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Pine-Strawberry Fire District

PINE-STRAWBERRY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 20, 2026

Call to Order: 1500 Hours (3 pm), 08/20/2026 by Chairman Robert Papke

1. Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by Robert Papke

2. Invocation: Given by Marylin Bennett

3. Roll Call of Board Members:

a. The following PSFD Board Members were present: Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke, Clerk David Burkhart, Members; Bob Bennett, Melvin Palmer, and Tina Trout.
b. Interim Chief James Stoltenberg, Carmen Wailes PSFD Office Manager, PSFD members, Marylin Bennett, Helen Palmer, Fire Chief Hunter Scott, friends and family of Hunter Scott, and members of the PSFD Community.
c. Ben Archer of the James Vincent Group (PSFD Finance Advisor) was on Interim Chief James Stoltenberg's phone for the financial report.
d. No one on Zoom.

4. Presentations: Pinning Ceremony: Congratulations, Chief Hunter Scott!

Interim Chief James Stoltenberg presided over the pinning and swearing in of incoming Fire Chief Hunter Scott. Chief Scott was sworn in by Gila County Chief Deputy James Lahti and pinned by his family.

Note: Board Chairman Robert Papke called for a recess to have those present celebrate and enjoy the cake for Chief Scott's pinning at 15:09 hours (3:09 pm). The regular meeting resumed at 15:27 hours (3:27 pm).

5. Correspondence:

a. Letter by Interim Chief James Stoltenberg on Scott Hunter's pinning.
b. Interim Chief James Stoltenberg to PSFD and the community about his time as Interim Chief.
c. Letter by Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke to Tonto Basin Fire District on allowing the Intergovernmental Agreement for shared Chief Services to expire at the end of its term 8-31-26, as PSFD has selected and promoted a permanent Fire Chief.

6. Call to the Public: No Response

7. Approval of Previous Minutes:

a. July 21, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes & Executive Session Minutes sealed
b. July 22, 2026, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

(i) Melvin Palmer made the motion to approve the 07/21/2026 Special Meeting Minutes and 07/22/2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes and have the Board Clerk sign both. Tina Trout 2nd the Motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the 07/21/2026 Special Meeting Minutes and 07/22/2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes and have the Board Clerk sign both.

8. Financial Report:

a. Approval of the July 2026 Financial Report: Ben Archer of the James Vincent Group (PSFD Finance Advisor) gave the July financial report via phone. (Ben said he would give a 2025-2026 fiscal year end report at the next Board meeting.)

(i) Bob Bennett made the motion to approve the financial report as presented and authorized the Board Clerk to sign the report. Tina Trout 2nd the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the financial report as presented and authorize the Board Clerk to sign it.

9. Fire Chief's Report:

a. Interim Chief James Stoltenberg presented the Fire Chief's report. (Attached)

b. He also briefed the Board on Pine Creek Taxing (each tiny house pays a tax and the lot in whole pays a tax) and PSFD current staffing (15 Full-time line employees), 1 Engineer promoted, 1 Fire Fighter promoted, 1 Fire Fighter hired, 1 Member retiring in December 2026 and a new Fire Fighter will be hire then.

c. He will get with Chief Hunter on the PSFD Lock Box confidential employee comment/feedback Program

10. Other Fire District Related Reports:

a. District's Board Chairman Report and Discussion: Robert Papke: TBFD IGA Expiration

b. Public Safety Personnel Retirement Board Report:

(i) David Burkhart briefed the Board on the requirement for having PSPRS Local Board meeting for the new hire sometime in September. There will be an additional new hire in December. These will meet the requirements of 2 meetings per year.

(ii) David Burkhart briefed the Board on the agreement on improvement of the Fossil Creek trail to allow emergency personnel to drive UTV down. This will cut rescue time by hours.

c. Firefighter's Association Report: None (Members out on Call)

d. Labor Organization Report: None (Members out on Call)

11. Old Business:

a. Discussion and possible adoption of Policy edits or additions to the following Policies.

