



**FOREST LAKES FIRE BOARD  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 21, 2020**



For the record, the following notice was posted on the FLFD web site along with the agenda for the meeting. It was not addressed in the meeting per se, but is presented here for the record.

*Members of the public may attend this meeting. However, please be advised that if you choose to do so, your temperature will be taken, you will need to complete a brief questionnaire and will be required to wear a mask that will be provided. Of course, if you have a temperature, your answers to the questionnaire cast doubt on your health or you refuse to wear the mask, you will not be admitted to the meeting.*

- 1 The meeting was called to order in the main equipment bay of the fire station by Chairman Tom Cummiskey at 10:03 am.
- 2 Chairman Cummiskey led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.
- 3 Roll Call of Fire Board Members. In addition to Chairman Cummiskey, Clerk John Hennessey, Treasurer Joe Ruet, Member Dennis Massion and Member Israel Torres were present. Member Torres attended telephonically. We had a quorum. For the record, it was confirmed that Member Torres was able to hear and understand the meeting discussion and that he had access to all files to be presented.
- 4 Chairman's Welcome and Activity Report. Chairman Cummiskey welcomed all those in attendance. As noted above, extra precautions had been implemented for this meeting due to COVID-19 concerns. There were no members of the general public in attendance, but we had one POC and one ODS member present. Chairman Cummiskey summarized that COVID-19 issues are unprecedented and may require new technologies with changes in how we conduct future meetings, including full teleconferencing capability with access to all documents presented, so that we are fully in compliance with OML provisions. Our planned leadership team building dinner in Mesa on April 7<sup>th</sup> may also be impacted as we intend to fully comply with CDC and state guidelines regarding social distancing. We will continue to monitor the situation nationally and statewide and make a decision by the end of the month. Chairman Cummiskey continued on with comments about the district's recent visit to the Gila River Indian Community Governance Center in Sacaton to thank them for the grant funding that allowed us to procure the new Blue and White ambulance, which was on display, having been driven from the fire station by Lou St.Germain and Jim Wiegold. Chairman Cummiskey read a proclamation during the council meeting from the FLFD thanking the Gila River Indian Community for their generosity. The Council then turned the tables by thanking the FLFD for thanking them, stating this is the first time a grant recipient had not only thanked them, but also put on display the equipment the grant was used for. The meeting was adjourned to allow council members the opportunity to view the ambulance, including the Power Load Gurney. FLFD was well represented by Chief Rodriquez, Chairman Cummiskey, grant writer Dick Zimmerman, POC members Lou St.Germain and Jim Weigold, and Auxiliary President Jan Cummiskey, who also served as photographer. Overall, it was an amazing and rewarding experience. Note: there will be additional comments in agenda item 8b). Chairman Cummiskey closed his remarks by thanking the Auxiliary for the purchase on 8 new tables and 64 new chairs so we can be self-sufficient for social functions.
- 5 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no comments from the public.
- 6 Review and Approve the Minutes for the February 15, 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Member Massion made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Treasurer Ruet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 7 Review and Approve the Financial Statements for February 2020. Treasurer Ruet reviewed the General Fund financial reports for the previous month, and provided a brief summary report. We are 66.67% through the year. In relation to our published Not-To-Exceed (NTE) budget, YTD revenue is at 54.0% while YTD expenses are at 71.2%. Treasurer Ruet pointed out this percentage is high due to the payment we made for our new ambulance. The end of the month cash balance was \$213,945. The Year-to-Date net gain/loss in our cash position is -\$228,927. The projected year-end cash balance is \$241,019, which exceeds our board guideline of \$175,000. Note: Treasurer Ruet stated he expects the projected year-end cash balance to be closer to \$200,000 when adjustments are made next month for the projected April revenue and expense entries. Chairman Cummiskey noted we are in the tax trough. Treasurer Ruet 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.



