

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District
Meeting Held March 19, 2009**

A Regular meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on March 19, 2009 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

David Ahern (Absent)

Ron Ballatore

Bill Snyder

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief

Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant

Brandon Nargessi, Captain

Matt Poe, Engineer

Brad Johnson, Firefighter

Steve Burroughs, Reserve Firefighter

Others Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting was called to order at 4:04p.m. by Clerk Murphy.

ROLL CALL. Chairman Elmer and Boardmember Ahern were absent.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC. None

MINUTES – Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held February 19, 2009.

Boardmember Snyder moved to approve the February minutes. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Chief Moore noted that the district is 66.66% into its budget year. He reviewed the income and expenses and noted that the District, as of February 28th, has received 60.7% of its income. Chief Moore reported that total expenditures are at 49.4% of the budget. It was clarified that the County distributes tax revenue as it is received. Chief Moore noted that the loan to the Town has now been paid in full. He also noted that \$11,000 in grant funds were received in February. This was the reimbursement for the radio grant.

Boardmember Snyder moved to approve the Financial Report. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER REPORTS

Without objection, the next agenda item was moved to later the agenda.

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

- Mountain Gate – The Town is planning a meeting with the bond company to continue to address safety issues.
- Highlands Update – The owner has acquired all of the property from the investors and is working with community development to complete infra-structure projects prior to building any more structures.
- Station 22 Deed – The deed was taken to the recorder's office for recording today.
- Dr. Seuss Day – He and the duty crew and ate breakfast with the students and then read books to them.
- Leadership Training – He, Captain Nargessi and Engineer Poe attended this training provided by the Verde Valley Fire Training Committee.
- Hiring Process – The hiring process for new full-time firefighters was completed and offers of hire were made February 27th. Their start date was the day of the meeting. The hire process was explained to the Board. It was noted that the Chief will consider hiring Reserves at the end of May.
- Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) – The District contracts with TIP annually to provide immediate on-scene support to victims of tragic events. One of their fundraisers is a calendar featuring personnel from different agencies in the Verde Valley. They took photographs at our station on February 23rd.
- Remodeling – The shift office was remodeled to accommodate the new full-time personnel.
- Re-roofing – Station 21's roof was re-shingled.
- March Against Meth – The district will be entering the parade truck into this parade taking place on March 28th. Boardmembers are invited to ride in the truck.

At 4:35 p.m. Jim Elmer arrived at the meeting.

Chairperson's Report – A report from the Chairperson on current events. Chairperson Elmer commented on how well the hire process went and that he appreciated the work done on the shift office.

Shift Reports – Written monthly reports by personnel regarding day-to-day operations. It was noted that the District has been doing hydrant checks throughout town. There were several hydrants which required repairs and some which were "bagged" because they cannot be used until major repairs are made. Chief Moore noted that Administrative Assistant Driscoll is now also submitting a monthly report.

Activity Reports – Written monthly reports regarding calls for service. It was noted that in 2008, 20% of the calls were mutual aid to Cottonwood Fire.

Miscellaneous Reports and Correspondence – Letters, news articles & other items of interest. The board commented on the photos of the truck roll-over which occurred in February.

COMMUNICATIONS COSTS – Discussion of costs for communications/dispatching services.

Chief Moore explained the current model for allocating costs for the Sedona dispatch center. The Sedona Fire District Board has decided that they want Sedona Fire to pay 51% of the operating costs and have all of the other agencies make up the other 49% of the operating costs.

Chief Moore stated that when Sedona first created their dispatch center they went to the other agencies about they using Sedona Fire for their dispatching. At that time the philosophy was to just help supplement some costs.

The fee structure was developed by the agencies. Their intent was to make the fee as fair as possible. The first part of the cost includes a base fee. Each agency pays a share of costs required even if there are no calls. The second part of the fee is based on number of calls. The agencies who do not have ambulance service receive a discount.

Chief Moore continued by saying that 80% of the District's calls are EMS, and since Clarkdale Fire does not have an ambulance, a discount amounting to 70% of the 80% of the calls is deducted.

Chief Moore reported on the discussion which took place at the March Verde Valley Fire Chief's Association meeting. At that meeting it was noted that Sedona Fire recruited the other entities. However, now Sedona Fire is saying their Board and taxpayers want the other agencies to pay more. The Cottonwood Fire Chief told Sedona Fire that the new fees are at the max that can be afforded and that if one agency leaves the domino effect will happen. It was noted that though Sedona Fire has the brunt of the costs, they also have the ownership of the facilities and equipment. Another point made was that when comparing the ratio of communication costs to the tax income of some of the departments, the fees are a large burden. Even though Sedona may be paying more, as compared to their income, it is more affordable. Chief Casson of Cottonwood Fire asked Sedona Fire to compute what it would cost them to run the dispatch center without any other agencies.

Chief Moore stated that with the new fees, the average cost per call is \$57. Sedona Fire personnel stated that all the fire agencies are subsidizing Verde Valley Ambulance's fees because they do not have a population base.

Chief Moore stated that a representatives from Yavapai County Emergency Management noted that how the agencies in this area work together is a model for others.

In addition, Sedona Fire wants participation by other agencies for future capital purchases. It was noted that Sedona Fire does not care how the other agencies distribute the cost.

