

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
February 26, 2024
Pinetop Fire District Station 12
Video & Conference Available
1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: Clerk Wayne Booher, called the meeting to order at 5:05pm

Roll Call of Board Members; Present-Wayne Booher, Edi Webber, Carla Bowen and Ben Borrego. Jon Rowlinson excused

Administration present; Chief Jim Morgan, Asst. Chief Richard Wallace, Gabe Buldra (JVG), Bill Whittington and Karen Robbins. Guest speakers, Nick Dodd from Raymond James, Paul Gales – shareholder and bond council from Greenberg Traurig LLP, and Paul Bentz from High Ground, Inc. community engagement.

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 January 2024 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Approval of Warrants paid in January 24

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

III. Personnel

1. Badge Pinning

a. Louis Mirabelli

Firefighter Mirabelli was present for pinning.
He was pinned by Chief Morgan

Firefighter Mirabelli is active AF Reserve and also brings many years of service to the district, including rural metro and TMFMD- thank you for your service.

IV. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Presentation of the January 23 Financial Reports

All reports were included in the board packet. Gabe Buldra (JVG) gave a quick summary of the January 2024 financial reports. Some highlights were;
Navajo County Revenue and property tax collection were slightly over budget for January.
Non-Levy Revenue was over and Grant revenue was slightly under, due to timing

Expenses for January were over budget as well as grant expenses probably due to the SHSGP Award.

Managerial Costs were over budget driven by Station 12 communication-tower costs.
Buildings and Land expenses were also over which were driven by Station Supplies.

Year to date Revenue was over budget having to do with the tax overage and Wildland deployments which were very successful during the recent season.

Year to date Expenses were over as well coinciding with wildland deployments.

Total Cash was \$436,063 more than this time last year.

Percentages; Personnel 77%, Ops 15%, Admin 6%, and Communication 2%.

There was some discussion about the assessed valuation and Chief Morgan gave a summary of several new construction projects in the district which will ultimately affect our future tax valuations.

Mr. Booher asked if our personnel percentages were in line with other districts, Mr. Buldra explained that districts who run over 90% personnel, in his experience would be concerning. PFD's highest was 82% in the past and that was due to wildland deployments OT and backfill.

Ben Borrego made the motion to accept the December 2023 financial reports as presented. Seconded by Edi Webber. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Update on seeking bonding opportunities for District fixed capital project.**

The presentation was included in the packet. Nick Dodd from Raymond James gave the presentation about what we should expect in the coming weeks/months of seeking bond opportunities. Discussion about the process and language employees should consider when in public. Paul Gale also gave a brief summary about district employees and board being very careful and presenting factual information, employees using appropriate remarks on and off duty. Paul Benz gave a presentation of strategy – Elections and timeline along with public relations and strategic communications. It was a great presentation from all three gentlemen, very informative. Copies of the presentation are available.

There was board discussion about educating the public concerning our tax rate and how to present facts that would matter to them. Discussion about possibly paying off the debt after 10 years.

Carla Bowen has worked with them in the past had nothing but good things to say about their services.

Edi Weber questioned success with other fire districts. Schools were questionable with older public. Public safety usually has a better record for success. They gave examples of successful fire district bond elections in Arizona. Question about the recent failure of BR School bond. The gentlemen told the board probably 2 reasons – timing and the elderly demographic not being invested in the schools, they emphasized how important timing is and the general election being a plus.

This is informational only at this point – more to follow.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Purchase of grant funded Portable and Mobil radios not to exceed \$91,200.00**

Chief Morgan summarized the grant process for radios. The board voted to accept the grant award on October 16, 2023. Chief compiled three quotes from vendors and he recommends using White Mountain Communications, they had the lowest proposal and we should support local business.

This project has been going on for approximately 8 years. It is worth noting that this grant is fully funded and there is no match from district. We will execute the purchase and seek reimbursement.

Edi Weber made the motion authorizing staff to purchase all hazard mobile and portable radios from White Mountain Communications not to exceed the amount of \$91,200.00 inclusive of shipping and taxes as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Purchase of a type 2 ambulance through Republic EVS utilizing the HGAC joint purchase contract not to exceed \$110,296.99**

We have identified the need for another ambulance, a type 2 Ambulance to aid in our IFT (inter-facility transports). We are looking at a van style 4x2 ambulance we would use especially for IFT transports. Our IFT transports have increased our call volume and thus long distances are taking a toll on our Type 1, 4x4 ambulances. This vehicle would help save us in the future with capital and vehicle maintenance for the ambulances that are currently racking mileage and wear and tear. These type 11 van style ambulances are use it and dispose of it type of vehicles. The build time for a new Type 11 ambulance is 4-6 months – but if we decide to approve purchase today, we can take delivery in April of this year and it won't show up on budget until 24-25. We will purchase through a JPC – all the footwork done and savings revealed.

Wayne Booher asked if we are adding or replacing ambulances? Chief Morgan told him –we are adding to fleet. Ben Borrego asked how many of our current ambulances are 4x4? Chief Morgan; all of our current ambulance fleet is 4x4 the new 4x2 Van primarily would be IFT, weather permitting, if bad weather we would err on the side of safety and send a 4x4.

Carla Bowen made the motion authorizing the fire chief to execute a purchase agreement with Republic EVS for the purchase of one (2) 2023 Ford Transit 4x2 Medix Specialty Type 11 Ambulance not to exceed \$110,296.99 excluding taxes and shipping. Seconded by Edi Webber. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Board Selection for 25-26 budget committee**

Annual budget committee - board selection. Carla Bowen commented that it is very educational and provides a better understanding of fire district operations if the newest members participate. Ben Borrego told them when he was a new member he attended and found it to be very helpful. Edi Webber and Wayne Booher agreed to be the two board representatives.

This is a non-vote item

6. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Renewal of Sunstate Informational Technology Service Agreement.**

Sunstate has partnered with PFD for about 6 years, they have helped manage our growth and have improved our tech services. We are seeking approval for the new contract. Stuart Hensley was present to give a summary and overview of the services and tech they would be providing to Pinetop Fire District. Chief Morgan explained that we probably would purchase our own equipment and servers through them and they would continue to provide the high-level IT services, diagnostics, service to equipment and servers, backups and protection to all district technology.

Ben made the motion to authorize the fire chief to execute an IT service agreement with Sunstate Technologies to include outright hardware equipment purchase in the amount of \$105,435.76 and monthly service maintenance fee of \$4,865.96 as presented. Seconded by Edi Webber. Motion passed unanimously 4-0

V. Summary of Current Events

1. Chief Report

Chief Morgan gave another overview of the IFT program and how successful it is becoming – He estimates possibly \$226,000 annually after expenses. He explained that the goal is to hire some civilian EMTs fulltime. He touched on the general wage incentives to keep them and be more competitive with our neighboring districts. There was some discussion about the Critical Care aspect of transports and how that might help our revenue.

He told the board that the arsonist in Vernon had been caught and that Chief Berlin would be aiding in the investigation.

2. Board Chair Report – none Chairman was excused and Mr. Booher had nothing to report.

VI. Future Meeting Dates: March 25th 2024

VII. Announcements;

Annual Wildfire Classes are scheduled in March. The WUI meeting is also scheduled 24 thru the 29th.

Meeting was adjourned at 7 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins