

QUARTZSITE FIRE DISTRICT

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MCMULLEN VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

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NEWLY MERGED QUARTZSITE FIRE DISTRICT / MCMULLEN VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

Initial Organizational Meeting Minutes

Date: October 3, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Desert Gold RV Resort
46628 US-60, Salome, AZ 85348

1. Call Meeting to Order: **Called to Order at 09:03 by Susan Sewell.**
2. Appointment of Temporary Chairperson: **A motion was made by TC Collier to Appoint Susan Sewell as temporary Chairperson. Pam Wolfe-Brady seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**
3. Pledge of Allegiance: **All in attendance participated.**
4. Roll Call: **Philip Cushman (via cell) Susan Sewell, TC Collier, Pam Wolfe-Brady and Travis Freedman were present.**
5. Call to the Public: **Patti Rinehart expressed a concern related to transport locations for the HALO Buckeye Helicopter. She was reassured that the transport unit had a legal obligation to transport patients to a location of their choice.**
6. Discussion and Possible Action: Acknowledgement of Governing Board Members: **The Board Members for the newly merged were acknowledged as follows: Susan Sewell, Philip Cushman, TC Collier, Pam Wolfe-Brady and Travis Freedman.**
7. Discussion and Possible Action: Appointment of Board Chairperson and Clerk: **Susan Sewell nominated herself as Chairperson and Phil Cushman as Clerk of the Board. TC Collier nominated Susan Sewell as Chairperson, and himself as Board Clerk. Travis Freedman nominated Susan Sewell as Board Chair Person and Philip Cushman as Clerk. Pam Wolfe nominated Susan Sewell as Chairperson and Phil Cushman as Clerk. TC Collier made a motion to accept**

Susan Sewell's Nomination as stated. Philip Cushman seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Susan Sewell as Chairperson and Philip Cushman as Board Clerk.

8. Discussion and Possible Action: Selection of District Name: After some deliberation and discussion, Pam Wolfe-Brady made a motion that the New District be named "La Paz Unified Fire-Medical District", TC Collier seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

9. Discussion and Possible Action: Appointment of Fire Chief: Travis Freedman made a motion to re-appoint Kevin Hess as Fire Chief. Pam Wolfe Brady seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Discussion and Possible Action: Appointment of General Counsel: Philip Cushman made a motion to retain the Law Firm operated by William Whittington. Susan Sewell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Discussion and Possible Action:

- Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with AFMA regarding HALO Helicopter Service in Buckeye, AZ: Travis Freedman made a motion to allow Chief Hess to review the IGA with AFMA, once the correct changes made by the board were in place. TC Collier seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.**

12. Discussion and Possible Action re: Possible Approval of Resolution 2025-10-02 of the governing board of the newly merged district; declaring the Quartzsite Fire District and the McMullen Valley Fire District merged; Appointing a Fire Chief; Appointing General Council; Authorizing receipt of All the Equipment, Assets, Contracts and Liabilities of the McMullen Valley and the Quartzsite Fire District; Authorizing Receipt of All Assets and Liability and All Books and Records belonging to the Fire Fighters' Relief Pension Fund and the Public Safety Retirement Plans of the McMullen Valley Fire District and the Quartzsite Fire District, if Any; And Directing Staff to Take Such Actions As May Be Necessary to Accomplish the Directives Set Forth Herein. Susan Sewell made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10-02 as written. Philip Cushman seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Discussion and Possible Action: Setting regular meeting day and time: Future Meeting Schedule and Locations The board discussed and set the schedule for future meetings, deciding on the third Wednesday of each month at 6 PM ([00:40:24](#)) ([00:42:49](#)). They also agreed to rotate meeting locations to better serve the communities, with the next meeting on October 22nd in Salome, the November 19th meeting in Quartzsite, and the December 17th meeting at Desert Gold ([00:41:27](#)) ([00:46:21](#)). The board emphasized improving electronic meeting capabilities to facilitate remote participation ([00:44:07](#)). Susan Sewell also noted a potential special work session to gather public input on the district's vision in late October or November ([00:51:21](#)).

