

**PINEWOOD FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
April 19, 2022**

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance:**

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. with roll call and Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call:**

**Members Present:**

|                          |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chairman, Richard Drinen | Clerk, Barbara Timberman | Member, Patricia Treharne |
| Member, Robert Rose      | Member, Lois Barnes      |                           |

A quorum was established.

**Staff Present:**

|                       |              |                |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Fire Chief, Josh Tope | Caleb Garcia | Dominic Garcia |
| McKenzie White        | Kris Jordan  | Joe McDonald   |

**Absent:** Office Manager Sara Byerrum

**Public Present:**

Sue Drinen    Steve Bowyer    Bob Timberman    Bryan Lundberg

**3. Administrative Remarks:**

Chairman Drinen advised member Patricia Treharne will be leaving the board and we need to elect a new member. He stated he has an individual in mind along with Clerk Timberman. He continued with the best way to go about choosing a new member within our community is to allow people to recommend individuals and then the board decides. Chairman Drinen advised we should leave it open to recommendations and at the next meeting to appoint that person. He stated let him know of all recommendations and individuals willing to fill the position. Then at the next board meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup> or hold a special meeting and interview the individuals that are interested. Chairman Drinen continued that we then could have a written ballot, executive session, then a public session where everyone voted.

Chief Tope mentioned with other agenda items such as appointing a bond attorney we may want to have a special meeting to get to know our council.

The board agreed to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 pm.

**4. Approval of Minutes: March 22, 2022:**

Approved as presented.

**5. Correspondence:**

Chief Tope advised there is no correspondence.

**6. Financial Reports:**

Chief Tope said that we are 75% through the fiscal year and the expense categories are as follows: 1000 HR Salaries and Overtime is at 63.91% and HR Benefits at 72.88%, 2000 Physical Resources is at

22.61%, 3000 Operational Expenses is at 67.08% and Capital Expenditures is at 24.79% leaving the total expenditures for the fiscal year at 52.09%.

### **7. Office Managers Report:**

Chief Tope covered the Office Managers report as Office Manager Byerrum had to leave due to the Tunnel Fire.

Chief Tope stated for the month of March we received \$8,900 in ambulance revenue with a fiscal year to date of \$124,000. Outstanding invoices of March are approximately \$53,000 with resident subsidy at about \$1,200. He stated for the month of March we received approximately \$1,400 in fire recovery revenue. Fiscal Year to date we are at \$2,600 with outstanding invoices at about \$9,000.

Chief reviewed the run log with the board.

### **8. Chiefs Report:**

#### **A. Response Exception Reports:**

Chief Tope stated that the district has been steady over the month. He continued the firefighters have been responding to domestic violence and staging type calls. He mentioned out of the ordinary the crew responded to a semi vs. work van a couple weeks back. Chief Tope also stated today the crews responded to a semi jack knifed blocking the highway and the units located nothing. Then we had a semi-truck fire with specific information and located nothing. Chief Tope stated calls have happened in the past like these where they believe they are trying to draw attention somewhere else to run something on the highway.

#### **B. Update on Legislative Issues:**

Chief Tope started with the SCR1049, Fire District Assistance Tax Referral trying to get pushed through the house. He then mentioned some history on it and stated that it went to a public safety committee and was submitted by representative Payne. It was pulled out of that committee and then popped back up in a lower committee. Chief Tope advised the board it passed that committee 8-1 and are now waiting for it to be heard by budget and then it goes to the floor. He stated there is no time frame on that and we are still collecting signatures.

#### **C. Operational Report:**

Chief Tope told the board members that the budget is being written and will bring a draft budget to the next board meeting. He stated that we have the Securis increase, we are currently carrying one extra employee, and the redemption mental health which are all extra costs. He continued with, we will have a balanced budget, but those extra costs will be covered by the recreational marijuana revenue the district receives and then by the 4000 capital expenditures. Chief Tope advised the board the good thing is we have not spent our override.

Then, the Chief advised the board he is pulling together a budget committee this year with the staff. This will allow the firefighters to learn the ins and outs of the budget process.

