

Regular Meeting of Pinetop Fire Board

**May 19, 2025**

Pinetop Fire District Station 12

Video & Conference Available

1845 S. Pine Lake Rd, Pinetop AZ 85935

Call the meeting to Order: Edie Webber called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

**Roll Call of Board Members, Present Edie Webber, Ben Borrego, Marcus Harding, and Steve Voldal. John Rowlinson by digital Conference. Note Mrs. Webber chaired the meeting.**

Administration Attending: Chief Jim Morgan, Asst Chief Richard Wallace, Karen Robbins, Gabe Buldra, Bill Whittington was available by telephone. Also, present video conference was Mr. Gerald Adams from Perlman Construction.

**1. Call 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.*

Approval of meeting minutes for April 2025

Approval of Warrants paid April 2025

Steve Voldal made the motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Ben Borrego. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**III. Board Business**

**1. Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Presentation and approval of April 2025 Financial Reports.**

Gabe Buldra present for financial reports. All reports are included in the May Board Packet for reference. Some highlights were.

Navajo County tax collection was slightly down due to timing of collections.

Non-Levy – Ambulance, fuels reduction and interest income were over budget and Wildland Revenue was down.

Total Expenses for March were over budget, also over budget were Grant expenses for the radios, personnel with lower-than-expected wildland activity. Travel meetings and training were under budget driven by lower employee training.

Year to date Revenue was over budget.

Wildland and Ambulance Revenue were also over budget.

Year to date Expenses were over budget driven by additional wildland deployments.

Total Cash at \$13,152,857 was more than last year by \$8,548,320 due to the GO Bond process.

Please refer to the board reports and any questions or concerns should be directed to Gabe Buldra or Sara Simonton, from the James Vincent Group.

Note: we are 100% budget spent for the year.

John Rowlinson made the motion to accept the 2025 April Financial reports as presented. Seconded by Edie Webber. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

2. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re: Provide direction to staff regarding the 2025-2026 Budget review process.**

Mr. Buldra gave a summary of the schedule for the budget process. He went through the Assessed Valuation and FDAT.

He told the board that the biggest increase this year was coming from unfunded liability with PSPRS pension program. PSPRS went from 24.16% to a 5% increase, about \$270,000.00 in money. There is a decrease in ASRS leaving Personnel at \$7,125,000.00 which is a 1-million-dollar increase. Health care also went up 4% and worker's compensation decreased slightly.

Mr. Buldra reminded the board that we have increased our employee roster; we have a mechanic and civilian EMTs. We are hoping to see a decrease in maintenance costs by the mechanic hire, but the Civilian EMT program needs to fund itself. He explained that we would have to do at least 1 IFT a day for the program to fund itself. We must be aware that the IFT program affects many accounts; wear and tear on the vehicles- tires, repairs, maintenance costs, wages, overtime, per-diem for meals on the trip, fuel, EMS supplies, the list goes on. Danny McNeil projected that we currently are doing about one ½ trips a day average, but we have had to turn down IFT transports because we didn't have a crew to take them. We are hoping to hire some fulltime 24-7 civilian EMS which is also driving up costs for the program.

Operations

Vehicles increased by about \$70,000. Wildland PPE and apparatus maintenance are trending over currently. With the Mechanic we should see that leveling off or going down now that all the vehicles are caught up for maintenance and repairs.

Communication is about the same, but dispatch fees rose slightly.

Travel and Training is trending downward; Captain Mosely has done an excellent job forecasting the training program.

We are still waiting on our EMS rate increase for transport, which would add an additional \$800.00 to each ambulance call, generating approximately \$400.00 per collection. We are hoping for at least by January an increase in charges. There are some holdups at DHS causing many districts to wait.

We probably need to increase our tax rate. Even with all the challenging work to get our budget balanced we are still short about \$193,000.00. Increasing our tax rate to ten or twelve cents more would allow us to balance our budget, we are not alone thinking of an increase in tax levy. Our neighbors have all had to increase their tax rates slightly to stay on top of things. We need to take care of our employees and maintain our exceptional service. Everything is more expensive, everyone is having to absorb increasing costs in their budgets.

There was a question about donations and Chief Morgan explained that White Mountain Summer Homes always has been very generous to our fire department. Donation funding has allowed us to do many good things; Christmas for underprivileged children, employee appreciation dinners, equipment and help for employees experiencing PTSD.

No further questions or comments.

John Rowlinson made the motion to consider increasing the tax levy no more than \$0.10 to balance the budget for 2025-2026. Seconded by Steve Voldal. Motion passed 3-1.

One did not vote. One voted no.  
Ben Borrego was excused at 6pm for a prior engagement.

3. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Selection of Contractor Manager at Risk for Fire Station 10 Complex.**

The district staff developed a statement of qualifications for publication for a CMAR process notifying contractors of the district desire to solicit proposals for consideration. We also created a committee for review and scoring. The committee completed the scoring process and recommended and discussed each proposal. Their recommendation is to go with CORE – and Mr. Gerald Adams was present for questions. Mr. Adams gave a summary of qualifications and said that he worked with each of the companies, Core, FCI and Lloyd. There was a question as to the work that had been completed by the companies, Mr. Adams gave them numbers with Core being the most experienced with Fire Station Builds including St 11.

John Rowlinson made the motion to recommend the acceptance of the CORE CMAR proposal as the contractor for the Fire Station 10 Complex project as presented. Seconded by Mr. Voldal. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

4. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Authorizing the Fire Chief to execute the full Architectural and Engineering agreement with Perlman Architects not to exceed \$1,396,744.50.**

Chief Morgan, Early years of planning didn't opt for the growth in Pinetop with needs for operations. For over 4 years the district has been actively planning for expanding needs in Pinetop Fire District so we can continue to provide our citizens with exceptional service. Perlman Architects has provided the district with services for the last two projects and has familiarity with the local built environment history. This will allow us to focus on the Wildland Response Station and Fire Station and start the ball rolling to begin a schedule that accommodates the grant award and performance period for the wildland station.

John Rowlinson made the motion to authorize the Fire Chief to execute and enter into a professional services agreement for full design and engineering architectural services not to exceed \$1,396,744.50 as presented with the pending review and approval upon language provided by the District's Attorney in agreement with Perlman. Seconded by Marcus Harding. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

5. **Discussion/Consideration/Possible Approval re; Wildfire Conditions**

Included in your packet is information on the current wildland fire conditions for our area- this is our annual update period. Included are the ERC's and we can see an increasing trend showing near maximum trend lines. The Chief updated the worsening conditions and explained the current rating at PL2. He told them about our area the slight change with the moisture we received and just up the road by Eager different scores and dryness. Small discussion about Stage 2 restrictions.

This is informational only – no board action.

IV. ***Summary of Current Events***

1. **Fire Chief Report** – Discussion about the Greer Fire Progression and current update. There was a question about lines around the fire vs. containment. Chief gave a summary of our crews and mod out on the fire.
2. Congratulations to Jimmy Meek and Ryan Carpenter for completing the Paramedic Program – they just have some testing and hours to complete.

**V. Announcements.**

AFDA is going to be July 14-18 in Glendale if anyone wants to attend.

Next Board Meeting is June 16, 2025

Meeting adjourned at 18:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted

---

Karen Robbins