

NORTHWEST FIRE/RESCUE DISTRICT

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MINUTES OF THE NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT REGULAR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING September 22, 2009

Call to Order/Roll Call/Affirmation of Quorum

Chairman Nassi called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Northwest Fire District Training Facility Conference Room, 8165 N. Wade Road, Marana, Arizona.

Present: Richard Nassi, Chairman
Lee C. Mellor, Vice Chairman
Anka Mischel, Clerk
David Talas

Absent: George Carter (excused)

It was determined a quorum existed with four of five members present.

Salute to the Flag of the United States of America

Richard Nassi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation of Service Awards

Chief Piechura presented a retirement award (special firefighter's helmet) to Kurt Oberdries for 25 years in the fire service.

Assistant Chief Pesqueira presented an award to Division Chief Grasham for 12.5 years of service with NWFD and 40 years collectively in the fire service; his family was also present and introduced.

Richard Nassi presented an award to Chief Piechura and to Division Chief West who have attained Chief Officer Certifications.

Public Forum

Mary Schuh, 1660 W. Roller Coaster Road, Tucson, AZ handed out copies to the Board members about a recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request she made to NWFD and spoke about the following concerns:



- Expenses involved with overtime of about 449 hours for the mandated Removing the Barriers; she estimated this to be over \$11,000 and said additional employees still need to attend the session.
- Expenses involved with the 2007 Josephson Institute Forum
- She asked how much was related to Wildland and the California fires; she felt that California State Wildland should be paying wages for our employees who were working this fire. Total overtime expenses for the pay period were \$109,035.
- Non-suppression overtime of 703 hours for \$24,266 in 14 days; she asked if this included per diem for meals and mileage reimbursement
- Concerns with the financial report listing ambulance revenue at \$1.5 million and told this was listed to allow flexibility if something occurred
- Concerns about the golf tournament check dated June 11; she asked if it was placed in an emergency medical budget, the contingency fund or general fund, and what monies were used to pay for EMT personnel at the tournament in March; she noted the invoice was sent out on May 18.

Richard Nassi granted Mr. Schuh four minutes to speak.

James D. Schuh, 1660 W. Roller Coaster Road, Tucson, AZ congratulated the Union for the donations given to the MDA for their recent telethon. He commented about the following concerns with the Picture Rocks Fire District (PRFD) merger/consolidation:

- Expenses incurred throughout the process and no specific or estimated dollar amounts have been given
- He did not feel the suggested motion should be approved by the Board, and taxpayers should have some estimates of all expenses incurred
- a report should be generated to include overtime and legal fees spent
- He asked for fiscal accountability to the taxpayers and what percentage of Phase II had been completed
- He stated this was not acceptable

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes of the August 25, 2009, Regular Governing Board Meeting

Lee C. Mellor made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to approve minutes of the August 25, 2009, Regular Governing Board Meeting as presented.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Fire Chief's Report – This is a summary of the activities of the Fire Chief and administrative staff concerning each of the District's Divisions including: Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Services, Administrative Services, Finance, Human Resources, Special Projects, Logistics, Life Safety Services and Wild Land Fire Fighting; the report might also include Administrative Activities in Annexations, Intergovernmental Relations, Community Assistance Programs, Fleet and Equipment, Labor and Management Relations, District Revenues and Expenditures, Strategic Planning, Information Technology, Status of Construction Projects, Status of Facilities, Public Outreach and Training

The reports were included in the packet; there was no discussion.

Finance Director's Reports – This report is a summary of the District's Financial Status including: Monthly Board Financial Report, Revenue and Expenditure Reports, Real Estate Tax Revenue Spreadsheets, Lease-Purchase Escrow Account Status, Monthly Bond Report and Arizona State Land Billing and Payment Reports. The Board will be asked to approve the District's Monthly Disbursements Report

The monthly financial reports were included in the packet. David Gephart reported there have been delays in property tax bills being sent out by the County because of delays in the State approving a budget. This will likely delay the District's tax collections by about two weeks. He felt we have sufficient funds and will not need to draw on our line of credit.

Richard Nassi made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to approve the monthly disbursements report as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion, Update and Possible Action on Picture Rocks Fire District and Northwest Fire District Merger/Consolidation Process and the Compatibility Study for Cooperative Services Evaluation between Northwest Fire District and Picture Rocks Fire District; Discussion may include, but not be limited to, the Compatibility Study, the Accreditation Self-Evaluation Tool; the Operational, Administrative and Jurisdictional Compatibility of the Districts for Integration; Fiscal Impact of the Merger Review Process; the Economic and Operational Staffing Assessment and Joint Fire Boards Determination Phases of the Merger Review Process; Cooperative Services between the Districts, Recent Picture Rocks Governing Board Meeting and Action Regarding Consolidation/Merger

Chief Piechura explained that he met with PRFD Chief Kathy Stewart prior to their September board meeting and discussed that a merger would not be in the best interest of PRFD because the CON can be sought by another entity when a merger occurs. The PRFD Board voted to cancel further actions about the possible merger at their September meeting. Chief Piechura said he was seeking a postponement until there could be further dialogue with Chief Stewart but felt the two fire districts could still work together for purchases, training and other cooperative items. He commented that the fiscal impact consisted of staff time and mainly staff salary time; he offered to get exact amounts if the Board chooses.

Richard Nassi made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to direct staff to postpone any further work on the Picture Rocks/Northwest Fire District Merger/Consolidation project until further notice.

During discussion of the motion, Chief Piechura stated that we did not pursue Phase II because of the CON situation. In answer to Mr. Nassi asking if it is correct that there will not be any major expenses in pursuing this in the future, Chief Piechura said that was correct.

Review and Discussion of Strategic Plan Update, with the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year Strategic Objectives and Initiatives, which may include, but may not be limited to: Prospective Improvements to Connection with and Service to the Community, including Community Health, Safety and Satisfaction; Prospective Financial Stewardship Improvements to Enhance Resource Effectiveness and Efficiency, and Increase Revenue Sources; Prospective Internal Process Improvements to Enhance Organizational Efficiency, Safety, Public Relations and Marketing, and Community Partnerships; Identification of Opportunities to Promote a Culture of Caring, Trust, Cooperation and Learning; and Opportunities to Improve Response Capacity/Capability, Professional Recruitment and Personnel Development, and Technology Utilization

Division Chief Grasham thanked everyone for the recognition award he received earlier in the meeting and said it was a complete surprise and deeply appreciated. He spoke about the update to the strategic plan and said there was a correction to his memo that should state there are 13 objectives and not 16. He explained that this is a three-year plan and will be updated and reviewed annually; a full quarterly report will be given at the October Board meeting regarding plans and initiatives.

NEW BUSINESS

Authorization to Pursue the Submittal of a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Application to the Department of Homeland Security for 14 Firefighter Positions for Fire Station No. 39

Division Chief Grasham explained there is not a definite time frame when this grant would be available and anticipates it opening sometime in October or November; the delay is because of a change in administration in the federal government. Board approval is necessary in order to apply for the grant; the application will be brought back to the Board at a future meeting. He remarked that we received a prior grant award and need to apply again in order to staff Fire Station 39.

In response to David Talas asking how many rovers we have and if 14 positions will be needed from the SAFER Grant, Division Chief Horvath said she estimates about 5 rovers on two of the shifts and 4 rovers on another shift. She explained we budgeted for 3.5 firefighters per position who will assist in support and vacations which is how we have the 14 positions to staff the station. DC Grasham explained that each shift is authorized eight rover positions. If we do not receive grant funds, rovers would need to be used for this station which would impact the budget more than hiring full time employees. He said the grant program could possibly change and not require matching funds, but we could be required to fund these positions in the future without grant assistance. By applying for this grant, we could possibly receive funding for the full 4 to 5 year program.

Richard Nassi made the following motion, seconded by Anka Mischel and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to authorize staff to pursue the submittal of a Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant application to the Department of Homeland Security for 14 firefighter positions for Fire Station No. 39.

Approval of the Third Amendment to the Option and Lease Agreement with New Cingular Wireless, LLC at Fire Station 30 on Orange Grove Road allowing Cingular to Extend a Twelve-Month Option for Equipment Placement

Assistant Chief Kahle explained we entered into an option and lease agreement in 2005. The new agreement is for a 65 foot communication monopole tower that will be behind Fire Station 30. The monopole will not be obtrusive and already has neighborhood approval. The lease will be for 12 months, and NWFD will receive \$3,500; there is no cost to NWFD for the tower. We will also receive a monthly rental fee of \$900 for the term of the 10-year lease.

Richard Nassi made the following motion, seconded by Anka Mischel, and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to approve the Third Amendment to the Option and Lease Agreement with new Cingular Wireless, LLC at Fire Station 30 on Orange Grove Road allowing Cingular to extend a twelve-month option for equipment placement.

