

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District
Meeting Held July 21, 2011**

A Regular meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on July 21, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. at the Clarkdale Fire District Station #21, 895 First South Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.

Board of Directors:

Jim Elmer, Chairman
Seth Murphy, Clerk
Ron Ballatore
Bill Snyder, (Absent)
Jerry Brown (Attended by telephone)

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief
Brandon Nargessi, Captain
Jeff Richey, Engineer
Kenny Turner, Engineer
Matt Poe, Firefighter
Steve Smith, Firefighter
Joyce Driscoll, Admin Assistant/Finance Manager

Others Present: Kyla Rolfes, Debbie Lewis, Ed Mezulis.

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

ROLL CALL. Boardmember Snyder was absent. All other Boardmembers were present, including Boardmember Brown who attended by telephone. A quorum was present.

MINUTES – Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held June 23, 2011. Boardmember Murphy moved to approve the minutes. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC. Ed Mezulis, Verde Valley Firefighters Association, stated that he felt it was good that the fire districts are having discussions like this (referring to the VVFD Request agenda item), and discussing options in these challenging times.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Discussion and consideration of the Monthly Financial Report. Chief Moore reported that the June Financial Report is the final report of the fiscal year. The district has received 99.76% of the tax income and 91.32% of its budgeted income. He added that the District expended 86.34% of the budgeted expenses for the year, (excluding grant income and expenses).

Boardmember Brown moved to approve the financial report. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER REPORTS

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT – A report from the Chairperson on current events.
Chairperson Elmer stated the following:

- The July 4th event went very well, it was a good showing of the staff and their families. He was appreciative of the family members who helped.
- He noted that the Parade truck was repaired.
- He thanked the Chief for his perseverance in getting the ISO (Insurance Services Office) rating reduced. He stated that the taxpayers will benefit by this. He noted that improving the ISO rating and was promised when the district formed and that they have kept the promise.
- He thanked Engineer Kenny Turner, Engineer Matt Poe and Reserve Firefighter Stephen Poe for doing well in their paramedic class.
- He thanked the Chief for his accomplishments in improving his personal fitness goals.
- He thanked Firefighter Steve Smith for agreeing to work on grant applications and stated that he is confident that Firefighter Smith will do a good job.
- He thanked the personnel who helped Verde Valley Ambulance Company move into their new building.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – A report from the Fire Chief on current events. Chief Moore reported on the following:

- Community Development/Construction projects occurring in town, i.e. Spirit of Joy Church, Crossroads at Mingus, Mountain Gate, etc.
- Historic Downtown property owners are meeting to brainstorm ways to further economic development in town.
- The district's ISO rating (Property Protection Class) will be reduced from a 5 to a 4. It will be three or four months before the official letter is received.
- He has carried two cell phones for a number of years. He stated his desire to cancel the district cell phone service and for him to use his personal cell phone, with possible reimbursement for the district portion of the expense.

SHIFT REPORTS – Written monthly reports by personnel regarding day-to-day operations. No discussion.

ACTIVITY REPORTS – Written monthly reports regarding calls for service. No discussion.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE – Letters, news articles and other items of interest. No discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

PSPRS APPOINTMENT – Discussion and consideration of a resolution making an appointment to the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System Local Pension Board. Chairman Elmer stated that the District has been advertizing for a new PSPRS Local Pension Board applicant and only received one. Boardmember Ballatore moved to adopt Resolution 2011-03 appointing Tim Irwin to the Public Safety personnel Retirement System Local Pension Board with a term expiring June 30, 2015. Board Clerk Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS – Acknowledgement of Declaration of Interest forms received from District personnel (these forms identify organizations that personnel and their family members have an affiliation with that could potentially create a Conflict of Interest should the District conduct business with them). Chairman Elmer noted that he is also a Boardmember for Verde Valley Ambulance. Boardmember Ballatore moved to acknowledge the receipt of the Acknowledgement of the Declaration of Interest forms. Board Clerk Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VVFD Request – Discussion and consideration of a request by Verde Valley Fire District for assistance with administrative duties due to their fire chief vacancy.

Board Clerk Murphy declared a conflict of interest as he is an employee of Verde Valley Fire District and he did not participate in the discussion.

Chairman Elmer stated that on July 12th, Chief Doerksen of Verde Valley Fire District requested that the board allow him to be demoted to Assistant Chief, due to recent health issues in his family and because of the stress of his position. The Board accepted this request and began discussing potential options.

A representative of the Verde Valley Fire District Board met with Chief Moore about Clarkdale Fire District providing administrative leadership for Verde Valley Fire District (VVFD) for some period of time. Chairman Elmer continued by saying that from 2003 to 2006, VVFD provided a similar service to the Town of Clarkdale under an intergovernmental agreement. VVFD Chief Eberle and later Chief Doerksen assumed the role of Clarkdale Fire Chief until the formation of the fire district was completed. At that time it was expected that the two districts would merge into one. Since the mil rates were so far apart, merging was not an option, so the intergovernmental agreement was terminated and Clarkdale Fire District hired a Chief.

Chairman Elmer stated that his first concern is for the employees and the community. He stated that everything is going so well with the Clarkdale Fire District (CLFD) that he has questioned whether CLFD should get involved. However, Chairman Elmer stated, helping others is what we do, so it is something to consider. Chairman Elmer listed some talking points for the Board to discuss:

- The impact on staff
- Possible financial advantages
- Diversity
- Sharing of information between agencies
- Impact on the community

Chairman Elmer stated that should the district consider providing administrative assistance for VVFD, he suspects that Clarkdale residents will see some reduction in service, as currently there is usually administration staff present during normal working hours. He stated that it will require Chief Moore and Administrative Assistant Driscoll to spend a lot of time at VVFD. He stated that he does not want them to be overworked, which will impact their quality of life.