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- 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: FY 20/21 Budget Prep Status and Schedule. Treasurer Ruet reported that finance committee activities are ahead of schedule. The committee met on March 10<sup>th</sup> and developed a first pass at the Not to Exceed (NTE) FY20/21 budget and a projection for the FY21/22 budget. The NTE budget will be presented to the board "for approval to publish" at the April board meeting. This will be followed by presentation to the public at the May board meeting and presentation to the board for final approval at the June board meeting.
- b) Status update re: Gila River Indian Community Presentation. Note: See agenda item 4 for additional comments. Chief Rodriguez exhibited a PowerPoint presentation documenting the March 4<sup>th</sup> visit to the Gila River Indian Community (see web site for the presentation.) He noted that once Chairman Cummiskey finished reading the Proclamation thanking the Gila River Indian Community for its grant to fund our new ambulance, during which he acknowledged the culture and heritage of the Gila River Indian community, that we had the full attention of all the council members. It was stated this is the largest grant they had ever awarded. Chief acknowledged the assistance of council member Cheryl Pablo in navigating the grant process. Lou St.Germain pointed out the Gila River Indian Community, unlike others in Arizona, manages the grant process internally, and does not just donate their monies to the state general fund. Member Torres thanked all for their efforts. Chief Rodriguez took an action to write a separate letter to Cheryl and perhaps to follow up in several months with a status update on how the new ambulance is being used.
- c) Status update re: Putting our New Ambulance into service. Chief reported the new tires have been installed and we are awaiting DHS inspection to formally place the unit in service. It was noted the inspection has been delayed due to the virus outbreak, but we have authorization to use the ambulance if needed.
- d) Discussion and possible action re: Declaring the older Blue and White Ambulance as surplus equipment. Member Massion made a motion to declare the old Blue and White ambulance as surplus equipment. Treasurer Ruet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- e) Status update re: Grant activities. Chief noted that we have submitted a FEMA microgrant application, authored by John Nelson, for 9 new mobile, truck-mounted radios (~\$20K). We should know by the end of the year if we are successful. Dick Zimmerman is working on a grant to procure laptop computers for our trucks. A separate grant is being pursued with Home Depot and/or Loews for construction materials for an additional storage shed. Construction will be self-performed by FLFD personnel and residents. In response to a question about the FEMA reimbursement request for last year's winter storm damage relief, Megan provided the following summary: the total cost requested and approved was \$5,483.13, and we will receive 75% of that amount, or \$4,112.36; we have so far received 90% of that amount, or \$3,701.13; and we will receive an additional \$411.23 once a final audit is complete. It took one year and one day to receive the initial payment. The additional payment is contingent on a physical audit, requiring travel to FLFD by FEMA personnel, scheduling of which is undetermined at this time due to Corona virus restrictions.
- f) Status update re: Pension Board activities. Due to scheduling difficulties with current ODS board members, for various reasons, a new board composition has been determined. The five new board members are LJ Waggoner, Chief deMasi, Chief Rodriguez, Megan Rutherford and Chairman Cummiskey. A meeting is planned for Thursday of next week, during which policies and procedures will be reviewed, and board positions determined. One of the key areas to be addressed going forward is whether to continue with Innis and Associates as plan administrators.