During discussion of the motion, Mr. Talas asked what equipment NWFD was allowed to have on the tower. AC Kahle explained we will have two microwave dishes, a F1 antenna, and F3 antenna which are EMS and fire ground channels. It was discussed that NWFD will own the monopole and have free access to the pole in the same way we have with Alltel at Fire Stations 32 and AT&T at Fire Station 37.

Discussion Concerning the Award Received from the United States Department of Homeland Security by the Northwest Fire Citizen Corps for Achievement in Volunteer Integration for Emergency Preparedness

Cynthia Dowdall said the NWFD's Citizen Corps Council received a National Citizen Corps Achievement Award from the United States Department of Homeland Security, and they placed in the top four nationally recognized by FEMA as an outstanding program for integrating volunteers. She noted that NWFD was recognized as an Honorable Mention in a letter from FEMA.

Ms. Dowdall spoke about some of the following activities the Northwest Fire's Citizen Corps Council are involved with: The Battery Assistance Team for smoke detector battery change outs, Community Assistance, drowning prevention, File of Life, and partnering with other agencies to help with the dispersing of the Strategic National Stock Pile to those who are in need to receive medicines after being exposed to biological or chemical outbreaks. A countywide drill will take place this Saturday at Twin Peaks Elementary School that will involve setting up a Point of Distribution Site for Mass Dispensing of medicines. She explained it was an honor to accept the award, and the volunteers put in approximately 300 to 400 hours per month which is a tremendous cost savings to NWFD.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding Firefighter Recognition and Awards: Review of Award and Recognition Programs and Strategic Plan Initiatives Now in Place, Consideration of Recognition of Heroic and Courageous Firefighter Acts; Determination of Candidates; Consideration of Having Presentation of Awards before the Governing Board for Heroic and Courageous Firefighter Acts; Consideration of Establishing an Awards Policy for Firefighter Acts that Go Beyond the Call of Duty; other Recognition and Awards Options

Georgeann Hackenbracht explained that this item was on the agenda at the request of Board Member Mischel. The board packet consisted of several documents pertaining to NWFD's Honorary Awards Program and the annual awards recipients that are currently in place.

Ms. Mischel said she was not aware there were existing programs in place when she requested this item be on the agenda. She spoke about a recent fatal fire in which two firefighters went above their call of duty and felt they should be recognized at a Board meeting for their heroic acts. She spoke about researching other fire departments that present ribbons for heroic acts that are worn on the employees' Class A's and would like to implement a similar award for NWFD employees. Mr. Mellor requested the Board receive information on this item if it is discussed at the Leadership Meetings. Mr. Talas felt it was important to publically recognize the employees and suggested possible changes be made to the current procedures to include heroic awards presented at the Board meetings. Mr. Mellor suggested that staff move forward with implementing such a procedure and report back at another meeting.

Assistant Chief Pesqueira remarked that we currently have the Heritage Workgroup in place which is under the Leadership Team that recognizes the service of current and past employees.

Adoption of Resolution No. 2009-049 Approving Agreements with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District Central Arizona Project for Right of Entry to the Central Arizona Project for Training Exercises and for the Provision of Stand-By Rescue Services

Georgeann Hackenbracht explained that these agreements replace our current IGA and spoke about the opportunity for beneficial training that our Technical Rescue Team will receive and being able to obtain information from the Central Arizona Project personnel that will benefit the District.

Richard Nassi made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to Adopt Resolution No. 2009-049 approving agreements with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District Central Arizona Project for Right of Entry to the Central Arizona Project for training exercises and for the provision of stand-by rescue services.

During discussion of the motion, Mr. Mellor mentioned that a large portion runs into NWFD's boundaries. Ms. Hackenbracht remarked that the canal runs into Pima County and down Avra Valley Road and further south into the District.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future Agenda Items [A Governing Board Member may bring forth general topics for a future meeting agenda. The Governing Board may not discuss, deliberate or take any action on the topics presented, pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02 (H).]

Discussion and Possible Action regarding the ISO Rating and its Impact on the Community


ADJOURNMENT

Lee Mellor made the following motion, seconded by Anka Mischel, and approved unanimously with four ayes:

Move to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Northwest Fire District Board at its October 27, 2009, Regular Governing Board Meeting.


Anka Mischel, Clerk of the Board