

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
October 16, 2023
Pinetop Fire District Station 12
Video & Conference Available
1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: Sitting Chairman Clerk Wayne Booher called meeting to order at 5:00pm

**Roll Call of Board Members; Present- Wayne Booher, Ben Borrego and Edie Webber
John Rowlinson Carla Bowen were not present.**

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

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 September 2023 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Approval of Warrants paid in September 2023

Edi Webber made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 3-0

III. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Presentation of the September 23 Financial Reports

Gabe Buldra gave a summary of the September 2023 financial reports. All reports were included in the board packet. Some highlights were;

Navajo County Revenue was at \$500,426 which was over budget for the month of September by \$186,864.00.

Non-Levy revenue was \$257,463 which was under budget for September by about \$45,197.

Wildland was actually over budget by \$43,127--and Grant Revenue was under by \$56,840
Ambulance is under budget by approximately \$24,000.

Expenses for September were \$675,829 which was over budget by \$107,104, this is due to personnel over by \$41,598 driven by wildland,

Meetings and travel/training is over by \$33,021 also driven by wildland fire. Grant expenses is also over budget by \$42,493 due to timing of the ICS purchase.

Year to date Revenue is \$1566,150 which is over budget by \$274,290.

Year to date Expenses were \$2,027,628 which is \$251,473 over budget

Total Cash is at \$2,274,188 which is \$459,901 less than this time last year.

Percentages were; Personnel 76%, Ops 16%, Admin 5%, and Communication 1%.

Capital Assets increased while liabilities are down,
There was discussion about the wildland billing process, how it was supposed to facilitate clean billing and faster payments, which both seem problematic. We have received another \$77,000 in wildland payments this week.

Ben Borrego made the motion to accept the July 2023 Financial Reports as presented.
Seconded by Edi Webber. Motion passed unanimously 3-0

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Authorizing the fire chief to enter into a grant agreement for Land Mobile Radio System equipment through Arizona Department of Homeland Security in the amount of \$62,400.00**

Chief Morgan explained that this is an Arizona Department of Homeland Security - joint grant with TMFMD for Land Mobile Radio Project for improvement of communications. We were awarded the joint LMR project SHSGP regional project grant and we have been continuing to improve our communication capabilities since Chief Morgan took his position and probably before. We would receive 4 mobiles and 12 portables split between. We would be reimbursed as soon as we get the radios purchased, paid for and submitted. There were some questions about the purchase cost, chief Morgan explained the grant process. Mr. Booher asked if the other partners were P-25 compliant, Chief explained the neighboring counties and told the board that PFD is not completely compliant, but that is the system, we are constantly trying to become compliant. Dispatch is actually remodeling their system and they will then be compliant, all 6 towers we all use are compliant it is just a process to become that way. He told them that the Darren Reed incident showed all of the deficiencies to all agencies that responded because there were agencies that were unable to communicate.

Edi Webber made the motion authorizing the fire chief to execute subrecipient agreement 23-AZDOHS-HSGP-230106-01 accepting grant funds for communication improvements in the amount of \$62,400.00 as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion carried unanimously 3-0.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Authorizing the Fire Chief to enter into a grant agreement for Joint Microwave Radio and Data Tower equipment through Arizona Department of Homeland Security in the amount of \$50,000.**

Chief Morgan; this is the joint grant we were awarded for the microwave and Radio project partially funded through SHSGP for regional radio communication improvements.

Our repeaters are over 20 years old; we previously didn't have the microwave element that would build redundancy in communication and add data coverage, we now have that capability. A Question about repairs and maintenance – Chief told them that any costs that come up in the future for maintenance or upkeep would factor in to future capital budget items. The Sheriff's office may be interested in joining and we just found out that the Cell tower that was trying to go in across the Street from St 11 may want to attach themselves to our project because theirs was in the process of being defeated. We would only enter into an agreement with them if it did not impact public safety at all, public safety comes first and foremost. PFD met with Pinetop-Lakeside today to discuss options. St 11 tower is just finishing the environmental study. If we had additional interests – it would cut down on our costs.

Our current equipment is 10-13 yrs. old and as stated - not fully P-25 compliant. This is not fully fundable through the grant therefore we will look for other means of financial assistance.

Ms. Webber made the motion authorizing the fire chief to execute subrecipient agreement 23-ADOHS-HSGP-23106-02 accepting grant funds for Microwave Radio and Data communication improvements in the amount of \$50,000.00 as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 3-0

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Updates on Larson Family Trust Land Purchase**

Pinetop Fire District finally owns the property at 324 W White Mountain Blvd, we have begun to make improvements and secure the utilities in our name. We are waiting to hear about the grant but Chief remains confident. We will be fixing up the living quarters and getting things ready for the seasonal housing and storage to meet our many immediate needs. We will be working on the easement issues for access to the property and it will benefit the city as well as the Martinez group for their needs. We may be looking a bond in our next phase as we are looking at about \$1000.00 a square foot to build our wildland response station. Ms. Webber told the chief we should gage the mood of the voters if we are going to entertain a possible bond election in the future.

This is informational only – no board action

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Discuss the advantages of refinancing the current lease purchase agreement through National Bank of Arizona to include land purchase noted in item 4.**

Discussion to refinance ½ or \$750,000.00 of the property sale with National Bank of Arizona to bolster our capital reserves which- will be at an unacceptably low level directly after the cash purchase of the Larson property. Gabe Buldra (JVG) explained the process including to refinance the C.O.P.S. with Station 11 at a rate of 4.7% extending our loan by approximately 4 years – being a 10-year term, about \$30,000 a year for the next ten years. This will help to maintain cash reserves for management of long-term debt and capital asset funding while maintaining the levy rates for tax payers. The longer we wait the more chance of interest rates going higher. We had hoped to have the information from Zion’s bank before the meeting but it takes longer when there are two collaterals involved, St 11 and the property normally banks are dealing with one.

We probably will have a quick “teams meeting” to get the documents signed and approved. Chief will notify the board members if the paperwork is received.

There was some discussion about the refinance process and the interest rate.

This is informational only – no board action today.

IV. Summary of Current Events

1. Chief Report

The report is included in packet –

2. Board Chair Report

V. Future Meeting Dates: November 20, 2023

VI. Announcements; AFDA in January – Let Chief Wallace know if you would like to attend, so he can reserve a room for you

Meeting was adjourned at 5:41 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins

Approved