(i) 2.2 Disciplinary Action Program: Sent back to the Policy Committee for action. (Create a separate policy for improvement plan and put on next meeting Agenda)

(ii) 2.10 Fire Chief Evaluation: Sent back to the Policy Committee for action. (Put on next meeting Agenda.)

(iii) 4.8 Jury and Court Time: Sent back to the Policy Committee for action. (Establish new policy numbers and put on next meeting Agenda.)

(iv) 4.16 PEHP Program: David Burkhart made the motion to approve policy 4.16 PEHP with the provision that the title spell out Post-Employment Health Plan rather than the abbreviation PEHP. Bob Bennett 2nd the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve policy 4.16 PEHP with the provision that the title spell out Post-Employment Health Plan rather than the abbreviation PEHP.

b. Discussion and possible action on equipment and operating budget for the Fuel Management brush pick up route.

(i) Interim Chief James Stoltenberg briefed the board on the cost of a chipper with Vermeer Mountain West ($113,694.00).

(ii) During discussions concerns were voiced about spending this amount when we don't have a cost for the new fire station, and potential ongoing personnel costs (which cannot be funded by Bond funds) alternatives were discussed, such as starting the Fuel Management brush pick up program in phases, with the 1st being just brush pickup without the chipper, and then the 2nd possibly adding a chipper.

(iii) The Board agreed to postpone action on this item and have it on future meeting agendas.

c. Discussion and Possible Action on the Fire Chief contract.

(i) Was handled during the 08/18/2026 Special Board meeting. (No Action Required)

d. Discussion and possible action on the Intergovernmental Agreement for shared Chief Service with Tonto Basin Fire District.

(i) Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke read the Board the letter to the Tonto Basin Fire District on allowing the Intergovernmental Agreement for shared Chief Services to expire at the end of its' term, 8-31-26. Discussed in Item 5 Correspondence. (No Action Required).

12. New Business

a. Discussion and possible action on the drafting of a Request for Qualifications for Architectural Services for design of the new station 41.

(i) Melvin Palmer briefed the board that Joel Brandt suggests the Board should take a trip to Snowflake Fire District and see their new fire station.

(ii) Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke requested we postpone discussion on this issue and have it on the next meeting agenda; No action taken

b. Discussion and possible action on determining if the services of a Construction Manager at Risk would be beneficial to the design/preconstruction/construction of the station and if so discussion and possible action on drafting a Request for Qualification for CMaR.

(i) Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke requested we postpone discussion on this issue and have it on the next meeting agenda; No action taken

c. Discussion and possible action on developing a timeline for releasing RFQ(s) and selecting Architectural and Construction Manager at Risk services.

(i) Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke requested we postpone discussion on this issue and have it on the next meeting agenda; No action taken

13. Future Board Meeting Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date:

a. General Board meeting scheduled for September 17, 2026, at 1500 Hours (3 pm), at the Pine-Strawberry Fire District Fire Station 41 Conference room, 6198 Hardscrabble Mesa Rd, Pine AZ.

b. Agenda Items will include but not limited to;

(i) 11 a. Discussion and possible adoption of Policy edits or additions to the following Policies.

(A) 2.2 Disciplinary Action Program

(B) 2.10 Fire Chief Evaluation

(C) 4.8 Jury and Court Time

(ii) 11 b. Discussion and possible action on equipment and operating budget for the Fuel Management brush pick up route.

(iii) 12 a. Discussion and possible action on the drafting of a Request for Qualifications for Architectural Services for design of the new station 41.

(iv) 12 b. Discussion and possible action on determining if the services of a Construction Manager at Risk would be beneficial to the design/preconstruction/construction of the station and if so discussion and possible action on drafting a Request for Qualification for CMaR.

(v) 12 c. Discussion and possible action on developing a timeline for releasing RFQ(s) and selecting Architectural and Construction Manager at Risk services.

(vi) New Item: Discussion and possible action on developing a Strategic Plan for 2027.

(vii) New Item: Discussion and possible action on developing and conducting evaluation of the Board.

14. Adjournment:

a. Tina Trout made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Bennett 2nd the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to adjourned at 16:52 Hours (4:52 pm).