

MEETING MINUTES OF THE VERNON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD

4/22/2025 AT 5:30 PM AT THE VERNON LIBRARY

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER REGULAR BOARD MEETING**, meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.
2. **ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS**, present were John Vehar, Grey Murphy, Randy Mifflin, and Tony Anderson.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLIEGENCE AND PRAYER**, The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Collin DeWitt prayed for the meeting.
4. **RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**, Wendy Sharp, Chief John Connolly, Chief Collin DeWitt, FF Daniel Brubaker, FF Brittany Hunsaker, FF John Patterson, FF Garrett Allen, FF Brandon Green, Captain Kevin Vickers.
5. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**, John Vehar gave the call, there were no members of the public who gave comments.
6. **REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**
 - A. Chair Summary – John Vehar stated that he did not have anything to speak about for the summary.
 - B. Financial Report and Discussion – Jacob York gave the financial report for March. Revenue was around \$31,000, over budget by \$7,800. Expenses were approximately \$69,000, about \$16,000 under budget due to lower personnel expenses. Managerial expenses were under budget by \$4,600. This fiscal year through March, revenue is \$1.5 million, over budget by \$600,000 due to wildland and grant revenue. Year-to-date expenses are approximately \$1.4 million which is over budget by \$362,000, due to wildland expenses and vehicle repairs. Cash is \$905,000 as of March 31, and \$240,000 of this is still earmarked for grant expenses. Jacob York called for questions, and Chief DeWitt commented that the final payment for the tender, which is a grant expense, will be made near the end of the week. Grey asked about Zoll Medical Equipment being a negative and different from last year. Jacob York said it looks like a typical payment, and the negative is likely due to the way it was recorded.
 - C. Chief's Report and discussion – Chief Collin DeWitt reported that there were 63 calls in March. There was one brush fire that Captain Vickers was called to as a mutual aid assignment. Captain Vickers explained how those incidents went, and that aiding other agencies is very helpful for all involved. He did mention that these incidents will likely happen more often. The state will stand up its task forces early this year. May first the task force will be in Pinetop, and all aircraft will be available by May 20. There are aircraft currently available in Wickenburg if need arises before then. Chief DeWitt also mentioned a search and rescue in which a Downs child was lost and located. It provided an opportunity to showcase that we do have thermal imaging equipment and drones available for this type of incident, and it was suggested that the drone operator, Mike Johnson, display his equipment during the next community event.
7. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - D. The Board has reviewed the Financial Report for the month of March 2025.
 - E. The Board has reviewed and approved the meeting minutes for 3/25/25.
8. **BUSINESS**
 - F. Grey Murphy motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, and Tony Anderson seconded the motion. Grey Murphy called for a vote, and the Consent Agenda was approved unanimously.
 - G. **Discussion and possible action: Grants**, Chief DeWitt gave a report. The Panasonic Tough Books were received today, which will be exchanged for the Microsoft devices. This will complete the ADASHI grant. The tactical tender is finished. John Berry and Chief DeWitt will pick it up.
 - H. **Discussion and possible action: Vehicles**, John Vehar asked whether there is an appointment for decals on the new tender. Wendy Sharp stated that it will be done on Wednesday. Engine 251 is still waiting at RWC for a quote for repair costs. Other small vehicle issues have come up, but our own personnel have been able to address those internally.
 - I. **Discussion and possible action: Body Armor**, Kevin Vickers showed the old armor vs. the new, and mentioned there are also options for larger bodies that can be purchased as needed. The body armor will be used on an as-needed basis during certain calls and mutual aid incidents. Helmets were briefly discussed along with pros and cons of usage and the cost of helmets.
 - J. **Discussion and possible action: 25th Anniversary Community Event**, Wendy Sharp reported that the tentative event date is May 17th for a meet-and-greet with the new Chief, a Firewise event, push in the new tender, and VFD's 25th anniversary all at the same time. The community, Apache County Emergency Management, State Forestry, ACSO, and surrounding agencies are invited. Hot dogs and chips will be served, and donations are being solicited for those items. Paper products will be needed, and the crew may purchase a Blackstone grill. John Vehar suggested inviting Nelson Davis, Dave Marshall, and Eli Crane. Wendy Sharp confirmed the date, and it was affirmed.
 - K. **Discussion and possible action: Fire Chief Contract**, John Vehar stated that a correction needed to be made, as a vote was taken during an Executive Session in the last meeting. The vote will be re-cast in the regular meeting to extend the job offer to the new Chief. Tony Anderson motioned to extend the offer, and Grey Murphy seconded. John Vehar called for a vote, and it was unanimously approved. Everyone has read the contract, and Tony Anderson moved to accept the contract as written. Grey Murphy seconded the motion. John Vehar called for a vote, and it was unanimously approved. The Oath of Office was administered to Chief John Connolly by John Vehar, and the employment contract was signed by John Connolly and John Vehar. Chief Connolly was welcomed by all in attendance.
9. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**: Grants, Vehicles, Budget, Wildland pre-season update.
10. **ADJOURNMENT**, Grey Murphy motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Tony Anderson seconded the motion. A vote was called and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm.