

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District  
Meeting Held April 16, 2009**

A Regular meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on April 16, 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  
Steve Burroughs, Reserve Firefighter/EMT

Others Present: None.

**CALL TO ORDER.** The meeting was called to order at 4:05p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

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

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC.** None

**MINUTES – Consideration of the minutes of the meetings March 19 and April 2, 2009.**

Boardmember Snyder moved to approve the 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 75% into its budget year. He reviewed the income and expenses and noted that the District, as of March 30, had received 64.43% of its income. Chief Moore reported that total expenditures are at 53% of the budget. He noted that the District received \$3,679 in miscellaneous income which was a refund from the Internal Revenue Service due to the over collection of Social Security taxes. Under operational expenses, Chief Moore noted some budgeted purchases which were made. Chairman Elmer inquired as to vehicle expenses and stated that he would like to see a breakdown of the annual costs per vehicle. Discussion followed as to Engine 211 repairs and issues regarding its tires. Chief Moore noted that he will be spending \$3,000 to change from the split rims on the engine, which will hopefully resolve some of the issues. Chief Moore noted that the costs for the shift office remodel are shown under “Miscellaneous Facilities Expense”.

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

## INFORMATIONAL AND OTHER REPORTS

**Chairperson's Report – A report from the Chairperson on current events.** Chairperson Elmer stated that he feels the news makes the economy look worse than it is. He stated that the District has done a good job of setting aside funds. He stated that he hopes that the Board does not undo any past decisions, because there are some great things happening here. Chairperson Elmer requested one of the members on shift during future board meetings give a 5 – 10 minute presentation on what they are doing. He stated that he would like to have Capt. Volk give a presentation on grant funding. He stated that he feels staff would be willing to share and would be educational for the board. Chairperson Elmer thanked staff again for their constant focus on physical fitness.

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

- Mountain Gate Update – District staff provided some assistance to a few of the residents in the subdivision with tumbleweed problems.
- Highlands Update – It was noted that the hydrants are not in service since the water infrastructure is not in operation, however, there are no homes built in the subdivision yet.
- Station 22 Deed – The deed has been received and has been recorded. Boardmember Snyder suggested that the deed be reviewed to see if there is a reversionary clause as the property was probably donated.
- Spring Fun Fest – The District participated in the Spring Fun Fest which was held by the Clarkdale-Jerome School Parent Teacher Organization.
- Personnel Changes – Reserve Firefighter/Paramedic Jon Lacy and Reserve Firefighter Aaron Wilder have resigned.
- Shift Office Remodel – A Cornville citizen who knows the Chief donated a plan holder he made for the District.
- Discovery Channel – Captain Nargessi was interviewed regarding his experience in a flashover which occurred in a live fire training exercise about four years ago.

**Shift Reports – Written monthly reports by personnel regarding day-to-day operations.**

Chairman Elmer observed that there are some pending grant applications. He stated that he was surprised to see that tourniquets were approved for use by the medical director.

It was noted that several water line breaks occurred in lower and upper Clarkdale while the District was performing hydrant checks. Hydrant checks in these areas have ceased for this reason. The Town of Clarkdale is working on replacing the old pipes as they are able.

Chairman Elmer was pleased that Administrative Assistant Driscoll had applied for National Fire Academy. He also commented on the District's new volunteer who is assisting with office tasks.

**Activity Reports – Written monthly reports regarding calls for service.** No discussion.

**Miscellaneous Reports and Correspondence – Letters, news articles & other items of interest.** Chairman Elmer noted that him, the Chief and Administrative Assistant Driscoll

attended a Verde Valley Fire District board meeting to present plaques and to thank them for all the help they have given the District.

**EQUIPMENT LEASE AGREEMENT – Discussion and consideration of entering an agreement with the Town of Clarkdale leasing them a District water tender when it is not in use for fire suppression purposes.** Chief Moore reported that the Town has requested the use of a District water tender. The Town's water tender is not operable and they do not currently have the ability to purchase a new one. Chief Moore stated that the lease would benefit the residents of the District and it would be stored at the Town yard which would free up some space in the bays. In the event the District needed the water tender for fire suppression purposes, the District would have it readily available.

Chairman Elmer moved to approve the water tender lease agreement with the Town of Clarkdale and authorize the Chairman and Fire Chief to execute the agreement on behalf of the District. Boardmember Snyder seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Without objection, the order of the agenda was changed to move the Budget Worksession item to next on the agenda.

**BUDGET WORKSESSION – Discussion and consideration of the draft fiscal year 2009-1010 budget.** Clerk Murphy stated that the Budget Committee met on April 13th. He reported the following from that meeting:

- There was no discussion regarding changing the mil rate.
- They discussed developing the budget to allow the district the ability to pursue grant funding opportunities, specifically the stimulus funding for a fire station.
- Not everyone at the meeting was comfortable discussing possible changes to employee benefit policies before the Board discussed them and before the budget was developed.
- The employees made a lot of cuts to make sure there was money in the budget to fund large items.

Chief Moore reviewed personnel benefit requests and his recommendations.

Sick and vacation time counting as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime was discussed. Vacation time counting as hours worked, and sick leave counting as hours worked up to FLSA overtime are proposed in the FY 09/10 budget. Estimated cost to the District is \$2,000. The Chief expects to propose a sick leave/post employment health plan package to the Board in FY10/11.

Chairperson Elmer stated that he would like to see the PEHP plan put in place. He would like to see there be an incentive to not abuse sick leave. He stated that he feels that the vacation pay change is a reasonable request and was something the board wanted to address this year.

Boardmember Snyder stated that from private enterprise point of view, the benefits given in the AFDA Salary and Benefits Survey are very generous benefits. He stated that he has a philosophical issue with the request. Discussion followed regarding how personnel are paid when working unscheduled work days.

Chief Elmer stated that the employees are exposed to sick people all day because of what they do and they bring it home to their families. However, he stated that he has seen sick leave abused.

Clerk Murphy stated that the board sets the policy that they think is fair and gives the Chief the tools to address abuse.

Chief Moore reviewed a 28 day pay cycle for the Board and how regular, overtime, sick and vacation pay is computed. Discussion followed regarding how overtime is computed regarding sick and vacation time. All the other Districts in the area count sick and vacation time as hours worked for the purpose of computing overtime.

The consensus of the board was to count vacation time as hours worked for the computation of overtime and sick leave counting as hours worked for the computation of overtime up to FLSA overtime for FY 09/10.

Discussion followed regarding medic pay changes which are proposed for FY09/10. The proposed budget includes increasing the pay from \$4,500 to approximately \$5,000 and including it in hourly pay to comply with FLSA. With these changes the paramedics are being paid the same for performing the same work as opposed to medic pay being computed as a percentage of pay.

Chairperson Elmer stated that one of the goals of the district was to have a medic on every shift. Previously it was noted that they want to be sure to keep paramedics and to be competitive with the pay. Chief Moore stated that originally the board was discussing increasing medic pay to \$5,500, however, staff is recommending \$5,000 for FY09/10.

Discussion followed regarding COLA vs. Merit steps in the salary schedule. Clerk Murphy stated that he would prefer that the step plan not include COLA and the entire salary schedule should change based on COLA.

Chief Moore stated that the proposed budget includes an increase in reserve uniform allowance from \$120 to \$400 for Reserves. The current allowances are not enough to equip reserve personnel. The cost increase to the District for 8 Reserves is \$2,240. Also proposed is adding a uniform allowance for administration and increasing the uniform allowance for full-time firefighters from \$400 to \$600. The survey and District experience show that the uniform allowance for full-time personnel is too low to adequately equip personnel.

Chairman Elmer noted that the District share of Arizona State Retirement and Public Safety Retirement are going down, however the District needs to be prepared for these to increase next fiscal year.

Discussion followed regarding transferring funds to the volunteer pension fund. Chief Moore stated that Staff is considering the \$5,000 as the limit for how much the District will place in the fund. This is with the thought that there will not be very many active reserves in the fund this year and that the contribution should be limited to \$1,000 per person per year.

Chairman Elmer stated that he was in favor of the limit of \$1,000 per active person in the pension fund. It was noted that funds are redistributed to the active Reserves when a Reserve leaves before being vested. This will continue to be evaluated on an annual basis.

Boardmember Snyder stated that the District has accumulated \$300,000 in savings and hopes to save approximately 90,000 this fiscal year. The District is facing two major expenditures in the future. He sees that there is a good chance of obtaining the new fire engine grant and that the District will have to go to the people to bond for the new fire station. He stated that he would like the public to know that the District has been very diligent; that it started out with 1.63 tax levy and lowered it to 1.58. He suggested that the mil rate be lowered this year another three cents. Boardmember Snyder said that the Town is raising their taxes 33% and he feels it would be a good gesture to the tax payers to give some money back, knowing in the future the rate will need to go up.

Chairman Elmer stated that this is an honorable recommendation, however he was hoping to build a building without a bond. It was noted that Verde Valley Fire financed a building without bonding. Discussion of district’s ability to finance followed.

Discussion followed regarding changing the mil rate. Chief Moore stated that any savings in FY09/10 he is proposing be carried over to lessen the impact to FY10/11 in order to hedge against a higher mil rate that year. The county has stated to expect a drop of 15-20% in assessed valuation in FY 10/11 which is approximately a decrease of up to \$200,000 in revenue.

Chairman Elmer stated that he likes the idea of lowering the tax rate and that the District will need to let the public know that they need to expect an increase the following year.

The consensus was to make a small decrease to the mil rate, 2 to 3 cents. The Board asked Chief Moore to bring back for their consideration various mil rate scenarios.

**SETTING MEETING DATE – Discussion and consideration of setting a special meeting date in May, or changing the May regular meeting date to consider the adoption of the preliminary budget.** Boadmember Ballatore moved to hold the May regular meeting to May 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:30p.m. Boadmember Ahern seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

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Jim Elmer, Chairman

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Date

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Seth Murphy, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date