

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District  
Meeting Held December 18, 2008**

A Regular meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on December 18, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clarkdale Fire District Station #21, 895 First South Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.

Board of Directors:

Jim Elmer, Chairman  
Seth Murphy, Clerk  
David Ahern  
Ron Ballatore  
Bill Snyder

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief  
Matt Poe, Engineer  
Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: None.

**CALL TO ORDER.** The meeting was called to order at 7:03p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

**ROLL CALL.** All members were present.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC.** None

**MINUTES – Consideration of the minutes of the meetings held November 20, 2008 and November 24, 2008.** Clerk Murphy moved to approve the November minutes. Boardmember Snyder seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REPORT – Discussion and consideration of the Monthly Financial Report.**

Chief Moore noted that the district is 41.66% into its budget year. He reviewed the income and expenses and noted that the District, as of November 30, has received 49.81% of its income. Chief Moore noted that the District was low on funds in the Chase payroll account; therefore the bank transferred funds from the District credit card. As soon as this came to his attention the funds were moved back. We have learned from this that deposits do not credit to our account the same day.

Chief Moore reported that total expenditures are at 31.9% of the budget. Some notable expenses for the month were: \$1,800 for front-end work on E211 and the final bill for the brush truck. He discussed the idea of paying off the loan from the Town of Clarkdale sooner.

It was noted that district funds are kept on deposit with Yavapai County and that the Town loaned the District funds for its start-up interest free. Boardmember Snyder moved to approve the Financial Report. Boardmember Ahern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER REPORTS

**Chairperson's Report – A report from the Chairperson on current events.** Chairman Elmer reported the following.

- He welcomed the new members of the board. He expressed his appreciation for them serving on the board. He feels that the board has done good work up to this point and they are presenting the new board members with a financially sound organization. He thanked Administrative Assistant Driscoll for the Board packets and noted that they help the board stay organized.
- He encouraged boardmembers to practice good communication. The Chief is always open for discussion whenever a board member wants to stop by and talk to him.
- He asked that when board members see town officials, that they thank them; it would have been tough to have this District without their support.
- He reminded board members of the responsibilities of being on the board that he shared with them last month and reminded them that it is the Chief's job to make any statements to the press.
- He thanked Capt. Volk and others who have worked on grants. They have done a good job. He encouraged them to continue to apply.
- He explained that the staff reports come from the line personnel. They are well put together and he appreciates getting them.
- He noted that at the last meeting the Chief introduced the new Captain. He hopes everyone gets chance to wish him well.

**Fire Chief's Report - A report from the Chairperson on current events.** Chief Moore reported on the following:

- Mountain Gate fire hazards.
- Highlands ownership status.
- Grant Funding – The district has received nine new radios and chargers for the engines and “smart” chargers for the station purchased with an \$11,000 grant. Four additional chargers have been purchased outside of the grant which were thought to be included in the grant. Due to the misunderstanding, the vendor gave the district a \$115 discount on the additional chargers.
- Computers and Network – The new computers are in and have been set-up. To reduce the cost of the network we are working on an agreement with the Town to purchase their old server software. This should save the District \$2,000.
- Station 22 Deed - The owners who deeded the property to the Town have signed the deed release required to get the station officially deeded to the District.
- Toys for Tots – The District is a drop-off location for donations.
- Christmas – The District participated in the Cottonwood parade and drove Santa to the Town of Clarkdale's event.
- Car Fire Training – Captain Nargessi arranged for a car fire training at the salvage yard. The District staff were pro-active in notifying the neighborhood that they might see smoke in the air during the training.

**Shift Reports – Written monthly reports by personnel regarding day-to-day operations.** Chairman Elmer explained that these reports are written by the firefighters. He has been pleased with the efforts being made regarding physical fitness. It was noted that fire pre-planning is underway.

**Activity Reports – Written monthly reports regarding calls for service.** Chairman Elmer noted the increase in call volume.

**Miscellaneous Reports and Correspondence – Letters, news articles & other items of interest.** No discussion.

**TRAINING – Presentation and discussion regarding open meeting law, conflict of interest, motions, minutes, agendas and roles and responsibilities of board members.** Administrative Assistant Driscoll presented the training, which included:

- The role of the board chairman
- Responsibilities of all board members
- A review of Chairman Elmer's advice to board members
- Information on Open Meeting Law
- Ethics
- Conflict of Interests and appearance of conflicts
- Agendas; legal requirements
- Minutes; legal requirements
- Motions

**BY-LAWS AMENDMENT – Discussion and consideration of a resolution adopting changes to the By-Laws of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors.** Boardmember Snyder pointed out some sections where there were still some discrepancies relating to a three vs. five member board. He also noted some areas that he would like the Board to also discuss changing. Boardmember Murphy moved to table this item to the next meeting. Boardmember Ahern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Discussion and consideration of electing from among the members the Chairman and Board Clerk.** Clerk Murphy moved to elect Jim Elmer as Chairman. Boardmember Ahern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk Murphy nominated Boardmember Snyder for Clerk. Boardmember Snyder declined.

