



# 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 will meet in Regular Session on **8/19/2021** 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. 10:05 AM

2) ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS.

**Directors Phyllis Aitken, Theodora Koeppen, Douglas Braaten 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

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 at 10:07 AM: Director Aitken.**

**Seconded: Director Braaten.**

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

a. Discussion regarding: Issues pertaining to a previous employee (Director Aitken)

b. Discussion regarding: Legal considerations about the District (Director Aitken)

c. Discussion regarding: Making payments through Bill.com (Director Aitken)

**Motion to end executive session and return to regular session at 11:08 AM: Director Koeppen**

**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

## REGULAR BUSINESS

5) MINUTES

**Motion to accept July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 minutes with corrections to names and grammar: Director Aitken**

**Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

6) FINANCIALS

Gabe Buldra of James Vincent Group called in at 11:24 AM to give the financial presentation for the month of July.

Mr. Buldra stated that since July was the start of the new fiscal year, there is not a lot of activity to report. Revenue for the month of July was \$283K, which was over budget by \$227K. Grant revenue was \$201K. Expenses were \$287K, which was over budget by \$194K. This is due to purchases made using grant revenue.

Mr. Buldra said that everything is within reasonable variances and the financials look good.

Director Koeppen had a question about a former employee's name still being on the credit card statement from Visa. Mr. Buldra said he would reach out to get the former employee's name removed, and it appears to only affect the billing address.

Chair De Lara stated that the card that was supplied to this person was deactivated.

Chair De Lara asked about a charge from Positive Promotions. Fire Chief Bonnee told her that it was an order of merchandise that will be given to children during Dolan Days and Fire Prevention Week.

Chair De Lara then inquired about the WEX cards used for fuel. Some statements showed delinquency.

Fire Chief Bonnee said that the statements going back to January were included in this month's Board packets because they had not been included in the financials so far this year. Currently, the WEX fuel cards are paid automatically and are not delinquent.

Director Aitken told the Board that WEX used to send information about each vehicle and their fuel use. She asked if that information is no longer being sent to the office.

Fire Chief Bonnee said he would give them a call about it. Mr. Buldra then said that other clients of his are experiencing the same thing from WEX.

Chair De Lara asked about an invoice from Purvis. Fire Chief Bonnee explained that he had to purchase an elbow for the cascade system because it was not filling their air tanks all the way.

Chair De Lara expressed concern to Mr. Buldra about the Fire Chief receiving packages from Amazon to his residence instead of the fire station. Fire Chief Bonnee told Mr. Buldra that they started doing that because UPS would drop packages in front of the station and the packages would disappear. Mr. Buldra said that when an item that is shipped to a residence is brought to the station, it would be a good idea to have the office staff sign off on the receipt as an acknowledgement that the order had arrived.

Chair De Lara then asked about charges from Microsoft. Office Assistant Jen Gardner explained that it was for Office 365 and Visio.

Mr. Buldra asked to move up other items in regular discussion so he may be present for them. The Board agreed.

**Motion to approve financials as presented: Director Aitken**

**Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

## 7) CHIEF REPORT

### Run Report:

AMR Transports: 0  
Med Calls: 117  
Dolan Transports: 78  
Dolan Refusals: 7  
Dolan Public Assists: 2  
Fire Calls: 26  
Mutual Aid Calls: 0  
HWY 93 Calls: 24  
Meadview Calls: 14  
Meadview Transports: 8  
Meadview Refusals: 3  
Meadview Public Assists: 3  
Meadview Coverage Days: 15

Fire Chief Bonnee said that this was the busiest month so far this year.

### Meetings/Conferences/Trainings:

The Fire Chief attended a run review on July 13<sup>th</sup> and the MCFOA meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### District Properties:

The interior of Station 41 has been repainted. They are planning on starting on Station 43 in October.

### District Vehicles:

The District had to replace the batteries in E-411 and R-415. Director Aitken asked about the warranties on the batteries since they had not been installed for that long. The Fire Chief said that he found out the batteries were used, and cost around \$500. He's looking at getting it straightened out.

The new motor for the ambulance had been installed and the vehicle was picked up. However, on the drive back, it lost all power and had to be towed back to the shop. The mechanics found out that it was stuck in first gear, which was caused by wires in the harness that were touching. That has been fixed.

### Projects in the Works:

The District is still waiting on the decisions on the AFG grant. We haven't been rewarded yet, but there is still time.

There was a snafu with the new collection agency the District was supposed to start with a few months ago. The contract and the addendum for RFGI, the new company, was sent to the attorney and the process was never completed. The Chief worked with Office Assistant Glenn Gardner to officially part ways with Healthcare Collections and start with RFGI.

Director Aitken said that it was caught because an invoice was sent to the District from Healthcare Collections. Chair De Lara said that it is good that it was caught and that everything has been made right. The lack of response and action from the attorney is still a problem, however. She suggested putting an item on an upcoming agenda so the Board may speak with him about it.

Fire Chief Bonnee told the Board that the two crewmembers sent to the Dixie Fire have returned. He also said that billing information for the past three fires have been submitted and approved. Checks from those fires have started to come in. The approved amount for the Dixie fire was 31K, bringing total Wildland revenue to almost 90K.

