

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
March 18, 2024
Pinetop Fire District Station 12
Video & Conference Available
1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: John Rowlinson called the meeting to order at 5:00pm

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

Administration present; Chief Jim Morgan, Asst. Chief Richard Wallace, Gabe Buldra (JVG), and Karen Robbins. Atty Bill Whittington was available by telephone

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 February 2024 Meeting Minutes**
- 2) Approval of February 2024 Warrants paid**

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

III. Board Business

1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Presentation of the February 2024 Financial Reports

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

Expenses for February were slightly over budget with communication and IT being the probable cause – new phone system setup for St 10.

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 \$4,300,272 which is \$363,836 more than this time last year.

Percentages; Personnel 77%, Ops 14%, Admin 6%, and Communication 3%.

Chief Morgan told them he is expecting 2 grants to come in, the SHSGP and the SFA Fuels Grant, they are currently chugging through the process.

Wayne Booher made the motion to accept the February 24 financial reports as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 5-0

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

At the last meeting we met the team and discussed a direction. We are currently talking about building a two functional Station, All Hazard response and Wildland Fire, housing Admin offices, storage, also addressing– fleet repair site. It would be single floor since – elevators and ADA would add expense. The team will be looking at funding opportunities – through bond and any possible additional funding. Discussion about the taxing structure, and the final amount we would be able to request in the bond process.

There was discussion about the ISO business ratings and possible future purchase of a ladder truck if housing in the district continues as planned with 3-4 floor structure section 8 homes. Currently there are many housing projects including the possible Section 8 housing by St 10. If we were to seek a lower I.S.O. and were in need of a ladder truck, it could throw our planning off slightly. Things to think about. Discussion.

Chief and staff are also talking to Architects for direction on Fire Station 10. Discussion about the cost of construction per square foot for business. Maybe getting a top dollar amount and having the contract signed. There were discussions and concerns about the concept of escalation of cost. This is an active and ongoing discussion.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Considering District Name Change.**

Discussion about the request to change district name to add “medical”. Chief reminded them that the legal name for the district currently is Pinetop Volunteer Fire Department. We need to change the legal name definitely, and if we are even thinking about changing the branding we should do it all at once. There is cost involved, conservatively around \$25,000, and a lot of work. If we do change the name the board feels it should be Pinetop Fire and Medical as keeping Fire before Medical retains the district legacy. Mr. Booher feels we should to remedy any confusion about what we do, Ms. Webber is adamant that we don’t need to change the name – she feels that people know we do ambulance transports, she feels Pinetop Fire District is a good name. Discussion about timing, board decided it would be best to have a resolution drafted by legal and then entertain changing the name around January 2025 after the bond hearing. Attorney Bill Whittington agreed to draft a resolution for board review. The thought was it should be Pinetop Fire and Medical District, retaining fire before medical. No board action at this time, discussion only.

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: 2024/2025 budget process**

Chiefs and staff had a preliminary meeting to get a feel about upcoming meetings and who would be on the committee from labor. Next meeting will be April 9, 2024 at station 11 break room at 1:30 pm with full committee and the representative from JVG, probably Gabe Buldra. We should have some good solid numbers next meeting for a good start, pension liability, worker’s compensation, salaries and budget requests. Chief Morgan told them that our main goal is to not raise our tax rate.

There was a question about Capital on hand, Mr. Buldra told them currently we have 4 million capital reserves, 3.2 million cash on hand. Carla Bowen asked about cash for capital purchase and Mr. Buldra told them approximately \$800,000.00 in the capital fund balance. Mr. Buldra told them to keep in mind a type 1 is almost a million dollars now and a ladder truck would be over a million dollars, we would have a better picture with a new fire station and bond but for now we need to be conservative with the budget money, we are good financial standing – we just need to be wise in our decisions.

This is for discussion only – no board action.

IV. Summary of Current Events

1. Chief Report

Chief Morgan explained that PFD hosted the White Mountain Fire Restriction Meeting. Revisit and meet again on April 15, 2024. He explained that it is a meeting of all the local entities that discuss the current and immediate future of wildland fire.

On March 13th we had the tabletop meeting – they had recommendations for evacuation, such as signs to direct public and keeping the forest roads open and passable, possibly a portable cell tower.

There was discussion about the meeting and evacuations. Chief said we were looking at options, such as software – Genesis which would evacuate in blocks instead of everyone trying to leave at once. He told them that Porter Mtn where all the cell towers are – has never been mitigated and the forest service who also had a seat at the table said their budget had been cut by 70%.

Chief Morgan told the board that he, his wife and Allison Moseley had participated in the Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range, in New Mexico, the marathon is 26.2 miles and one of the top 30 in the US. Chief Morgan ran the marathon and his wife Julie and Captain Moseley participated also. Congratulations to them for doing and finishing.

V. Future Meeting Dates: April 21, 2024

VI. Announcements;

The WUI meeting is also scheduled 24 thru the 29th.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:03 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins