



**FOREST LAKES FIRE BOARD
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
JULY 17, 2021**



The Board and Chief Rodriguez have concluded that enough progress has been made in controlling the pandemic that we now feel it is safe, while still maintaining CDC recommended safety protocols, to reopen the station and to resume holding in person meetings. We began that process with the May 15, 2021 board meeting, and will continue until further notice.

- 1 Call to Order. The meeting was called to order in the main equipment bay of the fire station by Chairman Tom Cummiskey at 10:03 am.
- 2 Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Cummiskey led the gathering in the pledge of allegiance.
- 3 Roll Call of Fire Board Members. In addition to Chairman Cummiskey, Clerk John Hennessey, Treasurer Pete Batschelet and Member Israel Torres were in attendance at the fire station. Member Dennis Massion attended telephonically. All board members were present. We had a quorum of the board. For the record, Chief Dave Rodriguez was in attendance. We had four members of the public in attendance.
- 4 Chairman's Welcome and Activity Report. Chairman Cummiskey welcomed Jimmy Riggs, Battalion Chief, Black Mesa Ranger District. He will address the board re: agenda item 8b). Chairman Cummiskey noted this is the first meeting of the new fiscal year, and is an appropriate time to reflect on our accomplishments for the past year, all of which were achieved in spite of COVID-19 restrictions:
 - a) Pete Batschelet joined in July as a voting board member and Treasurer.
 - b) Although ultimately abandoned by APS, the Fire Board spent significant effort on the APS Microgrid project. The proposed FLFD site was abandoned in favor of a site in the forest.
 - c) Received the \$125K Hazardous Fuels Grant.
 - d) Revived the Pension Board and approved its updated Bylaws.
 - e) Completed the construction and operability of the cell tower as well as the running of fiber optic cable.
 - f) Completed installation of the new station's signage.
 - g) Moved to the new Workers Compensation pool.
 - h) Purchased the Lucas Chest compression system and put it into service.
 - i) Recognized participation of Auxiliary members since the organization began.
 - j) Purchased 7 new radios via grant funding.
 - k) Completed another updated Strategic Planning exercise including its documentation and publication.
 - l) Updated multiple policies over the year generally bringing most current and compliant.
 - m) Completed update of Chief's 2-year employment contract.
 - n) Converted from Frontier to Starlight fiber optic internet service.
 - o) Approved participation in the Arizona State Retirement System.
 - p) Due to COVID, switched to remote board meetings including changing the date and time of the monthly meetings.
 - q) Began efforts to move the GWTS permit from FLOA to FLFD.
 - r) Erected new perimeter fencing as part of the Master Planning Committee's activities.
 - s) Completed another months-long budget cycle.
 - t) Agreed to lease annex space to the Coconino County Sherriff's office.
 - u) Completed annual audit process.
 - v) Agreed on and requested funding for a new heart monitor from the Auxiliary.
 - w) In addition to many other Governmental Advocacy Committee efforts, hosted County Supervisor Judy Begay at our May Board meeting.
 - x) Approved updated Mutual Aid Agreement.
- 5 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no comments from the public.
- 6 Review and Approve the Minutes for the June 19, 2021 Regular Board Meeting. Treasurer Batschelet made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Member Torres seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 7 Review and Approve the Financial Statements for June 2021. Treasurer Batschelet reviewed the General Fund financial report for the previous month, and provided a brief summary report. We are 100% through the year. In relation to our published Not-To-Exceed (NTE) budget, YTD revenue is at 89.3% while YTD expenses are at 81%. The end of the month cash balance was \$333,926.01 which is also the Year End Cash Balance. Treasurer Batschelet made several additional comments: (1) account #4011, EMS Receivables, came in at 156.1% of budget due to the high call volume. We are adjusting the budget up to \$155K for next year, versus last year's



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budget of \$140K. (2) We added budget coverage for participation in the Arizona State Retirement System. (3) We will be paying off the Front End Loader in February 2022. We are in a very strong position financially. Treasurer Batschelet made a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. Member Torres seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

In accordance with the statutory requirements of A.R.S. 48-807, by virtue of accepting the entire detailed financial report the Board certified that:

