

Pine-Strawberry Fire District

PINE-STRAWBERRY FIRE BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES October 20, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

- 1) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2) **Roll Call** – Present were Board Clerk - Bob Papke, Board Chairman - Chuck Ackerman, Member - Dave Burkhart, and Member - Melvin Palmer.
- 3) **Presentations** – Gary Morris gave an update on the upcoming ballot proposition 310. He presented the Board with three articles on the subject. He stated that there has been some opposition to Prop 310. He also stated that he will be doing a radio show on KMOG radio on October 27th.
Captain Tommy Cordova also commented on the resistance that we are seeing – coming mostly from the Republican Party – in opposition to ANY new taxes. Tommy also reported that this is why the PFFA was trying to promote the 310, not as an increased tax measure, but as a way to achieve quicker response times from first responders.
- 4) **Correspondence** – None
- 5) **Call to the Public** –Katie Calderon was in attendance and just wanted to say that they are very much in support of Prop. 310 and that living in a smaller, rural community they feel that it is a small price to pay for keeping themselves safe.
- 6) **Approval of Previous Minutes**
 - a) **September 15, 2022** - Regular Meeting Minutes – Dave Burkhart made a motion to accept the minutes as written and authorize the Board Clerk to sign them. Melvin Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 7) **Financial Report of September, 2022, Finances** - Steven Rodriguez of the James Vincent Group was in attendance via Zoom and he presented the financial report to the board. Dave Burkhart made a motion to accept the Financial Reports as presented and authorize the Board Clerk to sign them. Melvin Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 8) **Fire Chief's Report**– (Given by Interim/Acting Chief, Joel Brandt) Including but not limited to:
 - a) **Significant emergency incidents** –
 - b) **Other non-emergency Fire District Activity**
 - c) **The Fire Marshal's** office has reviewed 6 plans, adding 5,920 square feet of construction and totaling \$1,156.06 of revenue.
 - d) **Report on emergency call volume from previous month** – responded to 63 calls for service.
 - e) **Report on vehicle maintenance from previous month** – Three of our district vehicles was serviced this month totaling \$993.54. All vehicles are in service at this time.

- f) **Report on training activities from previous month** –191 hours of training reported.
- g) **Specific program updates or demonstrations** –

- Letter requesting a general rate increase was accepted and approved on September 15th. The increase was for 11.65% and that increases our base rate to \$2,412.78 and our mile to 22.33.
- We are in the process of cancelling the District purchasing cards. We are in the application process with National Bank for a consortium card just for Fire Districts
- We have submitted our information to ARPA for the District covid-19 expense reimbursement.
- SCBA donation from Three Points Fire District will be picked up on October 25th.
- Trunk or treat spaces are almost filled up.
- Three members attended AZ State Fire School
- One member taught ITLS in Laughlin
- We have three new reserves in that application process
- The PSFD has started to review the Camp Lomia Burn plan and will be working with DFFM to start prescribed fire treatment with in the camp this fall.
- Bill Potter was in the Pine School in September to teach fire safety to the younger grades.
- Bill Potter also took first place in the cook like a firefighter competition this year raising \$4,775 for AFB.

9) **Other Fire District Related Reports**

- a) District Board Chairman's Report – None
- b) PSPRS Board Report – None
- c) Firefighter's Association Report – None
- d) Labor Organization Report – Watching the 310 Proposition

10) **Old Business** –

11) **New Business** –

- a) **Discussion/Possible Action on Policy 4.6 Leave of Absence** – Dave Burkhart made a motion to approve the Leave of Absence Policy as written and authorize the Board Chairman to sign, showing an approval date of October 20, 2022 with an effective date of November 4, 2022. Bob Papke seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b) **Discussion/Possible Action on Policy 3.2 Fraternalization** - Dave Burkhart made a motion to approve the Fraternalization Policy as written and authorize the Board Chairman to sign, showing an approval date of October 20, 2022 with an effective date of November 4, 2022. Melvin Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- c) **Discussion/Possible Action on Policy 3.5 Hiring of Relatives** - Dave Burkhart made a motion to approve the Hiring of Relatives Policy as written and authorize the Board Chairman to sign, showing an approval date of October 20, 2022 with an effective date of November 4, 2022. Melvin Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

d) Discussion/Possible Action regarding District computer replacements – Interim Chief Joel Brandt reported on the precarious situation regarding District computers. The computer in the Captains office at Station 41 has died, the Fire Marshal’s office computer has died, and the Chief’s computer went blank and wasn’t able to recognize the hard drive. We were able to get it up and running again – for now, but that is the same thing that happened to the other computers before they crashed. The Office Manager’s computer is also starting to show these same signs of aging. Our current hardware is 5-7 years old and is on the tail end of its life cycle. The company that we had contracted with, Sunstate, had come out a month or so ago and installed updates on all the computers – knowing that our hardware was too old to support that kind of update which caused the crash of our computers. We did have a meeting with the president of that company who came and went over our contract with us and stated that he was willing to let us out of our contract with Sunstate.

