



Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District



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MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION OF THE LAKE MOHAVE RANCHOS FIRE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

*The Governing Board of the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District met in Regular Session on **07/15/21** at **1:00 PM**. The Meeting was held at **Dolan Springs Community Council, 16022 N 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. 1:00 PM

2) ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS.

Directors Phyllis Aitkin, Theodora Koeppen, and Chair Susan De Lara- PRESENT
Directors Douglas Braaten and 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-

Board of Directors may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R. . ~38.431.03 (A) (3).

5) MINUTES- 11:21 AM

06/17/21 Regular Minutes Review:

Motion to approve June 17th, 2021 minutes: Director Aitken.
Seconded: Director Koeppen

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

06/17/21 Executive Minutes Review:

Motion to approve June 17th, 2021 Executive minutes: Director Koeppen
Seconded: Director Aitken

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

6) FINANCIALS- 11:30 AM

Report:

Mr. Bulda was not able to attend this Board Meeting. Chair De Lara presented the financial report.

Revenue for the month of June was \$82.5K, which was over budget by 54K.

Tax revenue for June was 39.5K, which was over budget by \$35K. Fire Chief Bonnee noted that this is because of tax revenue being collected.

Non-tax revenue for June was 43K, which was over budget by 19K. This was due to ambulance revenue.

Year to date operating revenue is \$1,063,470, which is over budget by \$41.5K.

Year to date operating expenses is \$876,775, which is under budget by \$107,555.

Chair De Lara said that the District is currently functioning very well.

Director Aitken suggested that it may be a good idea to get a separate document that breaks down where deposits to the District are coming from to see whether or not the new collections company is giving due diligence. Fire Chief Bonnee said that the company should be sending statements monthly, however the new representative is not responding to emails. Chair de Lara mentioned that it would be a good idea to let someone at the company know that the representative has not been in contact with LMRFD.

Chair De Lara asked when the new motor for the truck will arrive. Fire Chief Bonnee said the motor has been delivered to the repair shop and will take a week and a half to two weeks for installation if nothing goes wrong.

Director Aitken noted that the credit card statement for June was not included with the financial report. Administrative Assistant Jen Gardner said that it had not arrived in the mail by the time of this meeting, and that the statements, along with credit card receipts, will be sent out to the Board for review when they arrive. Fire Chief Bonnee added that the credit card statements are mailed to LMRFD directly, however the bank statements are not. Bank statements go directly to James Vincent Group.

Chair De Lara asked that the District request the bank statements from James Vincent Group.

Director Koeppen inquired about where the District purchases fuel for their vehicles. Fire Chief Bonnee replied that they use Chevron in Dolan Springs and Gas 'n Grub in Meadview. Whatever gas station is convenient and available. Chair Ee Lara asked the Fire Chief if the District has approached Chevron about discounts on fuel for emergency vehicles. Fire Chief Bonnee said that he had, but Chevron was not willing to provide a discount.

Director Aitken explained that the fuel the District purchases is already tax exempt, which amounts to 50-75 cents per gallon.

**Motion to approve financials: Director Aitken.
Seconded: Director Koeppen**

**Vote: Directors Aitken, Braaten, Koeppen, and Chair De Lara- AYE.
Director Karash was unable to vote due to technical difficulties.**

7) CHIEF'S REPORT 12:47 AM

Run Report:

Amr Transports: 2
Med Calls: 83
Dolan Transports: 54
Dolan Refusals: 4
Dolan Public Assists: 2
Fire Calls: 17
Mutual Aid calls: 2
HWY-93 Calls: 21
Meadview calls: 8
Meadview transports: 5
Meadview Refusals: 3
Meadview Public Assists: 2
Meadview coverage days: 15

Meetings/Conferences/Trainings:

Fire Chief Bonnee and a full time staff member attended AFCA/AFDA Leadership in Fire conference in July. The Fire Chief mentioned that while at the conference, he had dinner and a long conversation with another fire chief that later passed away while on duty.

District Properties:

The new garage doors have been installed at Stations 41 and 43.

Fire Chief Bonnee and Director Aitken have been looking at new stoves for Stations 41 and 43. They have found a couple that look nice but are still searching for other options. Chair De Lara mentioned that Lowes has a 10% discount for veterans and may do the same for fire fighters. Director Aitken said that Home Depot offered \$50 off. Which would not amount to a 10% discount if they purchased from Home Depot.

Fire Chief Bonnee also mentioned that Station 43 experienced flooding during a thunderstorm the night before. He told the Board that they have sandbags to help mitigate future flooding and they just need to be filled.

The primary air conditioner up at Station 43 still has not been repaired. There was only one compressor for that unit in the entire country. A tech should be out next week to install the new compressor. Chair De Lara asked if it would be worth it to purchase a small unit for the living area. The Fire Chief said that once this one is fixed, it'll be sufficient.

District Vehicles:

The air conditioner and water temp sensor in T-418 have been fixed.

Projects in the Works:

The new air packs that were ordered as part of a FEMA grant have arrived and are ready to be used. A representative from United Fire will be driving out to the District from Tucson to provide in-service training for the packs. Fire Chief Bonnee said that there was a major problem with this particular grant that nearly put the District on the hook for the entire cost of the air packs- nearly 180K. Fire Chief Bonnee applied for this grant before he left his position of Fire Chief, and the new Fire Chief made changes to the order that caused the grant to be denied to the District. Fire Chief Bonnee had to submit an amendment, which was thankfully accepted by FEMA.

Chair De Lara asked if the packs are assigned to individuals. The Fire Chief said that they are assigned to vehicles.

The money earned from the Flag fire wildland deployment has arrived, as well as the evaluations for the Water Springs and Middle fires. Chair de Lara noted that these evaluations are from representatives of BLM and that the District personnel on these fires scored very well.

The Fire Chief mentioned that the District can expect another 10K or so in revenue from a deployment currently under way, where one of the District ambulances is currently in use. Also, the money coming in from wildland deployments are not budgeted since that income is not guaranteed.

Director Aitken brought up an idea of creating a contingency fund using the revenue from the wildland deployments. There was a general acceptance of this plan.

Chair De Lara asked how District personnel are paid while on deployment, and the Chief said that it is through the wildland funds. Also, the pay for District personnel that fill vacancies caused by deployments is also reimbursed.

Director Koeppen noted that a decision about a contingency fund should not be made this meeting. She asked that the Fire Chief write up a proposal. A decision may or may not be made next meeting. Fire Chief Bonnee agreed and said he would speak with Gabe Buldra of James Vincent Group about what could be done.

Lastly, the Fire Chief told the Board that he sent off documentation for a volunteer to the Red Card Committee. If accepted, this volunteer can begin training as an engine boss. Once completed, then more resources can be sent out for wildland deployments.

8) ADMIN REPORT

Office Assistant Jen Gardner presented the July Admin Report.

She discussed the headway made in organizing the documents and records within the LMRFD office, and the controls that are being put into place to better keep track of information vital to the District. Chair De Lara asked if documents and records that went missing prior to the hiring of new office staff and Fire Chief was due to a deliberate act. Gardner expressed that she could not say if the state of the information kept within the office during that time period was intentional.

Gardner then told the Board that starting in July, she is now also a 1099 contractor for the District performing IT-related duties outside of the scope of an office assistant. She explained that this includes rebuilding the District website, managing social media outside of office hours, doing on-site equipment repairs and software installs, training in new technology, and general help.

Gardner informed the Board that the new website is being built in the background and the current website will remain up and functional until it is time for the new website to go live for the public. Chair De Lara asked if there will be a calendar, and Gardner confirmed that there will be.

Gardner then requested that in an upcoming Board meeting, the Board members participate in a photoshoot so their portraits may be added to the new website. She also asked that the members write a short bio about themselves.

The question of video hosting was brought up, in which Gardner said that it would be possible to add videos from YouTube directly to the website. It would not cost the District anything to host videos through YouTube.

Finally, Gardner told the Board that after the website is completed, Microsoft SharePoint will be configured for District use. This will allow the Board members to access any information that they require to perform their duties. SharePoint will also be used to help organize administrative and operational efforts. It was stressed that this will not be a part of the website. It is an internal project management tool only. Training will be provided for Board members when SharePoint becomes active.

9) REGULAR SESSION 2:25 PM

a. Discussion and possible action regarding: CPA proposals. (Chair de Lara)

Chair De Lara noted that two proposals had come in for auditing services, one of which was a company that the District had used previously. She expressed discontent at the behavior of that particular CPA. The Chair stated that she did not feel that the auditor performed due diligence while conducting the audit and had missed discrepancies within the LMRFD finances. She also mentioned that this auditor also did not visit the LMRFD office and did most of his audit through QuickBooks.

Chair De Lara asked Fire Chief Bonnee about the second proposal, which was from a company that the Fire Chief met while at the recent AFCA/AFDA conference. The Fire Chief told the Board that he spoke with another Chief at the conference about that CPA service, and that Fire Chief was not impressed with their work.

Director Koeppen said that she thought the District was supposed to have three proposals, and Chair De Lara told her no more have come in yet. Chair De Lara then asked Fire Chief Bonnee to discover who Bullhead City is using for their CPA.

Director Aitken suggested that the item be tabled until the next meeting.

**Motion to table action about CPA proposals until a future meeting: Director Aitken
Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

b. Discussion and possible action regarding: Fire Chief employment contract approval. (Chair De Lara)

Chair De Lara mentioned that there was some discussion at the June meeting about splitting Fire Chief Bonnee's pay raise. Due to complications, it had been decided that it would be better to give a straight 8% increase. Changes in PTO is also reflected in the new contract.

**Motion to accept 8% pay raise to Chief and accept contract: Director Aitken
Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

c. Discussion and possible action: PTO accrual rates for LMRFD personnel. (Fire Chief Bonnee)

Fire Chief Bonnee told the Board that he worked with Gabe Buldra from James Vincent Group to create a better PTO policy. He stated that the District does not pay well so an incentive was needed to attract and keep employees. The previous PTO policy was way below standard. The proposed PTO policy is still low, however it is now more comparable to other departments. He stated that there would be no payout, but unused PTO will roll over until the accrual cap is reached. Accrual caps are dependent on role and years of employment.

A request for time off will have to be submitted two weeks in advance. This will allow the Fire Chief to keep the District adequately staffed. Chair De Lara asked if this would be a problem around the holidays, and the Fire Chief said that it is not a concern at the moment as none of his current staff want the same days off.

**Motion to approve proposed PTO policy for LMRFD: Director Koeppen
Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

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).*

Ellen Rey Bower from Dolan Springs said that she agrees with continuing the search for a new CPA. She felt that the previous CPA should have picked up on payroll fraud and he did not.

Director Koeppen notified the Board that she sent an email to the representative from PARS and expressed to her that the District is unable to participate in their program at this time. Koeppen read the email aloud for those not present.

Director Aitken wished to state her gratitude and appreciation for Fire Chief Bonnee and his efforts to get the District back in order alongside the Gardners. She also wanted to extend thanks to the suppression staff and their hard work.

11) CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

12) NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING DATE & LOCATION.

(Subject to change, notice/announcement will be posted via District Website, if any changes occur)
8/19/2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Meadview Civic Association, 247 Meadview Blvd, Meadview, AZ 86444

11) ADJOURNMENT: 2:25 PM

**Motion to adjourn meeting: Director Aitken.
Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

Minutes prepared by: Jennifer Gardner, Office administrator.

Date: 07/19/2021