Director Aitken said she would like to do a spreadsheet that lays out how much money was invested in the Wildland deployments compared to what the District made. Of the 90K, 60-64K has been netted after paying for fuel, wages, repairs, and more.

The Fire Chief mentioned that he will be doing more research on assignments before accepting them. There was a bit of a problem with the last assignment. Chair De Lara then asked if it was an issue to turn down assignments. Fire Chief Bonnee told her that it doesn't look good on the department to say no, but they understand that it is inevitable sometimes.

The Fire Chief also wanted to stress to the public that the District still remains fully covered even while on a Wildland deployment. Also, the crews have been working relentlessly with how busy things have been in the District lately. They're doing a great job. Director Aitken suggested using some of the Wildland funds, which are not from the taxpayers, to do an appreciation dinner for the A, B, and C shifts.

Chair De Lara mentioned using Wildland funds to pay off the ambulance. Director Aitken said that Mr. Buldra was asked about that in a previous meeting and he said it wasn't a good idea.

Fire Chief Bonnee told the Board that for the first year of doing Wildland, the District has been doing a good job. Director Koeppen stressed that the previous chiefs were not interested in participating. She spoke with those chiefs before about grants and other forms of revenue and she had to give up asking.

Lastly, Fire Chief Bonnee mentioned that the District's CON (certificate of necessity) for ambulance transports to Kingman Regional had not been renewed. Bonnee discovered this by accident when he checked the District's website and found the certificate posted there. It was set to expire the next day.

The Fire Chief said that the previous Chief did not take the steps to renew it when the notices were sent out prior to Bonnee's return. Bonnee and the office staff stayed late working on submitting the application and supporting documentation to the correct entities for renewal. If the CON lapsed, the District most likely would not have gotten it back. It would have gone to AMR, a private company.

## **8) ADMIN REPORT**

### **IT Support:**

Office Assistant Jen Gardner updated the Board on the state of the new website. It is functional and will be going live the following week. Also, she has begun taking portraits of the staff to be uploaded onto the website.

There are agendas and minutes still missing that Gardner will attempt to track down through paper copies. Director Karash offered to bring in his copies of minutes that may cover some of the gaps.

### **Office Admin:**

Gardner said that once the website is live, her and Glenn Gardner will start implementing SharePoint.

## 9) REGULAR SESSION

### a. Discussion and possible action: Issues pertaining to a previous employee (Director Aitken) 12:58 PM

**Motion to write a check with a notation saying that the fees are paid in full, plus include a letter stating that there is no supporting documentation for the fees that were requested be paid: Director Karash**

**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

### b. Discussion and possible action: Legal considerations about the District (Director Aitken) 1:00 PM

Item will be tabled, to be included on each subsequent agenda until an action can be taken.

### c. Discussion and possible action: Making payments though Bill.com (Director Aitken) 1:00 PM

No action taken.

### d. Discussion and possible action: Accountant proposals (Director Aitken) 11:53 AM

Chair De Lara presented the two auditor proposals that the District had received. First was Walker & Armstrong, whom the District has no current relationship with, and the second was BDR Richards. BDR Richards has been performing audits for the District for five years.

Mr Buldra said that he has worked with both firms and believes they are both qualified. He stated that he is aware of the issues from the audit performed last year by BDR Richards, however since James Vincent Group was not a part of the District at that time then he cannot comment of the quality of that audit.

Chair De Lara said that she was concerned about Richards leaving out excessive overtime in his last report. The Chair said he seemed to express sympathy for a previous employee and appeared offended when the Chair inquired about not including things she felt he should have caught. She asked Mr. Buldra if he believed Richards acted in good faith.

Mr. Buldra told the Board that the scope of the audit is very narrow. The firms are not engaged in seeing whether or not expenses are fair and reasonable. Perhaps an acknowledgement should have been made, but it was not necessary.

Chair De Lara then asked if a different firm may have presented the information in the same manner as BDR Richards, and Mr. Buldra said that was correct.

Chair De Lara inquired about whether either firm will come on site to look at invoices, or if the audit will be completed remotely. Mr. Buldra said that most of it can be done on the computer with at least one day on site.

Director Braaten wanted clarification about how often the services would be used. Annually or monthly? Mr. Buldra said annually.

Gabe Buldra left the call.

Director Braaten told the Board that there is a 15% differential between the costs of the two firms.

Chair De Lara said that BDR Richards did not include in his report that excessive fees were being paid toward late bills.

Director Aitken spoke, saying that BDR Richards did what he was paid to do. The previous employee provided negligent

information, which cannot happen this time because Mr. Buldra will be the one supplying the information this year. When Director Aitken volunteered in the office, she would tell the employee to pull documents for the auditor. BDR Richards then reviewed those documents. Director Aitken ended by saying that she was comfortable with BDR Richards.

Director Koeppen wished to discuss Walker & Armstrong. She listed information from their proposal, which stated they had five decades of experience. References included Sun City West, Kingman, Buckeye, and others. She suggested giving this firm a chance to see what the quality of their audit was compared to BDR Richards.

