

## QUARTZSITE FIRE DISTRICT

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## McMULLEN VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

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### Joint Board Meeting Minutes March 5, 2025

1. Call Meeting to Order: Called to order at 6:04pm by Teena Conrad.
2. Pledge of Allegiance: All in attendance participated.
3. Roll Call: QFD: Phil Cushman, TC Collier, Dave Collier & Travis Freedman were present. MVFD: Teena Conrad, Susan Sewell, Sam Rees and Jennifer Walton were present. Staff: K. Hess, W. Aaron, L. Collier, B. Howe and J. Johnston attended as well as several members of the public.
4. Call to the Public: Leroy Smith: Is the reason that this merger taking place to try to offset the higher costs of running the calls in McMullen? The slide show said that the average call in Salome costs more to run than in Quartzsite. Phil Cushman: No Sir, the cost per call in Quartzsite is lower than the cost in Salome due to the volume of the calls at QFD. There are 2,400 vs. 350 so when the budget is divided by the total number of calls, that is how we arrive at the cost per call number. Doug Wolfe: Folks in Salome get paid and we are fully staffed. Louise Wolfe: Costs in Salome would go up to 3.53 if merged, so Salome would go up. Kevin the tax rate in QFD is currently 3.73, and the cost in Salome is Currently 3.38, is that correct? Hess: Yes, that is correct. Tyler Calhoun: I think the biggest task is the continuity of care and we should consider that before taxes. Will it benefit our grandparents and our kids? Personally, I would be willing to pay more. Doug Wolfe: Our people are fine and the care is exactly the same. We just do not want to give up our identity. Patti Reinhardt: I thought the merger was over? Hess: Were still in a discussion and considering other options. The Quartzsite Board passed the merger unanimously, and as I understand it, that decision stands and McMullen can vote on the merger again if they so choose. James Reinhardt: So, their decision stands? They don't have to ask for approval, or hold another public hearing? W. Whittington: No, they don't have to. Chris Campbell: I know you're scared, but we did a merger and it works well. You need a larger tax base so you can get more money over a larger area. Fire Trucks are expensive! Lynette Maynes: I appreciate the board's explanation of why they voted the way they did. All of these partnerships can still happen, I just think you should explore some other options. I am proud of the Fire Department, I just want to ask the board to slow down. Gwen Leeman: Let's hear James Reinhardt's opinion on mergers. J. Reinhardt: We had a department merge. The majority of the tax payers were in the larger areas. We ended up being short staffed, they took our trucks and firefighters

when they needed them and we ended up being short staffed. We enjoyed a lot of camaraderie, but in the end, it just didn't work out. We ended up getting a couple of grants and trucks. There are several people in Salome who would like to be the chief and there's \$80,000 in the budget for admin., I see nothing but our people and equipment being taken to Quartzsite. I am not saying that Kevin would do that, but it could happen. Ilene Wood: I want to thank the McMullen Valley Board for listening to the tax payers. John Leland: the only take away I have is that if we can't staff them now, how would we staff them after a merger? Hess: Sir both departments are currently fully staffed at the moment. Bowen Howe: We have an overabundance of equipment at both departments and adequate staffing. There was a question as to whether a merger would decrease the times.... I think it would. Doug Wolfe: Folks in Salome are getting paid. The ones who stay at the station are getting paid the exact same wage as those who are staying home. They are getting paid, so they should be ready to respond. Phil Cushman: Okay, thank you everyone for your comments. We will be returning to the agenda not and moving on. At 6:09 pm the board convened to Executive Session.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice with the district's attorney. Teena Conrad entertained a motion to adjourn to Executive session, Sam Rees made the motion and S. Sewell seconded. Phil Cushman entertained a motion to adjourn to Executive Session, TC Collier made the motion and Dave Collier seconded. Both Boards voted unanimously. The Board reconvened at 6:54pm to regular session.

5. Possible approval of the minutes from Public Hearing 2-27-2025 – **Discussion and Possible Actions to approve MVFD and QFD: Dave Collier made a motion to approve the QFD Minutes. Travis Freedman seconded, approved unanimously.**
  6. Issues relating to possible Merger of the Quartzsite Fire District and the McMullen Valley Fire District; review of the process; Possible Alternatives. Possible Financial Study relating to the same. Possible election related to the same. **Susan Sewell made a motion to table the discussion on item #6. Sam Rees seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Travis Freedman made a motion to adjourn the QFD meeting at 7:41 and Dave Collier seconded, the motion carried unanimously.**
7. Adjourn Meeting: Teena Conrad entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41, Susan Sewell made the motion and Sam Rees second. The motion carried unanimously.

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Phil Cushman Chairperson

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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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Glen Love Member