

## **Pine-Strawberry Fire District**

### PINE-STRAWBERRY FIRE BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES October 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

- 1) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2) **Roll Call** – Present were Board Clerk Bob Papke - Board Member - Bruce Dow, Board Chairman- Chuck Ackerman, Board Member Dave Burkhart, and Member - Mel Palmer.
- 3) **Presentations** – Board Member Bob Papke presented the District with two beautiful water color paintings that he himself painted for us. They are beautiful renditions of the “Last Run” of the horse-drawn Fire Engines from the 1920s. The two beautifully framed pieces of artwork will be displayed at each of our Fire Stations in Pine and Strawberry.
- 4) **Correspondence** – One Letter of thanks was read.
- 5) **Call to the Public** –None
- 6) **Approval of Previous Month’s Meeting Minutes**  
September, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes – Melvin Palmer moved to accept the minutes as written and authorize the Board Chairman to sign them. Bruce Dow seconded and the motion passed with three ayes. Members Burkhart and Papke abstained.
- 7) **Financial Report** – Approval of Previous Month’s Finances  
September, 2021 Financial Reports - Ben Archer-Clowes of the James Vincent Group was in attendance and he presented the financial report to the board. Melvin Palmer moved to accept the financial statements and authorize the Board Chairman to sign them. Dave Burkhart seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 8) **Fire Chief’s Report**– Including but not limited to:
  - a) **Significant emergency incidents**
  - b) **Other non-emergency Fire District Activity**

There was a Fire District picnic sponsored by an area resident on October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00-3:00pm.

Chief Wisner also reported that we have been awarded a \$12,200.00 grant from the San Carlos Apace Tribe for the purchase of new hose nozzles.

Additionally, the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety approved the purchase of grant funded extrication tools.

Firefighter Bill Potter placed third in a state-wide “Cook like a Fire Fighter” competition to benefit burn victims. Firefighter Potter donated the prize money to the Pine Strawberry Food Bank, and will cook his recipe at the Burn Victim Camp.

The Pine Strawberry Fire District will host the annual “Trunk-or-Treat” event on Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm.

The Fire Marshal’s office has reviewed 6 plans, adding 9,804 square feet of construction and totaling \$1,900.80 of revenue.

- c) **Progress report on Fire Board directed business activities or projects** –  
Class A uniforms have arrived and have been issued.  
Station 41 replacement has been cut from the federal funding this year.
- d) **Report on emergency call volume from previous month** – responded to 68 calls for service.
- e) **Report on vehicle maintenance from previous month** – \$5,842.28
- f) **Report on training activities from previous month** – No report given.

9) **Other Fire District Related Reports**

- a) District Board Chairman’s Report – None
- b) Chaplain’s Report – None
- c) Employee Assistance Fund Committee – There have been no disbursements.
- d) PSPRS Board Report – The Local Board will hold its required meeting next month.
- e) Firefighter’s Association Report –Engineer Kevin Figueroa reported that after an extended period of inactivity, the Association has met and restarted. They are comprised of 13 dues-paying members. Officers were elected as follows:  
President – Tommy Cordova  
Vice President – Bill Potter  
Secretary – Zach Graham  
Treasurer – Kevin Figueroa
- f) Labor Organization Report – Captain Billy Chester reported that the organized members will become part of the State Union #4135 with local chapters to allow for localized action.
- g) Fossil Creek Access Report – CLOSED due to the Backbone Fire.

10) **Old Business**

- a.) Discussion and possible action related to developing a fee schedule. Chief Wisner reported that he is looking at some other district’s fee schedules along with the Department of Forestry and Fire Management. (DFFM) As he learns more, he will keep the Board up to date. No Board action required at this time.
- b.) Residential Lock Boxes – The Board will hear an update on this topic. Chief Wisner reported that he is still looking into other district’s “hold harmless” agreements. He noted that Blue Ridge Fire Department has had a lock box program for approximately 10 years with no significant problems. Research continues. No action taken.
- c.) Employee Assistance Fund – Consideration of transferring funds and management of this fund to the Pine Strawberry Firefighters Association. At the newly re-organized Association meeting, after officers were elected the Association voted to take over the administration of the Pine Strawberry Employees Assistance Fund. The intent expressed was to return the original District “seed money” to the Fire District and continue with community donations. Dave Burkhart and Bruce Dow favor turning all the Employee Assistance funds including

the original District “seed money” amount over to the Firefighter Association under the theory that the original funding was spent for its intended purpose in the past.

