



Desert Hills Fire District

3983 London Bridge Road
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86404
(928) 764-3333 (FAX) 764-2397

Desert Hills Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting, March 15, 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, March 15, 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

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 15, 2023: Motioned to accept Meeting Minutes as written by Board Member Schafer, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.

6. Reports:

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

- It's a hectic time of year, as you know it's budget season.
- The classroom remodel was a huge success, every shift helped with their multi talents. The room turned out good. Shortly after the classroom was completed, we invited Jerry Swift, he is an extrication guru from Phoenix, he travels all over the world teaching extrication stuff. He came and did a demo of equipment and taught a class on the nuts and bolts of extrication and advanced techniques. It was exciting to have an outside instructor. We also reached out to Fallen Firefighter Foundation, they offer free training from Emmitsburg, MD. They will send their instructors at no cost to the department. We're looking at two days of Attributes of Leadership training in May. We're also looking into hosting National Fire Academy classes. This will allow our department to take classes in-house versus traveling outside our area. Next Thursday we are hosting the Mohave County Fire Officers Association monthly meeting.
- We submitted a FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. We requested \$25,000 for a digital sign board for Station #1. If awarded, 75% of the messaging has to be fire prevention, Community Risk Reduction, and safety messages, we will also be able to post anything we need to tell the community, pancake breakfasts, etc.

- We had our first Chief appointed firefighter retention sub-committee. Bryce Marten, Fire Fighter, Steve Reeder, Captain, Jeremy Barragan, engineer, BC Bunn, Administrative Harrison, BM Roger and myself are on the committee. We have an opening for one more board member and we're hoping to meet every two months for the next year. This meeting was more of a round table discussion. By next year's budget we'll have done our homework on how employee compensation and benefits will affect the short term and long term for the budget.

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

- We are currently at 160 calls up 65 calls from last month.
- Update on the new engine – Rosenbauer expects delivery between October and December 2023.
- We did a fatality accident on Hwy 95 and B shift responded. LHCFD sent two engines, Yucca FD sent an engine, DPS, MCSO and Native 8 helicopter responded. There was one fatality, a person got flown to Las Vegas. There was a secondary accident which was the result of the accident.
- We concluded all extrication demonstrations as BC Stanec mentioned Jerry Swift was in charge of the extrication demos and classes. Captain Erickson will advise us which equipment he would like to see on the new engine.
- Wildland refresher will take place next week for all personnel. Engine Boss Sayre will be leading that training.
- Rapid Intervention Training began yesterday. Captain Spencer will be leading that training.
- I enrolled in a PIO class in Kingman from March 28th thru the 30th.
- Just a reminder I will be going to National Fire Academy in Maryland after the PIO class for a week.

c.) **DHFD Auxiliary Report:** Rich Fountain reported the auxiliary served 608 people. He will make sure the auxiliary is aware of our intentions for the \$15,000 donation. We have the Spaghetti Dinner this Saturday and one more pancake breakfast this year and he anticipates another nice sized donation.

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 \$47,505.02, Payroll Account \$8,046.35, Petty Cash \$100.00, Special Revenue Checking Account \$47,879.24, Special Revenue Savings Account \$145,223.49 Warrant Account \$1,027,760.17, with a total balance of \$1,226,514.27. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor.
- b.) **Discussion and possible action re:** To accept the DHFD Auxiliary's donation and approve purchases with the funds. BC Bunn presents the group with a list of items to purchase with the donation and will start purchasing if approved. The goal is to outfit the new engine. Motioned by Board Member Wilson to approve the Auxiliary's donation and the purchases from the auxiliary donation, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.
- c.) **Discussion and possible action re:** To accept the ARPA Grant (American Rescue Plan Act). BC Bunn states that he and BC Stanec went to the County Board of Supervisors meeting the beginning of March and we applied for a \$80,000 grant from the county. The grant was approved for \$100,000. This is unheard of for the County to give Fire Districts funding. I have the funding agreement that needs to sign. BC Stanec, myself and our lawyer have look over the agreement that was written by the County's Attorney. Once the agreement is signed by the our board chairmen, we will get it to the Board of Supervisors. They will put it on their agenda for approval April 3rd. Once we get the funding, we will follow our procurement policy for getting bids on handheld radios, it could take up to three to six months to receive the funds. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to accept the ARPA Grant for the purchase of handheld radios and to sign the contract, seconded by Board Member Roger, all in favor.
- d.) **Discussion and possible action re:** To accept the WACEMS Grant and to support FF Alvarez through Paramedic School. BC Stanec states that we found that the organization WACEMS is all about helping rural fire departments grow EMS. WACEMS allocated \$100,000 from the state to support fire departments. Firefighter Alvarez was interested in taking the medic class, so we applied for funding and we were awarded \$5,000. Currently we have Firefighter Palme is in medic classes, his is six months in, about half way through the program. It would be a great time to get FF Alvarez in the medic class. FF Alvarez will be under the same contract as FF Palme for medic school. We have also applied for funding for firefighter Morgan to take the medic class coming up in October. This funding has not been approved yet. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to accept the WACEMS Grant and support Alvarez through medic school, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.

e.) **Discussion and possible action re: Budget Workshop.**

- BC Stanec states we had our firefighter retention meeting; we received a lot of good feed-back from the fire fighters' on where they would like to see the department. We discussed compensation and benefits. Our plan is over the next year meet and come up with good plans and ideas for the future of Desert Hills Fire employees. There were a lot of good ideas, some are achievable this year and some may not be achievable till later years. Board Member Beltran volunteered to be on the committee.
- What we're looking for today is guidance from the board, one is health insurance. Last year we paid 100% of our firefighter's health insurance and supplemented more money to help support the families. We're looking to do the same this year. Our health insurance increased this year 14%. Last year we increased our budget for health insurance by \$38,780. If we stick with the same concept as last year the increase to the budget will be \$16,774. BC Stanec suggested possibly covering every one firefighter and family member, that would increase the budget by an additional \$46,444. We do not pay dental or vision coverage for families and only cover the employee's dental. Admin Harrison states if we cover 100% now and as our health insurance costs increases dramatically, how do we go back to only covering a % of families. BC Stanec states that he only wanted to see the impact. The board asked to proceed with the same percentage of health insurance coverage as the prior year for this year's budget.
- Discussion on wages. Last year the board approved adjusts to our pay scale, we increased medic pay, we broke the contraction between fire fighter and engineer, engineer and captain, captain and battalion chief. A little bit of history, Desert Hills Fire did not have pay scale when Chief Dennen became our chief. He identified this problem and created the pay scale. BC Bunn and I have built off what Dennen established. We are proposing to keep our current pay scale. Every year with board approval we have given a one-step increase of 2.5%, but with the cost of living and inflation, instead of a one-step increase we would like give a two-step increase. That would be 5% increase per firefighter. It will be an impact to the department financially but it is something we can absorb. Operations have come to us to increase their pay by \$3. This will have a huge impact to the department and there will need to be future studies on the impact. This will be done by the retention committee over the next year. Admin Harrison explains the two-steps in pay would increase our budget by \$100,835 and the one-step increases our budget by \$64,259. This includes PSPRS, taxes and health insurance. It does not include workers compensation We have not received quotes for workers comp yet. The board asked to proceed with the two-step increase.
- Board Member Roger stated it is the Boards responsibility to be the voice for the district and have a financial responsibility to the fire department. With the increase in inflation, I feel an increase in the levy limit is the responsible thing to do for the fire district. I support the levy limit increase for FY2324 to 3.50. All board members agree to increase the levy limit to the 3.50.

8. Board Member Comments:

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

9. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 10:19 by Board Member Beltran, seconded by Board Member Roger, all in favor.