

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
NORTHERN ARIZONA FIRE DISTRICT
THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021**

NOTICE: Due to Coronavirus/COVID-19, Arizona Executive Order #2020-18, and CDC recommendations on social distancing, the building is closed to the public and this meeting will be conducted electronically. Members of the public may call in to hear the live audio by joining the Zoom meeting. Public comment or audio is not allowed during the meeting and attendants are to listen only, per the guidance published by the Attorney General for the State of Arizona.

The Governing Board of the Northern Arizona Fire District met via Zoom from remote locations this 15th day of April 2021, at 6:00 p.m. for its regular monthly meeting. The Zoom meeting website, meeting phone number and meeting ID were all listed on the Agenda that has been provided and posted.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman Jim Bailey at 6:01 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS** – Board members present: Board Chairman Jim Bailey, Director John Bryant, Director Mike Collins, Director Sue Wilkin, and Director Sue Brown, were all present via Zoom from remote locations.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (for approval by unanimous consent after corrections/additions)
Chairman Bailey moved to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of March 18, 2021, as submitted. Director Bryant seconded the motion. There were no questions or comments. Passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.
4. **REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**
 - A. Chief's Report – Chief Rhoades gave his report in accordance with his memorandum and the Monthly Performance Report, both in the board packet. Monthly call total was 404, which is normal. All promotions are on hold pending completion of the feasibility study. We had an All-Hands Meeting on Monday to discuss the direction, it was a good meeting. Update on 2600 Northern: We are still looking at April 30th to the first couple weeks of May as the deadline. Once we have C of O, we can start the moving-over transition. The board should be able to set the date for the Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting at their next board meeting. We had a busy month of training, 307.5 hours. Re-branding is complete, you will start seeing apparatus with new emblems. The signage for the stations is currently under design, we are looking at cost and how we can implement those. The tentative feasibility study site visit is May 10 and 11. The board will be contacted regarding interviews for the study. The appraisal company was out today and did the appraisal. We should have the results by the end of the month. Going into the budget planning for next fiscal year, looking at the volume of calls for Station 31, we need a plan for apparatus. We are good on ancillary apparatus, however, our two front-line engines 31 and 32 need a replacement plan. If you look at Station 31 running 240 calls in a month, that's 8 to 10 calls a shift as compared to Station 35 making 27 calls in a month, that's a call day. Regarding mutual aid, 28 received and 4 given. We really lean hard with coverage from the City in the District and this is something we will need to be bring back into balance. This again is where the feasibility study comes in.

Chairman Bailey reminded the board that the AFDA Training is next Friday at the Mohave County Building, perhaps in the auditorium and starts at 8:30 with registration starting at 8:00. Rhonda confirmed that everyone who needs to attend has been registered, class has been paid, and she has confirmed with Kelly at AFDA that everyone is good to go. Chairman Bailey continued that there will be a light breakfast and lunch provided and that it should end around 4pm.

B. Financial Report – No discussion

5. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RE:**

A. **Approval of the March Financial Report.** Motion was made by Chairman Bailey to approve the March financial report. Director Wilkin seconded the motion. There were no questions or comments. Passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.

B. **Discussion regarding Automatic Aid with Golden Valley for the Chloride area.** Chief Rhoades explained he met with Chief Cunningham last week and discussed what this will look like. Our net assessed value in that area yields us about \$39,188.26. They concluded that we would still manage the administration, and they would manage the operations, the primary response out of their district. If we did that, we could split the \$39,188.26 in half and enter into a one-year agreement and see how it is working. That means we would pay them \$19,594.13. We would pay that in a monthly payment of \$1,632.84. This really helps us out because of our response time out there. Our response times to get out there are 30+ minutes. That is a huge factor in itself. So having this in their primary response helps out quite a bit and they are doing those calls because of mutual aid anyway. This will remove our responsibility, because while we are out there for a call, that takes units out of our busiest fire district for a minimum of an hour. The Automatic Aid agreement between GVFD, LMRFD, KFD and NAFD, will still be in place. Chief Rhoades asked for guidance on the monetary piece – does that rate sound amiable to the board? What direction would the board like him to take moving forward with the monetary piece?

Chairman Bailey asked what their response time was in Golden Valley. Chief Rhoades did not have that information with him, but he did say they run 50 to 60 calls out there a year. Golden Valley arrives at the incident long before we do and even before the City. It has been at least 10 to 15 minutes before we arrive; much better than the District. Chairman Bailey asked if they are looking at staffing someone out there, like a POC? Chief replied, no, they will respond from their stations. They will include these in their run cards. Chief Rhoades asked if 50% of our tax levy was amiable to move forward? Chief Cunningham is doing the same, by seeking direction from his board of directors as well.

Chairman Bailey stated that it is a huge benefit to have them as the first to go out. He believes its worth \$1,600 a month to get service out there. Chief Rhoades said he will triple check his calculations.

Director Collins said he thought there was a lot of value to it. He has been out there, and Golden Valley is there 10 to 15 minutes before even a Battalion Chief shows up. He agreed to double check the numbers regarding the assessed value. Chief replied, absolutely.

Chairman Bailey said he thought it was a big benefit for the area out there. He doesn't have a problem with \$1,600 a month for it. He also agreed with moving forward with splitting it half and half once the income has been checked. Chief responded, he will check those numbers and give the board a chance to see those numbers before any approval happens. Chairman Bailey said, sounds good.

