



shutterstock - 95087723

# Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District

16126 Pierce Ferry Road  
P.O. Box 611

Phone (928) 767-3300

Dolan Springs, Arizona 86441

FAX (928) 767-3301



Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District  
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the  
Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire Department Governing Board  
January 21, 2021  
10:00 a.m.

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LAKE MOHAVE RANCHOS FIRE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

*The Governing Board of the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District met in Regular Session on 1-21-2021 at 10:05 a.m. The Meeting was held at **Dolan Springs Community Council located at 15195 N. Pierce Ferry Road, Dolan Springs, AZ.** The Board may vote to go into Executive Session on any Agenda item, pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice and A.R.S. Section 38-431.03(A)(4) for legal direction with the District's Attorney on matters as set forth in the Agenda item. The following topics and any variables thereto, will be subject to Board consideration, discussion, approval, or other action. All items are set for possible action.*

### 1. Call to Order

Director De Lara called the Meeting into order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

### 2. Roll Call of Board Members

Roll call made:

Director De Lara present,  
Director Karash present,  
Director Aitken present, and  
Director Braaten present.

#### Staff Present:

Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, and  
LMRFD Office Assistant, Tina Kurowski

Director De Lara conducted the meeting.

#### Present on the Phone:

LMRFD Accountant, Gabe Buldra with James Vincent Group

3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Pledge of Allegiance was recited and acknowledged.

Director De Lara motioned to go into Executive Session. Director Aitken seconded. No discussion. Director Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, Director, De Lara, aye, and Director Karash, aye.

Director Karash motioned to call Attorney Cornelius. Director Aitken seconded. No discussion. Director Aitken, aye, Director De Lara, aye, Director Karash, aye and Director Braaten, aye. Motion passed unanimously. Executive Session held.

Director De Lara motioned to go into Regular Session at 10:28 a.m. Director Karash seconded. Director Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, Director Karash, aye, and Director De Lara, aye, unanimously voting in favor of.

Adjourn to Executive Session at 10:28 a.m.

4. **Executive Business:**

**Reconvened at 10:28 a.m.**

Director De Lara motioned to reconvene Regular Session at 10:28 a.m. Director De Lara discussed moving the financial report up on the agenda to the next order of business with no objections. Director Karash, aye, Director Aitken, aye, Director De Lara, aye and Director Braaten, aye. Motion carried, unanimously.

5. **Financial Report:**

LMRFD Accountant, Gabe Buldra with James Vincent & Group was called on speaker over the microphone/sound system within the facility for all to hear the discussion. In his report, Gabe covered issues related historical tax collection and revenues from the district, stating the district needs to make collections stat to which it was agreed by Director, De Lara to look into the current collection agency and how well it is working for the district.

Upon questioning about the district's financial ability for vehicle and ambulance repairs, Gabe Buldra with James Vincent and Group reviewed the underusage of the budget in that category, stating the district has \$15,000 remaining under the budget and can expect over the next six (6) months another \$18,000.

The next category of the budget discussed was the amount budgeted for fuel for the fire district. Gabe stated the present budget has \$62,000/year budgeted for fuel, but only \$31,500 was used and is overinflated by around \$25,000 with the highest usage in the past 5 years is \$32,000, prior to that \$15,000.

This concluded the discussion with the Fire District's accountant with no further questions from the Governing Board. Audience attendee and Dolan Springs resident, Charlotte Kiffer asked the accountant, Gabe, about overtime payed out within the district, as discussed during the last meeting under the financial report, as well as whether or not the figures for this month were available.

A breakdown of administrative vs. POC for the past 6 months was broken down by Gabe Buldra (\$6,105 for overtime (OT) under full-time operations, \$21,441 for firefighters (scheduled OT included), and \$432 in OT for part-time (POC) staff.

It was then asked of Gabe whether or not the Fire District has the ability to hire one (1) full-time suppression staff member or paramedic. Per Gabe, he presently doesn't have set value numbers, but will early next month.

Chair De Lara asked Gabe if the district had the ability to give small raises to full-time staff in the suppression or paramedic department, as she had found a letter by the previous office administrator promising everyone a raise by November of 2020, noting this item was never discussed in any of the previous meetings. She further questioned if everyone receives a raise, does paid-on-call (POC) increase the benefits or is it just the rate?

Per Gabe, the only benefit POC would associate match on is social security and Medicare, not on retirement benefits. We have three (3) full-time employees in suppression, not considering the fire chief or office assistant. The increase would also be benefits. For full-time employees, it'd be around 35%. Example: \$1 raise in pay would cost an additional \$0.35 within the budget for payroll.

This concluded the review of the financials with the district's accountant, Gabe Buldra, with no further questions from the Governing Board or the audience.

Director Karash motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Director Aitken. Vote: Director De Lara, aye, Director Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, and Director Braaten, aye, unanimously voting in favor of.

## **6. Chief's Report**

LMRFD Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, discussed the number of runs and calls the district had made in the previous month, December, 2020. He also discussed upcoming meetings, conferences and trainings on January 8<sup>th</sup> (ACLS, 9<sup>th</sup> PALS in the district, including his own. Live fire training at Station 41 on January , advising there will be smoke noticed in the area.

Chief Bonnee discussed concerns with District property within the multiple fire stations and District vehicles, noting issues with lack of overall care and maintenance and need for repair as noted in the Chief's Report. He further addressed issues he found when taking this position in late December of 2020. Some of those items are:

### **District properties:**

- Prior administration had an incident with one of the garage doors at station 41 being hit and damaged, never being quoted for repair or being repaired,
- Station 43 has door opener issues – being looked into to be fixed.

- Station 42 paying utilities, apparatus in bay, discussed using as volunteer station where centrally located between Meadview and Hwy 93. He praised the volunteers for their availability at any time, even all through the night, and expressed the Department's appreciation of their efforts.

#### District Vehicles:

- Red Chief's 401 truck turned over 12/29. Asked previous chief when last maintenance was performed. Answer have not done nothing since you left before. There was 51,000 miles put on the truck since he worked her before. The transmission fluid was completely empty, Prior hit a curb, causing a hole in transmission pan. Truck holds 6 quarts of oil was only 1.4 quarts in the truck when brought in for maintenance and dipstick for oil was caked with black, tarry, viscous oil. 51,000 miles of NOT being maintained.
- Tender 418 at Station 41 needs a new ladder hanger bracket, when the prior Chief hit Golden Valley's engine on fire. It cost t he District \$2,500 to pay for their engine. The fire bracket has been broken for months. It has been known and brought to the attention of the previous administration and nothing has been done with it. So, the ladder that goes on there is out of service until it is properly mounted for safety concerns.
- 415 ambulance has a major cooling issue, requiring 1 gallon of antifreeze daily, costing the department a lot of money by not having it fixed. Right rear air shock is leaking oil and has been a long time. No maintenance has been done on that. Windshield on it has cracks. Prior administration did put two new front tires were put on the front, but the alignment is off, causing issues with those tires – uneven wear and are worn down. Rear tires are worn down by the wear guards.
- Brush 426 (one of two brush trucks). Has a rear main seal that is leaking for months and hasn't been taken care of in months. The previous chief has known about this and hasn't taken care of it.
- Brush 416 siren horn is out-is broke off with no maintenance or repair to this vehicle as well.
- These were all things brought up to the prior administration, but not addressed. Lack of interest and lack of care -These are all things Chief Bonnee is looking into the cost of repair on now.
- Fuel card has been shut off twice due to non payment of the prior Administration
- The issues relating to the lack of priority on issues related to insurance policies not being addressed, leaving Chief Bonnee in a position to clear the matter up and make sure the policies remained in effect.
- Turnover from previous chief has left the present Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, with open positions. Some staff has been hired, such as the office assistant, who is also a Registered Nurse, as well as a notary public. Suppression aspect of staff has had not had any quality review performed on the calls that had been done.
- A stack of unpaid bills given to accountant, as checks that were sent out were returned since the previous administration has not given out the information on the banks, changing the passwords. It's been a struggle coming in, but we're slowly getting everything on track.

