a November 2027 opening.
– While working on the 60% GMP, LEA will assess the annex and other projects.

3) Purchase Orders over $10K

– An air conditioner unit at Station #1 required approximately $6K in repairs and $30K to replace it. The unit fix was completed this year, despite being planned for next year.
– A pickup was purchased for facilities use.
– An unexpected expense occurred to repair an engine motor.

4) Legislative Update

– Discussions are at a standstill and bills continue to linger until there is a balanced budget. However, the Craig Tiger Act, which provides funding for mental health support for firefighters and police officers, was renewed.

– The AFG grant period opened up and staff worked with a manufacturer to prepare a draft grant. The District could recognize up to $300K in savings for diesel exhaust ventilation, if approved. It would also reduce costs for the Station #4 construction. SFD would be responsible for 5%.

VI. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Possible approval of the expenditure of funds for the direct current power system replacement and upgrade in an amount not to exceed $300,000.00.

Chief Mezulis explained that the District's radio sites have redundant supply. The sites have three battery banks of power supply, including APS (line power), a backup generator fueled by propane, and DC. The replacement/upgrade has been a recognized capital need for past three years. The District can now purchase the batteries, in addition to rectifiers and inverters that convert DC to AC. The material costs are calculated, though the installation costs are pending. Thus, the request identifies a "not to exceed price" of $300,000.00. Chief Mezulis added that this recognizes the identified capital

SEDONA FIRE DISTRICT
2860 Southwest Drive, Sedona, Arizona 86336
Telephone: (928) 282-6800 • FAX: (928) 282-6857
www.sedonafire.org

purchase from this year's budget and gets the material coming due to a three-week lead time.

Diana Christensen, Board Member, moved to approve the expenditure of funds for the direct current power system replacement and upgrade in an amount not to exceed $300,000.00. Helen McNeal, Board Chair, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no further discussion.

B. Possible approval of the expenditure of funds for the purchase of two Pierce PUC/Enforcer Engines in an amount not to exceed $2,245,482.00.

The engines are recognized capital expenses; one engine is budgeted for this year while the other is budgeted for next year. A RBO committee evaluated and identified the apparatus specifications. The manufacturer previously requested payment upfront but has shifted how payment is received. One engine will be received on time and the other later than anticipated, due to build times. The District can spend budgeted capital allocated for this year, then choose to pay the balance which is already budgeted for next fiscal year or spread it over two years. Ultimately, it locks in the current price for fire trucks and prevents more expensive costs.

Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk, noted that it appeared the District would receive a credit for delivering the monies when it is completed. Chief Mezulis recommended that the District spend what is capitalized this year, get payment to the vendor, and pay the remaining balance over the next one or two years. Ms. Cooperman asked if the District would be paying the vendor soon. Chief Mezulis commented that it would be prudent to pay a portion this year which has been budgeted in capital. Gabe Buldra remarked, noting performance bonds and the value of locking in the price and realizing discounts. Lance Waldrop, Board Member, commented that the District is taking advantage of economies of scale. Chief Mezulis remarked it is advantageous to have a reserve fleet that is not 24 years old.

Helen McNeal, Board Chair, moved to approve the expenditure of funds for the purchase of two Pierce PUC/Enforcer Engines in an amount not to exceed $2,245,482.00. Lance Waldrop, Board Member, seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board with no further discussion.

VII. BOARD MEMBER UPDATES AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Bill Pay Calendar

- Helen McNeal, Board Chair, asked staff to resend the Bill Pay Calendar as a reminder of when each member is to pay bills. Ms. McNeal asked the Board to notify staff if they are swapping dates so the right individual can be notified.
- Ms. McNeal recommended that the Board be added to the "all staff" email distribution list. She asked each Board Member's input and they all agreed it would be beneficial.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 PM.

/S/Original signed by Corrie Cooperman **6/16/26**
Corrie Cooperman, Board Clerk Date