



Desert Hills Fire District

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Desert Hills Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting August 16, 2023

1. Call to order

Board Member Roger called to order the Desert Hills Fire District Board meeting at **9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 16, 2023**, 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
Char Beltran
Jimmy Wilson
Rich Fountain - Absent

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 July 19, 2023: Board Member Schafer motioned to accept Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Board Member Beltran, all in favor. Board Member Roger abstained.

6. Reports:

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

- As I said in the past the Auxiliary is working on a Cookbook fundraiser, it's been a summer project that June LaSota has been managing. It should be wrapped up soon.
- Fire Incident Management Grant, the Adashi Grant, we received the equipment and have it up and running in our office and we're currently working out the bugs before we roll it out to the firefighters.
- We are still actively hiring. We made an offer to a gentleman from Surprise. He is in the process of relocating. We still have two more vacancies. BM Roger asked what level is the candidate coming in. BC Stanec replied he's coming in at FF/EMT, step one.
- At 9:00am tomorrow we have a company officers meeting. It's a time to meet with the captains to go over things that are happening.

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

- Our call stats are currently at 527 calls up 67 calls from last month. This shift had an RV fire. Captain Young and group made a quick stop on it.

- Jeff Stancil spent two weeks at a Fire Investigation class in Bakerfield, 1B and 1C. He reports he learned a lot.
- Jessica Holcombe will be attending National Fire Academy for an EMS class in Emmitsburg from 08/26-09/02. She is the first firefighter from DHFD to go to the academy.
- AZ State Fire School is coming up and runs from 09/06-09/10. Captain Erickson and Engineer Barragan, Johnson and Ryan will be taking a leadership classes.
- 1516 had a tire blowout, it is still in Kingman getting repaired.
- There are some new pictures of the new engine. Please go check it out.
- ARPA funding-still waiting, all the paperwork has been sent to the county for approval of vendor.

c) **DHFD Auxiliary Report:** none

d) **Correspondence:** None

7. New Business:

- a.) **Discussion and possible action re: Approval of monthly Financial Report.** Administrative Specialist Harrison states that the Grant Savings Account is \$30,005.71, Payroll Account \$4,189.95, Petty Cash \$100.00, Special Revenue Checking Account \$22,035.92, Special Revenue Savings Account \$301,734.07, Warrant Account \$820,275.57, with a total balance of \$1,178,341.22. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.
- b.) **Discussion and possible action re: JPA.** BC Stanec states as follow-up from the last board meeting with Chief Moore the board voted to inquire about the study. The August 1st deadline is past. As of that date Bullhead City, Mohave Valley, Golden Shores, Yucca, Golden Valley, Northern AZ, Buckskin, Parker, and us were the nine Fire Districts that showed interest. On Monday BC Bunn and myself met with the respective chiefs from all the organizations. We talked about the companies to conduct the feasible study, the price of the study. It was agreed that we use The James Vicent Group. It was decided that the study should not be more \$5,000 for each nine districts, a total of about \$40,000. We're asking our Board to approve participating in the study.

BM Roger was asked his thoughts, he begins first as a Board we represent the public, number two we're responsible for the public's prospective, the public's needs and responsibilities for maintaining this department, hiring Chiefs. We don't hire employees that's their responsibility and so as a Board member I feel it's our responsibility to make sure everyone is well informed. We have to base our decision based upon the needs of the public, the needs of the department and the realities that the employees are faced with.

One of my concerns was it was suggested that there would be a balanced pay scale. How would this create a balanced pay scale? My feeling is we live in Lake Havasu City, one of the most expensive places out of all districts. LHFHD has the highest pay scale and Bullhead City has a similar pay scale. I feel we would be diluting our ourselves, we are the strongest department financially, they need us we don't need them. Pat Moore would be excited to have us and so would our adjacent fire department. We have to be well informed and get feed-back for our employees, chiefs and make our discussions based on what's right for our community. I am for the study. This study should be very helpful. My option is we should approve the JPA study.

Desert Hills has the highest percentage of growth rate for new construction which is our best basis for increased revenue to Desert Hills Fire than any other district. The gains that we're going to making here in Desert Hills affords us the ability to meet the needs of our district and to satisfy our personnel without joining the JPA, but I'm still open to it and we need to thoroughly investigate it. We all need to be opened minded.

