

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District
Meeting Held April 2, 2009**

A Special meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on April 2, 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
Ron Ballatore
Bill Snyder

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief
Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant
Shane Waterfield, Captain

Others Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting was called to order at 4:10p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

ROLL CALL. All members were present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC. None

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.

Vision

The Board discussed creating a vision statement. The consensus was that it should be no longer than a paragraph, simple and fit the District. The Board requested that staff draft some options for a vision statement for them to work from.

It was noted that the order in which items are accomplished will change based upon when opportunities arise.

The staff is working on a Mission Statement and Core Values.

New Station/Land Purchase

Actions/considerations outlined were:

- Procure land which will meet design and response time criteria in preparation of possible economic stimulus funds for construction.
- Explore possibility of partnerships (i.e. DPS, Clarkdale Police, Yavapai County, Yavapai Apache Nation, Verde Valley Ambulance Company, etc.)
- Take other steps as necessary to prepare for application of economic stimulus funds, i.e. building plans, design review, etc.

- The new station building should be moderate, meet the needs and “fit” Clarkdale.

Discussion included:

- The District has been successful with other grant funding.
- Staff has begun meeting with property owners.
- Members of the department have connections to architects and “canned” plans which will reduce costs.
- The building needs to meet needs, “fit” Clarkdale, and not be “flashy”.
- District staff are willing to save funds in order to put aside money for a station.
- Response times are a primary factor when determining a station location.
- The stimulus funds will have certain building requirements.

Replace First-Out Engine

Actions/considerations outlined were:

- To re-apply for grant funding.
- To explore other funding options, i.e. financing, in fiscal year 2011/2012 if grant applications have not been successful.

Discussion included:

- The current first-out engine is 20 years old and it is important to continue to keep it well maintained for the safety of the personnel until it can be replaced.
- Obtaining grant funding to replace the engine is a priority (it is a \$430,000 truck that will only cost the community about \$25,000 if a grant is successful).
- Since the District was successful in obtaining SAFER grant funds for additional personnel, it improves the District’s chances at being successful in obtaining grant funds for the engine.

Manpower

Actions/considerations outlined were:

- A major need was accomplished with the addition of three firefighters through the SAFER grant.
- Additional reserves are to be hired depending on the District’s ability to outfit them.
- The Board is committed to retaining the current employees and positions.

Discussion included:

- No additional manpower should be needed for awhile, unless call volume changes dramatically.

Improve ISO Rating

Actions/considerations outlined were:

- A review is being conducted this fiscal year. Items which should improve the District’s rating are:
 - Increased man-power due to the SAFER grant.
 - New hydrants have been installed (this is under the Town’s control).
 - There are new and improved intergovernmental agreements for automatic aid.
 - Personnel training has been documented per ISO standards.
 - There has been consistent testing for hydrants, hose, ladders and pumps.
 - There is an increase in the number of homes in the district with sprinkler systems.

- The District has supported the Town's request for funding to upgrade the water system.
- The District can maximize the use of run cards to increase ISO scoring.
- The goal is to decrease the District's ISO rating from 7/9 to 6. This will decrease insurance costs for home and business owners.

Discussion included:

- A date has not yet been set for the ISO review.
- The District and Town of Clarkdale have a close working relationship regarding fire suppression needs.
- The District has the authority to recommend where fire hydrants are located for existing developments and to require hydrants in new developments.

Salaries and Benefits

Actions/considerations outlined were:

- Based on a salary and benefit survey and employee input, future changes to consider are:
 - Sick leave accumulation
 - Uniform allowance amounts, and adding an Administration uniform allowance.
 - Keeping salaries competitive with other districts.
- Changing the salary structure to create flexibility to better compensate employees based on performance.
- Vacation and sick leave accumulations and how they effect overtime.
- Setting aside funds for unfunded liabilities, i.e. to payout sick/vacation time when employment is terminated. These funds could also be used in the event of a line of duty death.
- Consider increasing paramedic pay and making sure it is FLSA compliant.
- Consider post employment health plan benefit.

Discussion included:

- Uniform allowance is not paid to the personnel, rather it is the limit that we will spend on any one employee for uniforms.
- There are controls in place to prevent any unnecessary spending for uniform items.
- The preference for any changes in benefits to be more for retirement rather than short term "use it or lose it" type benefits which can lend themselves to abuse.

Merger With Other Districts

To merge with other districts, the following need to be considered:

- The mil rates of the districts must be aligned.
- Operational characteristics should be similar.
- Goals and directives of each district should be aligned.
- Assets and liabilities must be considered (it isn't favorable to merge if one of the districts has too much in financial liabilities).
- Citizen support.

Discussion included:

- The vision of the district formation committee was to merge.
- Currently there is a 25 cent difference in the tax rate between Clarkdale and Verde Valley Fire Districts. This is too much of a gap for the entities to effect a merge.

- There may be a better opportunity to align mil rates with Verde Valley Fire in the next few years.

The consensus of the Board was that the goal of the District is to provide quality service as efficiently as possible, rather than purposefully trying to align mil rates. The District should evaluate on an annual basis as whether or not the mil rates of the entities are conducive to a merger.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda. No future agenda items were listed.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Jim Elmer, Chairman

Date

Seth Murphy, Clerk

Date