



# QUARTZSITE FIRE DISTRICT

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## Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order: **Called to order at 6:00pm by Philip Cushman.**
2. Pledge of Allegiance: **All in attendance participated.**
3. Roll Call: **Philip Cushman, Travis Freedman, present at QFD, TC Collier and Bear Collier attended Via cell phone. Staff present: K. Hess, W. Aaron, L. Collier. Teena Conrad, Sam Rees and Jennifer Walton from MVFD.**
4. Discussion and Possible Action re: possible approval of Minutes from 12/19/2024 joint special meeting, as well as the minutes of 1-21-25. **Travis Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes and TC Collier seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**
5. Discussion and Possible Action re: possible approval of FY 2024 Audited Financial Statements. **Travis Freedman and TC Collier Seconded the motion carried unanimously.**
6. Call to the Public: Those wishing to address the Quartzsite Fire District Board need not request permission in advance. The Fire District Board is not permitted to discuss or take action on any item raised in the call to the public due to restrictions under Open Meeting Law. However, individual Board Members may respond to criticism directed toward them. Otherwise, the Board may direct that staff review the matter or that the matter be placed on a future agenda.  
  
Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) Travis Freedman made a motion to adjourn to executive session, TC Collier seconded and the board unanimously agreed for the purpose of advice from Attorney, Bill Whittington.
7. Discussion and Possible Action re: Public Hearing regarding the possible merger of the Quartzsite Fire District and the McMullen Valley Fire District.
  - A. Informational slide show pertaining to the proposed merger.
  - B. Public Hearing/Comments re: The Governing Board will hear those persons who appear for or against the proposed merger and to determine if the merger will promote the public safety, health, comfort, convenience, necessity or welfare of the Quartzsite Fire District.

**Philip Cushman open up the narrative with the audience to answer any comments or concerns.**

**Jay Millan: Right now property owners pay more tax in Quartzsite right now, but will it go down after the merger? How many FFs are full time?**

**Chief Hess: Yes taxes will go down by a small percentage. There is 7 FFs in Salome and 30 in Quartzsite.**

**Linda Goldberg: The main comments I have heard, and it's amazing, but the people were worried we would be losing part of our firefighters, but they didn't know that they are currently working in Salome right now.**

**Unknown lady: I have no comments.**

**Mayor Norm Simpson: I have confidence in Kevin, we have worked together for years. He Makes miracles.**

**Hess: Thank you Norm, but the Lord makes miracles, us firefighters are just His hands and feet.**

**Unknown Lady: I have a friend who looked at all of the materials on line and he is a firefighter. He said this is a good deal.**

**Hess: Thank you ma'am.**

**Rain Bearcat:** Will this go to election, like the board? How about the water in Salome?

**Hess:** If the Board votes unanimously, there will be no election necessary.

**Unknown Man:** What happens to the current board after the merger?

**Hess:** They will elect two members from the MVFD district and three from the QFD district.

**Unknown Lady:** Brenda is in the Rain Grass aquifer and it is filled by rain. Will the fire department have any effect on this?

**Hess:** I don't think this will have any effect. The fires in Brenda happen infrequently, so we will not be using a lot of water. We have a well at the station in Brenda. The water table is at 100', and it is 300' deep. We have a 20,000 gallon storage tank, donated by the Town of Quartzsite and a 4,000 gallon water tender out there, so when there is a fire we'll be ready.

**Lady:** it is in the Rain Grass aquifer, and I agree, fires are infrequent in Brenda.

**Monica Timberlake:** This is not my area of expertise, but I've read the statutes and it said if a person owns 30% of the property it doesn't need to go to election, but if not, then it does have to go to election.

**Hess:** Mr. Whittington would you like to speak to this?

**Bill Whittington:** Nobody owns 30% of the property in this district so it doesn't need to go to election at this point.

**Kari Ammon:** I just wanted to say that people should welcome fore inspections. They are important. I lay there at night and I worry about some of the faulty electrical appliances the tenants in our park have. I am grateful for the inspections.

**Hess:** Thank you. Captain Collier and his team of inspectors do a great job. They stop a lot of fires before they start. That's why we call it fire prevention.

**Star Bearcat:** What is the population and the density of the McMullen Valley District compared to the Quartzsite District?

**Hess:** There is a lot of empty land and the population is centered mostly in and around the communities. According to the census bureau, there is approximately 7,600 people in the district. Of course, here in Quartzsite there is around 3,500 and then there is also La Paz Valley and Rainbow Acres. So almost half of the residents are in our existing district.

**Star:** 1,000 square miles and 190 square miles, our people will have to cover these areas.

**Hess:** We have already been doing this, so it's the same O same O.

**Star:** So you cover the BLM?

**Hess:** Yes. The good thing about this is that we are able by AZ Statute to bill these people if they are not residents.

**Monica:** Do you bill people in the RV Parks?

**Will Aaron:** Transient Travelers only. The year round peoples taxes are covered by the RV Parks.

**Lady:** I live in a park year round in my motor home, do I have to pay taxes?

**Will:** No.

**Unknown Man:** I was concerned about the price per call. Looking at your pros you said this may save money, These kind of things bother me.

**Hess:** We have to phrase it that way, because we cannot predict what the actual operating costs will be without knowing what the assessed value will be in the future.

**Lady:** You said that McMullen Valley has 7 members. Who does the training?

**Hess:** I do, through our training center. Captain Collier will generally show a firefighting video of cover a new development in fire control, etc. We also teach Fire Academies and EMT Classes and provide monthly continued education for all of our EMTs.

**Star:** You said you take water from that area. If you take the water, do you pay for it?

**Hess:** Of course we use the water. You know I have been working here in Quartzsite since 2001. We have protected the TOQs infrastructure all of these years for free. So if you think you are going to charge us for water, there will be a war. I had an IGA with a previous town manager that said in exchange for our fire protection the Town would provide us with water. She even stated that they had already bored under the road and there is a sleeve in place to carry the water and sewer to the fire department.

**Rain:** The open meeting law requires that the agenda be posted 24 hours in advance. I looked and it wasn't on the website.

**Hess:** Assistant Chief Aaron posted it. **Aaron:** That is correct.

**Rain:** Well it wasn't there at 12:37am today.

**Hess:** We also post at three locations denoted on the agenda.

Hess: Mr. Whittington can you please address this?

W. Whittington: Mr. Chairman, permission to speak?

P. Cushman: Granted

Whittington: You only need to have the agenda posted in one place 24 hours prior.

P. Cushman: Is there any other questions? Heads in the audience shake. Chairman Minor do you have any comments?

Duce Minor: I've learned one thing about firefighters. You can be sitting around having a conversation about money, or pretty much anything and if the bell rings, they are ready to go. I commend the board for all of their dedication behind the scenes and work. Chief Hess is always looking for a way to make it. He doesn't seem to have an off button.

Hess: Thank you Sir.

Philip: If there are no other comments, I'll go ahead and close the discussion.

C. Close Public Hearing. **The Public Hearing was closed at 7:10 by Phil Cushman.**

D. Discussion and Possible Action re: possible adoption of Resolution 2025-02-25, approving the merger of the Quartzsite Fire District and the McMullen Valley Fire District. **Phil Cushman made a motion to approve Resolution# 2025-02-25 calling for the merger of the McMullen Valley and Quartzsite Fire Districts. Travis Freedman seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

8. Adjourn Meeting: **Phil Cushman adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm.**

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Phil Cushman interim Chair

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Dave Collier, Clerk

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TC Collier, Member

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Travis Freedman, Member

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