BC Stanec states; once we get the results of the study, there will be scheduled workshops that will include chief officers, board members and labor side. We will be going through and analyzing everything. Admin Harrison asks, the study is going to analyze all districts combined, then each district separate. Will be able to see all the other districts information? BC Stanec responds, yes it will be published for all districts involved.

BM Beltran states that the biggest benefit is savings thru the pension and insurance. BC Stanec replies and Worker Comp, health insurance, PSPRS. Admin Harrison replies that as wages go up so does Workers Comp and PSPRS costs, so I don't see saving there. With more employees we could see a saving with health insurance and liability costs. We will know more once the study is back.

BM Beltran would like to hear from someone who has done it, how long they've been in it and what they found the pros and the cons are. BC Stanec says he will work on provide someone to provide that information.

BM Wilson asked if we have to inform the community? BC Stanec said we do by posting our agendas and board meeting on our website.

BM Roger makes a comment to the staff. I want to let you know that the Board, doesn't want to dash you hopes of equal pay. That is not what we're here for. We are 100 percent wanting to be equal pay with LHFCFD, because you live in the same community. That is our board's objective. We want to be certain that you guys aren't buying into unfulfilled promises, because someone wants to make one big fire district. If the study comes through with the type of saving than I'm all for it. If it's not a reality, with your input and the chiefs input my vote would be no. If it can be shown in reality than we are in your corner 100%.

Board Member Roger motions to allocate \$5,000 for JPA study, seconded by Board Member Beltran, all in favor.

- c.) **Discussion and possible action re: Lexipol Paid Time Off Policy.** BC Stanec states; when we signed up with Lexipol I didn't realize the original PTO policy did not transition into Lexipol. So, we have been reverting back to the old policy. Presented to you is the new PTO accrual schedule broken down by holiday, sick and vacation. In the updated Lexipol policy everything remains the same throughout the first half, then we changed the following; originally, we were given nine (9) paid holidays, 8 hours for each holiday, per year. We increased the nine (9) holidays to the eleven (11) federal holidays which ups holiday accruals for 72 hours to 88 hours. Per ARS 23-373 we have to show we are giving 40 hours of sick time annual and the rest is accrual of vacation time. Exempt and full-time hour employees will not receive accrual holiday. They will get the paid holiday off. The maximum paid out at time is employment termination is; employees hired after December 17, 2015 is 220 hours and before December 17, 2015 is 440 hours. This is following with the original policy.

The following has also been added:

- PTO cash out; with the following rules; only allowed to cash out once a year in November, up to 48 hours maximum. Employees must have at least 96 hours remaining available PTO to be eligible.
- Compensatory Time and Flexible Time; Comp time is for fulltime non-exempt employees to accrue extra time off for hours worked beyond their regular 40 hours. Flex Time will allow employees to have a more flexible work schedule within limits.
- Shift trades; this is eligible to full time 48/96 operation staff to exchange work shifts with colleagues in lieu of using PTO.
- Voluntary Paid Time Off, this was approved by the board but never put into a policy. This provides eligible employees with the opportunity to support their colleagues who are facing unforeseen circumstances. Eligible donating employee must have a minimum of 96 hours of PTO remain.

Board Member Roger motions to approve the Lexipol Paid Time off Policy, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor.

- d.) **Discussion and possible action re: Pay off First Internet Bank Loan for 1511 and 1521.** BC Stanec states; per our plan for the purchase of the new engine we were to pay off the existing engine loans. Last fiscal year we paid off the brush engine and this fiscal year to pay off 1511 & 1521. The new engine payment will be due next fiscal year. Since we have the funds available at this time, we felt it was a good time to pay them off.

Board Member Schafer motions to pay off the First Internet Bank loan for 1511 and 1521, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.

8. **Board Member Comments:**

- a) **New Business to be considered on future agendas:** Establish the next retention committee meeting. The next meeting will be held on September 13, 2023. BC Stanec will try and get a chief or board member to speak on existing JPA experiences.
- b) **Comments:** None

9. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 10:20 by Board Member Roger, seconded by Board Member Beltran, all in favor.