

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board
January 13, 2025
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 5:02pm

Roll Call of Board Members, Present John Rowlinson, Edie Webber, Ben Borrego and Carla Bowen

Administration Attending: Chief Jim Morgan, Asst Chief Richard Wallace, Karen Robbins and Attorney Bill Whittington.

1. Call to the Public

With the continuing worry about the fires in California and the lack of moisture here in the White Mountains, Mrs. Yvonne Matice came to express her concerns about the upcoming fire season. She is concerned about hydrants-, water, evacuation exits, and wildland fires.

Carla Bowen made a point of order that the board could not comment on any of the call to the public comments unless they are added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Ben Borrego made a motion to move the Chief's report to the top of the agenda so they could discuss matters in the report which may be an interest to the public and pertaining call to the public. Second, by Carla Bowen. Motion carried 4-0.

Chief Report

1. Fire Chief Report – again the deployments in Payson and California

Chief Morgan- **wildland preparedness in firewise**. He gave examples of what Pinetop Fire has been doing to make our community a little safer if a wildland fire were to break out, pointing out IF the winds were as bad as they were in California (the Santa Annas') – it would be indefensible with our current forest conditions.

He reminded the board that our ISO rating, changing from 4 to 3, is quite an accomplishment, adding that we are hoping to work towards a 2 or better with the building of our Wildland Fire Station.

The private water companies in our area are not regulated by the state. Arizona water tends to be very cooperative and is regulated by the state. Empty and broken hydrants usually are picked up by water companies or the firefighters who both do inspections throughout the year, however fire hydrants are not regulated by the **fire districts**. Hydrant problems in Pinetop are hopefully in the past, we have better systems in place to catch those problems early. Firefighters and the local water companies do annual inspections and the local water companies manage their systems on a regular basis. Chief Morgan made the correction that the 6-inch main through Pinetop Proper was upgraded to twelve inches this year.

Chief Morgan explained that we have an IGA with local governments and Auto aid agreements with other fire districts in the area. He said that we all work together to fight fires here in the white mountains. If we are called on a structure or wildland fire – the auto aid districts are also included in that paging system.

He mentioned that people such as Mrs. Matice, should go to other board meetings and speak up – specifically the water company board meetings, City Council meetings and or HOA meetings. Unfortunately -as is the case in all communities, the public is usually silent until there is an event and then input after the fact.

He told the board that we currently have crews deployed to the Horton and California wildfires, an example of our readiness and willingness to work with other districts and fire departments.

He commented about our future Wildland Fire Facility—we are the only department in Arizona who will have such a commitment to the community.

Chief Morgan provided a couple of historical examples of industry lobbying and took away code application options such as a residential sprinkler in the new home building and where town and county managers wouldn't adopt a WUI code because of unproven ideology that the code and home hardening would drive away development. Voting is a major part of the problem, if we only have 30% of registered voters voting in the elections and the public doesn't attend our board meetings, or the council meetings, it is hard to garner change when there is no forward voice.

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 December 2024 Meeting Minutes – approved below.
- 2) Approval of December 2024 Warrants paid. Tabled until the February meeting. Chairperson Rowlinson pulled the Approval of warrants for next meeting February 24th due to early meeting date and incomplete Financial Reports available.

Ben Borrego made the motion to accept December 2024 minutes as presented. Second, by Edith Webber. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

III. **Board Business**

1. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: update on vacant Board Member Seat.**

Chief Morgan, the add is in the paper and on the white mountain independent website – it is posted at the district and on our website. This is the process; we are asking for a letter of interest and resume – we will have the information for consideration at the next board meeting. Hopefully, we will have generated some interest in community involvement.

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Presentation and approval of December Financial Reports.**

The financial reports are not complete at this early date, they will be available at the next meeting on February 24th, 2025.

Tabled until February 24th Board meeting.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Update to the Bond Sale Process**

Chief Morgan reviewed the process for the bond going forward. Lease purchase or bond rating, sale of the bonds and the position statement with legal counsel. There are prepared documents included in the board packets for review.

Chief Morgan submitted the application for the wildland response station approximately 3.3 million dollars from Congressional Spending Grant 2024.

There was a question concerning the grant we were expecting, specifically about 7.7 million dollars- Chief Morgan told them the latter was from the Congressional Spending Grant 2025, and it was not funded. We will proceed with what we have.

Chief Morgan will resubmit it if the grant is presented again.

No board action, information only.

IV. Summary of Current Events

1. ***Fire Chief Report – again the deployments in Payson and California (moved after “call to public”***

2. Chairperson Rowlinson “hopefully we will be prepared in the event of a wildland fire but unfortunately we cannot change the weather.”

V. Announcements.

Winter AFDA in Laughlin for anyone that needs statutory training. Dates are January 15-17
Chief Morgan was proud of the turnout for the employee appreciation party.

Next Board Meeting is February 24th, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Karen Robbins