

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
Monday September 21, 2020
Pinetop Fire District Station 12
Video & Conference Available
1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: John Rowlinson Called Meeting to order at 5:00 pm

Roll Call of Board Members, John Rowlinson, Carla Bowen, Ernie Lawes, Brad Baker and Doug Wright

Attorney Bill Whittington by phone conference and Finance Directors from James Vincent Group, Gabe Buldra, Ben Archer, Sara Simonton, and Dean Taylor were present for new board members questions.

I. *Call to the Public:* None

II. *Consent Agenda Board Business*

The items on the consent agenda are considered routine and will be adopted in one motion unless a board member, staff, or member of the public in the audience requests, before the vote on the motion, to have the item considered separately. If any item is removed from the Consent Agenda, the Board Chairman will indicate when it will be discussed in the regular agenda.

1. Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting held in August 2020
2. Approval of Warrants paid in August 2020

There was a small error on the Agenda, it read; Approval of Minutes for Board Meeting held on July 20, 2020 and subsequently Approval of Warrants in July of 2020. Both were corrected to August 2020.

Carla Bowen made the motion to approve the consent agenda with the two small date corrections on the agenda, as presented, seconded by Doug Wright, motion carried unanimously 5-0

IV. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re: Presentation of July Financial Reports

Gabe Buldra and Ben Archer from James Vincent Group gave a brief summary of the expert oversight they provide for the district for extra layers of transparency and their expert level of oversight. Welcome James Vincent Group Team and Thank You for all you have done to help the District financially stable and the oversight you provide for our tax payers. Great Job.

Gabe Buldra presented the financial report, all documents are included in the packet. Highlights; Navajo County Revenue for August is right in line; non-levy is under slightly due to timing of grant revenue billing. The Gila River Grant was not awarded this year so we will have to use other funds for the capital replacement purchase this year.

Non-Levy Revenue was under budget in August, wildland fire billings are fully under way but we should see a lot more revenue coming in by next meeting. As of this meeting we have collected approximately \$600,000.00. Total Revenue is trending under. Personnel is over budget due to the wildfire fire season. We will see this area balance out over the next month as Wildland Revenue invoicing occurs and reimbursement rolling in. Covid has affected our Training and Travel spending, everything has been canceled or conducted virtually online at a lower cost. Thus, this line item is trending under budget. Buildings / Land and managerial were under budget, while vehicles and equipment, communications and IT were right in line last month.

Year to date Cash is about \$2,366,000.00 compared to last year this time at \$2,328,000.00, we have been trending slightly over.

Year to date expenses were high with Wildland Season upon us. We will see that start to level out as the reimbursements start come in. There was some discussion about the budget stabilizing fund that the state uses to reimburse fire districts for wildfire suppression in AZ being more efficient with recent legislative changes. Chief explained to the new members how in the past trying to get paid for Wildland could take even up to a year, now takes days or a couple of weeks. He gave a brief rundown of people and equipment on wildland fires currently. Revenues are earmarked to go back into the Capital Reserve fund.

There was discussion about prop 207 the marijuana bill, how the funding from that would absolutely benefit our Fire District, helping to pay down the unfunded liability. There was a question from Mr. Lawes about the Pension Liability and why the numbers aren't more solid. Chief Morgan explained that the actuaries varied due to mainly 2 factors, 1. life expectancy and 2. assumption of annual earnings. Mr. Lawes asked who decides, Chief Morgan told him that they PSPRS board of trustees appointed by the governor makes those decisions.

Cash is sufficient for the foreseeable future. There is no need for a draw on our county line of credit.

Summary 85% personnel Ops at 11% Admin 3% and 1% communications. This is right in line with other districts.

There was a discussion about the interest on St 11 going from 8% to 2 ¾, paying down the COPS and refinancing.

Doug Wright made a motion to approve the August 2020 financial reports as presented, seconded by Ernie Lawes, motion carried unanimously 5-0

2. *Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re; Updated 2020 Fire District November Elections.*

Chief Morgan; Mr. Lawes submission of his intent to run and filing paperwork for the November Election along with there being no write in candidates means that the Pinetop Election is uncontested thus effectively canceling the requirement to have an election this year. This will save the district approximately \$7500 to \$8000. John Rowlinson brought up the January Board position elections would go on as normal for Chairman and Clerk of the board.

This item is informational only, no board action.

