



**FOREST LAKES FIRE BOARD
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
MAY 21, 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 10:00 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 Dennis Massion were in attendance at the fire station. Member Israel Torres attended telephonically. Also in attendance were Chief Dave Rodriguez, Admin Asst Julie Mattila and Communications Specialist/Public Information Officer John Nelson. Attending from the public were Judy Nelson, Tom O'Brien, Rita O'Brien, Dick Zimmerman, and Joe Ruet.
- 4 Chairman's Welcome and Activity Report. Chairman Cummiskey welcomed all to the meeting, noting this is the largest participation from the public in recent months. He thanked FLDWID for coordinating a meeting last Thursday with County officials (including representatives from the offices of the Treasurer, Assessor, and Board of Supervisors) and various Forest Lakes entities (including Water District, Fire District, Auxiliary, FLOA, School District and Library). Following the meeting he gave our county visitors a guided tour of Forest Lakes, which was much appreciated.
- 5 Call to the Public/Audience Comments. There were no comments.
- 6 Review and Approve the Minutes for the April 16, 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 April 2022. Treasurer Batschelet reviewed the General Fund financial report for the previous month and provided a brief summary report. We are 83.3% through the year. In relation to our published Not-To-Exceed (NTE) budget, YTD revenue is at 80.0% while YTD expenses are at 77.5%. The end of the month cash balance was \$406,607.46. The projected year end cash balance is \$328,743.46, which is favorable when compared with the beginning of the year cash balance of \$333,926.01 since we completed the LPA payment on the FEL and paid for a new water tender. We expect to receive additional tax revenues from the county. We are in good shape 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 re: Public review of 2022-23 budget and following year forecast. Treasurer Batschelet led those assembled through the budget presentation for the next fiscal year 2022-2023 and the projection for 2023-2024 (see attached.)



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_8a 2022-05-21
Budget Presentation 2

Key discussion points were as follows:

- Expenses are driven by staffing for ODS to maintain our 24x7x365 PM plus FF/EMT coverage.
- The Mil rate shown increases from the current level of \$3.25 to \$3.375 in 22-23 and \$3.50 in 23-24 and remains fixed thereafter. This amounts to an increase of about \$60 per property owner per year.
- Worker's Comp coverage expense has increased by 100%.
- Chief Rodriguez's salary has been increased for the first time in 15 years.
- We have adjusted ODS wage rates to be competitive with neighboring districts (FF/EMT hourly rate goes from \$15.00 to \$17.50, while PM hourly rates go from \$18.50 to \$20.00).
- Inflation rates have increased from 2.5% to 3.5% across the board.
- We have included appropriate grant income and expenses.
Note: In response to a question from John Nelson re: whether inclusion of FEMA grant opportunities have been addressed, Chief Rodriguez replied they were not. Chairman Cummiskey stated should we win a FEMA grant we would make adjustments within the budget to accommodate any expenditures and costs to the district.
- We have included appropriate levels of capital expenditures.
- FDAT revenue has been adjusted downward per guidance for the County Treasurer (from 20% of tax revenue to 18%).

Chairman Cummiskey noted board action is required to assure the proposed budget be posted to the web site for 30 days to allow residents to respond with comments prior to the June board meeting, where final board approval of the budget will be an agenda item.

Treasurer Batschelet made a motion to approve posting the budget as presented. Member Massion seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Julie took an action to post the budget per current practice.

- b) Status update re: Repairs to the Annex and timeline for lease to Sheriff's Office. Chief Rodriguez reported refurbishment is nearing completion, with a projected occupancy date of June 1st. At that point, the fire district will receive a nominal monthly lease payment from the County Sheriff of \$400.
- c) Status update re: Water Tender Replacement. Chief Rodriguez reported the Entry into Service of the new water tender is 2 to 3 weeks out. It was noted the Auxiliary board has approved a fund-raising campaign for the summer to help fund the cost of the bumper mounted Water Turret Nozzle for the new tender. The new tender will be on display at the upcoming Open House.
- d) Status update re: Grant activities. Grant Administrator Nelson reported the current Hazardous Fuels Grant is going well, with about 50% of the proposed lots having been treated. The pacing item continues to be availability of contactors. John is looking to add another 30 properties to the grant when the current grant is completed. He reported budget amounts to support grant activities in the proposed budget look good. Chief noted the PPE costs have risen sharply (per FF cost from \$2500 to \$3500).
- e) Status update re: Governmental Advocacy Committee. Governmental Advocacy Chairman Torres reported the legislature continues to focus their efforts on passing the new budget. Work



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continues on SCR 1049, Fire District Safety Act, which needs to pass the rules committee to move forward. AFDA's John Flynn says it is a tossup at this point whether the issue will appear on the November ballot. In response to a question from Chairman Cumiskey re: an action item from last month related to AFDA's involvement in the large increase in Worker's Comp insurance rates, Chairman Torres confirmed that AFDA is working the process. There is an open dialogue with the parties involved. Securis has had to absorb the costs of two COVID related deaths as well as the presumptive effects of the recently passed firefighter cancer legislation. There may be some relief with the passage of the Fire District Safety Act. Chairman Cumiskey then asked about the action to contact our District 4 County Supervisor, Judy Begay, to determine if we are being represented in the distribution of federal monies related to COVID deaths. Chairman Torres reported he has yet to make contact with Supervisor Begay in his regard.

