



**FOREST LAKES FIRE BOARD  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 16, 2021**



*For the record, as a general rule, the Fire Station remains closed to the public. Access can be achieved on a case by case basis. The board meeting was held in a virtual format using Webex conferencing software. Chief Rodriquez was at the fire station for members of the public to attend if they chose to do so. Chief Rodriquez will monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and determine if, and when, the Fire Station can be reopened to the public.*

- 1 The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Cummiskey at 10:28 am. For the record, the late start was due to technical difficulties related to using Webex.
- 2 Due to the virtual meeting format, Chairman Cummiskey dispensed with the pledge of allegiance.
- 3 Roll Call of Fire Board Members. In addition to Chairman Cummiskey, Clerk John Hennessey, Member Dennis Massion, Treasurer Pete Batschelet and Member Israel Torres were in attendance. We had a quorum. For the record, Chief Rodriquez was in attendance at the fire station. Chairman Cummiskey verified that everyone could hear and understand the proceedings.
- 4 Chairman's Welcome and Activity Report. Chairman Cummiskey noted this is the first meeting of 2021, which is off to a rocky start. We look forward to better things to come. We continue to experience problems with Webex. We need to explore alternatives such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 5 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 6 Review and Approve the Minutes for the December 19, 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Member Massion 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 December 2020. Treasurer Batschelet reviewed the General Fund financial report for the previous month, and provided a brief summary report. We are 50.00% through the year. In relation to our published Not-To-Exceed (NTE) budget, YTD revenue is at 59.3% while YTD expenses are at 47.3%. The end of the month cash balance was \$395,161. The Projected Year End Cash Balance is \$332,099. We are in a very strong position financially. Treasurer Batschelet made a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. Member Massion 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) Discussion and possible action: Change monthly meeting date. Following deliberation, Member Massion made a motion to change the board meeting day for the next three months (February, March and April) to be on the third Thursday of the month at 11 am. Treasurer Batschelet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. It was noted Megan will need to change calendars and make any other notifications required. There was some sentiment to keeping the current Saturday meeting time for the summer months. We will revisit the change at the April board meeting.
  - b) Discussion and possible action: GWS Permit Move to FLFD. Chief Rodriquez stated he had reached agreement with former FLOA President Wayne Rothwell to make the subject change. There is no fee involved. With the change, FLFD will have to produce an annual operations update for the Forest Service, which will not be a burden on the district. It is believed current FLOA leadership will support the move.



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Treasurer Batschelet made a motion to approve the move of the GWS Permit from FLOA to FLFD. Member Torres seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Chief took the action to notify FLOA leadership and to take the actions required to make the subject change.

- c) Status update re: Grant activities. Chief reported we are submitting for a side x side rescue vehicle through Firehouse Subs. The unit will be a diesel Kubota, with a snowplow attachment, patient transport capable and will have a small pump and tank for firefighting.
- d) Status update re: ASRS Participation. Chief Rodriguez stated there is nothing new to report. He and Megan have both tried to contact state representatives, without success, most likely due to COVID-19 issues. We are still planning to start participation on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- e) Status update re: Pension Board activities. Pension Board has 17 inactive recipients for payouts totaling \$38,616.69. Remaining participants will all be active duty from this point forward. Chairman Cummiskey reported we are waiting for the year-end report from Innis and Associates so we can review, evaluate and provide input back to Innis for recommended changes.
- f) Status update re: Policies needing updates in 2021. Policies, Procedures and Bylaws Chairman Massion stated that he has purged all his old lists of policies, along with dates of approval, and will rely only on our website going forward, which should reflect all approved changes and dates of the approved FLFD Board Policies. According to the current posted policy list on the website, our oldest policies are: Policy 16, Vacation Accrual and Use, Dec. 2014; Policy 24, Donations, Nov 2016; and Policy 2, Fire Board and Chief Policy, Aug 2017. Policy 16 updates are difficult, especially with all the COVID focus for emergency leave and quarantines. Policy 24 updates should be easy and will be addressed at the February meeting. Policy 2 will be addressed at a later date. All remaining policies have been updated in 2019 or later. It was noted our Bylaws were last updated in 2019, and will be reviewed for possible updating. Megan, Dave and Dennis took an action to update the Policies on the FLFD web site.
- g) Status update re: Governmental Advocacy Committee. Government Advocacy Committee Chairman Torres reported 2021 is off to a rocky start at the state and federal levels. He will work with Chief Rodriguez to define a list of items that are important to us at the county, state and federal levels. He took an action to write congratulatory letters to the newly elected officials (he has already contacted District 6 Representative Blackman.) He will continue to work with John Flynn, Bryan Jeffries and our AFDA district representative, Dirch Foreman, on issues important to FLFD, including Mill rate and financial relief. It is early in the term, and players are changing. In response to a question from Chairman Cummiskey, Israel stated he wasn't aware of any federal assistance available to fire districts in the recent proposed legislation dealing with economic stimulus. He feels this is an AFDA issue since it would affect all fire districts. Once things open up he will pursue invitations to all our elected representatives to attend community events. Success will depend on strong relationships with all these individuals.
- h) Status update re: STRAP publication. Clerk Hennessey reported several sections have been released for board member review and comment. We are on target to issue the complete draft document by February 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be an agenda item for the February 18<sup>th</sup> board meeting for a motion and possible action to approve the 2020 STRAP Update and One-Page Summary for publication.
- i) Status update re: Master Planning Committee Activities. Master Plan Committee Chairman Hennessey reported the draft input for the Facilities and Master Plan section of the STRAP document has been released for board review and comment. Chief is in negotiation with a fence contractor to replace the existing perimeter fencing per approval by the board at last month's meeting. There will be some 840 feet of chain link fence replaced. He will decide how best to dispose of the chain link fabric and railings/posts. He will notify the board when the work has been contracted.
- j) Discussion and possible action: Provide funding target(s) to the Auxiliary. Chief Rodriguez reported he is in the process of updating the previous list sent to the Auxiliary. Considering the restrictions on fund raising caused by the pandemic, he is trying to not be too aggressive. Chairman Cummiskey noted the Auxiliary needs some items they can focus on in advertising FLFD's needs to the community for targeted fund-raising activities. Two items of note were mentioned: 1) replace our donated heart monitor, which is nearing the end of its useful life, with a new unit and 2) funds to provide supplemental equipment and accessories for the side-by-side all-terrain forest rescue vehicle we are pursuing with grant funding through Firehouse Subs. Since the grant has not yet been awarded, but is anticipated soon, the discussion was tabled until next month's meeting.



