

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
March 20, 2023 5:00pm
Pinetop Fire District Station 12
Video & Conference Available
1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: Chairman John Rowlinson called meeting to order at 5:02pm

Roll Call of Board Members; Present- John Rowlinson, Carla Bowen, Ben Borrego, Wayne Booher and Ernie Lawes was present electronically

Administration present; Chief Jim Morgan, Asst. Chief Richard Wallace, and Karen Robbins

1. Call to the Public: None

III. Possible Vote to go into Executive Session

Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re: possible vote to go into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice regarding purchase of property for district operations agenda item 2.

Note: Item 2 was moved to the end of the agenda for Executive Session.

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 for February 2023
- 2) Approval of Warrants paid in February 2023

Carla Bowen made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Wayne Booher. Motion passed unanimously 5-0

IV. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re: Presentation of January 2023 Financial Reports.

Gabe Buldra (JVG) was present to discuss the February 23 Financial Reports – all documents were included in the packet. Some highlights included;
Navajo County Revenue for February is \$99,860 which was under budget by \$16,437 driven by property tax collection timing.
Non-Levy Revenue was under budget by \$2,349, Ambulance revenue is under by \$5,994 (not unusual for this time of year)

Expenses for February were over budget by \$45,941 Totaling \$449,055. Several variances at play, such as Buildings and Land – we had duct cleaning at both stations and cleanup at the new parking area station 11.

Vehicles and equipment were over budget by \$9,251 as we took care of some annual EMS Equipment maintenance agreements.

Personnel expense is over budget by \$7,076 driven by higher EAP costs for traumatic Events.

Year to date total revenue was \$5,357,873 which is over budget by \$509,906

Wildland Fire was \$858,823 over budget

Grant income was under budget at \$326,010

Chief Morgan gave a brief summary of the grant process and what we are expecting in the coming weeks/months, he told the board we have about 13 mil in grants; an ambulance, water tender, staff and wildland facility are to name a few. There was discussion about the USDA congressional spending process and the current state of ARPA funding.

Year to date expenses were \$4,776,184 which was over budget by \$783,722 driven by personnel expenses, at \$480,692 for wildland fire, and training travel and meetings which were also over budget, all influenced by wildland expenses sitting at \$94,216 over budget. Wildland revenue and expenses are very relevant to our finances, it affects income and expenditures.

Total Cash is at \$3,934,811 which is \$1,133,787 less than this time last year. Capital projects and paying off long term debt all factor into the total. Our Cash position at this point in 22-23 budget is still very good.

Percentages; Personnel 76%, Ops at 13%, managerial at 6% and Communications at 3%

Year over year - 4.3 million compared to last year at 5.4 million.

Our total assets were at 10.8 million compared to last year at 19 million this is partly due to pension reform and payoff of the lease purchase.

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Updates on Martinez Group Land Purchase**

This item was moved the last item in meeting to coincide with the Executive Session.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Personnel Hiring and Retention.**

This item is to generate ideas for the budget committee. We have vacancies and are in need of employees. Since Covid – the workforce has undergone some generational and fundamental changes. There is a shortage in the US for firefighter/medics and nurses. We are going to have to be creative in our process to interest and attract new employees.

We have a paramedic incentive program of \$6500 annually - the neighboring district has raised theirs to \$10,000. We probably need to be more competitive and there are other incentives we could utilize to generate employment interest; we need to start thinking out of the box and out of the district.

There was discussion about housing problems. Chief Morgan told them—we no longer have a rule to live in the district, but it is extremely expensive to live in here. It costs around \$1700 - \$2500 monthly to rent in Pinetop proper.

We recently lost one Paramedic/Firefighter to retirement and another Paramedic who recently lost a daughter, has now suffered a traumatic brain injury from an assault and is out for at least 6 months. We are becoming desperately short of qualified paramedics.

Mr. Booher asked if Pinetop Fire District has an explorer program to recruit young people? Chief Morgan; we have an active Reserve program, we have cross trained some of our fuels crew – to EMTs, who now are active Reserve Firefighters. We have the civilian EMT program,

these are Paramedic/EMTs who want to work on the ambulance – do medical wildland assignments but not structure/firefighting, we are currently expanding the program.

There was discussion about hiring Captains. Our testing process requires at least 3 candidates, we currently have two qualified employees in house. Mr. Booher asked why we couldn't test with two candidates? Chief Wallace explained our 3 candidate HR requirements. Chief Morgan introduced them to a future candidate Zach Van Slyke (candidate in training). Ms. Bowen asked FF Van Slyke when he can test, he explained he isn't comfortable testing until he has completed all of the classes, training and mostly more experience with PFD. We have one other trainee also about 2 years out.

Mrs. Bowen asked how we are recruiting employees? Chief Morgan told her we advertise within all of Arizona but have started reaching out via social media. There was discussion about our new PIO trainee, Keith Plympton using Social-Media for recruitment. Mrs. Bowen recommended "Linked in" it has a far-reaching platform. Mr. Plympton agreed to get an account with Linked In for recruitment purposes.

There was a question from MR. Lawes about hiring Military Personnel, this sparked a discussion about some of the challenges, Mr. Borrego had keen insight about hiring military personnel.

Chief Morgan explained that we are utilizing a new psychological evaluation process for prospective hires as well as wellness, physical requirements and testing. This is a new practice in the fire service which hopes to weed out potential problems prior to hire. He explained we just lost a candidate who was unable to pass our pre-testing process.

There was discussion about PTSD prior to hire and with on duty personnel. Chief Morgan gave a brief explanation concerning on duty PTSD treatment for traumatic events.

There was a question about current staffing and how A and C shift have been affected by the shortages. A shift is in need of a Captain and at least one firefighter. C shift needs an Engineer and a firefighter. Mr. Booher expressed his concern about the shortages and community needs. Chief Morgan assured the board we are actively working on new employments and the need for the budget committee to come up with creative ideas.

Information only, no board action

III. Possible Vote to go into Executive Session

Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re: possible vote to go into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice regarding purchase of property for district operations

4. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Updates on Martinez Group Land Purchase

Ben Borrego made a motion to enter executive session at 5:54pm for legal advice about land purchase. Seconded by Carla Bowen.
Motion passed 5-0

Out of Executive Session at 6:32pm
Informational only – no board action at this time.

V. Summary of events

1. Chief Report

Chief Morgan wanted to inform the board of the problem withing the district concerning PMA status businesses. He told them they are holistic healthcare businesses that do not comply with any licenses, codes, documentation or inspection process. He explained we were able to gain entry to one of them alongside law enforcement and able to complete the inspection – but added that it could become a legal problem if the Tennant decided to sue- possibly involving PFD. He just wanted the board to be aware.

2. Board Chair Report

Chairman Rowlinson advised the board that he had chatted with Chief Morgan and there were 3 new Firewise Communities, one of them being his PCC community. Congratulations and thank you Chief Morgan and all involved, great work.

VI. Future Meeting Dates: April 17, 2023

VII. Announcements

AFDA training in July in Glendale, Chief is asking anyone who wants to attend please let him know so they can reserve rooms.

Agenda Items;

1. Property- timeline, issues, solutions
2. Approval of 2 executive session minutes.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins