

Sun Lakes Fire District Regular Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2011

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Sun Lakes Fire District Board of Directors was called to order by Board Clerk Kohler at 2:00 P.M. Board Members Kohler, Utter, Price and Crawford were present. Board Chair Sellers was absent because of illness. Board Clerk Kohler acted as Chairman Pro Tem for this meeting. Others in attendance included Fire Chief Wilson, Deputy Chief McCoy, Battalion Chief Kelly, Finance Manager Elikan, Captain Kenyon, Administrative Assistant Engel, and Member of the Public Bernadette Halpin. The meeting was led in the Pledge of Allegiance by Finance Manager Elikan.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler asked Board Member Price to provide an update on Chairman Sellers. Board Member Price stated that Chairman Sellers was still in the hospital undergoing treatment for an arrhythmic heart. He now has a pacemaker which is working well and expects to be released from the hospital Jan. 26 or 27.

Approval of the Minutes of the December 21, 2010 Monthly Board Meeting

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the December 21, 2010 Monthly Board Meeting, therefore, Chairman Pro Tem Kohler declared the Minutes approved as circulated.

Unscheduled Public Appearances Call to the Public

There were none.

A. Recognition—Five Year Service Anniversary:

Firefighter/Paramedic Chris Wiley.

Chief Wilson recognized Chris Wiley as a Firefighter/Paramedic for 5 years of service including being the Union Local 3560 Member Services person and a qualified Wildland Firefighter.

Board Member Utter asked how many firefighters were qualified as Wildland Firefighters. Chief McCoy answered that 12 originally qualified but one FF has dropped out.

Board Member Utter asked if anyone in the group had been assigned to a wildfire operation. Chief McCoy answered that the group received its qualification last Summer and last Summer had coincidentally been a slow wildfire season so nobody had received an assignment.

B. Correspondence and/or Other Important Information Attached

Chief Wilson called the Board's attention to a letter received from Neighbors Who

Care Director noting the passing of Barbara Warner, an 8 year Board Member. There will be a Memorial Service on March 17, 2011 at St. Steven's Church beginning at 10 AM.

C. Presentation—2010 District Accomplishments

Chief Wilson presented the 2010 Accomplishments of the Sun Lakes Fire Department. He thanked Diane Engel for her help in preparing the presentation and the handouts. A copy of the handout is attached to the end of these minutes for record.

Significant items noted included over \$30,000 received in monetary donations this year. Chief Wilson noted that this level of unsolicited donations is rather unique compared to other nearby municipal fire departments.

D. Reports

Summary of AFDA Conference—Jan. 13-15, 2011

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler noted that all Board Members except Chairman Sellers attended the Conference. He complimented Board Member Crawford on a very good presentation at the Conference.

Other Board Members agreed that all of the sessions attended provided valuable information.

Fire Chief's Report for December 16, 2010 through January 15, 2011

The full text of the Fire Chief's Report is attached to the Board Agenda Package.

1. News and Events.

Chief Wilson noted the donation of \$6,500 from the Sun Lakes Women's Association. He stated that the Sun Lakes Women's Association has consistently made substantial donations to SLFD for designated purposes in each of the past several years. Chief Kelly will explain later in the meeting what the donation will be used for.

Deputy Chief McCoy presented the remainder of the report.

2. District Accomplishments & Highlights.

There were no comments.

3. Operations Report – A, B & C Shifts & Emergency Medical Services

Chief McCoy discussed the portable lighting generators purchased through a grant and explained how they would be deployed on the Engines.

Chief Kelly and Captain Kenyon explained the operation of the new Personal Alert Safety System (P.A.S.S.) warning devices on the SCBA equipment. They noted this equipment is the best available and includes both audible and visual alarms and are installed on all SCBAs.

Chief Kelly and Captain Kenyon went on to explain the operation of the Communication Amplifiers that will be purchased with the donation money from the SL Woman's Association. These units will be installed on the SCBA masks of the Battalion Chiefs and the Captains and will facilitate normal voice communication while wearing the SCBAs. Chief Kelly noted that without the Communication Amplifiers any communication has been by shouting.

Chief Kelly reviewed the plan for using the old Sun Lakes Health Building for training noting that a number of neighboring departments have committed to helping SLFD with the cost of preparation in return for training time using the building.

There were no comments.

4. Significant Emergency Incidents

There were no comments.

5. Chief Wilson represented the Fire District and met with the Individuals and Organizations noted:

This information is presented in the Chief's Report included with the Agenda package.

Financial Report.

The Financial Report was reviewed by Finance Manager Andrea Elikan.

Board Member Price asked if future financial reports could include the monthly percentage of expenditure on each page. Finance Manager Elikan answered the she would add the percentage to future reports.

Local 3560 Report.

Captain Kenyon presented the Local 3560 Report.

A BBQ using the newly purchased grille will be held at Cottonwood Tennis Club on February 5, 2011 from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM

The Art at the Lakes exhibition is on track for Feb. 26, 2011 with the following Saturday as a rain date.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler asked Captain Kenyon to informally canvas the Union

Members as to their opinions on how the Health Savings Account (HSA) plan is working. Mr. Kohler explained that the Board would soon have to consider whether or not to modify the current health plan offering. Captain Kenyon agreed to do so.

There were no comments.

E. Regular Agenda

1. Discussion and Possible Action, on Disposal of Unneeded Equipment, for a Negotiated Sale of Five Motorola VHF Radios and the Proceeds Deposited to the District Capital Improvement Account.

OR

Discussion and Possible Action on the Five Motorola VHF radios being “Sold” to the Juniper Woods Fire District for \$1.00, as a transfer of assets, to Benefit a Deserving Northern Arizona Fire District.

Chief McCoy explained this item. He noted that there was virtually no market for used VHF radios in the Valley. Juniper Woods Fire District is an all volunteer fire department and could utilize the radios immediately.

Board Member Crawford moved that SLFD donate the radios to Juniper Woods Fire District for \$1.00. The Motion was seconded by Board Member Utter. There was no further discussion. The Motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

2. Discussion and Possible Action to Enter into a Government Fleet State Contract with Sanderson Ford for a 2011 Ford F-250 Service Truck, including Lift Gate, in the amount of \$27,984.44 from Budgeted Capital Improvement Funds, for the replacement of Support 231, a 1999 Chevrolet Pick-up.

Chief McCoy explained this item, noting that the existing pick-up was a ½ ton truck and the proposed truck would be a ¾ ton vehicle with a lift gate to minimize the chance of back injuries lifting heavy equipment.

Board Member Price moved to purchase the 2011 Ford F-250 truck. The Motion was Seconded by Utter. There was no further discussion. The Motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

3. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Resolution CVII (107) to Transfer FY 2009/10 Grant Funds in the Amount of \$18,150.00 to the Capital Reserve 960 Account.

Finance Manager Elikan explained this item.

Board Member Utter moved the Approval of Resolution CVII (107). The Motion was seconded by Board Member Crawford. There was no further discussion. The Motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

4. Discussion and Possible Action on the Adoption of a Revised Policy Manual Section—Daily Scheduling 100.13 to Address District Overtime Costs.

Chief Wilson explained that this Policy Revision has been discussed and agreed to with the Union. It is necessary to keep the District from overrunning the FY 10/11 Overtime Budget of \$254,000.00. The policy will provide for one Engine only to be manned with 3 firefighters instead of the current 4 for a maximum period of 12 hours. It will also provide for one Engine only to be manned with one paramedic instead of the current 2 for a maximum period of 12 hours. Chief Wilson noted that the option is to not make the change and thus overrun the Overtime Budget. The Department has currently expended over \$200,000 at the half year point.

Board Member Crawford moved adoption of the proposed policy change. The Motion was seconded by Board Member Utter.

Board Member Price asked Captain Kenyon what the Union's opinion was. Captain Kenyon answered that the Union was concerned because of liability issues and the impact on the Residents of Sun Lakes. He also noted that the Union fully understood the budgetary necessity of this change.

Board Member Crawford asked what the significance of the 12 hour period was. Chief Wilson answered that the 12 hour period would provide the minimum impact on Sun Lakes Residents. The normal call includes both the Engine and the Ambulance which will mean that 2 paramedics will be on the scene. The Chief noted that it was possible that this subject would need to be revisited toward the end of the FY to potentially increase the time period to 24 hours.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler noted that he had read that Phoenix FD had instituted a plan whereby an entire engine company would be left unstaffed for a 12 hour period. Chief Wilson answered that Phoenix has many engine companies that can cover for an out-of-service engine company. If Sun Lakes did that, it would reduce the department strength to 50% which is an unacceptable level of coverage that could not be made up by mutual aid from Chandler.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler asked how this policy change would play into the open positions. Chief Wilson answered that the current staffing level of the Department provides for 4 firefighters on both engines unless someone is either sick or on vacation. Thus any absence at this point means that a firefighter must be hired back on overtime to fill the 4 person compliment required by current policy.