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- g)** Status update re: Cell Tower Construction. Chief reported that as of this past Thursday cell tower construction activities are 80 to 85% complete. The recent snow has halted construction. Once construction is completed, we can move on to the technical/communications/equipment installation phase of the project. There is no official finish date at this time, but it is hoped the project will be completed in 6 to 8 weeks.
- h)** Status update re: Station signage. Chief reported little progress has been made due to weather issues in general, and more recently by Corona virus concerns. Anchor bolts have been installed on the front façade to hang the sign, which will have three-dimensional lettering and will be unlit. While there is no firm date for completion, Chairman Cummiskey asked to have it in place by Memorial Day. Chief reminded us that the proceeds from last year's Poker Run will be used to pay for the cost of the sign.
- i)** Status update re: Worker's Comp. Chief reported that Copper Point, our current worker's comp insurance carrier has notified us they will not be providing worker's comp insurance coverage next year. Worker's Comp insurance is a statutory requirement. There are alternatives to Copper Point Insurance Company (7710 Insurance Company and Travelers Insurance Company), but both are indicating potential premium increases. For reference, Treasurer Ruet provided the following data: our 2019-20 budget for worker's comp insurance is \$30,218 and our first pass at the 2020-21 NTE budget is \$34,125. 7710 has indicated their cost for next year would be 170% over and above our current budget for status quo coverage. Travelers has quoted a neighboring fire district an increase of 70 to 80% above their budgeted amount for status quo coverage. Note: status quo coverage implies neither estimate for coverage next year would address the issues in S1160 (Firefighters; Cancer; Presumption; Worker's Compensation), which led to Copper Point no longer providing worker's comp insurance. An alternative has been proposed to address the S1160 issues by having fire districts self-fund worker's comp insurance by creating an insurance pool, whose startup costs would be partially funded by the state. Per our Governmental Advocacy Chairman Torres, a senate budget resolution bill was passed on Thursday, but did not address the fire district insurance pool or S1160. The senate bill now resides in the house, with action expected on Monday.
- j)** Status update re: Board policies needing updating. Policies, Procedures and Bylaws Committee Chairman Massion, along with committee member Chief Rodriguez, addressed draft Policy 0017, Family Medical Leave Act, which had been previously distributed to the board. The draft policy was acknowledged to be in near final form and will be on next month's agenda for board approval. Chairman Massion took an action to compile a list of all policies as published on the web site, including their date of last update. From that list he will generate a prioritized update list, with the oldest policies to be updated first.
- k)** Status update re: Auxiliary Recognition effort. Member Massion reported we are still on schedule to have the auxiliary recognition effort at our 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities.
- l)** Status update re: Governmental Advocacy Committee. Governmental Advocacy Committee Chairman Torres stated his comments are supplemental to the report published weekly by John Flynn, AFDA Executive Director. He is still feeling his way for how to get FLFD's issues front and center with AFDA, especially with respect to the proposed legislation to increase the Mill rate. This is a key issue for small districts such as Forest Lakes. Current thinking at the legislature is to have the rate go from \$3.25 to \$3.75 in equal increments over two years. This is not the best situation for Forest Lakes. Chief Rodriguez offered to get with Bryan Savage, AFDA Vice-President, to assist Chairman Torres. This has been a weird session, with CDC restrictions for the Corona virus, culminating in a planned recess of the legislative activity next week, including approval of a skinny budget to basically fund existing programs until the summer. This means there will be no effort on the firefighter cancer bill. Chief Rodriguez noted he had received word that Chief Gary Morris expects to reconvene discussions related to the cancer bill in May. Chairman Torres took an action to contact Chief Morris. He reported he is still working to schedule visits to an upcoming board meeting from Legislator Blackman and Congressman O'Halleran.
- m)** Status update re: Master Planning Committee Activities. A pre-planning meeting will be held to make sure we understand the needs of the Auxiliary, including the new storage shed and electrification of the existing sheds. A site walkaround will be conducted in conjunction with the April board meeting (weather permitting) to help prepare the master plan, which is due for completion June 30<sup>th</sup>. The budget for next year has \$25K allocated for completion of the master plan activities. We will need to prioritize work efforts to get the best bang for the buck. There is no money allocated in the following fiscal year due to the front loader balloon payment.



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- 9 Fire Chief's Report. Chief thanked Lou St.Germain for having completed his 7<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with the district. He thanked the Auxiliary for their donation of tables and chairs which will allow us to be self-sufficient for social activities at the station. He acknowledged Megan's efforts to pursue financial assistance and to streamline our ambulance billing process. He thanked Member Torres for his efforts to get us a donation of 1500 N95 face masks to help us get through the COVID-19 crisis. Chief reported he has been using a just in time method for ordering medical supplies, so the new face masks will be a big help. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Chief related he has closed the station to the public in order to create a safe zone for our emergency responders. In addition, Megan will be working from home on selected days. Chief has instituted CDC issued guidelines to our ODS and POC personnel when responding to calls for assistance from the public. He has instituted the use of our Thermal Imaging Camera to assess body core temperatures of prospective patients. Our first responders are very vulnerable, and we are doing everything we can to protect them from infection. Patients must be removed from their environment before they can be treated. Patients can be refused care if they refuse to wear a fire department supplied face mask. The fire station is being cleaned and sanitized twice daily. Fortunately, our call volume is down at the present time. There have been no reported COVID-19 incidents in Forest Lakes, Payson or Heber-Overgaard.
- 10 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no comments from the public.
- 11 Fire Board Comments. There were no comments from the board.
- 12 Adjournment. There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 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).