Boardmember Brown stated that he is under the impression that the reason the VVFD chief demoted was not just due to health issues, but that there were also personnel issues. If this is the case, he stated his concern for Chief Moore having to deal with those issues.

Chairman Elmer stated that the official word is that the VVFD Chief asked their board if he could move to the assistant chief position due to family health issues.

Boardmember Brown stated that CLFD's administration is one of the significant strengths of the district, and asked how diluting this leadership could be justified. He stated that he needs to know more about the process to understand how they can expect the administration to take on this larger district. He added that he has a huge problem with the concept, as he visualizes the concept. Boardmember Brown stated that should the board approve VVFD's request, the board would be asking Chief Moore to work under two authorities, and he believes this is a huge problem.

Board Chairman Elmer stated that VVFD's board chairman asked for an initial period of 6 months to a year as a trial time to see if it will work more permanently. Boardmember Brown referenced a previous board meeting where VVFD Chairman Shanks was promoting the idea of a fire authority. Boardmember Brown stated that he is open minded about moving towards an authority, even though he has these concerns. He stated that there may be some long-term benefits, but in the short-term he does not think that there is a benefit to make a change.

Chairman Elmer stated that the justification for agreeing to VVFD's request, if Chief Moore and Administrative Assistant Driscoll were in favor of it, would be the some opportunity for some professional growth. He stated that there is also the financial benefit, although there has been no discussion about how much. Chairman Elmer stated that his initial thoughts are that Chief Moore and Administrative Assistant Driscoll should receive additional compensation. He added that this is not the only avenue that the VVFD board is considering.

Boardmember Brown stated that if Chief Moore said we he wanted to go work for VVFD, then they would write him a great letter of recommendation. However, he feels asking him to serve two masters is asking a lot.

Boardmember Ballatore stated he is concerned that frequently when something like this is attempted, the small player gets lost in the shuffle, and in this instance the small player is CLFD. He stated that he is concerned for the community, and that it may be difficult for it to be equitable. He needs clarification on how the pay issue would get resolved i.e. what if the Chief works 75% of the time on VVFD projects and issues, and 25% on CLFD work, but he gets paid 50/50. Boardmember Ballatore stated that he is also concerned about the time frame of 12 to 18 months; he would prefer 3 to 6 months with the option for an extension.

Chairman Elmer stated that one thing discussed is that Chief Moore and Administrative Assistant Driscoll would have additional resources provided by VVFD, i.e. payroll, fire inspections, etc. There may be a problem if the VVFD employees who are expected to help CLFD, are upset by the change.

Chairman Elmer stated that it would be easier to provide administration for VVFD if there were not already any issues they were dealing with. He stated that it is too bad there is not an easier way to provide help, rather than this big step.

Boardmember Ballatore stated that Chief Moore and Administrative Assistant Driscoll are almost always at the station during business hours, more often than not they are both there. If anyone comes in, someone is there to talk to them. He wondered how that will sit with the

community. Chairman Elmer agreed, he stated that he likes offices to be staffed and staffed with people who are knowledgeable, so this is a huge issue to be resolved. Boardmember Ballatore stated that he would be very interested Boardmember Snyder's input.

Chairman Elmer stated that if the board agrees to help VVFD, then the Board Clerk Murphy may have to resign since he is a VVFD employee and VVFD may lose one of their boardmembers who works for CLFD. Chairman Elmer stated that this would be a loss.

Boardmember Ballatore stated that he has been searching for positive reasons for CLFD to agree to the VVFD request.

Boardmember Brown stated that it appears that at the very most the board could consider whether or not to study this matter further.

Chief Moore stated that 52 hours ago VVFD personnel just got the information, and it was a new concept to them. He stated that they have only had a couple of days to absorb this concept. Chief Moore stated that it may not be possible for everyone to get the information at the same time. He stated that it is important that VVFD personnel have buy-in and that he is not interested in helping VVFD unless a majority of the staff, on both sides, are supportive. He stated that if the board has an interest in going forward, it is going to take a lot of research and analysis. He stated that he also agrees that the full board should participate in the discussion. Chief Moore stated that it is premature to figure-out how this will work organizationally. He stated that the CLFD staff is remaining open minded and is supportive of the board's decision, whatever it may be. Chief Moore continued that they do not want to influence the board's decision.

Chairman Elmer asked for Administrative Assistant Driscoll's input. Administrative Assistant Driscoll stated that she is comfortable with the board proceeding with obtaining more information.

Boardmember Brown stated that the board has such a great relationship with the administration, and he stated that should the board decide to move forward, it is important to and maintain that relationship. He stated that this will be a board decision; however the board will definitely want staff input.

Chairman Elmer summarized that at this point the board has a pile of concerns. He asked how the board should respond to VVFD's request.

Boardmember Ballatore stated that he is keeping an open mind, however he too has concerns and it is time for baby steps, they should not rush into something. He stated that he feels a certain obligation to help VVFD as they have helped the district in the past.

Boardmember Brown stated that he feels time is of the essence and he would like to consider a special meeting.

Boardmember Ballatore made a motion to direct staff give VVFD a list of concerns for them to address, and to include the board's desire that the contract period be shortened. He added that the letter should offer to give them any assistance they may need in the meantime.

Boardmember Brown seconded. The motion passed with Chairman Elmer, Boardmember Brown, and Boardmember Ballatore in favor and Board Clerk Murphy abstaining.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda. The following items were listed:

- Chief Moore using his personal cell phone for district business.
- VVFD’s request for assistance with administrative duties.
- The possibility of providing water hauling services to homes with dry wells.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Jim Elmer, Chairman

Date

Seth Murphy, Clerk

Date