C. **Discussion and possible approval of Firefighter/Medic Hiring Incentive.** Chief Rhoades said this is part of our recruitment. You will see a flyer come out. We have tried to jazz this up and improve what we put out there. This will be on social media and our website. We are looking at laterals. We have had a couple of good candidates; we just need experience and paramedics. Paramedics are at an all-time shortage in the area. Bullhead City increased their paramedic incentive to \$10,000 because they keep losing medics going north to the Vegas area. Chief is hoping to use this as a recruitment tool. This \$5,000 incentive will have a two-year commitment agreement. So, if

we hire somebody and pay them, under this agreement, if they leave before the two years have been completed, they must pay back the money to the District. This is similar to the tuition agreement that we currently use. Other cities are going to this methodology as well. Chairman Bailey stated that eventually we are going to have to raise our pay to get it similar to everyone else or we will just continue to be nothing but a training ground. Chief added, Peach Springs is on a totally different structure as us and so their pay is very enticing, to say the least. Whether or not they get PSPRS, that is a huge factor. Chairman Bailey made the motion to approve the Firefighter/Medic hiring incentive of \$5,000 which will include a two-year employment commitment from the new hire and a signed Firefighter/Medic Incentive Agreement and Promissory Note. Director Bryant seconded the motion. There were no questions or comments. Passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.

D. Discussion and possible action regarding board Zoom meetings. Chairman Bailey stated that Director Wilkin had asked him about going into regular session for this meeting. He felt it was too close and not enough time to change the plans on this meeting. He would like to wait until we are in the new station, so we are not having the meeting in the firefighter's living quarters. When we use Station 31's training room, the room the two Sues are in, it is actually their living quarters. He is not personally concerned about any viruses, but there might be firefighters who might get nervous about the board members and the public coming into their station. Director Wilkin stated that because everything else in town is open, why aren't we. And no one is going near those quarters. You won't find me in their restrooms. Chairman Bailey said that in the past we actually have used their restrooms before and the public has come in through the fire station, even though there is the outer door that can be used. A couple of times there has even been public members walking through the station thinking that it is okay to do that. Chief Rhoades said the one thing that he would request is that when we do go back in person that we have a hybrid ability, so we still run Zoom meetings for people and the firefighters that can still attend via Zoom. We should probably think about social distancing. Once we are in the new building and have a much larger capacity to that, I would ask that the board consider some of those items in deciding. Chairman Bailey added, this would allow Donna to be included in the meetings. Director Wilkin said she thinks we should go back to regular meetings. Chairman Bailey said he hoped they would be done with the building closer to the next meeting on the 20th.

Director Wilkin said regarding the new building, she thinks the board should have a walk-through inspection before we ever have our next meeting, if it's complete. Chairman Bailey asked, you mean a walk-through so you can see it? Director Wilkin answered, a walk-through inspection. Chief asked, an inspection – what do you mean, ma'am? Director Wilkin answered, walk through, to make sure it is the way it should be, on site, we can look at plans and all that, but that's not what I am saying, walk through it and make sure it is ready to be used – in useable condition. Chairman Bailey stated that the County is not going to issue a Certificate of Occupancy if it is not ready. In addition, the contractor will do a walk-through with the Chiefs to sign off on everything. He said they could do a walk through before the public does. Director Wilkin said they should. So, we at least know what we are talking about if anyone asks us about it. Chief Rhoades said once we have the C of O, before we start moving in, he will arrange that. Donna reminded everyone regarding a quorum.

Chairman Bailey said, regarding the Zoom meeting, we will just have to wait on the next couple of weeks. He asked Chief about any special meetings coming up. Chief stated that we may want to have a special meeting at the start of the month regarding the contract with the realtor so we can get the property on the market.

Director Wilkin said, as far as she knows when someone is new to the board, they are given an orientation of all the stations – opened or closed. That has never been done for Sue Brown and she thinks it should be. We do discuss these things (the stations) in meetings. This is normally done by the Chief or whomever is the acting Chief – it could be a Battalion Chief though. Chief replied that

he could facilitate that and given that this is an IGA, he will ask the Chair or the Clerk to accompany him on that as well. Chairman Bailey said he was available most of the time. Chief said he will set it up over the next several weeks, he will have Rhonda reach out to Sue next week and set this up.

- 6. CALL TO THE PUBLIC** – The District may, but is not required to, give the public an opportunity to speak to any issue. A.R.S. §38-431.01(H).

Call to the public has been suspended due to the guidance of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the recommendation and approval of the Attorney General’s Office, letter dated March 13, 2020, due to the impact of the COVID-19.

Public comments can still be submitted by the public in writing – including your name and address – to the NAFD Fire Administration office either through email, dropped off at the Admin office, or by mail. Comments must be received by 9:00 am on the morning of the meeting. All comments will be shared with the Board of Directors and made a part of the public record. Members of the public are welcome to watch or listen to the meeting via Zoom.

No comments were received.

- 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Chief Rhoades said we have started our ISO review. ISO reached out before the elections and given the climate at that time; they chose to wait. They had their initial fact gathering meeting and overview. Chief Rhoades is a little concerned. It was done in 2015/2016. He is concerned about some of the information that was given, so he will provide updates as he gets them, but he is concerned about the current ratings and what those are going to be moving forward. He has concerns with the accuracy of information; he is digging into that. Understand that the numbers that were provided, as far as staffing, responses, those type of things, at this time, neither ISO nor the Chief understand what the rationale was. Once submitted, it takes about six months to get our ratings back. He has requested ISO come on-site and deliver those ratings to the board, so they can explain them. Chairman Bailey said he has never seen them. Chief Rhoades said, I think in this case, it will be necessary.
- 8. ADJOURNMENT** – Chairman Bailey moved to adjourn the meeting and Director Wilkin seconded it. Passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

These minutes were prepared and posted by Rhonda Johnson on April 19, 2021.

James Bailey, Board Chairman

Mike Collins, Board Clerk