Board Member Price asked if the proposed policy change had been discussed with Board Chair Sellers. Chief Wilson answered no. Ms. Price stated that she would

not vote for this policy change until the entire board was present noting that Chairman Sellers brought a lot of experience in this matter to the table. Board Member Kohler asked what the impact would be if the vote on this policy change was delayed for a month. Chief Wilson answered that the probability that the Overtime Budget would be overrun increases and the further the FY year progresses toward the end without this change, the more difficult it will be to adjust for any overrun. Chief Wilson stated that the Department was looking at 12 hour or longer periods as part of the budget proposals being considered for the FY 11/12.

Board Member Crawford stated that he felt this was a reasonable proposal that was negotiated and it was not a permanent change that could not be rescinded if it does not work out as planned. He stated that he intended to vote for the motion. Chief Wilson noted that the current policy was instituted in 2008.

Captain Kelly was asked as a long time employee of the Department what the history of staffing was. Captain Kelly answered that the Department started with 2 firefighters on an Engine and one on an ambulance. Since that time the Department has evolved through 3 firefighters on an engine, 2 firefighters on the ambulance to the current policy which requires 4 firefighters (2 of whom are paramedics) on an Engine and 2 EMS personnel on an ambulance (1 of whom is a paramedic).

Captain Kelly suggested that there might be other alternatives to the proposed policy revision to be considered including utilizing one of the Battalion staff.

Board Member Utter asked if this proposed policy change had been negotiated with the Union. Union President Kenyon answered that it had.

Board Member Price stated that she felt there were other alternatives that needed to be explored before any policy is revised. She again stated that she would vote against this proposal. Chief Wilson offered to withdraw the proposal but noted that the next Board meeting already had a very full agenda with John Flynn making a presentation on future taxes and tax overrides.

Board Member Crawford stated that he felt the proposal should go forward and be monitored. If it causes any undue hardship, then the Board would revisit the issue. The overtime pay that would be expended in the minimum 1 month delay will not be recoverable.

Board Member Price asked if the possibility had been considered that the Firefighters might take a reduction in pay. Chief Wilson answered that would require a reopening of negotiations on the current MOU. Reopening the current MOU would require the Board to declare a financial hardship situation which would be difficult to justify under the present overall District financial situation.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler asked the Board if there someone wanted to make a motion to amend the original motion made by Board Member Crawford.

Board Member Price moved that the Motion made for the adoption of the Revision to Daily Scheduling Policy 100.13 be withdrawn. There was no immediate second and a point of order was made that a second motion could not be made until the current motion on the floor was acted on.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler called for the vote on the Motion to Adopt the Policy Revision as presented. Board Members Utter, Crawford and Kohler voted in favor of the Motion. Board Member Price voted against the Motion. The Motion carried 3 to 1.

Chief Wilson stated that it was the intention of both Labor and Management to implement this policy revision as soon as possible and no later than February 1, 2011.

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler asked that Chief Wilson put a report on the implementation of this policy revision on the February Regular Board Meeting Agenda. Chief Wilson agreed to do so and also reiterated that the February Agenda included probably a one (1) hour presentation on taxes and budget issues.

F. Board Member Comments

Chairman Pro Tem Kohler stated that it was his opinion that the District needed to be looking for ways to generate more revenue. Reducing expenses to make up budget shortfalls will of necessity result in reduction of service quality.

Board Member Crawford stated that the District may need to consider changing its policy and bill for the deductibles in Ambulance charges that are currently absorbed.

Other Board Members commented on the gravity of the situation and the need to consider every possible expense reduction and income increase.

Chief Wilson stated that any changes contemplated must include consideration of the time that the Firefighters and EMS personnel have for family time and rest and relaxation. He noted that working 3 shifts—72 hours—straight put a strain on both the Firefighter and the Firefighter's family.

G. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Pro Tem Kohler declared the meeting adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Forrest Kohler,
Board Clerk & Chair Pro Tem
FK/geh