3. Discussion/Consideration/Updates on COVID-19

Chief Morgan: Covid19 information is in the packets; He gave a discussion about Arizona numbers slowly beginning to level out. Monthly meetings with NAFCA, Navajo County have been disbanded. The numbers are steadily going down or staying at a low number. Dr. Wright added that Summit Healthcare was not seeing the huge uptake in beds and respirators being used. The numbers seem to be trending down as more education comes forth. The state seems to be trending down as well. Chief Morgan told them we aren't out of the woods; flu season is coming and with COVID and Flu we just don't know how that will affect everything. He reminded everyone to get their vaccinations.

Informational only, no board action.

4. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re; Updates on Wildland Fire Season

Chief Morgan, information in the packets. He went over ERCs and told them that so far this season, we have been extremely lucky, he went on to update the board on current fire conditions.

We have had a very busy season out west in California and Oregon. There was discussion about the firefighters in California and Oregon. Chief Morgan explained that there are now firefighters from all over the US, Australia, Israel and Canada to battle wildfires in California and Oregon. Mr. Lawes asked what happens to inhouse business when they are all away? Chief Morgan explained that we have the fuels crew which augments our fulltime personnel staffing. He explained that the mitigation work temporarily slows here at home but this staffing model allows us to maintain our service delivery while supporting wildfire suppression efforts. He explained how our crews were taking extra shifts sometimes double or more -especially with hunting season in full swing, at one point we had 17 people out on fires. He mentioned how proud he is of all staff picking up the slack and those on the fire lines. He thanked the families at home who were the support that keep our crews going on the fires and our board members who make it possible with excellent PPE and equipment that allow our fire and medical crews to be able to do their jobs with confidence. Carla Bowen thanked the Chief for continuing to make it all possible. Thanks all around, Pinetop Fire District has great people from the bottom to the top.

Informational only, no board action.

5. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re; Purchase of a Heavy Equipment Skid Steer for fuels mitigation work through State Contract not to exceed \$65,000.00

Chief Morgan, one of our goals is to replace Capital items. This request is for the Fuels Mitigation Division. We have needed a second skid steer for some time. The bobcat we currently have is beginning to see increased costs to keep it running and we have had to rent equipment to back it up when it is down. Repair costs have risen to about \$9000 this last year. This new equipment has a heavier lifting capacity and crews will be more effective with larger heavier and longer stems, which will cut down on cutting time and allow the crew to work more efficiently.

We looked at the purchasing options and decided if the purchase was approved to use Arizona State Contract joint purchasing plan. This is a state contract for local schools and

municipalities, fire districts. We as a local government can use this purchasing option to save money and adhere to our procurement policy. Currently we will be reimbursed by grant funding, we will be able to recover costs in about 4.1 years. Brad Baker asked if this is like a GSA contract. Chief told him it very similar but at a state level. Based on our funding we have approximately 3 years of funded mitigation work on the schedule. The state is able to secure pricing at a larger group rate, with pre-negotiated pricing, which trickles down to us and saves us a lot of money. Using the State Contracting price will save us approximately \$24,000.00. Mr. Baker asked if our crews have to be certified to drive the vehicle. There were questions and discussion about working through winter with the track vehicle and that there is annual driver training available to the fuels crew, also on how far we have come with mitigation program.

Brad Baker made the motion authorizing Chief Morgan to exercise the purchase of one T76 Model T4 Bobcat Track Loader through Arizona State Contract Procurement services not to exceed the amount of \$65,000.00 excluding tax and shipping. Seconded by Ernie Lawes, Motion carried unanimously 5-0

V. Summary of Current Events

1. Fire Chief's Report regarding district activities
Chief Morgan; Report is in packet, NFA training coming up, there was discussion about the business inspections and NATC training facility both mentioned in the Chief's report. Mr. Lawes thanked Chief Morgan for his tireless work keeping us all plugged in as a community. There was a comment of how amazing it was to see how the members of Pinetop Fire District all work together to close out a year.
2. Verbal Chair report, John Rowlinson thanked the families of the firefighters once again for their continued support allowing their loved ones to go out and fight wildland fires. He said they are the backbone of the fire community and we support them any way we can. He mentioned the smoke that we were occasionally experiencing from the fires in AZ, CA.

VI. Future Meeting Dates:

October 19, 2020

VII. Announcements

AFDA has been cancelled this July due to Covid 19.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins