

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District  
Meeting Held February 25, 2010**

A special meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on February 25, 2010 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 (absent)  
Bill Snyder  
Jerry Brown

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief  
Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: None.

**CALL TO ORDER.** The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

**ROLL CALL.** Boardmember Ballatore was absent. All other members were present. A quorum was present.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC.** None

**STRATEGIC PLANNING – Discussion and direction to staff regarding the vision, goals and strategies for the District which is expected to include the following topics: facilities, equipment, apparatus, human resources, budget, capital reserve and financing mechanisms.**

The Board discussed the accomplishments of the District over the last year. These included:

- Procurement of land for a new station which met response time criteria.
- Exploration of partnerships to build a new station.
- Grant application submitted for economic stimulus funds.
- Design of a new station that is moderate, meets needs and “fits” Clarkdale.
- Completion of the Insurance Service Office (ISO) Risk Mitigation/Review, which should result in lower insurance premiums for district property owners.
- Completion of items that contribute to a lower ISO rating: documented training, consistent hydrant and equipment testing, purchase of large diameter hose, pike poles, attic ladder, etc.
- Purchase of four new sets of turnouts.
- Receipt of refurbished EMS monitor from the Verde Valley Medical Center Foundation.
- Adoption of a financial policy.
- Change in pay structure to included medic pay in hourly rates.
- Successful grant applications for a new heart monitor and for wildland personal protective equipment.

Next the board discussed present and future challenges facing the District:

- Economic downturn.
- 7% decrease in assessed property values for fiscal year 2010-2011, with a 24% decrease expected in fiscal year 2011-2012.
- Increases in costs, i.e. fuel, utilities, dispatching, etc.
- Difficulty in setting the tax rate when not every property owner realizes the same change in valuations.
- Citizen concern over property taxes for the fire district, and in general.
- Misconceptions of the public, i.e. “new” Chief’s car that was actually purchased used to save taxpayer dollars.

The two primary goals of the District were discussed. The first is a new first-out engine. It was noted that the vehicle is over 21 years old, past the expected life span. Concerns were expressed as to the costs to continue to maintain the vehicle. It was noted that a grant application for a new first-out engine is still pending. The Board previously gave direction to staff that should this last attempt for grant funding fail, the District needs to look at financing a new engine in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The Board discussed the advantages and challenges of buying new, already built engines. Chief Moore noted that they have been informed of a Community Development Block Grant process specifically for the purchase of fire trucks. Staff will be looking into submitting an application for this grant as well.

The consensus of the Board was to look for a new, already built fire engine, perhaps one used for demonstrations. It was agreed that the District does not want to purchase an older engine that may have problems.

The second of the two primary goals of the District is the building of a new fire station. It was noted that the District does not own the building that it currently uses. That building is owned by the town and is leased by the District. The lease expires in 2017.

Discussion began as to the timing for expending engineering costs, obtaining permits from Arizona Department of Transportation to access 89A, etc. The pros and cons of moving forward to complete engineered plans was discussed. Pros: The project would be “shovel ready” should grant funding be obtained. Cons: The plans would need to be updated, at a cost to the District, to reflect new building codes, etc. if the building is not built within five years; if a grant is successful, it is unknown how much time there will be to get engineering done.

The consensus of the Board was to move forward with finishing conceptual drawings, but to not go to engineering design at this time.

Chief Moore presented three alternatives for funding the new fire engine and building construction for the Board to discuss:

Option A: To build the Capital Improvement Fund over time toward a lease/purchase.

This option takes time, but decreases the need to create large spikes in the budget as compared to making a purchase in a single year. It spreads the cost out over time and the Board has control over the increases and decreases of taxation, where with a bond it would not. Discussion of this plan

included the possibility of setting aside a specific amount of funds a year to use for future down payments on a new engine and a station. It was noted that saving funds over a period of time is a proven method of financing capital purchases.

Option B: Bond

Discussion of bonding included:

- Bonding costs more, there is a 3-5% administration fee.
- An election process is necessary.
- The District’s bond rating is unknown.

The consensus of the Board was that bonding is not the favorable method for financing a building.

Option C: Both building the Capital Improvement Fund and bond.

It was noted that any savings could be used to decrease the total bond amount. This method shortens the savings time, making the goal achievable in a shorter time frame.

Next the Board discussed various scenarios regarding the expected property assessed valuation decreases and the needs of the District. They discussed how a change in the levy effects the mil rate. It was noted that the budget for next fiscal year will be developed based on the needs of the District to determine what income the District needs to operate.

Short-term goals of the staff were discussed. These included:

- Updating the personnel policy
- Updating the salary structure to better create flexibility to compensate employees based on performance.
- Update job descriptions and performance reviews.
- Evaluate the sick leave policy.
- Creation of an unfunded liabilities fund.
- Engaging an accountant to perform periodic reviews.
- Fire Code Amendments.
- Adoption of new Standard Operating Procedures.
- Doing on-line reporting for National Incident Management System.
- Create a hire list for the position of Captain.
- Create a hire list for the position of Reserve Firefighter/EMT.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda.** None.

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Elmer, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Seth Murphy, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date