



# Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District



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## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR 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 06/17/2021 at 10:00 a.m. The Meeting was held at the **Meadview Civic Association, 247 Meadview Blvd, Meadview, AZ, 86444**. 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. -10:00AM
- 2) ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS. -10:00AM

**Directors Phyllis Aitken, Douglas Braaten, Theodora Koeppen, and Chair Susan De Lara- PRESENT**  
**Director Mike Karash- PRESENT by phone**

- 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 -10:04 AM  
Board of Directors may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S.~38.431.03 (A) (3) .

**Motion to enter executive session: Director Braaten.**  
**Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

- a. Discussion: Former employee filing repeated erroneous complaints against LMRFD. (Chair De Lara)
- b. Discussion: Former employee that charged LMRFD residents for services that should have been provided for free. (Chair De Lara)
- c. Discussion: Former Board Member's disregard of LMRFD policy and state statutes. (Chair De Lara)
- d. Discussion: Fire Chief Bonnee performance review. (Chair De Lara)
- e. Discussion: Fire Chief Bonnee's potential as the permanent LMRFD Fire Chief. (Chair De Lara)

**Motion to close executive session: Director Aitken**  
**Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

**Motion to open regular session: Director Braaten**  
**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

## 5) MINUTES

05/20/21 Regular meeting review:

**Motion to approve 05/20/21 minutes: Director Aitken  
Seconded: Director Braaten**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE  
Director Karash- ABSTAINED**

06/04/21 Special meeting review:

**Motion to approve 06/04/21 minutes with correction to roll call: Director Koeppen  
Seconded: Director Aitken**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE  
Director Karash- ABSTAINED**

## 6) FINANCIALS

Gabe Buldra of James Vincent group gave the financial presentation. He projects that LMRFD will have approximately 680K in the bank to close out the fiscal year, which ends next month.

Revenue for the month of May was 57K, which is under budget by \$59K

Expenses for May totaled 84K, which was over budget by 9K. Mr. Buldra explained this by saying the District needed to purchase equipment for Wildland calls, as well as much-needed vehicle equipment.

Operating revenue is 981K, which is under budget by 39.5K.

Operating expenses is 800K, which is under budget by 106K.

Mr. Buldra said that the District is in a good place financially.

Director Koeppen had a question about accumulated depreciation, and Mr. Buldra explained that it was simply a fixed line over the useful life of equipment. The figures are from fixed asset schedules that are audited every year. Director Koeppen mentioned that there appears to be a lot of loss with depreciation, and Mr. Buldra stated that the District has not had the means to invest in new equipment. Much of it is old.

Director Koeppen asked about deferred outflows-pensions PSPRS. Mr. Buldra explained that it was part of GASB 68 adjustments. PSPRS hires auditors that report to us. There will be a reduction in this number due to new hires to the District.

Director Braaten had a question about doubtful accounts, and Mr. Buldra said that was referencing funds that can't or won't be collected.

Director Braaten asked about the rate we're paying on the ambulance lease, and whether if it would be better to pay it off. Mr. Buldra said it was around 3%, and it would be better to keep the cash in the bank.

Chair De Lara questioned if it would be good for the District to keep more part time than full time staff. Mr. Buldra

explained that it wasn't as reliable from an operational standpoint. It would be better to increase the number of full time staff, which will cost more. However, it'll be worth it.

Chair De Lara inquired about how it looks like the District is not getting as much tax revenue as it should, and whether that was normal. Mr. Buldra said that this was normal, and referred to the last six years. 90% collection historically, and 88% right now.

Director Koeppen wanted clarification that the budget has no carryover from year to year, and Mr. Buldra said yes. The budget must be balanced, however there is surplus built in as a line item.

**Motion to accept May 2021 Financials: Director Aitken  
Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

Chair De Lara introduced the next part of the Financials, which is the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System Pension Funding Policy.

Director Koeppen said she had not seen this before, and Mr. Buldra explained that it was required that public entities using a public safety pension needs to adopt an annual pension funding policy. In the Board packet that day, it was simply a copy of the updated policy that needed to be approved by the Board before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The one component that was added for this year was the passage of Prop 207 in Arizona, which was the marijuana tax. It is currently unknown how much money the District is going to receive from this tax. In the PSPRS policy, it's stated that any money gained from the passage of Prop 207 would go to PSPRS.

Director Koeppen mentioned that she saw 15K as a possible figure that the District would earn from Prop 207. Mr. Buldra did say that it was a possibility. And right now, the District will receive the money and, per the recommendation in the policy, the money will go to pay Public Safety-related liabilities. So it can be used to pay normal pension cost or unfunded.

Chair De Lara asked what Mr. Buldra's recommendation was, and he said the money would be best going toward unfunded liability.

Director Koeppen asked if the policy is mandated, and Mr. Buldra said yes. The only thing that isn't mandated is the addition of Prop 207, which is a recommendation by James Vincent Group.

Director Koeppen also expressed concern that this is the same pension, run by the same people, that lost money in the Enron scandal. Mr. Buldra did agree that yes, this is part of the Public Safety Pension. However it was legislatures that passed the law requiring the policy and not Public Safety.

Chair De Lara asked about a discrepancy in the numbers posted in a table in the given documentation versus what was documented by the District. Mr. Buldra said that there were other figures that were involved that weren't reflected in the numbers she was looking at.

Director Koeppen mentioned that this is the largest thing that we owe, which is about 2 million. Mr. Buldra said that yes, however the District should see that number come down significantly since we now have more participants in the system.

Director Braaten asked if we were obligated to use PSPRS, and Mr. Buldra said yes.

**Motion: Approve the pension funding policy as presented: Director Braaten  
Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

## **7) CHIEF REPORT**

### **Run Report:**

AMR Transports: 0  
Med Calls: 87  
Dolan Transports: 56  
Dolan Refusals: 7  
Dolan Public Assists: 4  
Fire Calls: 19  
Mutual Aid Calls: 4  
Highway 93 Calls: 7  
Meadview Calls: 7  
Meadview Transports: 6  
Meadview Refusals: 1  
Meadview Public Assists: 0  
Meadview Coverage Days: 15

### **Meetings/Conferences/Training:**

Fire Chief Bonnee mentioned that during night fire training at Station 41, a couple individuals on social media were complaining that the fire fighters were standing around simply watching the fire burn. Fire Chief Bonnee stressed that the training was very successful and helpful for the new hires.

The Fire Chief stated that he will be attending a conference in Phoenix July 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **District Properties:**

The garage doors that were ordered will be installed at Station 41 and 43 next week.

A part of the metal skirting around Station 42 had blown off, and a volunteer at LMRFD was contracted to fix it.

Director Aitken asked if it was insured, and Fire Chief Bonnee said that it was, however the deductible was 3.5K. Since LMRFD is buying the materials, it's cheaper to forego using insurance.

Chair De Lara mentioned that she noticed that there appeared to be new damage to the awning over the main entrance to Station 41. Fire Chief Bonnee said that the awning had metal flashing and was sealed, however the wind might have affected it.

Fire Chief Bonnee stated that the annual hose testing had been completed thanks to LMRFD volunteers. There were a couple failures and those hoses had been taken out of service.

The Fire Chief mentioned that the stove at Station 43 was leaking propane and needs to be replaced as soon as possible. Also, the stove at Station 41 was not working correctly due to the lack of a propane adapter. Director Braaten asked why they could not be switched out for electric stoves, and Fire Chief Bonnee said that they wouldn't work with the current connections. Director Aitken said that she did not mind if the District checked out the costs for replacing the stoves at

both stations.

### **District Vehicles:**

The Fire Chief said that motor for the new ambulance had been ordered.

Projects in the Works:

The grant results will be out by July.

Lastly, Fire Chief Bonnee expressed some concerns about Director Karash's role on the Board. Specifically lack of communication. Director Karash noted the concerns.

Director Koeppen asked what was involved in a public assist, and Fire Chief Bonnee said that covered falls, servicing/installing smoke detectors, and other services that don't require transport.

Director Koeppen asked if Fire Chief Bonnee had a replacement in mind for when he attends the conference in July. He responded yes, the paramedic on duty will take over. Director Braaten asked about Board Meetings, and Bonnee said the same is true for Board meetings if he must miss one.

Director Koeppen asked what the average was for fire calls. The Fire Chief said that some months they respond to 30-40, which covers everything from smoke investigation, illegal burns, structure or vehicle fires, etc. So the current number of 19 is low.

The Fire Chief added that they also responded to 87 med calls in the last month, whereas this time last year they didn't have 50 combined for the months of April and May.

## **9) REGULAR SESSION**

- a. **Discussion and possible action:** Adoption of 2021/2022 fiscal year budget. (Chair De Lara)

**Motion to open public hearing on proposed budget: Director Braaten**  
**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

There was no public comment on the proposed budget

**Motion to close public hearing on proposed budget: Director Braaten**  
**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

- b. **Discussion and possible action:** Public Agency Retirement Services Informational Presentation. (Director Koeppen)

Director Koeppen arranged a presentation with Maureen Toal on the phone.

Director Koeppen did state that prior to this meeting, she was not aware that LMRFD was mandated to use PSPRS. She

asked Ms. Toal what was different about PARS vs PSPRS.

Mr. Buldra explained that this was a separate investment trust administered by PARS and managed by PSPRS.

Ms. Toal added that PSPRS sought approval to offer this trust, and this is for pensions and/or retirement healthcare which is kept in a separate account. There are currently over 400 clients that use these trusts. Also, the organization will be affiliated with the whole state of Arizona.

Chair De Lara said that it might be a good idea if Ms. Toal could come do an in-person presentation. The Chair said that Director Koeppen will continue to be her point of contact.

Presentation with Maureen Toal concluded at 12:46 PM.

Director Aitken brought up that in the state of Utah, they ran similar programs that required participation that were managed poorly. Local governments, school systems, etc. ended up leaving the program. However, the state forced them back. She asked if PSPRS was absolutely mandatory. Mr. Buldra said that once an organization makes the decision to participate, they're in it for good.

Chair De Lara Asked what Mr. Buldra recommended. His current thought is that the cost may be greater than the benefit for a small District.

Director Koeppen is going to tell Ms. Toal that the District is probably unable to participate at this time. She also reiterated that it is important for everyone to pay attention to our investments and keep an eye out for any misuse of funds.

- c. **Discussion and possible action:** Former employee filing repeated erroneous complaints against LMRFD. (Chair De Lara)

Discussed in Executive Session.

Chair De Lara said that the District will go with the advice given by the Attorney and continue to comply and respond to the complaints. She would also like to keep track of anything that may be coming in on social media for later review if action is necessary.

- d. **Discussion and possible action:** Former employee that charged LMRFD residents for services that should have been provided for free. (Fire Chief Bonnee)

Discussed in Executive Session.

Chair De Lara said that this issue is currently resolved since nobody paid any of the bills that were in question. However, it would be a good idea to release a public statement. She will write one up and send it over to the Attorney for review.

- e. **Discussion and possible action:** Former Board Member's disregard of LMRFD policy and state statutes. (Chair De Lara)

Discussed in Executive Session.

Chair De Lara noted that a member of the community is planning on filing charges related to this issue.

Director Braaten also mentioned that another member of the public filed complaints with Facebook about a page that is posting false information about LMRFD.

Chair De Lara said that there is currently nothing for the Board to do about this issue.

**f. Discussion and possible action:** Fire Chief Bonnee's performance Review. (Chair De Lara)

Discussed in Executive session.

**Motion to acknowledge that Fire Chief Bonnee passed his performance review with high marks: Chair De Lara**

**Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

**Directors Karash, Koeppen- ABSTAINED**

**Motion to increase Fire Chief Bonnee's salary by 5% starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, to be raised another 3% in November contingent on another performance review. 3% raise, if granted, would be retroactive- Director Aitken**

**Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

**Director Karash- ABSTAINED**

**g. Discussion and possible action:** Fire Chief Bonnee's potential as the permanent LMRFD Fire Chief. (Chair De Lara)

**Motion to move Bonnee from Interim to Permanent Fire Chief starting July 1<sup>st</sup>: Director Braaten**

**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

**Director Karash- ABSTAINED**

Chair De Lara added that the Fire Chief has three weeks to have the new contract reviewed by an attorney. That aside, there are still a few changes to the proposed contract that needs to be made so no signing will be done today.

**h. Discussion and possible action:** Change in leave policy and accrual rates. (Fire Chief Bonnee)

Fire Chief Bonnee asked his crew what they wanted as an incentive considering LMRFD is not a high-paying District. He said that they wanted more PTO. Under the new plan, there will be a higher accrual rate, one member of the suppression staff will be able to take off at a time, and there will be no cash out. It'll be a "use it or lose it" policy.

Director Aitken asked if it was by calendar year or fiscal year, and the Fire Chief says it'll go into affect July 1<sup>st</sup> and follow the staff's anniversary dates. Mr. Buldra said that no PTO that has been currently accrued will be lost. However, a more detailed policy is still being written.

Chair De Lara said that the Board will revisit this item when the new policy has been written.

**Motion to table item until more information is available from James Vincent Group: Director Aitken**

**Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

i. **Discussion and possible action:** Bulletin board at the Meadview Post Office. (Director Braaten)

Director Braaten said that there is currently no bulletin board outside of the post office in Meadview. Chair De Lara mentioned that she has no problem purchasing a small, locking board for LMRFD use.

Director Braaten said that the proposed site was next to the parking lot and that there was no town approval required.

Chair De Lara suggested that Director Braaten get a price and an agreement saying that the property owner is okay with LMRFD setting up a board.

**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).*

**12) CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.**

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

**Motion to close LMRFD Board Meeting at 1:30PM: Director Braaten  
Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

**13.) NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING DATE & LOCATION.** (Subject to change, notice/announcement will be posted via District Website, if any changes occur.) **07/15/2021 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **Dolan Springs Community Council, 16022 N Pierce Ferry Rd, Dolan Springs, AZ 86441.**

MINUTES prepared by: Jennifer Gardner

Date: 06/21/21

*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 an accommodation, please notify the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District at: (928) 767-3300, prior to the scheduled meeting time.*

**LMRFD Official Posting Locations:**

Administration / St. 41 (16126 Pierce Ferry Rd Dolan Springs, AZ)  
Dolan Springs Chamber of Commerce (16154 Pierce Ferry Rd Dolan Springs, AZ)

St. 43 (30250 Stillwater Meadview, AZ)  
Meadview Post Office (250 Pueblo Dr, Meadview, AZ 86444)  
Meadview Civic Association (247 Meadview Blvd, Meadview, AZ 86444)

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