Chair De Lara asked Fire Chief Bonnee if he met representatives from Walker-Armstrong, and he said he met them at a conference in Phoenix. The Fire Chief wasn't impressed with their attitude, saying they came off cocky.

Concerning BDR Richards, the Fire Chief told the Board he felt they were thorough and came to the office a couple times. Director Aitken added that they attended Board meetings too.

Director Braaten noted that they did the best with the information that was given to them at the time.

Director Karash said he recommended using BDR Richards again.

**Motion to accept the bid placed by BDR Richards: Director Aitken**

**Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

**e. Discussion and possible action: Reserve fund using Wildland deployment income (Director Aitken) 11:40 AM**

Director Koeppen wanted to stress the importance of looking at the big picture when it comes to allocating funds earned through Wildland deployments. She saw three options. First was setting a goal to expand personnel and equipment. Second covered building a pension fund and reducing debt. Third was investing in a trust to use in the future. She wanted the Board to think about what was best for the District and the taxpayers.

Mr. Buldra said that fire districts are very limited in the number of ways they can invest. There can be a pension reserve fund for PSPRS, but then the funds would be locked into only going toward paying the pension. Mr. Buldra did agree with having a rainy day fund. He suggested setting aside amounts for particular purposes, and that the Board should think about how much could go into each "bucket".

Director Braaten asked if this should be handled at committee level since there would be more time to talk about it. Chair De Lara said she didn't see a reason for it. She suggested that the Fire Chief and Mr. Buldra meet and create a plan. She stressed that the Fire Chief is responsible for running the District and he would be best to figure out where the money should go.

Fire Chief Bonnee said the District currently does not have a type 6 truck that can go out of state. The Chief also said that starting in April 2022, the Wildland billing will combine equipment and personnel together into a higher rate because people have been complaining they're not being paid enough. Chair De Lara asked about a type 6 that was supposed to be given to the District, and the Fire Chief told her that it was a much older truck.

Mr. Buldra stated that he would work with Fire Chief Bonnee on a plan. They may have something together by the September meeting, however it may be pushed to October to give them more time.

**Motion to table item until the Fire Chief Bonnee and Gabe Buldra of James Vincent Group have a plan to present to the Board: Director Aitken.**

**Seconded: Director Koeppen**

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

**f. Discussion and possible action: New cascade system for filling air tanks (Fire Chief Bonnee) 1:05 PM**

Fire Chief Bonnee explained that the grant for the new air packs came in, however they use a different style bottle. Cascade systems are what fill these bottles with breathable air. Currently, the District owns four. Three are nonfunctional and parts cannot be obtained to fix them. To add to that, these systems are over 35 years old. The new bottles can handle 4500 psi, but the current system can only fill them to 2500 psi.

United Fire is the only company on this side of the country that deals in cascade systems. Fire Chief Bonnee included the quote, which was just under 40K. He stressed that this is a necessary expense as the compressor in Meadview is on its last legs.

Director Aitken inquired about which funds would be used for the purchase, and Fire Chief Bonnee told the Board that he's leaving that up to them. Director Aitken then suggested that a portion comes out of the budget for maintenance. Any remaining balance can then be pulled from the Wildland funds.

Fire Chief Bonnee said that the District is looking at purchasing a new Type 6 truck and he does not want to deplete the Wildland funds on a new cascade system. Also, the Fire Chief said that this supplier's wait is two months out. The other supplier, Mako, has a 9 month wait and is located on the East Coast.

**Motion to purchase a new cascade system: Director Karash**

**Seconded: Director Aitken**

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

**g. Discussion: Status of collection agency (Director Aitken and Glenn Gardner) 1:17 PM**

Item discussed in Chief's Report. No action taken.

**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).*

Director Koeppen made note of a gentleman that was in the audience that had left. He was a resident of Meadview that wanted to join the District. Director Braaten told the Board that he had been in contact with this person and told him to look out for a line item on his tax bill.

Office Assistant Jen Gardner told the Board that there will be a section on the new website with a link to the annexation form and a list of instructions on how to fill it out and submit it to the District.

Director Braaten asked the Board if the Technical Committee should reconvene. Fire Chief Bonnee said he spoke to Ellen Rey-Bower and there were a couple things for the Committee to do.

Director Koeppen notified the Board that the VFW chapter in Meadview will have a flag raising on September 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am. There will be a fire engine there with a volunteer in uniform. There will also be Oktoberfest in Meadview on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

**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.

**13.) NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING DATE & LOCATION.** (Subject to change, notice/announcement will be posted via District Website, if any changes occur.) **09/16/2021 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **Dolan Springs Community Council, 16022 N Pierce Ferry Rd, Dolan Springs, AZ 86441.**

**Motion to close the August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting at 1:25 PM: Director Aitken.**

**Seconded: Director Braaten**

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

Minutes prepared by: Jennifer Gardner

Date: 8/22/2021

Minutes signed/posted by: Jennifer Gardner

Date: 8/22/2021

*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))