14. Adjourn Meeting: The Meeting was adjourned at 09:52 by Susan Sewell.

Oct 3, 2025

Board Meeting Transcripts:

Attachments [Board Meeting](#)

Meeting records [Transcript](#)

Summary

The meeting was opened, leading to the appointment of Susan Sewell as the temporary chairperson, who was subsequently elected board chairperson, and Phil Cushman as board clerk. The newly merged district was named "La Paz Unified Fire and Medical District," and the board reappointed Kevin Hess as Fire Chief and retained Bill W's law firm as general counsel. The board also approved Resolution 25-2025-10-03 for the district merger and an Intergovernmental Agreement with AFMA for the Halo helicopter service, subject to amendments, which was unanimously passed after a motion by Travis Freedman.

Details

- **Initial Meeting Logistics and Member Appointments** Attendees were welcomed, including Fire Department members and Phil, who joined by phone ([00:00:00](#)) ([00:03:04](#)). The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM, and Susan was appointed as the temporary chairperson ([00:04:13](#)). The newly merged fire district governing board members were acknowledged, including Phil Cushman, Travis Freedman, TC Collier, Pam Brady, and Susan Sewell ([00:11:26](#)). Susan was also nominated and voted in as the board chairperson, with Phil Cushman appointed as the board clerk ([00:14:19](#)).
- **Public Call and Emergency Transport Policies** The board opened the meeting to the public, clarifying that while direct action on unlisted items is restricted by open meeting laws, board members can respond to criticism, and staff can review matters for future agendas. Discussions arose about the Halo helicopter service in Buckeye, Arizona, and the board clarified that patients have the right to choose their transport destination, even if it's not the closest facility, a point Kevin Hess strongly emphasized as essential patient autonomy ([00:05:49](#)).
- **Website and Communication Resources** Will Aaron suggested creating a resource page on a new website for the district, listing important information. They noted that Chief Hess and Captain Collier manage the Facebook page, which they plan to rename from Quartzsite Fire to reflect the new district ([00:10:26](#)). Will Aaron also suggested posting EMT information and other resources on the website for public access ([00:09:05](#)).
- **Naming the New Fire District** The board engaged in an extensive discussion to select a name for the newly merged fire district. Various suggestions were put forth, including "Desert Fire and Rescue," "Sonoran Desert Fire and Rescue," and "Desert Valley Fire and Rescue" ([00:15:44](#)). Other ideas included "La Paz Fire District" or "La Paz Unified Fire District," "Arizona Outback Fire Department," and "Union Fire District" ([00:16:51](#)) ([00:23:00](#)). The board decided to name the district "La Paz Unified Fire and Medical District" ([00:24:41](#)).
- **Fire Chief and General Counsel Reappointments** The board discussed and approved the reappointment of Kevin Hess as the Fire Chief for the newly merged district, with unanimous support ([00:28:01](#)). They also voted to retain the law firm of Bill Whittington as general counsel, acknowledging Tomas, a member of the firm, who has provided support and engagement ([00:29:17](#)).
- **Resolution Approval and IGA with AFMA** The board approved Resolution 25-2025-10-03, which declared the merger of McMullen Valley Fire District and Quartzsite Fire District, appointed leadership, named the new district, and authorized the transfer of assets and liabilities ([00:32:16](#)). A discussion and possible action on an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with AFMA for the Halo helicopter service were also on the agenda ([00:33:55](#)). Travis moved to approve the IGA, subject to amendments for state-required provisions and a change in language to reflect that Halo 321 is an "air medical transport resource" rather than the "primary" service, and allowing the Fire Chief to execute the final agreement ([00:35:23](#)). This motion passed unanimously ([00:39:21](#)).

- **Future Meeting Schedule and Locations** The board discussed and set the schedule for future meetings, deciding on the third Wednesday of each month at 6 PM ([00:40:24](#)) ([00:42:49](#)). They also agreed to rotate meeting locations to better serve the communities, with the next meeting on October 22nd in Salome, the November 19th meeting in Quartzsite, and the December 17th meeting at Desert Gold ([00:41:27](#)) ([00:46:21](#)). The board emphasized improving electronic meeting capabilities to facilitate remote participation ([00:44:07](#)). Susan Sewell also noted a potential special work session to gather public input on the district's vision in late October or November ([00:51:21](#)).

Suggested next steps

The group will hold the next meeting on October 22nd at 6 PM in Salome, followed by the November 19th meeting in Quartzsite at the Firehouse, and the December 17th meeting at Desert Gold.

The group will start a rotation for meeting locations in January.

The group will hold a special work session to discuss vision and gather public input by the end of October or in November.

The group will list several future meeting dates and locations at the bottom of the agenda.