- f) Status update re: Master Planning Committee Activities. Master Plan Committee Chairman Hennessey reported that Master Plan tasks and expenditures would be aligned with those of the 5 Year STRAP, with the most immediate item to be addressed being the winter cover for the FEL. The last item to be addressed will be housing for the new chief, in year 5 of the plan, coinciding with Chief's announced retirement. Between these two end points, work will continue as weather permits on the overall site cleanup and beautification efforts, including placement of railroad ties along the south boundary to prevent water incursion onto the neighboring property. Regarding the FEL cover, Chief has decided the winter cover will be placed in the rear of the fire station in the same location as the previously planned APS Microgrid Project (which has since been returned to its original site on Forest Service property) and will include provision for the protecting the diesel fuel farm. Ideally it will be sized to hold the loader as well as its accessory equipment. A building permit will be required. Treasurer Batschelet stated in his experience we should plan on a two-year time frame just for the completion of the FEL winter cover. As plans are developed, we will coordinate with the county Planning and Zoning Commission as required. Best practices as well as our procurement policies require that we go out for competitive bids. The new chief residence, which will be located in the southwest portion of the property, will require its own septic system.
- g) Status update re: Heart Monitor Purchase. Chief reported supply chain issues continue to delay the delivery of the new heart monitor.
- h) Discussion and possible action re: Preparation for Board Member elections in November and Resolution 2022-1 Call for Election. Clerk Hennessey reported he notified the County Elections Department last month that we will have three board positions expiring November 30th and that we will be calling for an election November 8th. We are responsible for complying with all legal requirements for posting the notice of election, one of which is for the board to approve a Resolution Calling for the Election. Resolution 2022-1 was circulated to all board members prior to the meeting for their review. Following a review of the document (attached) Clerk Hennessey made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-1 as presented. Member Massion seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.



_8h1 Formal Board
Resolution 2022-1 Cal

Clerk Hennessey then reviewed an announcement of the upcoming elections to be posted by FLOA and our Communications Director, John Nelson, to advise residents of the openings. (Attached)



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_8h2 20220505 FLOA
Happening Search for

For the record, members with terms expiring are Tom Cummiskey, Dennis Massion and Pete Batschelet. Dennis and Pete have announced their intention to run again for office. If there are only three applicants for the three board seats, the County Board of Supervisors will declare the election in the August/September timeframe and the issue will not appear on the November ballot.

9 Fire Chief's Report.

Chief reported the transfer of the GWTS from FLOA to FLFD has been signed and sent to the Forest Service. Our ambulance billing service transitions to the new provider June 1st. As noted by Chairman Cummiskey, we had a very successful meet and greet with our county officials last Thursday. Operation of the H-O green waste site has been compromised due to a fire on site and is closed. Chief offered the use of our GWTS until such time they can make their site safe for operations. The upcoming fire season is going to be a bad one (see attachment.)



Fuels_Fire_Behavior_A
dvisory_SW_AZ-NM_21

The forest to the south side of Forest Lakes is scheduled for thinning by the Forest Service in two years. The most difficult part will be getting contractors to accept the trees to be removed. He noted that next month is the 20-year anniversary of the Rodeo-Chediski fire. He reported he is beginning to have difficulty attracting ODS due to the higher cost of fuel (both regular and diesel), for which the ODS bears the full burden. Julie took an action to call a Finance Committee meeting as soon as schedules permit for the committee to provide recommended actions to the board as to how best to address the issue.

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

11 Fire Board Comments.

In response to a follow-up question from Member Massion related to fire danger, Chief replied there will be fires. The recent Tunnel Fire in Flagstaff is good example of how dry conditions and high winds can quickly cause fires to get out of control. This is exacerbated by Forest Service staffing issues and budget problems. The Forest Service is still experiencing fallout from COVID vaccination requirements. Firefighters have left and are not coming back.

Chairman Cummiskey reminded us that we agreed last month to adjust the expiration of Chief's employment contract to align with our fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). He will be modifying Chief's current contract language to begin July 1st with minimal changes to the text of the agreement except for necessary changes, including salary adjustments. With the signing of the new contract, we will be giving Chief an accelerated performance review (June effectivity versus October). Board members took an action to update their input to the October 2021 review to June 2022 so Tom can prepare Dave's updated review. Board member comments are requested to Tom by June 1st.

12 Adjournment. There being no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 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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Approved by the Forest Lakes Fire Board on June 18th, 2022

John Hennessey

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Hennessey".