

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
June 19, 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, Ernie Lawes submitted his resignation

Administration present; Attorney Bill Whittington and Chief Jim Morgan Virtually, present 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 May 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Approval of Warrants paid in May 2023

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

III. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Action re: Accepting Ernest Lawes Resignation

June 8 Fire Chief and Board Chairman received a letter of resignation for Ernie Lawes, citing sale of his home and moving to the Valley to aid family. Direction to staff to notify previous applicants - then post in the newspaper for any additional interested parties.

John Rowlinson made the motion to accept Mr. Lawes' resignation from the fire board in good standing as submitted, to thank him for his service and valuable contribution. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

John Rowlinson made the motion to direct staff to reach out to the two previous applicants and publish the vacancy in the newspaper until June 30th 2023. Seconded by Carla Bowen, Motion passed unanimously 4-0

2. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Appointment of Board Clerk

Ben Borrego made a motion to nominate Wayne Booher as clerk of the board. Seconded by Carla Bowen. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

3. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Presentation of May Financial Reports

Gabe Buldra gave a summary of the May financial report. All reports included in the board packet.

Some highlights were;

Navajo County Revenue, Non-Levy, Wildland and Grant Revenue were all under budget for the month of May.

Expenses were over budget probably due to personnel expenses, OT wages and worker's compensation payment for the covid premium FY2022.

YTD revenue was over budget driven by wildland. Grant Revenue for the year was under budget, due to timing of grants and invoicing.

YTD Expenses were also over budget with the biggest driver being Personnel via wildland expenses. Vehicles/Equipment and Travel/training were also over – all due to wildland expenses.

Total Cash was almost ½ million less than last year. Keep in mind we have a slower start to our wildland season.

Percentages were; Personnel 79%, Ops 12%, Admin 6%, and Communication 3%. Which is still acceptable

Wayne Booher made a motion to accept the May 2023 Financial Reports as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Adoption of tentative 2023-2024 budget**

Gabe Buldra gave a summary of the proposed budget 2023-2024, all documents included in the packet, last meeting was a detailed run down of the budget items. Mr. Buldra told the board the tax rate increase would be approximately \$38.90 average per home owner and would allow room for future increases and a balanced budget. Discussion about 8.3million dollar balanced budget with a .17 cent levy increase or \$3.35 tax rate.

Wildland revenue does not count towards bottom line, however if we do have a good season the money goes towards our capital replacement.

Discussion about civilian EMTs doing interfacility transports for alternative revenue.

Discussion about 5% C.O.L.A. increase for all employees and 3% merit increases for those who are eligible. Most folks are topped out and are not eligible merit increases.

Carla Bowen asked if the labor group is on board with the amounts, Chief Morgan told them yes.

Discussion about dispatch costs. Carla Bowen asked if service had improved. Asst. Chief Wallace told her we have meetings to discuss improvements. They have come a long way from where we started, there is always room for improvement. Chief Morgan talked about dispatch getting new consoles which will improve the service as well as trying to train dispatcher as EMDs that can give instructions on the phone during the dispatch to help with patient care - a crucial component for patient survival. They are having personnel hiring problems like the rest of public service.

Carla Bowen noted if the budget is balanced and everything is good then she feels confident to vote.

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

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Adoption of PSPRS Pension Funding Policy for the 2023/2024 Fiscal Year**

Chief Morgan; This is a requirement for all governmental employers to adopt a pension funding policy since 2019- it is also a part of the annual budgeting process. There was limited discussion about this policy. Wayne Booher asked about PSPRS unfunded liability. Mr. Buldra told him all fire and police have this liability. Tier 1 and 2 are the older established personnel that are siloed and tier 3 includes the newest employees and is system wide.

Ben Borrego made the motion to adopt the PSPRS Funding Policy as presented. Seconded by Wayne Booher. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

6. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Updates on Larson Family Trust Land Purchase**

Chief Morgan, we have been actively working on purchase for the Larson property. Mr. Larson was very receptive and has accepted our agreement. The Ernest Money check was signed tonight and is ready for delivery, the purchase is moving along. Documents are included in this packet for review and signature.

Attorney Bill Whittington suggested the board make a new action to engage the contract.

Carla Bowen made the motion to grant Chief Morgan the authority to sign the final purchase agreement for the Larson Family Trust, 13.74 acres. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

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

Documents included in the packet. We currently are at a level 2 preparedness. Conditions are starting to get a little concerning with no moisture in the forecast until well after the 4th of July. Pinetop has already had a small brush fire on Buck Springs Rd and things are drying out. Informational only – no board action.

8. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Fire Chief's Contract renewal.**

Discussion about Chief Morgan's contract and review. The board decided to postpone any action until next board meeting on July 17, 2023, possibility of executive session. Chief Morgan said he has no problem with transparency if they do not enter into executive session. No board action until future meeting.

IV. Summary of events

1. Chief Report

The report is included in packet –
Carla Bowen thanked Chief Morgan for the Wildland Fire Report

2. Board Chair Report

Great response for the Buck Springs Fire – he was really impressed how quickly firefighters from PFD, forestry and Police were on it and extinguished it. He thanked everyone involved.

V. Future Meeting Dates: July 17, 2023

VI. Announcements

Chief Morgan gave a brief summary of a technology innovation he and Fire Marshal Berlin had attended. It is a new research development for electricity in homes concerning wildland fires, it alerts to electrical fire hazards and utility hazards as well as power surges. He said the technology had already prevented wildland and seemed extremely effective. The company that is doing it is Whisker Labs – “Ting”, this was installed in over 300,000 homes and looks extremely promising. He said the NFPA class they attended was mostly codes and prevention but they were getting a lot out of it.

Ben Borrego gave an update about a possible fund raiser golf tournament he is trying to get scheduled between PLCC and WMCC. He will get with all involved and hopefully get the information to our public information officers for advertisement. The tournament would be in 2024, he is very hopeful. Money could possibly help fund the Fallen Firefighter Val Reidhead Memorial Scholarship.

Chief Wallace, our department will be busy with the Bullfrog loop parade, the July 4th parade and fireworks show. If anyone wants a parking pass for fireworks in Show Low, they just need to contact staff for one. They are 1 per vehicle for superior parking. Timber Mesa Fire and Medical has been gracious enough to include our district.

AFDA training in July in Glendale, Wayne Booher and Carla Bowen are the board members who will attend.

Agenda Items;

1. Budget hearing and approval
2. Property update
3. Wildland Fire updates

VII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins