



# Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District



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## MINUTES OF SPECIAL SESSION OF THE LAKE MOHAVE RANCHOS FIRE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

*The Governing Board of the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District met in Special Session on **4/22/2021** at **10:00 a.m.** The Meeting was held at **16126 Pierce Ferry Rd, Dolan Springs, AZ 86441**. The Board may vote to go into Executive Session on any Agenda item, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3) for legal advice and A.R.S. §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- 10:15 AM**
- 2) **ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS.**

**Board: Directors Phyllis Aitkin, Doug Braaten, Theodora Koeppen, and Chair Susan De Lara- PRESENT**

**Director Mike Karash- ABSENT**

**Staff: Fire Chief Tim Bonnee and Office Assistant Jennifer Gardner- PRESENT**

- 3) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE.** *(To honor those who serve our Country and within Public Safety and to those we've lost).*
- 4) **EXECUTIVE BUSINESS**  
Board of Directors may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S.~38.431.03 (A) (3) .
- 5) **REGULAR SESSION**
  - a. **Discussion and possible action regarding: District engine purchase (Chief Bonnee & Board Chair)**

Fire Chief Tim Bonnee located an engine on public auction in Camp Verde, posted by Copper Canyon Fire and Medical. It was originally posted for \$20,000, but the price was reduced to \$10,000. It has been pump tested and service records are available. \$12,000 in repairs had been done on the engine in just the past year. It has a new engine, transmission, A/C, air compressor for brakes.

The engine has 14,000 hours on it, and only 20,000 miles on the new motor. For the price of \$10,000 it will benefit the District.

Chair De Lara said that the District is in a cash position at the moment. Also, Gabe Buldra had mentioned that if the purchase was going to be made, it should be done before the start of the new budget year.

**Motion: Purchase the Type 1 engine from Copper Canyon Fire and Medical- Director Aitken. Seconded: Director Koeppen**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE.**

**b. Discussion and possible action regarding: Past Employee Benefit Pay (Director Aitken)**

Director Aitken said that it was brought to the Board's attention in a previous meeting that there was a lack of action in May 2020 regarding Fire Chief Bonnee's benefits. The contract drawn up at that time needs to be honored. She said she would like a check drawn up today to cover the missing funds.

De Lara mentioned that the previous Board paid Attorney Wittington to draw up a contract to be used with any Fire Chief that was hired. There would be a guaranteed 5% pay increase upon contract renewal. It was later changed to 2.5%. De Lara then said that, when negotiating Fire Chief Tim Bonnee's contract for his previous employment, the District removed the clause with the automatic pay raise because of the problems encountered with a previous Fire Chief. They counterbalanced this decrease with benefits.

The Administrative Assistant from this time period was instructed to set up insurance and retirement for the Fire Chief on June 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. It was not done. Fire Chief Bonnee said he complained in October, in which the Board again instructed the Administrative Assistant to set up the benefit accounts. It was still not done.

Chair De Lara mentioned that the Administrative Assistant was not reprimanded, and a few months later Fire Chief Bonnee was dismissed.

The Fire Chief noted that \$8,619.91 was not paid by the District at the time of his previous employment. Director Braaten asked if this amount could be fed into a current retirement account, and Chair De Lara mentioned that it would be better to give the Fire Chief the amount directly.

**Motion: Issue \$8,619.91 to Fire Chief Tim Bonnee in replacement of the funds lost at the time of separation from LMRFD: Director Aitken. Seconded: Director Koeppen**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE.**

**c. Discussion and possible action regarding: Doug Braaten comments on social media (Board Chair)**

Chair De Lara expressed concerns that Director Braaten made some comments on social media that the Attorney General would find issue with. If the Attorney General sees any violations, they may fine Board Members and the District.

According to the AG, complaints from social media posts need to be ignored.

Chair De Lara brought up a couple of instances on social media that may be of concern, including a

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**Updated:**  
4/22/2021

complaint about an ambulance bill, a complaint about the Fire Chief, and a comment about a job posting in Golden Valley.

Chair De Lara stressed that this conversation was meant to help, and again stated the importance of not responding to the public on social media. It was noted that individuals on social media may file complaints with the Attorney General if they so wished.

Chair De Lara also mentioned the importance of not hitting Reply All to emails that were sent from the Fire Chief or Office Assistant to the Board, to avoid the appearance of conducting a meeting before an actual meeting takes place.

Director Koeppen gave an example from another moment in her life as an elected public official in a different state. She encountered an issue with the public and asked a federal judge if she could sue for defamation. The judge said she could not as she was a public figure. Director Koeppen said that staying silent in the face of public comments is a sacrifice that needed to be made.

Chair De Lara asked if Director Braaten understood the importance of not commenting on social media and that he would not do so again in the future. Director Braaten said he understood.

Director Braaten did express a bit of concern about the notice given for the special meeting held today. Chair De Lara responded that the timing of the notice was legal, and that the Fire Chief agreed to give as much notice to the Board members as he can.

#### **6) CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.**

Specified tabled items will move to following month's Regular Meeting, unless noted otherwise and/or pending additional information.

**10) CALL to the PUBLIC.** *(The Fire District Board is not permitted to discuss or take action on any item(s) that are not on the Agenda that are raised in the call to the public. However, individual Board Members may be permitted to respond to criticism directed to them. Otherwise, the Board may direct that staff review the matter or that the matter be placed on a future agenda. The Fire District Board cannot discuss or take legal action on any issue raised during the Call to the Public due to restriction of the Opening Meeting Law).*

**11) NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING DATE & LOCATION.** (Subject to change, notice/announcement will be posted via District Website, if any changes occur.) **5/20/2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Dolan Springs Community Council, 16022 N Pierce Ferry Rd, Dolan Springs, AZ 86441**

**Motion: End the Special Meeting: Director Braaten. Seconded: Director Aitken.**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE.**

MINUTES prepared by: **Office Assistant Jen Gardner**  
MINUTES signed/posted by: **Office Assistant Jen Gardner**

Date: 04/22/2021

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