Boardmember Ballatore moved to elect Seth Murphy as Board Clerk. Boardmember Ahern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**SAFER GRANT – Discussion and consideration of a SAFER grant which would pay a portion of the costs to hire three firefighters.** Chairman Elmer stated that the board approved applying for this grant previously. Based on the goals and objectives of the board, the board was in favor of the grant. He stated that now it appears the District may be awarded the grant the board needs to understand the commitment it will be making.

Chief Moore noted that the Board approved the submission of the grant in September 2007. The board felt that adding manpower was a key element in the district's goal to provide quality service

and improve firefighter safety and efficiency in operations. This funding would allow a third person on each shift. This is on the board agenda because the district anticipates being awarded the grant and staff wanted the board to be aware of the impact of the grant match to the district. Staff recommends that the board move forward with this grant, if it is awarded, and to hire three firefighters with a start date in February.

Chairman Elmer noted the sliding scale for the grant match; the grant portion starts at 90% and decreases over four years. The fifth year and beyond the employee costs are the District's responsibility.

Discussion followed regarding the potential for some growth in the District's tax base and the fact that the grant requires a hiring process which is external as well as internal.

Boardmember Snyder stated that he has thought about this item; he is concerned and feels the state of the economy must be taken into consideration. He stated that he feels that right now it is not the fiscally responsible thing to do. He feels that the property values will continue to go down.

Board Clerk Murphy stated that even without additional personnel being hired, the rate would have to be adjusted at some time during the next five years.

Chief Moore noted that the financial projection provided to the Board does not depict any growth, however there will be some growth; there have been some new home permits, etc.

Board Clerk Murphy stated that when discussing possible future tax rate adjustments the board needs to see what the effect is on property owners.

Chairman Elmer stated he has reviewed this for awhile, and he feels it is safe think there will be some growth. He stated that he would hate to turn the grant down and then growth does occur and the District must hire more firefighters without the grant.

Boardmember Ahern stated that he has experience with only having two persons on a truck and it is not safe, yet he understands Boardmember Snyder's concerns.

Chief Moore explained the duties of the crew on a fire and the importance of a third person. He reported that if there are only two personnel on a truck and there is an imminent rescue situation, they go in; however that leaves no one manning the engine and this is how personnel get killed.

Boardmember Snyder stated that he does not make light of situation, if wasn't for current economy would certainly be in favor of the grant.

Board Clerk Murphy stated that the District started with a low mil rate; with projecting five years out, there is time to break down any needed increase into small steps.

Discussion continued regarding the following:

- The grant conditions state that if the persons hired must be let go later, the district would have to reimburse all grant money received.

- The District cannot rely on Cottonwood Fire for extra manpower; they are running only one engine and doing over 2000 calls a year of their own. They are relying on Clarkdale and Verde Valley to assist them.
- As a cost saving measure, the minimum crew size could remain two persons, therefore if the third person is sick or on vacation the District will not pay someone overtime to cover the third persons' absence.
- Station #21 has three bedrooms, so there is the ability to house a third person on shift. After the third person is on shift a great deal of growth would have to occur to justify a 4<sup>th</sup> person on shift.
- The County has reported that the tax base will not go down for FY 2009-2010.
- The District will realize a savings beginning in FY 2009-2010 due to the loan from the Town of Clarkdale being paid-off.
- Turning down the grant award can effect the District's ability to receive a grant in the future.
- The District continues to be diligent in applying for grant funding. Other successful grant applications can save the District in other areas of operations.
- Rimrock Fire applied for this grant for six consecutive years and were never successful; it is not an easy grant to obtain, Clarkdale Fire will be the first in the Verde Valley.

Boardmember Ballatore stated that this was a difficult decision; however it is scary to only have two persons on an engine.

Boardmember Ahern made a motion to move forward with this grant, if it is awarded, and to hire three firefighters. Board Clerk Murphy second the motion. The motion passed 4 to 1 with Boardmember Snyder opposing.

**BOARD MEETING DATE – Discussion and consideration of changing the regular meeting date in January due to a scheduling conflict with the Arizona Fire District Association conference.** Boardmember Snyder moved to reschedule the January regular meeting to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**AUTHORIZED SIGNERS – Discussion and consideration of making changes to the authorized signers on the District's financial accounts.**

Chairman Elmer stated that typically the Chairman and Board Clerk sign the checks, however when one or both are not available other Boardmembers should have the ability to do so. He added that the Fire Chief is also a signer on the account and usually only signs checks when no one else is available.

Board Clerk Murphy moved to approve changes to the authorized signers on the District's financial accounts, resulting in only the following persons being authorized signers: Jim Elmer, Seth Murphy, Dave Ahern, Ron Ballatore, Bill Snyder and Joe Moore. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW – Discussion and consideration of the annual financial review for fiscal year 2007-2008.** Chief Moore explained that the financial review is conducted by an outside auditor who is a certified public accountant. Administrative Assistant Driscoll reported that the auditor did not have any negative comments or note any areas irregularities. Boardmember Snyder moved to

approve the annual financial review for fiscal year 2007-2008. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

- Changes to the By-Laws.

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

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Jim Elmer, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Seth Murphy, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date