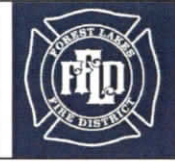




# FOREST LAKES FIRE BOARD REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES July 16, 2022



*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 10:04 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, Member Dennis Massion, Treasurer Pete Batschelet and Member Israel Torres were in attendance at the fire station. Also in attendance were Chief Dave Rodriguez and Admin Asst Julie Mattila. Attending from the public were Jan Cummiskey, Tom Swanson, Julie Swanson, Kathy Swanson, Tom O'Brien, Rita O'Brien, Dick Zimmerman, and Carl Kunasek. In addition, we had honored guests District 4 County Supervisor Judy Begay, District 4 Director Cheryl Barlow, Linda Curly, and James Big Horse. For the record, we had a quorum of the board.
- 4 Chairman's Welcome and Activity Report. Chairman Cummiskey welcomed all to the meeting, noting this is the first meeting of the new fiscal year, and he will include a prior year-end review in his remarks. He noted Judy will present some prepared remarks following the adjournment of the board meeting and she, and her team, will graciously provide a Fry Bread demonstration, for which members of the public are invited to attend. He then acknowledged the recent passing of prior board member Brad Pontious, who served the board for over six years, four years as Treasurer, until health issues forced him to retire from the board and move to the valley. His wife April supported the district for many years as an EMT. Chairman Cummiskey then presented the previous year's accomplishments, noting these accomplishments are a credit to the leadership team of seven individuals (board, chief and admin assistant).

## Forest Lakes Fire District Accomplishments – FY21-22

- Hiring of Julie Mattila to replace Megan Rutherford as District Admin
- Visit by Coconino County Supervisor Judy Begay and team including their delivery from Representative Tom O'Halleran of a flag that flew over the Nations Capitol
- Ratified decision by Pension Board to move from administrator Innis and Associates to Nationwide
- Spent significant time working with Crabbree and Associates reviewing and updating our insurance coverages
- Initiated, held meetings, and finally published the new year's Strategic Plan
- Ordered a new Heart Monitor funded largely by the FLFD Auxiliary
- Repairs to the roof and ultimately the interior of the Annex caused by weather were completed.
- County Deputy Sheriff was finally able to occupy that Annex space providing FLFD with an additional revenue source
- Purchased a "gently used" water tender to replace our 30+ year old unit
- Worked with the Auxiliary to have them raise funds to purchase new Bumper Mounted Turret Nozzle for the new Tender
- Thanks to changes in Arizona law, agreed to change our mil rate from 3.25% to 3.375% in fy22-23 and 3.5% in fy23-24
- Made final balloon payment to pay off our Front End Loader
- All Management Team members attended the annual AFDA Conference in Tucson gaining valuable educational information and team building
- Reinstated PIO role in the form of a Communication Specialist with John Nelson selected to fill that role
- Explored various options including an ASRS buyout to help fund Dave's retirement. As that was not an option, salary increases were approved instead, approximating the same result.
- Transitioned to a new ambulance billing company
- Completed annual CPA audit with excellent results
- During the year, multiple policies were reviewed and updated. Our policies are generally up-to date at this time
- Agreed on a final budget and approved submission to Coconino County
- Changed dates for annual Chief's review and bi-annual Chief's Contract update to better coincide with our fiscal year. Both actions were completed and approved.
- Co-hosted, with FLWDID, a meeting with County officials in Forest Lakes including the County Treasurer and team, the County Assessor and the County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
- Held annual Open House

- 5 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no comments.



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- 6 Review and Approve the Minutes for the June 18, 2022, Regular Board Meeting. Member Massion made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Treasurer Batschelet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 7 Review and Approve the Financial Statements for June 2022. Treasurer Batschelet reviewed the General Fund financial report for the previous month and provided a brief summary report. We are 100.0% through the year. In relation to our published Not-To-Exceed (NTE) budget, YTD revenue is at 93.4% while YTD expenses are at 89.0%. The end of the month cash balance was \$421,878.69, which is also the year end cash balance. We expect to complete the payment for the new water tender next month. We are in good shape financially. Chairman Cummiskey made a motion to approve the financial report 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) Status update re: Finance Committee Meeting Outcomes. Treasurer Batschelet reported the Finance Committee met July 14<sup>th</sup> with Chairman Batschelet and members Chief Rodriquez, Chairman Cummiskey, Clerk Hennessey and Admin Ass't Mattila in attendance. Agenda items included Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy for FLFD, On-Duty Staff (ODS) Temporary Surcharge Related to Higher Fuel Costs and Review FY2022-2023 Budget Submittal to Auditor General (Due August 1, 2022). Significant discussion points/action items follow:
    - i) Even though the agenda item referred to PTO, we agreed that we will not pursue PTO but will continue to keep two categories, Vacation and Sick Leave.
      - (1) Vacation
        - (a) Vacation is currently limited to 240 hours per year.
        - (b) Are we in line with other districts/entities?
      - (2) Sick Leave
        - (a) Recommend this be limited to 160 hours annually, with a buyback option of 80 hours.
        - (b) The buyback option only applies to Sick Leave.

Dennis took an action to have both policies ready for review and possible approval at next month's meeting.
    - ii) Fuel Surcharge
      - (1) Needed to help offset the increased fuel cost of ODS travel (some from Show Low, Mesa, Chandler, Payson, Gilbert, ...).
      - (2) Recommend we use the IRS guidelines of \$0.58 per mile, one-way travel only.
      - (3) Julie to review last 3 months to see budget impact.
      - (4) Temporary adjustment until inflation eases.
      - (5) Motion and possible action at August board meeting?)
    - iii) Auditor General Budget Submittal Due August 1<sup>st</sup>.



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- (1) Julie has worked on this submittal which requires us to map our Chart of Accounts line items (some 100 accounts) into Auditor General format (some 50-line items.)
  - (2) A subset of the Finance Committee has a work session Monday to finalize the submittal.
  - (3) Note: Our operating budget has already been approved by the board at the June meeting. Only the Board Chair and Clerk are required to approve Auditor General submittal.
- b) Status update re: Budget Submission to Coconino County. Clerk Hennessey referred to the status from agenda item 8.a.iii).
- c) Status update re: Water Tender Replacement. Chief reported the new water tender, which is replacing our 32-year-old equipment, is here for our inspection and review after the meeting. It will be returned to the valley for completion of graphics and the installation of the Water Turret.
- d) Status update re: Grant activities. Dick Zimmerman and Chief reported as follows. Safeway has signed off on a \$1,500 grant to provide on-site nourishment and hydration supplies for our first responders (power bars, trail mix, bottled water, ...). The grant will go to the Auxiliary (a 501c3 organization). Dick is pursuing three other areas, including Firehouse Subs for grants. Chief reported our Hazardous Fuels Grant is about 70% complete. We are looking to either extend this grant or pursue a new one, both through the State Forestry Department. The limiting factor in completing the grant remains availability of qualified contractors.
- e) Status update re: Governmental Advocacy Committee. Governmental Advocacy Committee Chairman Torres thanked Judy and her team for visiting us today. He commented on the importance of our improved communications activities headed up by our Communications Specialist and Public Information Officer John Nelson and Chief Rodriguez, with a renewed focus on social media, including Twitter and Facebook, initiatives for which Israel has been an ardent spokesperson and supporter. Israel then introduced Proposition 310, which if implemented, will be a game changer for the 144 rural fire districts in Arizona. For every ten dollars in sales tax collected, Prop 310 will add one cent. That incremental tax will go to support rural fire districts, like Forest Lakes, which like other rural districts, has been under intense budgetary pressures for the last decade. The legislature recently approved adding Prop 310 to the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot. It puts the approval in the hands of the voters. Legislative approval for the ballot initiative was only achieved after significant effort by the Fire Chiefs Association (FCA), Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) and the Professional Fire Fighters Association (PFFA). The initiative now moves into the campaign stage where there is expected to be strong opposition, basically pitting the city population against the rural population.
- f) Status update re: Master Planning Committee Activities. Master Plan Committee Chairman Hennessey reported he has been in touch by email to resident Mo Morey to solicit his assistance in preparing a drawing package for submittal to the county building department to secure a building permit. He is awaiting his response. When asked if we need a garage to house the Front Loader, Chief responded we expect the new loader to have a life expectancy of 20 to 30 years and we need to protect our investment. We will offset part of the cost by using leftover faceted concrete block from the fire station construction. In addition, it needs to be ready at a moment's notice and not have to wait for it to be dug out of the snow. Chief reported work on the underground electric to the tuff sheds, which are pre-wired, and the blue garage will be initiated once weather permits. Due to the underground utilities already in place, this will require hand digging a trench for the new underground conduit. We have all the RR ties needed for the southern boundary surface water flow control project. Work will be scheduled based on contractor availability. Regarding drainage issues for the Cell Tower, discussion continues with the county as flow from the county yard onto the FLFD property is an issue. Repainting the annex garage doors has been delayed due to lack of available contractors. Chief is pursuing self-performing the task.
- g) Status update re: Heart Monitor Purchase. Chief reported he has canceled the existing heart monitor purchase order and is pursuing a different supplier and brand, which has the equivalent capability. The expected delivery date is 6 to 8 weeks in the future.
- h) Status update re: Special Election Updates. Clerk Hennessey reported we have been notified by the County Elections Department that three candidate application packages have been received for the three board openings that will exist as of midnight November 30<sup>th</sup>. Per past practice, when the number of applicants equals the number of openings the Elections Department will notify the County Board of Supervisors and recommend the election be declared, which they will do at their next regularly scheduled monthly meeting.