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- 9 Fire Chief's Report. Chief reported we are in need of more commercial contractors to support residents who want to clear their lots. With the mild winter and the GWTS has being open more so than in the past, there is more demand than usual. We are in extreme drought conditions. We can expect higher fire danger and more, and earlier, forest closures. Promontory Point is the driest it has been in quite some time. Homeowners are encouraged to continue their due diligence and address keeping clear, defensible space around their homes and properties. In response to a question from Member Torres, Chief stated fire danger this year is about the same as last year, but is escalating. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being worst, we are about at an 8. He may need to bring in additional staff and request help from our neighboring fire departments via Mutual Aid agreements. Israel asked if Dave could expand community outreach to target visitors to the forest as well as Forest Lakes residents, perhaps through social media, to alert them to potential fire danger. Chief replied John Nelson is preparing communiques to residents addressing the Hazardous Fuels Grant. In response to Chairman Cumiskey regarding the Fiber-Optic (F-O) project, Dave noted it will be kicked off in the next 2 to 3 weeks, with a spring activation date. There are no plans for F-O service to the community in general. With respect to an action item assigned to Chief from last month's meeting to draft a letter to APS expressing our disappointment in the delay of the Microgrid Project, there was discussion that a letter may be counter-productive and may not be the best means of achieving our goal: to get the Microgrid Project online as quickly as possible. It was agreed to leave it to Dave's discretion on how to best communicate our position to APS. In response to a question from Pete on the dirt berm on the south side of the property, Chief reported there are no drainage issues at this time that need to be addressed.
- 10 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were none.
- 11 Fire Board Comments. Member Massion reported FLOA held a board meeting yesterday during which it was suggested FLOA and FLFD explore the possibility of having FLFD be a site for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine. Chief reported he had been in discussion with Coconino County Health officials and there is no realistic way for implement a site at FLFD with the current two-dose system. It might be possible with the single dose vaccine. Member Torres asked if we could procure fire hydrant markers to better identify the hydrants and make sure they are not accidentally damaged by snowmobilers or other off-road recreational vehicles. Chief agreed to take this action and provide an update to the community. Chief took the action to draft a letter to FLDWID acknowledging their efforts to upgrade their infrastructure, including new hydrants. Israel thanked the Finance Committee (Pete, Dave, John and Megan) for their work in getting ready to publish the 5-Year Budget Projection for the STRAP Update.
- 12 Adjournment. There being no further business before the board the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 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](http://flfdaz.com), and following the web site prompts; or by going directly to the URL, [flfdaz.com/board-meeting-minutes](http://flfdaz.com/board-meeting-minutes).

Approved by the Forest Lakes Fire District Board on: February 18, 2021.

John Hennessey, Clerk