Secondly, Chief Tope advised he submitted a request to the 100 club after hearing they want to invest money into helping firefighter mental health in Northern Arizona. He stated he submitted a grant yesterday that is regionally. It allows approximately 200 people to attend 6 classes. Chief Tope advised its about \$8,000 and will find out more about it at the end of the week.

Thirdly, Chief Tope told the board the Firehouse subs grant has been submitted. He should be hearing back by the first Friday of next month. He reminded the board that this grant was for extraction equipment.

Fourthly, Chief Tope told the board they are trying to reestablish a firewise board and are holding a meeting this Wednesday. Chairman Drinen asked if we were still looking for members. Chief Tope responded with, we have plenty of members and has 8 responses total. Currently it is a 7-person board.

Fifthly, Chief Tope advised the board we applied for our DHS ambulance billing rate. We applied for a 11.65% billing rate. He stated we asked for a little bit more because the hospital cut us off for resupplying supplies.

Chief Tope told the board for Securis we are looking at a 108% on our premiums. They are advising everyone to budget for that amount. He stated right now they have lobbyist working down in Phoenix trying to get a \$26 million dollar appropriation passed for the Fire Districts. He continued with they passed the bill for \$20 million however did not give the Fire Districts any. So, we are asking for cancer part of it and the rest because of COVID. Chief Tope advised the board if this gets passed, we will not see those increases.

Lastly, Chief Tope informed the board of the Tunnel Fire occurring in Flagstaff off Schultz pass. He stated he jumped US89 within the last hour into the Fernwood area. He mentioned we have two members in that area with one evacuated and the other on set. There are half a dozen firefighters already there or headed out there.

Clerk Timberman asked if BearJaw will be delayed in the Pine Needle Pickup due to the Tunnel Fire. Chief Tope answered with he spoke with Robert Ortiz who stated they will be here on the 25<sup>th</sup> in order to complete the cleanup.

## **9. DISCUSSION AND VOTE: Station Bond**

### **A. Bond Attorney**

Chief Tope advised he emailed the board members two engagement letters for bond attorneys for their viewing before the meeting and have copies in the board packets. He stated these two attorneys were recommended to him by multiple people. He reached out to Sarah Benatar with the County Treasurers Office and an Ex-Fire Chief of Summit. Chief Tope mentioned the difference between the two is the cost. Chief Tope asked the board for their opinion. He advised there does not need to be a vote nor do either attorney require one however, he would like to hear the boards opinions.

Chief Tope reminded the board the fees if the bond is passed are reimbursable.

Chairman Drinen asked for Member Roses opinion. Member Rose advised after looking at each engagement he prefers Gust & Rosenfeld. Member Barnes mentioned she also likes Gust and Rosenfeld because they listed their experiences.

### **B. Financial Advisor – Bryan Lundberg with Stifel**

Bryan Lundberg was present and reviewed with the board the difference between a financial advisor and a consultant. He referred to the preliminary engagement letter that he provided to the board as an example of using a consultant without the cost of using a financial advisor and the financial laws around that decision.

The board felt comfortable with using Stifel as a financial consultant and directed the Chief to sign a preliminary engagement letter.

## **10. DISCUSSION: Medical Billing Company Change**

Chief Tope wanted to advise the board that our current medical billing company is AERO medical billing and we are just not receiving the same service we used to when first signing with them. We have decided to go with FireRecovery who we already use for out of district billing. They are cheaper however will not take on outstanding debits from AERO. So, the department will stick with AERO until July 1<sup>st</sup> and start sending new calls over to FireRecovery as soon as we can. Chief Tope advised we will be making the transfer to the new company here quickly.

Chief went over the station design draft Perlman presented with the board. He reminded the board this is just a concept design at this time.

## **11. Call to The Public:**

Caleb Garcia stated as the Union President and behalf of the members they wanted to thank Patricia Treharne for all her years and always stepping up on the firefighter's behalf.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 P.M.  
Next Meeting: April 19, 2022 at 3 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Timberman  
(Clerk of the Board, Barbara Timberman)