Chief Brandt included in the Board packets information that Engineer Garrett Turley put together of three separate bids on the cost of replacing the desktop computers and also on the tablets that are on the trucks. So the bids are for seven computers and two rugged laptops. We also need to address the issue of storage.

The budget line item for IT was \$13,000. We have already spent some of that on Sunstate, and we would also like to leave a little bit (about \$2,000) in there for contingency, so that leaves \$9,000 in that line item. What he would like to do is spend the \$9,000 and then use \$7,975 from the capital reserve to move forward with the project. We have been in contact with the accountant on the subject and he is in complete agreement.

Bob Papke commented that he was in the office the day the Chief’s computer was failing and stated that we “Can’t have our staff running around trying to do all the things they were trying to do just to get on the computer. In today’s age you HAVE to have operating computers that talk to themselves and back themselves up and those kinds of things.”

Dave Burkhart made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$17,204 for the computers and the SSD storage option. Chuck Ackerman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

e) Discussion/Possible Action on Post Employment Health (PEHP) Plan Loyalty Waiver. The staff wanted to re-visit the PEHP plan. This plan was formed many years ago and was originally formed with only one group – which was all staff – and each person put \$25.00/ pay check into the plan. The staff has recently asked if they could have separate groups by which they could deposit more than that if they choose. So we have talked with Nationwide and created a plan where we have three different groups. This is all on the employee side – nothing comes out of the District. Where it does need Board approval is the Loyalty Medical Waiver. Which is this: If an employee who works for Pine Strawberry Fire District does NOT opt into the Health Insurance, and or the HSA, then they would be eligible for the Health Waiver. What that means is that the Fire District would put in a one-time per year donation into their PEHP plan of \$250, \$500, \$750, or \$1,000 in lieu of being covered by our District health insurance.

Bob Papke clarified that the one-time deposit to this Loyalty Waiver plan would be LESS than the cost of our health insurance. Chief Brandt confirmed this – Reminding him that we spend \$5,100 on the HSA deposit alone for an employee on the family plan. Chief Brandt also pointed out that the way it is paid is spelled out, based on their years of service.

5-9 years: \$250

10-14 years: \$500

15-19 years: \$750

20 + years: \$1,000

It was also pointed out that currently everyone here is covered by our District insurance and this would only occur if a spouse perhaps had better insurance coverage, or someone went on Medicare.

Chuck Ackerman made a motion that we approve the proposed PEHP Loyalty Waiver. Melvin Palmer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- f) Discussion/Possible Action regarding 5-10 year Capital Planning. Interim Chief Brandt reminded the Board that this was a contentious discussion a few months back and agreed – we do not have a good 5-10 year plan. We have had a few that were presented, but none have them have actually been sustainable plans. What he would like to do over the next month or so, is to get the staff’s input on what they would like to see in the Capital Improvement plan – which will include a lot of vehicles and also probably building maintenance. I’d like to get a punch list of what the staff feels is required, what they need, and also what the “wants” are. Then I’d like to take this down to Ben with the James Vincent Group, and we can come up with an actual measurable/obtainable/feasible plan moving forward. The reason to take it down to the James Vincent Group is the fact that they have all of our financials, they have access to Zion bank, etc. and this is what they do. This is part of our contract with them and this is why we pay them. This is kind of the process of moving forward. I’d like to start with this, get the input from the staff then move on to doing the actual number crunching down at the James Vincent Group.

Chief Brandt again pointed out that this is part of our contract with them – there is no additional cost for this service. Mr. Papke wanted to be sure that in this Capital plan we weren’t only looking at trucks, but including office equipment, computers, SCBA’s, all the large ticket items that we have. Chairman Ackerman suggested that we actually have two plans. One for what we would really like to do in a perfect world, and then another one for the bare minimum of what we need. Chief Brandt agreed and stated that that is also why he would like to wait until next month to see what happens with the Prop 310 vote. Mr. Papke agreed that we absolutely need to have this IN WRITING as soon as we can, so that we know where we are going. Dave Burkhart stated that it would be good to have before our budget planning- actually by the first of the year. Direction was given by the Board to Chief Brandt to move ahead with this.

No Action Taken

- 12) **Future Meeting Agenda Items and Meeting Date** – November 17th at 6:00 pm

Items for discussion – Swearing in of New Board Member, recruitment for Fire Chief, MOU with the Union

- 13) **Adjournment:**

Melvin Palmer made a motion to adjourn. Chuck Ackerman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously at 6:56 pm.