- Active911 had taken us off the account. Had to send notarized letter to have it changed to current staff. Many checks were being returned because the prior administration wouldn't hand off passwords and other needed information for the District's bank account, etc.
- Payroll was late the week of December 7<sup>th</sup>, due to previous administration not getting the information over to payroll.
- Nonpriority issues to the previous administration have affected not only the fire department(s), but also for the community. Vehicle maintenance is a high priority because without the vehicles, the department wouldn't function. It was more a priority for the previous administration to pay overtime than take care of the vehicle.
- The Insurance policy had an issue in early December. It wasn't addressed and ultimately cancelled (for properties, vehicles, everything), requiring Chief Bonnee having to plead with the insurer to get the insurance policy reinstated.
- Two (2) district cell phones from the previous administration with Verizon had an unpaid balance for over \$7,000 and has not been paid since the account was opened. Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, had called Verizon to see what plan we were on, what upgrades, etc. Because we're a government agency, wrote it off for us.

#### **GRANTS:**

Fire Chief Bonnee discussed within his report were projects in progress, such as grants received (2019 FEMA Grant from his previous tenure, a \$196,000 grant to replace our air vacs. Twenty-six (26) new ones are coming. They're the MSAG1s that all the other departments we have mutual aid agreement with. Our existing are not NFPA compliant, but these new ones *are* NFPA compliant. Once the new equipment arrives, everyone will be fit tested for them.

We also got approved for adapters at the field station to fill them. FEMA approved us for rescue packs in the event that someone is trapped and needs oxygen by use of these rescue packs. The approved rescue packs have been ordered.

Director De Lara mentioned the grant is \$186,666.67. The District is paying a match of less than \$9,333.33 (less than \$10000) for almost \$200,000 of OSHA life-saving and imperative equipment we do not have at present. Our equip are non-NFPA compliant and non-OSHA approved. These new air vacs will be compliant for both.

The 2020 State Homeland Security Grant (applied during the Chief's previous tenure) for new radios, which will include: 8 hand-held and 3 base units was approved and awarded for \$16,022.97. Out of that, the District pays \$1,176.97 out of \$16,022.97. Kenwood radios that have 4 on grant last year, now we're getting 8 of them. New Bluetooth capable, GPS, etc. The public was welcomed to see the whole list of their capabilities.

A communication radio was turned over, excessive damage was noted. Replacement cost for this type of radio is approximately \$1,600.00.

The 2020 AFG grant opened last Monday and is being applied for now for a new firetruck. We submitted our narrative to the grant writer. The chief gave a description and some specs given along with pictures of the desired firetruck. This truck, if awarded for it, is \$449,680. The District would pay \$16,000-\$19,000 for a nearly \$500,000 truck. A piggyback grant is being applied for a turnout extractor (a heavy-duty washing machine) that will allow regular cleaning/drying of firemen gear, cleansing them of cancerous materials. The grant would be included in the grant with the truck. The Extractor is an upcoming Federal Mandate.

In closing of his report, Fire Chief Bonnee informed the audience that this new administration was left with many missing files and that everything is being worked on by this administration to bring everything up-to-date and organized.

The District's bill pay was set up through the accountant so the district's bills can be paid on time. This concluded the Chief's Report. A spreadsheet was created and is being done to track maintenance that is being done.

De Lara on special meeting for the jobs of maintenance and department needs.

Questions from the audience:

Phil Lantham, a resident of Dolan Springs, was regarding whether or not the diesel fuel tank at the school in Dolan Springs was being used, as he had concerns about it being used, citing fuel contamination, to which the present Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, responded, "We're presently getting fuel from the local Chevron. We stopped that. There was an issue with the billing and being overcharged. Dolan Springs resident, Phil Lantham, expressed his concern that the tank has not been cleaned. PL's concern is about the fuel getting contaminated, causing problems for the vehicles and if we should put in Biodiesel fuel treatment to prevent issues with fuel contamination. Chief Bonnee responded, "We'll look into it for the engines".

