

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board

**October 21, 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, Carla Bowen, Edie Webber and Ben Borrego. Wayne Booher was excused.**

Administration present: Gabe Buldra (JVG), Chief Jim Morgan, and Karen Robbins were present for the meeting. Asst Chief Richard Wallace and Attorney Bill Whittington were available by phone or computer.

**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 2024 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Approval of September 2024 Warrants paid.

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

**III. Board Business**

**1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; September 24 Financial Reports**

All reports are in the board packet. Gabe Buldra (JVG) gave a quick summary of the September 2024 financial reports. Some highlights were.

Navajo County Revenue and property tax collection were under budget.

Non-levy revenue – wildland billing over budget

Ambulance Revenue is currently under budget.

Expenses for September were over budget by \$204,128.

Personnel Expenses are over budget by \$140,558 driven by wildland fire deployments, wages and OT

Vehicles and Equipment over budget, driven by wildland fire and timing of maintenance contracts.

Travel, meetings and training are over budget \$52,963 driven by wildland expenses.

Managerial cost expense was over by \$12,665 driven by increase in audit fees.

Year to date Revenue is \$1,439,762 which is \$144,504 over budget.

Ambulance revenue is under budget \$81,977. There is concern over the billing company. being behind with the billing.

Wildland is over budget by \$314,746.

Grant Revenue is under \$40,691.

Year to date Expenses were \$2,517,002 which is \$675,566 over budget driven by Personnel Expenses

Total Cash is \$1,804,760 which is \$675,566 less than last year at the same time.

Percentages; Personnel 77% Ops 14%, Admin 5%, and Communication 3%.

Chief Morgan explained that the ambulance company has begun actively billing at this point. We are having monthly meetings to keep on top of it. We should start seeing money come in by the next board meeting.

Ben Borrego made the motion to accept the September 2024 financial reports as presented. Seconded by Carla Bowen. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Authorizing the fire chief to enter into a grant agreement for Land Mobile Radio System equipment through Arizona Dept of Homeland Security in the amount of \$60,900.00.**

Land Mobile Radio Grant from Arizona Dept. of Homeland Security. This grant will continue to improve interoperability communication problems we experience in this area. This project will continue the multi-phase implementation approach and will allow end users to communicate with other public safety entities at the P-25 level. This is a non-matching grant that we are partnering with TMFMD. PFD and TMFMD will receive two mobile radios and ten handheld portables, once the radios are purchased, we will be reimbursed. The award letter was included in the packet for review. See Item 3 the motion will follow item 3.

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 \$41382.00.**

We were awarded this grant that is partially funded through SHSGP for regional radio communication improvements more specifically – microwave radio and data communication improvements. The LMR radio equipment is 10-13 years old and not P-25 compliant. Our radio repeaters are over 20 years old. This is part of our Tower project and will provide Microwave Radio on the Tower at St 12. The project utilizes two budget cycles allowing us to plan out the funding match. You will see a future agenda item authorizing the purchase amount. We will be looking for partners to assist with funding for the project progresses.

Carla Bowen made the motion to Authorize the Fire Chief to execute subrecipient agreement 24-AZDOHS-HSGP-240105-02 accepting grant funds for communication improvements in the amount of \$60,900.00 as presented, and to authorize the Fire Chief to also execute subrecipient agreement 24-AZDOHS-HSGP-24105-01 accepting grant funds for Microwave Radio and Data communication improvements in the amount of \$41,382.00 as presented. Edi Webber seconded. Motions passed unanimously 4-0.

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Award High Desert Communication the installation contract for the microwave communication towers at Station 11 and 12 in the amounts of \$108,000.00 and 112,530.00, respectively.**

Chief Morgan, there are bids to consider for the construction of the microwave towers at Station 11 and Station 12. High Desert Communication had the lowest bid, and the Chief is seeking authorization for the construction. Adding these towers will be beneficial to public safety in the area. There was some discussion about the bids, it was agreed that High Desert was the best company for the two jobs.

Ben Borrego made the motion authorizing the fire chief to execute the High Desert Communication quote for Station 11 not to exceed \$108,080.00 and Station 12 not to exceed \$112,530.00 as presented. Seconded by Edie Webber. Motion carried 4-0.

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Fatal Structure Fire at 3400 block of Blacksmith Trail.**

Discussion about the fatal fire on blacksmith trail and resident push back about our response. Chief Morgan explained that there were several dispatch breakdowns during the call – he talked about the problem calling 911 with a Cell Phone- jumping from 2 different entities- and calls with incorrect address information, Mr. Rowlinson commented about calling 911 from a land line and how that speeds up dispatch by immediately providing the address of the caller. There was discussion about the same street names in the local cities of the White Mountains, problems, and potential problems.

Our Firefighters performed on a professional level even with the initial 911 problems, dispatch, and address problems. Our hearts go out to the family for their loss.

We will study the response, find improvements and train harder, every situation is a learning situation.

**Note: also included in Chief's report for discussion is the Grey Fox Fire.**

The fire at Grey Fox. There were rumors that ST 12 is not staffed year-round and is used only for training. All these things are rumor driven and not accurate, Station 12 is staffed 24 hours a day with ambulance crew and 4-5 days a week with command staff. There were questions about our burn permit process and if rules had been followed. District has been working to correct misinformation.

This is for discussion only, no board action.

6. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Station 10 bond election update**

Chief Morgan informed the board of the efforts to promote the Station 10 bond. He explained that there seemed to be a lot of positive feedback. There was discussion about the meetings and information being put forth and all agreed it seemed very positive so far, the social media blasts are very effective as are the telephone texts, and there are signs all over town. There was still some work to do before the Election on Nov 5. Chief Morgan and everyone have been working hard to inform the public and there are upcoming events that PFD will be attending, to additionally get information out. There is more information about Chief Morgan's schedule for the bond in the Chief's report, he has been very busy.

This is informational only – no board action.

**IV. Personnel**

1. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; vote to go into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A) (1) for personnel matters re: Fire Chief Jim Morgan's annual evaluation review.**

John Rowlinson told the board that Chief Morgan requested public discussion. Then he added that we would have to table the discussion until the next meeting because not all the board members filled out the evaluation as of board meeting date.

Discussion tabled until November 18, 2024, meeting.

**V. Summary of Current Events**

**1. Fire Chief Report**

Chief Morgan told the board that Omar Apodaca was doing his Engine Boss qualification review so he could become an Engine Boss. Omar does a lot of work with our technical rescue training such as Dive Team and Rem Team. Once he is an Engine boss he could go out on fires in charge of a crew. Congratulations Omar. Chief Morgan also discussed the DFFM money problems that might affect PFD on reimbursement for wildland fire money. He filled the board in on the EMS finances and told them we had a successful meeting with the billing representative. We are hoping to see money coming in before the next meeting.

He also told the board that he attended the National Wildfire Cohesive Strategies Conference in Atlantic City. Chief Morgan felt like he was successful in getting information out nationally about the unique problems we face here in the white mountain region. It was an honor to sit on that committee and the chief was the only western fire chief asked to participate. Chairperson Rowlinson congratulated Chief Morgan for the honor to attend and told him as always, the district is very proud of his hard work.

**VI. Announcements.**

Stephen Fuller Retired – we are hoping to have a retirement party for him in November.

On agenda Fire Chief evaluation

Update on Blacksmith Fire – Ms. Bowen would like to know the official cause of the fire.

Next Board Meeting is November 18, 2024

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm

Respectfully Submitted

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Karen Robbins