

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board  
**July 17, 2023**  
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 5:00pm**

**Roll Call of Board Members; Present- John Rowlinson Carla Bowen, Wayne Booher and Ben Borrego**

Administration present; Attorney Bill Whittington remotely and Chief Jim Morgan, Asst. Chief Richard Wallace, Gabe Buldra (JVG), and Karen Robbins,

**1. 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 June 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Approval of Warrants paid in June 2023

Carla Bowen made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

**III. Public Hearing in consideration of adoption of the proposed 2023-2024 Budget.**

Budget was posted for required time.

Public Hearing began at 5:02 pm – There was no public questions or discussion.

Public Hearing Closed at 5:06 pm

**IV. Board Business**

**1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action Adoption of proposed tentative 2023/2024 Budget -**

All documents included in the packet. Gabe Buldra: the budget was posted for the required time, Chief Morgan confirmed no one had called to comment or complain. He gave a brief summary of key points – The 5% C.O.L.A. increase, a \$10,000.00 stipend for paramedics and an increase to Ambulance Revenue from IFT.s

Carla Bowen wanted to be clear on the point - administrative board had not raised the tax rate in 6 years, but with the economy and inflation, there simply is no choice. Gabe Buldra (JVG) explained that we are approving the budget with the premise to increase the property tax slightly and to look at refinancing the station and the property. There was minimal discussion, no questions.

Ben Borrego made a motion to approve and adopt the 2023/2024 fiscal budget, fee schedule, and wage scale as presented. Seconded by Wayne Booher. Motions passed unanimously 4-0.

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; appointment of vacant Board member position**

The vacant board position was posted in the newspaper for three weeks, the two previous applicants were invited back, only one of them reapplied, Mrs. Edith Webber. Mrs. Webber spoke to her qualifications and how she had hoped to be chosen for the board.

Wayne Booher made a motion to nominate Edith Webber to fill Mr. Lawes position as presented. Seconded by Carla Bowen. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Presentation of the June 23 Financial Reports**

Gabe Buldra gave a summary of the June financial reports. All reports are included in the board packet. Some highlights were;

Navajo County Revenue was under budget for the month of June by \$17,518.

Non-Levy revenue, and grants were all over budget for June. Wildland Fire was under by \$50,000.

Expenses were over budget probably due to wildland expenses and backfill for those who are out, all reimbursable from the State. Mr. Buldra reminded them that we not only get reimbursed for the personnel expenses, we also get reimbursed for equipment and vehicles. Even though we don't report on the budget we do use wildland money for capital expenses and replacement.

YTD revenue was over budget by \$372,141. Wildland for the year was over budget.

Grant Revenue for the year was under budget, due to timing of grants and invoicing.

YTD Expenses were also over budget by about \$942,000 with the biggest driver being wildland expenses across the board.

Total Cash was \$436 less than this time last year.

Percentages were; Personnel 79%, Ops 29%, Admin 6%, and Communication 3%.

Chief Morgan told them we have several deployments out currently. He reminded the board that typically this time of year tax payments are down slightly.

Carla Bowen made a motion to accept the June 2023 Financial Reports as presented.

Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Larson Land Purchase**

Latest update – property is in ESCROW. Surveyors should be finished by the end of the month estimating end July beginning of August.

No questions- no board action

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Wildland Fire and Forest Conditions**

Documents included in packet. Despite the lack of rain, we are still in Stage 1 restrictions and not moving to stage 2 at this time. We have had several local fires, we even had a small wildfire locally, across street from St 11, on Billy Creek at the end of Phipps Dr. This fire was human started – only about a quarter of an acre and had a reignition.

We will be watching the ERCs for changes in the upcoming weeks. Hopefully monsoons will be settled in by then.

Mr. Booher asked if we had an Arson Investigator for wildland, Chief Morgan told them for forest service it is, Rex Thompson. FBI is the tribal investigator and, in the county, proper it would be the sheriff's office and or the PD.

Informational only – no board action

- V. Personnel** *The board may vote to discuss this matter in executive session pursuant to A.R.S § 38-431.03 (A)(1) and (A) (3). Possibility of executive session, however, Chief Morgan said he had no problem with transparency to have discussion in open public.*

Boad Chairman briefly summarized the duties of the Fire Chief he reminded them about the many grants throughout the year. He briefly went through the evaluation process for the newer members.

Each Board member presented their personal evaluation of Chief Morgan's job performance, all exceeded expectations. There were no problems and all comments were extremely positive.

There was discussion about the Lifetime Achievement Award that Chief Morgan had just received and what a wonderful tribute it was for all of the hard work and dedication he has put forward throughout his career in fire service, he explained that it generated from the employees and it is a great honor.

Mr. Booher expressed concern over the evaluation paperwork and suggested maybe we could look at other options for the future.

Carla Bowen made the motion to accept the Fire Chief's contract dated from July 1, 2023 until June 30, 2025 as presented. Seconded by Wayne Booher. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

## **VI. Summary of Current Events**

### **1. Chief Report**

The report is included in packet –

Chief Morgan told the board that he and his wife cooked for “dinner with firefighters” that is auctioned every year for the bullfrog parade donations

He updated the board on the type 6 transmission issue and trying to get it repaired, how it is hard to get repairs with supply chain and the economy the way it is.

### **2. Board Chair Report**

Thank you to Rob Watson for his many years of service, we all hope his retirement goes well. We will all miss Captain Watson.

## **VII. Future Meeting Dates: August 21,2023**

## **VIII. Announcements**

Congratulations and thank you to Mrs. Edith Webber for her new role on our Fireboard. Reminder for her to take the open meeting law required class so she can participate in next month's meeting.

Agenda Items;

None at the time of the meeting.

**IX. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm

Respectfully Submitted

---

Karen Robbins

Approved