



Desert Hills Fire District

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Desert Hills Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting, March 17, 2021

1. Call to order

Board Member Roger called to order the Desert Hills Fire District Board meeting at **9:07 a.m. on Wednesday, March 17**, 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
Brad Shelton
Curtis Schafer
Char Beltran
Jimmy Wilson

Also, in attendance:

Battalion Chief Stanec
Battalion Chief Bunn
Administrative Specialist Harrison
Consultant Dennen

4. Call to the Public: None

5. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for February 17, 2021: Board Member Shelton motioned to accept meeting minutes, seconded by Board Member Schafer.

6. Reports:

a) **Fire Administration Report:** BC Stanec states;

- Bryce Martins passed his Paramedic National Registry. He working with the hospital to be approved by them, but is certified with the state. He really saved us by achieving his paramedic cert.
- We've been conducting interviews for firefighters and offered the vacant position to Joseph Palme. He should start April 1st.
- The Covid-19 Supplemental we were awarded thru FEMA; we received all the PPE minus 50 glasses. FEMA notified us to expect reimbursement.
- We received the payment from the state for the last wildfire in the amount of \$40,812.85.
- We caught wind that there is a SAFER Grant with zero match for three years. We had about ten days to write the Grant. It is for three (3) years for three (3) firefighters and the amount of the grant is \$677,946. There is \$3,000,000 anticipated with 300 awards. They will be awarding grants in August.

b) **Fire Operation Report:** BC Bunn states;

- We are currently at 170 calls for the year.
- We are currently working on a IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) with LHCDFD on performing FIT and Flow testing on our MSA air packs. They have qualified technicians in the city and are just waiting for

- the city to sign off on it.
- The Wildland refresher will be completed this week. Captain Sayre our Engine Boss will be teaching the class on 3 separate days.
- We had 2 personnel – Kane Wijngaarden and Jeremy Barragan attended the S212 chainsaw class at the Wildland Academy.
- Captain Young and Captain JL Spencer attended a Leadership training in Kingman last week.
- On a sad note two our Firefighters children are in Phoenix Children's Hospital in Phoenix. Captain Reeder's son has been there for about 10 days now with seizers and unfortunately Kurt Fowlers daughter has been diagnosed with cancer. We'll pass on further information as we receive it.

c) **Correspondence:** None

7. New Business:

- Discussion and possible action re: Approval of monthly Financial Report. Administrative Specialist Harrison states that the Grant Savings Account is \$62,268.23, Payroll Account \$21,611.66, Petty Cash \$100.00, Special Revenue Checking Account \$28,522.91, Special Revenue Savings Account \$23,682.17, Warrant Account \$710,381.25, with a total balance of \$846,566.22. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.
- Discussion and possible action re: Exempt Employees Evaluation. BC Stanec explains that he and BC Bunn both did a self-evaluation and reviewed each other's. Then meet with Consultant Dennen to review and approved them. I believe we've met the Boards request on that point and now in your hands. All board members reviewed evaluation. Board Member Shelton comments that he feels having 2 Chiefs is working out very well. He feels the evaluations are fair. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to accept the evaluations as written, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.
- Budget Workshop Discussion: presentation of proposed pay scale and health insurance increase. BC Stanec states we identified some issues, needs, wants and challenges to this year's budget. One which addresses employees being at step ten on the pay scale, also is our pay scale comparable with other county fire departments of the same size. We compared our pay scale to others department and found that our entry level Firefighter pay scale was pretty comparable, but paramedic pay was under par and engineers pay has the same starting pay scale as our paramedic. We came up with a new pay scale that we think will work out for us in the long term. We also found that some of the formulas in the present pay scale had incorrect calculations. Employees were paid the correct regular/overtime rates. The new pay scale breaks down regular time and overtime. Board Member Roger asks "when does the budget apply". BC Stanec responds, "July 1st", but it needs to be adopted in May and posted for 30 days. The current pay scale has been in effect for 5 years.
 - Firefighter (FF) pay scale stays the same.
 - Once an employee receives step 10, they could receive a 1.3% increase, +10 Step. Board Member Shelton states "when you reach your max if you give them a percentage on top of, now your applying to all hours worked where as if you give them a lump sum it doesn't compound annually. Adding a percentage annually will cost the district more and more each year. BC Stanec asks if it would work with PRPS, Admin Spec Harrison responds, "that she didn't know why it wouldn't work, it's still considered pay".
 - FF/Paramedic rate was 14.70 with an increase to \$15.45, which is in line with other districts.
 - FF/Engineer increase from \$14.70 to \$16.53. This increase separates the paramedic and engineer pay rate.
 - Increasing the paramedic pay increased the engineer, engineer/paramedic, captain, captain/paramedic pay.
 - BC Stanec states this pay scale will make us more competitive with Mohave Valley, Golden Valley and other similar sized departments.

BC Stanec states that we have three (3) vacant positions budgeted and we will keep those positions in the budget. Consultant Dennen recommends keeping the three (3) budgeted positions.

Board Member Roger allowed Firefighter Martens to discussions the discrepancy in pay scale between the FF/Paramedic and FF/Engineer. FF Martens explain we run about 97% medical calls. Paramedics are hard to find right now. We talk about tradition in the fire service and having two (2) Battalion Chiefs is not traditional, but it is working for DHFD. So, looking at this pay scale you have an FF/Paramedic making less than an FF/Engineer, which is a less educated position. Traditionally that is the normal ranks. But a paramedic goes to school for a year and cost \$6000 an engineer goes to school for a week. I feel a paramedic pay should be above an engineer. Board Member Shelton interjects that this is not the place for labor to approach this kind of topic at a board meeting, but with that being said BM Shelton 100% agree with FF Martens. BM Shelton commented "what is more important to this department, engineers or paramedics"? We have a shortage of paramedics so we should look at the paramedic pay. Board Member Roger asks whether the pay scale between FF/Paramedic and FF/Engineer be

matched or flip. BC Stanec responds “that we are going to look at the numbers and what’s within reason to the budget. We are trying to build a budget, not only for this year’s budget but going forward also”.

Consultant Dennen recommends leaving the pay scale as presented and giving paramedics a bonus.

Board Member Shelton asked “how many Engineers do we have and how many Paramedics do we have?”, the response is six (6) engineers and six (6) paramedics, BM Shelton says to split the difference and everybody does good”. Board Member Wilson asked “Do we help with the cost of Paramedic school?”. BC Stanec responds “we don’t financial support them, however if they are scheduled for class while on duty, we back fill his position and they are paid their wages, and they have use of the department vehicle to travel.

Board Member Roger asked if we had any figures for the increase to the county money. Admin Spec Harrison stated for next FY the revenue will be \$1,818,402 up from \$1,696,060. That does not include our FDAT.

Admin Spec Harrison stated the health insurance went up by 13%. The proposed increase is to distributed the cost evenly between employer and employee.

Board Member Shelton requests to present to the board next month the complete costs for salary, PSPS, benefits with the three (3) vacancies. Board Member Roger asked to present the projected revenue for next fiscal year. Admin Spec Harrison stated she will have a proposed budget to present next board meeting.

8. Board Member Comments:

- a) New Business to be considered on future agendas: Budget and Wage Scale.
- b) Comments: Admin Spec Harrison reminded BM Roger and BM Wilson they have statutory training April 23. Board Member Roger comments that it’s great to have the interaction with employees, the Chiefs, BM Shelton and Consultant Dennen, thank you for that. Board Member Beltran stated the BC’s are doing an amazing job.

9. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 10:11 by Board Member Shelton, seconded by Board Member Beltran, all in favor.