



# Desert Hills Fire District

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## Desert Hills Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting, March 19, 2025

### 1. Call to order

Board Member Roger called to order the Desert Hills Fire District Board meeting at **9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 19, 2025**, at the Desert Hills Fire Station Si-Mock Room located at 3983 London Bridge Road, Lake Havasu City, AZ.

### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance commenced by Board Member Roger

### 3. Roll Call

The following Board Members were present:

Tom Roger  
Curtis Schafer  
Rich Fountain  
Dana VanLeuven  
Linda Hanks

Also, in attendance:

Battalion Chief Stanec  
Battalion Chief Bunn  
Administrative Specialist Harrison

### 4. Call to the Public: None

### 5. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for February 19, 2025: Board Member Schafer motioned to accept meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.

### 6. Reports:

#### a) **Fire Administration Report:** Battalion Chief Stanec reports:

Communications update: we have gained good ground this past month on the communication project. This week we will be testing the repeater on Crossman with our handheld radios. We are working with WeCom on the Goat Mountain site. We are still getting the paper work in order. But WeCom has been very responsive and we are anticipating equipment installed soon. The best update, we have been in talks with DPS Ranger to fly us up to our current site on Ram Mountain. We are still hashing out those details on flights, but we are hoping to have things online sometime in April, pending no further setbacks.

Senate Appropriations: We were slated to receive \$224,000 in Congressional District Spending Appropriations this year for new medical equipment if the appropriation spending bill was approved by congress last week. Unfortunately for us, congress did not approve the bill and passed a continuing resolution that would fund existing projects from FY24 but not any new projects for FY25. But the good news is, after attending a zoom call with the Senators office, all projects that were approved by the appropriations committee for FY25 now take priority in the FY26. The application period to re-submit our application is slated to open later this week.

National Fire Academy: So, as you all have probably heard, our National Fire Academy classes were abruptly cancelled about 15 hours before we were supposed to take off a week and a half ago. I was pretty bummed, to the least. BM VanLeuven, at our last board meeting had made a comment he would like us to create a Capital Improvement Plan in the future. The class I was scheduled to take, looking at the syllabus had us spending a day creating that plan as an assignment. With or without that training, creating that plan will be a goal in 2025.

The SB1720 Wildland Engine has been ordered, the manufacturer is waiting on the chassis from Ford. Once they receive that it will take them approximately a month to upfit the apparatus.

I'm closing my report with, we recently were informed we are parting ways with two (2) of our employees. Captain Joey Spencer informed us he was offered a career opportunity outside of the fire service and it was an offer he couldn't refuse. A few days later, FF Andrew Shiner informed us he will be relocating back to Phoenix area the first of April, his family is dealing with some family issues and they cannot get the treatments needed here. We appreciate both of them and their service to the district. With Captain Spencer's departure and an expired Captain eligibility list, on Monday we posted internally and began the application process for a Captain. I choose to end the report with this, because we have our first budget workshop on the agenda today and with the SAFER Grant period of performance expired, discussions on post SAFER Grant staffing levels will need to take place.

b) **Fire Operation Report:** Battalion Chief Bunn reports:

Call Stats: we are at 167 calls for service, which is 58 calls since last meeting. There were no significant calls to report

Training update: Captain Erickson, Captain Glomboski and myself completed the IAFF Fireground survivability train the trainer class hosted by Bullhead City Fire. This was by far the most physical and humble training I have ever completed in my career. I am proud to say all three of us are now certified FGS trainers. We are working to build props for our station and make sure all personnel complete the training as soon as possible. There was a total of 28 students from 8 different departments in Mohave County. We had the best IAFF instructors from the U.S. and Canada pass on their knowledge to us.

National Fire Academy: I am scheduled to attend the class that was previously cancelled, it is in August, now. I look forward to the training.

New Engine update: our first payment of \$249,430.50 was received by HME. I have a meeting scheduled in 30 days with them to go over build parameters and timelines.

ARPA update: both staff vehicles are getting finishing touches completed on outfitting as we speak. I am anticipating having them in service by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

c) **Auxiliary Report:** Auxiliary President Rich Fountain reports:

A gentlemen came in and donated \$10,000 to the auxiliary. He did not want any recognition. So, with that donation we were able to present to the fire district \$45,000 for the purchase of extraction equipment. We have one event left for this year. It was a great year! The board asked to relay their appreciation to the Auxiliary for all they do for the district.

7. **New Business:**

- a.) Discussion and possible action re: Approval of monthly Financial Report. Administrative Specialist Harrison states that the Grant Savings Account is \$25,894.79, Payroll Account \$15,029.67, Special Revenue Checking Account \$275,467.51, Special Revenue Savings Account \$285,485.61, Warrant Account \$1,896,714.85, Petty Cash \$100.00, with a total balance of \$2,498,692.43. Motioned by Board Member Roger to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor.
- b.) Discussion and possible action re: Accept the donated extrication tools from the DHFD Auxiliary. Board Member VanLeuven motions to accept the donation of \$45,000 for the purchase of extrication equipment, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.
- c.) Discussion re: Budget Workshop. BC Stanec states this first meeting is to get a feel for the direction of the board. We do not have all the projections right now but we do have pretty solid numbers.

Some realities we do know is our health insurance is going up 25%, that's an increase of \$63,485. Our insurance company did give us a heads up that premiums were going up and invited to shop around. Administrative Specialist Harrison got quotes comparable to our current plans and unfortunately none of the quotes were lower than our current insurance carrier. One quote was 77% higher than our current plan. The other reality is we have a new engine coming next year the last payment is \$249,435.

Some unknowns are Workers Compensation, we are still waiting on a quote from 7710 and Securis. There is currently no legislation that will affect workers compensation rates drastically. We have had no claims so we should see a decrease in our EMod. The other unknown is our FDAT (Fire District Assistance Tax) but trending over the last 5 years it has increased about \$20,000 a year.

Levy limits; We are 3.5% and have held strong to that. We do have the opportunity to increase it up to 3.75%. Projection on this is if we remain at 3.5% the increase to revenue will be \$184,173. If we go to the max of 3.75%, we will see an increase of \$392,319. There are pros and cons on raising the levy. I reached out to our county assessor's office and asked for the low, medium and high median of homes in our district on the effect would be if we were to increase the levy to the 3.75%.

- For a low median home at full cash value of \$93,000 The tax increase is 5% plus an additional \$12 for our increased levy.
- For a medium median home at full cash value of \$203,000. The tax increase is 5% plus an additional \$28 for our increased levy.
- For a high median home at full cash value of \$581,000. The tax increase is 5% plus an additional \$100 for our increased levy.

BM Fountain states if we can maintain what we need for the district, also have safe staffing levels he would like to see the levy limit remain at 3.5%.

We have created a tentative budget with keeping the levy limit at 3.5%. With at levy, we are thinking a decent increase in wages would be 4% with current staffing levels. By lowering our staffing by 2 we are looking at an increase at about a 6 or 7%. The saving to have 2 less staffing the saving would be about \$135,000. The current labor voted 60 to 40 for more money, less staff. They feel comfortable with prior SAFER Grant staffing. It is very common in our area to run 2-man crews. Board Member Roger states he feels the district has the best interest or the community and trust their judgement. BC Bunns states operationally he feels better with a full crew with 6 or 7 responding to an emergency. BC Stanec states we will work on a budget with 19 and 21 firefighters. We know we have to be competitive with surrounding departments, but work within our parameters.

#### **8. Board Member Comments:**

- a) New Business to be considered on future agendas: None
- b) Comments: None

#### **9. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 9:47 by Board Member Roger, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.**