

Mayer Fire District
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 18, 2023 5:15 PM
Mayer Fire Administration

1 ***Call to order***

Chairman Thurman called the meeting to order at 5:17 P.M.

2 ***Pledge of allegiance***

3 ***Roll Call of members***

Present were Chairman Thurman, Clerk Tang, Member Baca, Member Junkins, Member Lundeen. All present.

4 ***Call to the public (The Fire Board can only respond to items on the Agenda, Comments limited to two minutes each.)***

There was no public comment.

5 ***Chief's Report:***

a) *Monthly and year-to-date financials*

Chief Smith reviewed his monthly report with the Board.

There were 191 calls last month and 95 cancelled calls.

There will be a meeting on February 9, 2023 with all of the ambulance providers and fire departments to discuss how to better utilize the regional ambulances. The back up ambulance services sometimes are not staffed with a paramedic, but only basic life support personnel.

The secondary issue is that MFD (Mayer Fire District) is getting called into Dewey and Prescott Valley as back up, and many times being cancelled in route. The wear and tear and fuel expenses due to calls cancelled in route will be discussed.

Priority Ambulance has gotten only 4 ambulances in service of the 8 ambulances they are supposed to have according to their CON (Certificate of Necessity). They will lease two ambulances from CAFMA (Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority) and try to find two more. They also are struggling to find paramedics.

Chief Smith asked the Board to approve Resolution 2023-01 for an updated fee schedule, an increase of 10%, for out of district claims filed through the current vendor, Fire Recovery USA.

DHS, Department of Health Services, awarded MFD an 11% rate increase. This could amount to \$100,000 per year with the collection rate of 55% by Action Ambulance, our ambulance billing vendor.

The USDA loan has been refinanced with a lower interest rate and there will be escrow money returned to MFD.

b) *Current event report*

Nothing to report.

6 ***Mayer Chapter of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local #3066 (the Union) report.***

Nothing to report.

7 ***Consent Agenda***

Member Junkins motioned to approve the consent agenda items a-h.

Member Baca seconded. The vote was Aye-5, No-0. All voting Aye. Motion carried.

8 ***Swear-in Clerk Tang as Local Pension Board Chairman***

Chairman Thurman administered the oath to swear in Clerk Tang.

- 9 **Possible nomination and vote for Board Clerk and Board Chairman positions**
Member Baca motioned for current board positions to remain unchanged.
Member Junkins seconded. The vote was Aye-5, No-0. All voting Aye. Motion carried.

- 10 **Traffic light at Highway 69 and Old Sycamore Road**
Member Lundeen would like to see a traffic light at the intersection that MFD apparatus uses at station #22. Chief Smith suggested a traffic preemption light that would warn traffic to slow when MFD apparatus is using the intersection without the expense of a traffic light.
Chairman Thurman added that we may be able to acquire a used set of these lights through ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation). ADOT will require a traffic engineering report on what it would take to implement, then go in front of the ADOT board as a project using their funds. He recommended making contact with Yavapai County Public Works and the County Supervisor to explain what we would like to propose to ADOT.
Chairman Thurman asked Member Lundeen to give an update at the next board meeting.

- 11 **Possible review and update of Board Policies**
Chairman Thurman wants to make sure policies are reviewed and maintained. Policies should be able to give instruction to future personnel in the case of loss of current leadership.
Member Junkins added that photos of apparatus and its purpose, an explanation of acronyms, and other general orienting materials for future new board members would be very helpful.
Chief added fiscal policy orientation would be helpful.

- 12 **Update on grants for a new fire station in Cordes Lakes**
The AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) is open. MFD is putting in for a rescue. We have a 5% match on any of the federal grants.
The past year MFD, WVFD (Williamson Valley Fire District) and CKFD (Crown King Fire District) got all new radios, MFD got new SCBA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus).
The SAFER (Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant is opening to support increased staffing levels. MFD is putting in for three positions. If awarded the positions would be fully paid by the government for two years. They also have a recruitment and retention grant that MFD will apply for. If awarded, we would have about \$100,000 per year for four years to spend on training.
Crown King Fire District was awarded \$900,000 funding from the federal government for a new fire station. Last year under this same grant program we were awarded 6 heart monitors, three of which came to MFD.
Senator Kelly will provide a letter of support for all our grant applications.
If the congressionally directed spending is available, we would like to put in for a new fire station at Cordes Lakes for \$1.5 million and a regional radio grant for \$1.2 million.

