



Desert Hills Fire District

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Desert Hills Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting, September 20, 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, September 20, 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 August 16, 2023: Board Member Wilson motioned to accept meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor.

6. Swearing in and badge pinning for FF/Medic Martens promotion to Engineer: BC Stanec swore in FF Martens.

7. Reports:

a) Fire Administration Report: Battalion Chief Stanec reports;

We had 3 firefighter vacancies. Happy to report we have filled those positions. Michael Terriquez, firefighter/EMT from Buckskin area as a parttime firefighter. Matthew French, firefighter/Paramedic from AMR, formally worked for LHCFD and Quartzsite Fire. Andrew Shiner, firefighter/EMT, he's in the process of moving here from Surprise, AZ.

Nothing to report more on the JPA. There are 9 districts participating in the study. BC Bunn went to the JPA meeting and reported there is nothing new to report. They are still waiting for all districts to turn in their paperwork. They still feel the study will be done by December. BC Stanec stated that the chief from Buckskin is very knowledgeable in JPA's, as a chief, firefighter, board member and citizen. He hopes to have him at next month's board meeting.

Last Wednesday we had a firefighter retention committee meeting. We discussed the JPA updates, we presented our current budget without the fluff, without grants, donations, wildland income. Income we can not guarantee. It was eye opening for our members to see.

Tom and I went to the county accessor Wednesday, met with her and her right-hand man and they were able to give us projections, past projections which showed a standard 5% growth. The only thing not projected was building permits. BM Roger will be working to get that information.

We have been partners with Wirefree Communications for a number of years, they provide us free internet for placing their equipment on both stations. Alan approached us with a contract to install digital equipment at both stations. We'll have fiber optic wired in both stations at no charge and he is putting up a camera security system at both stations.

- b) **Fire Operation Report:** Battalion Chief Bunn reports;
We're currently at 616 calls for service-up 90 calls from last month and we're averaging 68 calls per month.

Jessica Holcomb attended EMS incident class in Emmitsburg. She said it was amazing and couldn't stop talking about it.

Fire School attendees reported that all classes were good and wanted to thank the district for their support.

1516 is still waiting for body work to be done.

New Engine update, the body is on and painted, the pump is in. The next part is the finishing process and I'm still hopeful we'll have for Christmas or the New Year.

ARPA Funding. The equipment has been ordered and delivery is about sixty days out.

Community Risk Reduction. I will be introducing a risk reduction program this fall to the district. I will be doing all the work as to not burden on duty crews.

I want to announce that I have finished my Bachelor's Degree Program. I want to thank the Board Members and coworkers.

- c) **DHFD Auxiliary Report:** Rich Fountain reports;
We had our first meeting yesterday. Getting geared up for the season. I have a donation to present to the Chiefs from Rods and Relic Car Club for \$2,000.

- d) **Correspondence:** None

8. New Business:

- a.) **Discussion and possible action re: Approval of monthly Financial Report.** Administrative Specialist Harrison states that the Grant Savings Account is \$10,005.90, Payroll Account \$7,929.78, Petty Cash \$100.00, Special Revenue Checking Account \$16,260.54, Special Revenue Savings Account \$183,867.77, Warrant Account \$659,153.32, with a total balance of \$877,317.31. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.
- b.) **Discussion and possible action re: Employee Retention Credit:** Administration Specialist Harrison states that it came to her attention that we may be able to get an Employee Retention Credit from the IRS for retaining employees during COVID. I have located a company that will do all the filing, they understand the legislation to make sure we will qualify before they file for us. It is a tax credit against payroll taxes we paid. The IRS will need our 941 payroll tax filing records from 2020 and 2021, along with payroll reports. It can take up to 12 months for the IRS to complete. The maximum we can receive per employee is up to \$26,000. When or if we do receive money, their fee is 20% of the amount we received not including interest. There is no fee if we do not qualify and do not receive any funds. If we don't qualify, we won't be charged. Motioned by Board Member Roger to move forward with filing after reviewing of the contact, seconded by Board Member Beltran, all in favor.
- c.) **Discussion and possible action re: Approval of the Fire Prevention Safety Grant:** BC Stanec states that a few months ago we applied for the Fire Prevention Safety Grant, in hopes of in receiving funding for a digital sign in front of our fire station. Last week FEMA notified us that we were awarded the \$23,809.52 grant, with our share of

5% match at \$1,190.48. The benefits are getting fire prevention and fire safety messages out to our community, and our auxiliary events. I have gotten 3 bids and Mack Signs had great pricing. Motioned by Board Member Wilson to accept funds, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor.

- d.) **Discussion and possible action re: Resolution No. 2023-01, Surplus Equipment:** BC Stanec introduces Chief Robinson from Oatman Fire and is an active member of County Chiefs Association. We started talking about the need for their community to have water on hand. Their current water supply is 16 miles away from Oatman. The plan is to get water sources there so they can plumb hydrants. Havasu Heights Water District donated the tank to the fire district years ago, the other one is old rail cart and they work in tandem as a gravity fed system. We have not used these in our fire operation for over ten years, we did confirm that they belong to us. It is our recommendation to surplus the tanks and donate them to Oatman Fire, as is, with no warranty and Oatman will transport.
Chief Robinson talked about the town and fire district in Oatman. This tank will help the community out. Motioned by Board Member Schafer to Surplus the water tanks and donate them to Oatman Fire, seconded by Board Member Fountain, all in favor.
- e.) **Discussion and possible action re: Increase pay scale steps from 10 to 11 steps:** BC Stanec states that the board adopted in this year's budget to increase wages by 7.5%. One of our employees did not receive the 7.5% increase. We felt the right thing to do is to extend our current pay scale one more step to make it far. Motioned by Board Member Beltran to increase pay scale to 11 Steps, seconded by Board Member Wilson, all in favor.

9. Board Member Comments:

- a) New Business to be considered on future agendas: JPA talks, Wildland Fire pay portal to portal.
- b) Comments: None

10. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 9:43 by Board Member Beltran, seconded by Board Member Schafer, all in favor