- a) The District has reconciled all balance sheet accounts for the preceding fiscal month, and the Board has reviewed them.
 - b) The District has produced a financial report for the preceding fiscal month, including a register of all checks, warrants, and deposits; a statement of the District's financial activities; and a statement of the District's net assets.
 - c) The District has produced a cash flow projection report for the current fiscal year, and said report has been updated to include the actual revenues and expenditures for the preceding fiscal month.
 - d) The Governing Board has reviewed the financial reports, the updated cash flow projection report, and all month end fund statements and reports of the preceding month, including any reports provided by the County Treasurer and each of the financial institutions in which the District maintains an account.
 - e) The District is in compliance pursuant to A.R.S. 48-807 (N) & (O) and no reports indicate an adverse impact on the ongoing operations or liquidity of the District.
- 8 Business.
- a) Status update re: District's Insurance Coverages. Chief Rodriquez presented a summary of our liability insurance coverage. See Certificate of Liability Insurance, attached.



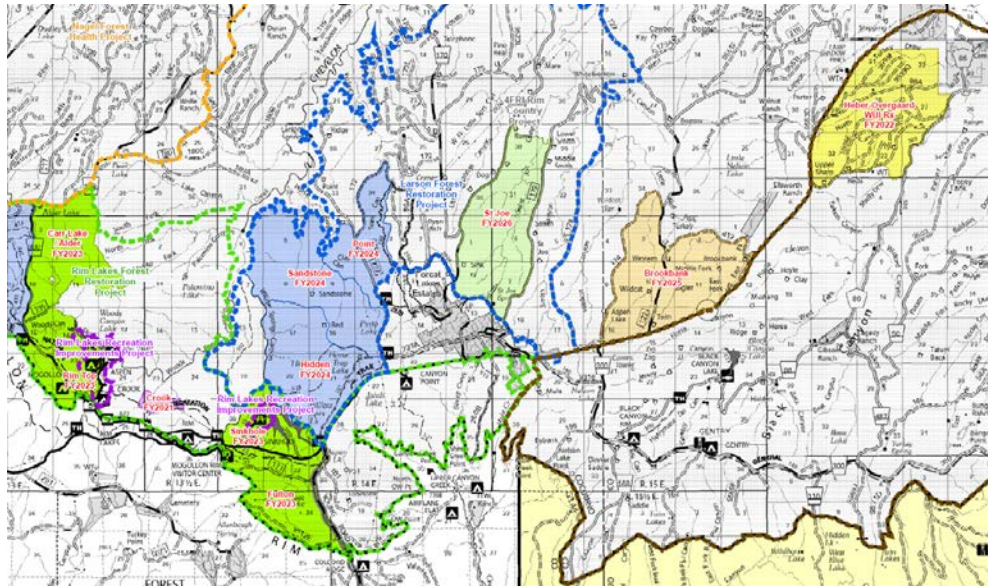
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Chairman Cummiskey asked for a breakdown of how much Indemnification Coverage board members have. Chief took an action to report back. Chief took an action to follow up next month with details on our Property Insurance Coverage (Umbrella, Fire Station, Rolling Stock, ...).

- b) Status update re: Weather forecast and forest re-openings. Chief Rodriquez began by noting that fire conditions are such that all forests have reopened. We can have campfires and use charcoal in Forest Lakes. He introduced Battalion Chief Riggs, who gave a briefing on the recent wildfires in and around Forest Lakes, and all the efforts the Forest Service took to contain them. A Type II Management Team was called in to address the worst of the fires, which allowed the deployment of aviation resources, the largest of which were the DC-10s which were very obvious in the skies immediately over Forest Lakes. He said the forest restrictions, which no one likes, served their purpose. The last half of June exhibited bad fire conditions. Due to the recent rains, the fires are mostly out (but not yet officially.) We will have to see how the next few weeks play out. He then reviewed the 5 Year Plan to mitigate future fire dangers, including prescribed burns and aggressive forest thinning. Logging operations should start to the south of Forest Lakes in late 2022, early 2023. On a related note, Chief added that we have not done enough on the interior of the Forest Lakes boundaries to become FireWise, especially on the south side. We need to improve education on what is needed to create a defensible space. There are too many match-stick trees. Not enough residents on the south side have taken advantage of the Hazardous Fuels Grant to get their lots cleaned up. The Proposed Burn Blocks in and around Forest Lakes are shown for reference:



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Black Mesa Ranger District Proposed Burn Blocks FY21-26 Surrounding Forest Lakes

- c) Status update re: GWS Permit Move to FLFD. Chief stated there is nothing new to report.
 - d) Status update re: Grant activities. Chief reported 12 properties have been completed per Hazardous Fuels Grant requirements. There are 15 more on the immediate wait list, with 100 more in the queue. Only 4 properties have been completed on the south side. There are issues with cost due to the steep terrains involved. The use of inmate crews is being pursued. They were in suspense due to COVID-19.
 - e) Status update re: Sheriff's Occupancy of Annex Offices. Chief reported that work is in the final stages for occupancy. The lease arrangement began July 1st. Payments will be one month in arrears.
 - f) Status update re: Pension Board activities. Pension Board Chairman LJ Waggoner reported the next meeting is scheduled for July 20th. Work continues with Nationwide to determine the best approach going forward.
 - g) Status update re: Governmental Advocacy Committee. Governmental Advocacy Committee Chairman Torres noted he has a three-pronged approach to advocacy: federal, state and county. At the federal level, he is working to get Congressman Tom O'Halleran to attend our September board meeting and to give him a first-hand view of the fire danger from the forest surrounding the properties on the south side and how that impacts all of Forest Lakes. At the state level, he is working with House members Walt Blackman and Brenda Barton and Senate member Wendy Rogers. A key point of interest is the proposed increase in Mill rate. In addition he continues to work with John Flynn of AFDA on several pieces of legislation of interest to FLFD: S1828 - Mil rate Increase Potential, S1603 - Transwestern Pipeline Settlement Reimbursement (yes, we were affected), S1120 - EMS Response on Federal Lands, S1351 - Fire District Amendments, and S1659 - Fire District Budgets. The overall goal is to understand either what we need to do administratively or what we can do to increase revenues, and then open the conversation to options we may want to entertain.
 - h) Status update re: Master Planning Committee Activities. Chief reported he is trying to find a source for the annex garage door replacement. Repair of Bay Door #1 on the main fire station is awaiting availability of labor, which will be self-performed. The temporary electrical cable serving the Auxiliary shed has been buried. There is discussion also on procuring a new Tuff Shed to store tables and chairs.
- 9 Fire Chief's Report. Chief stated there is not much to report operationally. Call volumes are down with the closure of the forests. We will have to wait and see the impact on EMS revenues. He reported two wildland firefighting personnel perished in a wildland firefighting aviation accident in northwest Arizona. The accident occurred during initial attack operations on the Cedar Basin Fire. Pilot Matthew Miller, 48, and Air Tactical Group Supervisor Jeff Piechura, 62, were on board a Beechcraft King Air C-90 aircraft, conducting visual



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reconnaissance and aviation command and control over the fire, when the accident occurred. They are well known in Arizona, and to many in the Southwest wildland firefighting world. Jeff was a personal friend of Chief Rodriguez, who stated he will leave a lasting impression on those in the fire service. Chairman Cummiskey noted this just goes to show the considerable risks wildland firefighters encounter on a regular basis.

- 10 Call To the Public/Audience Comments. POC Member Joe Ruet inquired why ambulance reimbursement was not being addressed by S1120. Chief Rodriguez noted ambulance service is covered by DHS regulations, which control reimbursement to fire districts.
- 11 Fire Board Comments. Member Torres thanked battalion Chief Riggs for attending our meeting. He noted that during the recent spate of fires it was very difficult to get accurate information about the fires, and wondered if there wasn't a better way to get credible information to the public. There really was too much information, much of it bad. Social media was both a blessing and a curse. Perhaps we need to reintroduce the role of Public Information Officer. Per Chairman Cummiskey, we will address improved communications in the spring time frame, in time for the next fire season.
- 12 Adjournment. There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

Note: In order to promote openness and transparency, all materials presented at the board meeting are available to be viewed on the FLFD Web Site: flfdaz.com, and following the web site prompts; or by going directly to the URL, flfdaz.com/board-meeting-minutes.

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