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The question will not appear on the November 8<sup>th</sup> general election ballot. For the record, the three applicants are current board members Dennis Massion and Pete Batschelet and Julie Swanson, who will join Israel Torres and John Hennessey on the new board December 1<sup>st</sup>.

9 Fire Chief's Report.

Chief spoke in support of Prop 310, supplementing the remarks of Member Torres. Passage of Prop 310 will help secure the future financial support for Forest Lakes, allowing us to sustain our service delivery model. It is all about affordability for our predominantly vacation home community. He reminded us that we travel through three fire districts in our trips from the valley to Forest Lakes. Prop 310 will support all three, plus the other fire districts state-wide (144 in total.) We all need to get behind the proposition. He thanked the Auxiliary for its current fundraising efforts which will help us procure the Water Turret for the new water tender. He noted the funding support also included the proceeds from the recent July 4<sup>th</sup> Charity Ride, which was donated to the Auxiliary for that purpose. He thanked all the board members for their diligence in overseeing the district finances as evidenced by our positive annual auditor results.

- 10 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. Resident Carl Kunasek, long time member of the state legislature, including past Senate President, recognized the members of the public for their attendance and participation as it demonstrates government in action. He mentioned in passing that his daughter, Karrin Taylor Robson, who is running for governor, is also a resident of Forest Lakes.
- 11 Fire Board Comments.
  - a) Member Massion noted there appears to be frustration on the part of some members of the public on how to access our new communications tools. He suggested this be a future agenda topic/
  - b) Member Torres thanked former Senate President Kunasek for his presence and remarks. He also noted there is a Prop 310 web site and recommended everyone visit it to learn more about the proposition.
- 12 Adjournment. There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

Notes:

Following the meeting, District 4 County Supervisor Begay delivered some prepared remarks, which will addressed under separate cover, and she and her team provided a Fry Bread demonstration.

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 Forest Lakes Fire Board on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

John Hennessey