

# MEETING MINUTES OF THE VERNON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD

1/28/2025 AT 5:30 PM at the Vernon Library

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. **CALL TO ORDER REGULAR BOARD MEETING:** Called to order by John Vehar at 5:30pm.
2. **ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Present members: Tony Anderson, Gregg McClendon, Randy Mifflin, John Vehar, and Grey Murphy.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:** The Pledge was recited, and Chief DeWitt prayed for the meeting.
4. **RECOGNITION OF GUESTS:** Wendy Sharp, Chief Collin DeWitt, Paula Johnson, Chief Willie Nelson, Louis Mirabelli, Captain Sarah Petersen, Firefighter John Patterson, Firefighter Daniel Brubaker, Justin Jones, Brandon Green, and Jacob York.
5. **REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**
  - A. Chair Summary – John Vehar spoke of discussing calls. While calls are public knowledge, firefighters, board members, etc., need not answer questions from the public. If someone is listening via scanner, they can do that, but the person listening should not share what they have heard.
  - B. Financial Report and Discussion – Jacob York presented the financial report for December. Revenue was just under \$74,000 from property taxes, which is under the projection for the month, but over the projection for the year to date. Expenses were approximately \$95,000 for December, which is over budget by approximately \$11,000, which is mostly due to vehicle repairs and maintenance. The year-to-date revenue from July to December was just over \$1,000,000, which is over the projection by \$400,000 and this is driven by grant and wildland revenue received. Year-to-date expenses are just over \$960,000, and that is \$312,000 over budget, mostly due to personnel costs, vehicle repairs and maintenance. Cash is approximately \$850,000, and \$240,000 of that is earmarked for future grant expenses. Jacob York called for questions, and Collin DeWitt mentioned that personnel costs include wildland costs which makes personnel costs appear larger than they are since wildland personnel costs are reimbursed. He wants to show that fact more clearly on the report so that the public is better informed, John Vehar agreed, and Jacob York said he could do something for that. Grey Murphy had a question regarding the amount for future grant expenses, and Chief DeWitt clarified that it is an amount that is spread over 3 years and each year we pay the vendor the allocated amount specified by the grant.
  - C. Chief's Report and discussion – Chief Collin DeWitt noted the number of calls in December was 19 out of district, 16 in district, and there was one exceptional call in which an acting command officer witnessed an assault, called for help, and other notable events ensued.
6. **CONSENT AGENDA**
  - A. The Board has reviewed the Financial Report for the month of December 2024.
  - B. The Board has reviewed and approved the meeting minutes for 12/17/2024.
7. **BUSINESS**
  - A. **Consent Agenda:** Grey Murphy motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, and Gregg McClendon seconded the motion. John Vehar called for a vote, and it was approved unanimously.
  - B. **Discussion and possible action: Grants,** Chief Collin DeWitt reported that the assembly of the tender is still taking place. We have been contacted about color choice for paint. The cab is on, and the final touch-up and mounting will be done soon. The ADASHI grant is in its second year, and a distributor will come soon to give our users some instruction time. Computers will be exchanged from Surface Pro to Tough Books for durability, and these will be included in the grant so that VFD does not spend any additional dollars. Mounting is a separate issue and will also be covered in the grant. Grey Murphy asked if there were any new grants coming up, and the Chief said that unfortunately the Arbor grant that had been hoped for did not materialize. John Vehar asked about the fuel mitigation grant, and the Chief said that VFD will be applying for that as mitigation will likely get a good amount of funding because of the California wildfires.
  - C. **Discussion and possible action: Wildland,** Chief DeWitt reported that there have been 7 rollouts since November, and 3 more this month for a total of 18 for the entire year. There have been some expenses involved, but the total revenue is over \$250,000 and should add another \$70,000 by the time the last 3 deployments are billed. This will defray vehicle repair costs on the Type 3 engine.
  - D. **Discussion and possible action: Vehicles,** Repairs to the Type 3 engine are estimated to be \$30,000 for the head, lower engine, rocker arm assembly, and related systems. VFD staff picked up the engine from RWC and it reached Payson but then broke down and was towed back to RWC. RWC indicated that a warranty repair would not be possible without payment. Discussion was had regarding whether to pay it right away, whether the company was reputable, and certain line items on the bill. Chief DeWitt recommended paying the bill right away and taking action with RWC afterwards if necessary.
  - E. **Discussion and possible action: Taylor Snowflake Fire Department Relationship,** Collin DeWitt mentioned a previous discussion regarding a JPA or IGA collaboration with other districts and municipalities. He introduced Chief Willie Nelson to answer any questions from the board. Discussion centered around how things would work between a fire district and a municipality, if there would be any benefit to Taylor Snowflake Fire Department, and who would be the employee of the VFD Board. Chief Nelson pointed out that there are many options from a managerial standpoint, and the town would be contracted as an employee of sorts. Chief DeWitt added that an arrangement such as this would be helpful to save on administrative costs by combining certain jobs. Randy Mifflin mentioned that his original concept was to expand our district by combining with neighboring districts in order to serve the public better, possibly being able to apply for different grants or have access to other resources.

Louis Mirabelli spoke about ongoing discussions with firefighters, and his knowledge of previous events with Timber Mesa, and a current proposed merger between Hell's Gate and the City of Payson. The main concerns are maintaining firefighter safety, and serving the community. He offered his assistance in any way needed and mentioned that longevity is of high importance to all involved. Chief Nelson stated that this is the very beginning of any kind of discussion, and anything that would be decided upon would need to be taken before their

town council for approval. Chief DeWitt added that bringing this up at this time is for the purpose of opening the discussion so that all questions can come to light for any future discussions and/or meetings. The board is open to ongoing discussions regarding all aspects of an agreement, and Chief DeWitt reminded the board that there are Chief candidates under review, so that aspect also needs to be considered.

8. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC** – Paula Johnson thanked VFD for attending the Christmas party and expressed appreciation for the help that VFD gives to the community during events for Vernon residents.
9. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** The February 25, 2025 agenda will include further discussion regarding Taylor/Snowflake, grants and wildland during the Chief's Report, permanent towers, land off Highway 61, the UTV, auction outcome, and firefighter safety equipment.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Grey Murphy motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Randy Mifflin seconded the motion. Grey called for a vote, and it was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 6:36pm.