- 13 **Board, Chief, and staff study session including questions and answers regarding:**
- a. Intergovernmental Agreement for Contracted Fire Chief Services with Williamson Valley Fire District
Previous chiefs have been under contract. We do not have a contract with the current fire chief. Chief Smith's 2-year contract is with WVFD (Williamson Valley Fire District). That board does his annual review and sets pay. The current contract is due for renewal December of 2023. A fire chief's contract renewal is set at a maximum of 2 years. Further discussion will be on the February agenda.
 - b. Proposition 117 and tax rates
Chairman Thurman asked for clarification and how it affects the district. Chief Smith explained this proposition locked in the home values from 2011 that had drastically fallen due to the 2008 recession. Going forward, the home values could only increase a maximum of 5% per year on existing homes. New builds and annexations would be assessed at the current value at the time of build/annexation. Through the economic recovery, MFD never increased more than 3%. It went up 5% in 2021. The only way to override the limit is with a bond or a vote to increase in an election.
 - c. Public Safety Personnel Retirement unfunded liability amount
Chairman Thurman asked if MFD has any liability left. Chief Smith responded that there is about \$2 million left. Actions of past MFD leadership partially contributed to this liability. There were Tier 1 individuals hired that were close to retirement, which made MFD responsible for funding their pensions when they were employed by MFD for only a short time at the end of their careers.

Chairman Thurman added there are also retired individuals that are benefitting from the pension plan who did not pay into it their entire careers due to the initiation of the pension being in the late 1970's. Overall, the fund has about 50% retired and collecting pensions and 50% paying still active and paying into the fund. The proportions do not contribute to effectively funding and growing the pension fund. The past PSPRS board made poor investment decisions.

Chief Smith explained the new system, Tier 3, is set up much like the Arizona State Retirement System. Currently MFD pays an employer portion into PSPRS at about 35% of a participating employee's salary in order to pay back the \$2 million in unfunded liability over the next 15 year. This amount can be paid down. He discussed the option of a bank loan which could be paid down relatively quickly with some of the annual taxes collected from the solar farm, expected to be \$1 million the first year. Once the unfunded liability is paid back to PSPRS, the employer portion would go from the current 35% down to 12%, or the rate the actuarial table requires from fully funded employers at the time the debt is paid.

- d. Percent of interest paid to the County for warrants, if needed
The interest rate is currently 3% if MFD has to borrow from the County. The majority of taxes come into the MFD County bank account in October and May of each year. In between, if funds run out, the County backs warrants and MFD pays back with interest.
- e. Bond payoff amounts
Discussed earlier in meeting.
- f. Pie chart for budget mid-term
Chairman Thurman asked for the creation of a pie chart for descriptive information on the budget.
- g. District goals, mission, and vision
Chairman Thurman wanted to share with the board members and revisit to remain on track. He asked for a copy of the Mission Statement and vision be added to the February regular board meeting agenda.

Chairman Thurman thanked the Board and Chief Smith for reviewing the items in this study session.

14 *Update on Board Member training at the Arizona Fire District Association's conference*

Member Tang attended. He stated he learned much, including open meeting law and where board members are responsible, legally. The outlook on the Arizona economy was positive.

Member Lundeen attended the online class.

Chairman Thurman stated he likes his boards to be educated, involved, and invested in what is going on with the organization.

Chief Smith added that long-term items to be aware of for MFD are the debt that we need to manage and pay off, positions that need to be added and the associated cost, apparatus that will need to be refurbished or replaced due to age and wear, a new station in Cordes Lakes. We are hoping to enter into an agreement with a paramedic school in Phoenix in order to offer paramedic classes locally to lower costs of educating our own personnel and open the classes to individuals outside the organization to help lower our tuition costs. We are hoping for an October 2023 launch. Another topic to be knowledgeable on is offsetting costs with grants.

Member Baca expressed her appreciation to Chief Smith for his foresight and the free-flowing information he provides the Board.

15 *Future Agenda items.*

Update from Member Lundeen regarding Traffic light at Highway 69 and Old Sycamore Road

Board policies

Letter to WVFD Board regarding increase in Chief's wage; draft a letter

Make sure budget vs. actual on financials are included in packets

District goals, vision(copy) book

16 *Future meeting dates.*

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 15, 2023 at 4:30 P.M.

17 *Adjournment.*

Member Baca motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Junkins seconded the motion. The vote was Aye-5, No-0. All voting Aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Thurman called the meeting adjourned at 6:42 P.M.

 

Clerk Tang *Date*