Other audience questions were:

Walt Kiffer of Dolan Springs, a resident of Dolan Springs, Az, asked about whether or not there would be training for electric or hybrid vehicles to start making more of a vehicle force? Fire Chief Bonnee responded, "We don't have access to a hybrid." That is something he talked to about with one of the chiefs and is something we will be doing training at some point on those issues". Walt Kiffer also had asked about Ambulance 415's warranty, stating the Board of Directors had previously approved a 10 year warranty, and had asked if the prior Chief did get 10 year warranty on it. Fire Chief Bonnee informed him, "the vehicle had only a 3-year warranty". Lastly, Walt Kiffer asked if Brush truck 416 has a pipe held together by a coat hanger. Fire Chief Bonnee informed him, "Nothing was maintained. It's a work in progress".

## **7. Review of Previous Minutes**

Director De Lara motioned to review and accept the minutes from the previous board meeting. Director Braaten seconded the motion. Director Braaten motioned to correct the spelling of purview on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the minutes from the previous board meeting. Motion voted by Director De Lara, aye, Director Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, and Director Karash, aye, unanimously approved in favor of, noting the needed correction.

Director De Lara motioned the moving of the Financial Report up to the next call of order on the agenda, seconded by which was unanimously approved by Board members Director Karash, Director Aitken, and Director De Lara, as well as the audience with no objection.

## 8. Regular Business

- a. Open Board Seat:** Director, De Lara advised the open board seat opening notice will have the first of two postings in the newspaper on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, and the second posting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021. Any applicants will be interviewed at the February LMRFD Board meeting. Encouragement for applications to be submitted, noting January 25, 2021 to be the deadline. Audience members requested a later deadline for the open board seat application.

Director De Lara motioned to change the deadline to February 5, 2021. Director ???? seconded. Director Aitken, aye, Director Braaten, aye, Director Karash, aye. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Action regarding volunteers:** Discussion held among board members about how the fire stations are in need of painting and drywall repairs from a previous water/roof leak, the need for a door at Station 41 separating the public waiting area on the administrative side of the building from the firefighters quarters, putting a door between the public waiting room the administrative offices at Station 41 (a waist level gate is presently there), and getting chairs for the public waiting room/lobby at Station 41. Fire Chief Bonnee claimed he had contacted the probation department and prison looking for volunteers to do this type of work, to which they are willing to send inmates with an officer to assist around the station.

Audience member, volunteer fire fighter John Lilly, of Dolan Springs, stood at podium explaining how he himself is willing to assist and hangs doors and windows for a living as a licensed contractor.

- c. Officer Positions and Responsiveness and/or lack of response.** Director, De Lara discussed changes to the Board with newly voted in members, as well as a lack of response in communications from existing Board member, Director Karash as Clerk, asking him if he wanted to remain on the Board due to his lack of response(s) on matters. Director Karash answered, "Yes", he wishes to remain on the Board of the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District.

Additional conversation was made between Director De Lara and Fire Chief Bonnee regarding the process of identification verification of those who were given access, as well as making sure prior employees and/or Board members no longer have access, to which the Fire Chief claimed was already taken care of.

- d. Technical Committee Actions:** Technical Committee's Chair, Director Braaten advising the LMRFD Board that, during the Technical Committee's meeting held on January 11, 2021, a Secretary of that Committee was named, with the nomination of Ellen Reh-Bower, to which she accepted the position.

Charlotte Kiffer, a Technical Committee Board member, asked the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District Board where the minutes and by-laws were for the Technical Committee.

Director De Lara answered, "The District has given five (5) copies of the minutes to the Technical Committee and the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District Board does have by-laws from 2019 and some old copies, but anything prior to that was not left for the District with no trace of them (previous minutes, by-laws, etc.) by the previous administration, but they're doing everything possible to recover those found electronically." Director De Lara added, "attempts to contact the previous administration have been made multiple times to obtain all property of the District, to no avail".

Next Technical Committee meeting will be held in Meadview on February 8, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. at the Meadview Civic Association in the large room.

Director De Lara, motioned to allow the Technical Committee of the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District electronic access to Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District policies and other documents necessary to function adequately. Motion seconded by Director, Director Aitken. A vote was made by Director Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, Director Karash, aye, and Director De Lara, unanimously in favor of this motion.

Ellen Reh-Bower, Secretary of the LMRFD Task Force Committee and a resident of Dolan Springs, AZ, suggested a Fair-Funding Task Force, requesting permission to receive financial information from the Fire Chief.

Director De Lara responded, making reference to the Chief's Report provided with the present agenda. Ellen Reh-Bower clarified the information the Task Force Committee is interested in is where the runs go and where taxes are being paid.

Fire Chief Bonnee informed Ellen Reh-Bower that a copy of the Dispatch report will be provided and that data for medical calls, fire calls, etc. (without personal information of victims) would be included in that report. It was further advised to the Technical Committee to obtain whatever official information desired from the county first.

- e. Picard Hearing:** Discussion was made about the results of the hearing for Picard, whom the judge gave a light sentence of probation for the stealing of \$24,000 from the District due to the Covid pandemic, but that Picard has lost his paramedic license for life, which would injure his livelihood. No action needed on this item.

Director De Lara motioned to move Item "j" on the agenda to the next call of business. Director Aitken seconded. Director Bratten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, Director Karash, aye, Director De Lara, aye. Motion carried unanimously.

- f. Recognition of Volunteers & Retire:** Michael Pettway, newly retired firefighter with the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District was given recognition for the services he provided the LMRFD over the past 23 years with an honorary plaque and a gift card from funds donated by co workers and Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee. Volunteer firefighters Dennis Reed, John Lilly, Hayden Frye and Kody Cowan were given recognition certificates and gift cards.



**g. Collection Agency and computer services company** Director De Lara discussed the fact that over \$1,000,000 in collections are uncollected funds with \$300,000 being written off. If the District can collect 30% of those uncollected accounts, that itself would be good to keep the finances stable for the District for now.

RFCI, a national company was discussed, noting the District would not have to pay for their services, unless we actually can collect past due accounts and that the payment varies for the number of accounts due that are actually collected – 2-4 accounts due = 20% of that amount payable to RFGI, 5-25 accounts due collected by RFGI = 35% of that amount payable to RFGI.

Director, De Lara motioned to accept RFGI as LMRFD's collection agency to collect old debt. Motion seconded by Director Aitken, and voted on by Director Braaten, aye, Director Karash, aye, and Director, De Lara, aye, unanimously in favor of the motion.

**h. Obtaining at least 3 quotes for repairs to the LMRFD Vehicles (Chief)**

Fire Chief, Tim Bonnee, stated he will obtain the quotes needed to determine the cost of the repairs.

**i. Social Media discussion and LMRFD response.** Setting up the fire District's own social media page was discussed with intent of having administrators from the district maintaining the page vs a present social media page operated by others out of the local area.

**j. Cert Program:** Ignatio De Lara, a Dolan Springs citizen, stood before the podium with a program designed train local residents regarding emergency responses.

**CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- Director Braaten suggested uses of facility at Station 42 be discussed in the next meeting.
- Director Braaten discussed having ad space in the local newspapers. A motion to set up ad space, if available for \$50/year or less was agreed to be put on the agenda for next month's meeting.

**NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING DATE AND LOCATION.** (Subject to change, notice/announcement will be posted via District Website, if any changes occur.

- February 18, 2021 @ 11:00 a.m. - Meadview, Arizona in the large room.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Director Aitken Motioned to adjourn the Meeting, Director Braaten seconded. Directors, Braaten, aye, Director Aitken, aye, and Director Karash, aye. Motion carried unanimously.
- Director De Lara adjourned at approximately 2:08 p.m.

MINUTES prepared by: Tina Kurowski

Date: 1/25/21 – 2/4/21  
(This is a working draft, until Board approval).

MINUTES signed/posted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District endeavors to ensure accessibility of all its programs, facilities and services to all persons with disabilities. If any disabled person needs any type of accommodation, please notify the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District at: (928) 767-3300, prior to the scheduled meeting time.*

***LMRFD Official Posting Locations:***

***Administration/ Station #41, 16126 Pierce Ferry Road, Dolan Springs, Arizona***

***Station #43, 30250 Stillwater, Meadview, Arizona***

***Dolan Springs Chamber of Commerce, 16154 Pierce Ferry Road, Dolan Springs, Arizona***

***LMRFD Website ([lmrfd.org](http://lmrfd.org))***