Chairman Elmer noted that he was around with Sedona first asked other agencies to participate and it was not based on a percentage, it was to help fund the third dispatcher they needed. He stated that without all of the other fire agencies, Sedona Fire will also lose something. If communication costs keeps increasing, the District will get to the point where the Board will look elsewhere for this service. Chief Moore noted that 20% of Clarkdale calls are auto aid calls to Cottonwood Fire. The proposed fee schedule charges both Clarkdale, Cottonwood and Verde Valley Ambulance for each

of these calls. Chairman Elmer stated that he does not feel that the fee schedule is fair, especially to small departments who run auto aid calls.

It was noted that one of the reasons all the agencies went to Sedona communications was because the ambulance company went to Sedona. Chief Moore relayed an incident where conflict occurred because the ambulance company and fire agencies were with different dispatch agencies.

Discussion followed as to options, i.e. fire and police being dispatched from one center. The challenges of having a shared center with a police agency was discussed. Chairman Elmer stated that he feels agencies need to inquire with Cottonwood Police Dispatch as to the possibilities. Discussion followed regarding how 911 calls with police/fire are currently handled.

There are some challenges with having Prescott and other areas dispatch for the District.

Chairman Elmer noted a concern that Sedona may not be evaluating how they can save money, instead, they are asking for additional funds from the other agencies. The consensus of the Board was to evaluate all options for communication services.

At 5:30 p.m. Clerk Murphy left the meeting.

REQUEST FROM VAN HOOK FAMILY – Discussion of a request by the family of former Clarkdale Fire Chief Van Hook for participation in his funeral service and designating a District liaison to work on arrangements with the family. Chairman Elmer noted that this is something that the District needs to do. He stated that he would like the District to make a commitment to participate in the funeral. Chief Moore stated that some firemen in the area, who worked under Chief Hook, would like to be involved in the funeral. The family would like firefighters who knew him to be poll bearers. Verde Valley Fire stated that if all of the Clarkdale Fire District wanted to attend the funeral, they will staff the station. Chief Moore noted that no formal planning has taken place. It was noted that a contact list needs to be established of those wishing to participate. The truck Chief Hook and his family want to use in his funeral service is E212, which was bought while he was Chief. Chairman Elmer offered to be the district liaison.

STRATEGIC PLANNING – Discussion and direction to staff regarding the vision, goals and action steps for the District which is expected to include the following topics: facilities, land, equipment, salaries, benefits, finances, funding and development/growth. Boardmember Snyder noted that this is a lot of information to process and that he does not feel fully prepared to address all of the given topics. He feels that this should be discussed in a separate worksession. Chief Moore noted that staff does need some vision and direction for the upcoming year in order to start work on the budget. However, he feels that this could be rescheduled. It was also noted that not all Boardmembers are in attendance. Chairman Elmer suggested that some items be discussed tonight so the Chief has some direction, but that no major decisions be made.

Chief Moore noted that economic stimulus money is expected to be available this summer for fire districts. It is anticipated that these funds will come through FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grants. The information he has seen states that the funding will be for construction and will not include purchasing land.

Chief Moore stated that when relocating a fire department, it is desirable to be in a non-residential area and centrally located for response times. Chief Moore showed the Board a possible location. Initially staff's idea was to have a joint public safety building with Clarkdale Police however, the stimulus funds will probably only fund space needed for the fire department. An option may be to leave space for a future addition.

Chief Moore stated that in order to be prepared to apply for stimulus funds, the District needs to pursue purchasing land. He stated that he would like direction to contact property owners and see what the possibilities are to acquire property.

It was noted that should the District build a new facility, Station #22 could be sold or traded (Station #21 is not owned by the District).

Chairman Elmer stated that the former Board felt that it couldn't go wrong securing land. He stated that if the District does not get stimulus funds it will still be okay to tie up property. And, if needed or if the direction of the District changes, the property can be disposed of. He stated that the Chief needs to have the ability to talk to property owners as it may be opportunity to move forward. He added that although it may feel uncomfortable, they have to think ahead. It pays to ask people, if you don't ask, you don't know what the possibilities are.

Chief Moore stated that he is thinking around two million dollars for construction.

Chairman Elmer noted that there may be other entities where a partnership would be viable. Another option is renting communication tower space on the building. Chairman Elmer noted that there are challenges, however he is interested in exploring options. Reserve Steve Burroughs stated that the building could be designed in such a way that it has the ability to grow with the District.

Chief Moore noted that Sedona Fire District has land and plans to build another station just waiting for funding. He feels that they would be a preferred applicant because they are "shovel ready".

Boardmember Snyder stated that one of the properties identified as a possibility is probably one of the most expensive pieces of property in Town. He stated that he is concerned that citizens will criticize the District building on that property. He stated that he is not in agreement yet with the District attempting to tie up an expensive piece of land. He stated that there is going to be so much politics in the distribution of these funds that the District does not have a chance. Chief Moore stated that with or without the possibility of grant funding, the Board has previously identified purchasing land a priority. Discussion followed as to the need for access out of a station to both directions and that therefore it may be necessary to locate near a round-a-bout.

Chairman Elmer stated that the hope an owner might work with the District, and if not, the District can look at other options. Chief Moore stated that he is comfortable talking to all property owners who may have suitable property.

Boardmember Snyder suggested an RFP process where the District makes its need known and property owners come to the District with their proposal.

Discussion followed as to the factors that determine the best location for a station. The District needs to be close to the “older” part of the town, but also needs to be able to respond timely to the west area of town where the growth is.

Chairman Elmer moved to direct Chief Moore to approach property owners and determine what possible options are for acquiring property. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Without objection this agenda item was tabled to a special meeting.

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

- Communications
- Strategic Planning Session

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Jim Elmer, Chairman

Date

Seth Murphy, Clerk

Date