Mel Palmer made a motion to give Chief Wisner the authority to release the Employee Assistance funds balance, less the \$2,000 “seed money”, (to be retained by the District) to the Pine Strawberry Firefighters Association for all future management. The motion was seconded by Chuck Ackerman.

Vote: Ackerman, Papke, Palmer – Aye

Burkhart & Dow – Nay

Motion carries 3-2

**11) New Business –**

- a.) Overtime Costs – Chief Wisner reported that the non-reimbursed overtime is budgeted at approximately \$200,000 for the fiscal year. September 2020 – September 2021 the cost was approximately \$280,000. Chief is seeking the Board’s direction in reducing overtime expenses. Chief proposed that the part time Reserves Firefighter program be made more robust to attract qualified candidates who can choose between Districts offering part time, backfill, or special need shifts on an as needed basis. The District currently offers \$12.15/hr, without benefits. Other districts offer up to \$22.00/hr for FF/Paramedics. Increasing the hourly wage of part time but fully qualified firefighters would still result in wage savings as the rate would be less than the overtime rate for District Career Firefighters, or Engineer/Captains working out of class to fill required minimum staffing and provide service to the community. Mel Palmer made a motion to direct the Fire Chief to develop and bring to the Board a proposed competitive Reserve Firefighter pay scale to attract qualified candidates and reduce overtime spending. Chuck Ackerman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b.) Reserve Pay Range – covered in item a.)
- c.) Staff Pay Scale – covered in item a.)
- d.) End of Year Bonus – Dave Burkhart stated that he wanted this item on the agenda and that the “bonus” would not necessarily have to be monetary. It could be a gift such as a ham or other item. He just suggested that we think about what other item could be given that the staff would appreciate. Chuck Ackerman suggested that we check with our attorney to see if an “End of Year” bonus is even appropriate to give from District funds. Dave Burkhart made a motion for the Chief to seek guidance from District Legal Counsel before any further discussion. Chuck Ackerman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- e.) Cardiac Monitor Funding – The Board will consider authorizing the Chief to expend funds for the cardiac monitors. Chief Wisner reported that the District was awarded a grant of \$51,300 to purchase state of the art cardiac monitors. In the past, purchases and maintenance has been on a piece-meal basis. Acquisitions of the equipment needed to deploy and use this equipment on each of the two primary ambulances will cost up to \$15,000 additional District funding. Bruce Dow made a motion to authorize the Chief to spend up to \$15,000 of District funds to purchase the monitors and any incidental needed equipment. Dave Burkhart seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- f.) Policy Committee – The Chairman may appoint himself or other members to serve on a policy committee. As previously authorized by the Board, a new set of Personnel Policies has been submitted by the vendor and reviewed by the Chief and three District Captains. Chairman of the Board may appoint members as a committee to review the draft and

comments made by staff to make recommendations to the Board as a whole, prior to adoption. Chuck Ackerman, Dave Burkhart, and Robert Papke volunteered to serve on this committee. There was discussion that having a majority of the Board on the committee might duly influence the ultimate vote as to adoption of the policy. Mel Palmer made a motion to direct the Board Chairman to appoint two members to the policy committee to make recommendations to the Board as to the revised Personnel Policy Manual. Dave Burkhart seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Board Chairman Ackerman appointed Dave Burkhart and Bob Papke to the committee.

- g.) Fire Chief's performance Review – The Board must review and rate the Fire Chief's performance.

*(Discussion of this item will be held in Executive Session)*

Chuck Ackerman made a motion to convene in Executive Session. Dave Burkhart seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

*The Board and Fire Chief Wisner went into Executive Session to discuss the personnel matter of the Chief's performance over the past year at 7:50 pm. All others were excused.*

Dave Burkhart mad a motion to resume public session. Bruce Dow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The Board having met in Executive Session finds Chief Wisner's performance over the past year to be satisfactory and beneficial to the District.

Dave Burkhart made a motion to continue Chief Wisner's employment and authorize the implementation of the scheduled pay increase per the Chief's contract. Bruce Dow seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- 13) **Future Meeting Date** will be Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 6:00 pm. Items for consideration- District fee schedule, Lock Box implementation, Reduction of Overtime costs, Reserve pay scale, End of year Performance Bonus
- 14) **Adjournment** –Bob Papke made a motion to adjourn. Chuck Ackerman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously at 8:25 pm.