



NORTHWEST FIRE/RESCUE DISTRICT

SERVING RESIDENTS OF THE NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT, THE FLOWING WELLS
COMMUNITY AND THE TOWN OF MARANA
ADMINISTRATION/LIFE SAFETY SERVICES 5225 W. MASSINGALE RD. TUCSON AZ 85743
PHONE: (520) 887-1010 FAX: (520) 887-1034 www.northwestfire.org

MINUTES OF THE NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT REGULAR GOVERNING BOARD MEETING October 26, 2010

Call to Order/Roll Call/Affirmation of Quorum

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

Absent: None

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

Salute to the Flag of the United States of America

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Cub Scouts' Brayden Barkett and Caleb Barkett from Cub Scout Troup 231.

Presentation of Service Awards

No awards were presented at this time.

Public Forum

No members of the public requested to speak at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

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



Move to approve items A and B on the September 28, 2010, Consent Agenda 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.

Anka Mischel thanked the CAP Team for their assistance given to a neighboring fire department.

Finance Director's Reports – This report is a summary of the District's Financial Status including: Monthly Board Financial Report, Monthly Disbursements 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 statements were included in the packet. David Gephart reported that tax collections and financials were solid; monitoring will continue throughout the year.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to approve the District's monthly disbursements report as presented.

TEAL BLUE ANNEXATION PUBLIC HEARING

Discussion of the Teal Blue Annexation Boundary Change Impact Statement; Possible Discussion Concerning the Character of the Property and the Impact of Bringing it into the District

Chief Piechura explained the area is slightly under one-half square mile; assessed value is about \$3.8 million; based on today's property tax rate, revenue is estimated at

\$84,000. The area would be primarily serviced by Station 39 at Tangerine and Thornydale with either Station 37 or Station 38 servicing as secondary.

Public Hearing Regarding the Proposed Teal Blue Annexation

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to open the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.

No members of the public requested to speak at this time.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to close the public hearing at 6:07 p.m.

Chief Piechura discussed the following:

- A public hearing offers the Governing Board an opportunity to hear from District residents as well as those in the Teal Blue area; the public hearing can be reopened for comments.
- Petitions would be circulated within the area.
- To receive County approval, petitions would require signatures of more than 50% of the property owners and more than 50% of the assessed value.
- There are opportunities for the property owners to meet with District staff and public officials to discuss the proposed annexation.
- In about six months, Rural Metro will be withdrawing their subscription for services from the area north of Tangerine and west of Camino de Oeste.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to reopen the public hearing at 6:09 p.m.

Paul Owen's concerns and questions were:

- How did it come about that Rural Metro would be discontinuing servicing the area and NWFD would be able to provide services?
- He requested an explanation about the financial difference with their current provider and higher rates with NWFD
- What options do the residents have after Rural Metro is no longer providing services?

Chief Piechura explained:

- Rural Metro bases their service fees on square footage acreage; NWFD's fees are based on assessed property values.
- If you are not within a municipality that provides fire services, you would need to either rely upon a fire district or a private provider to offer services such as Rural Metro.
- NWFD is a governmental, tax-based entity; the Governing Board is elected by the residents; NWFD is internationally accredited.
- There are four people and paramedics assigned to each engine.
- The general fund tax rate is \$2.17 per secondary \$100.
- There is an additional bond rate of about \$0.29 per secondary \$100 that paid for several new fire stations.

Chief Piechura discussed that Rural Metro will be leaving the areas north of Tangerine between Thornydale and Oro Valley with the exception of La Cholla Air Park which is a subscription area. Notices have been mailed to the subscribers about their withdrawal and options for fire service. NWFD became involved with the Teal Blue area after receiving requests from residents who were interested in being annexed into the District because of receiving service withdrawal notices from Rural Metro.

Pam Tilden's concerns and questions were:

- She has a small house on 10 acres and felt she was being penalized for having a larger property and stated her assessed value would be 4 to 5 times higher.
- Can a person who only has vacant land opt out of services?
- What type of ambulance service will be provided?
- How is water brought to the properties in the event of a fire?
- She has not been contacted by Rural Metro and when she spoke with them two weeks ago; they did not mention pulling out of the area.
- If Rural Metro does pull out, what are the options?

Chief Piechura explained:

- The Arizona Tax Code establishes a structure that taxes are evaluated on the total assessed land value whether you are part of a school district, library district or fire district. It does not distinguish between land or dwellings; once annexed into an area, the resident cannot opt out.
- NWFD does not provide ambulance services. Paramedics are on the engine and rescues are available for transport if an ambulance is not.
- Southwest Ambulance services are located at Thornydale and Linda Vista; a fee will be charged to utilize the service.
- The water tender located at Station 39 contains 500 gallons and a brush engine contains 500 gallons that would respond to fires.
- Upon completion of the annexation, a water tender would be relocated at either station on Thornydale or Dove Mountain that will contain 2,500 to 3,500 gallons of water.

- He explained using Class A Foam mixed with water that aids in extinguishing the fire.
- If the residents do not approve the annexation, NWFD would offer private contracts; the fee is 125% higher than what the assessed value would be (an additional 25% would be added to the rate).
- If no contracts are in place and there is an emergency, a bill would be sent based on services on an hourly rate and equipment used no matter who made the call to respond. The costs would be greater than the tax rate paid; by law, a lien would be placed on the property if the fees are not paid.

Mary Modoff's concerns and questions were:

- How is everyone contacted about the annexation?
- She and many of her neighbors have not received any information from NWFD or Rural Metro.
- Where did NWFD get the mailing list?
- She would like it in writing what her costs would be if annexed into NWFD.
- How will the residents know everyone has been contacted with a petition?

Chief Piechura explained:

- Notices were sent in the mail using the list provided from the County Assessor's Office that NWFD is required to use by law.
- He offered to come speak to the community and bring other staff to speak about the services that are being offered; assessed values will also be provided.
- NWFD has one year to complete the annexation, but the residents have a six-month transition to complete the process because of Rural Metro pulling out.
- Once annexation has been confirmed by the County, services begin 30 days from that date.
- A year of free services will be provided because the properties will not be on the tax rolls until 2012.
- Rural Metro has a month-to-month contract available.

Bob Bohasic's concerns and questions were:

- Who decides what level of service is required and equipment needed, and is there any control?
- He has never needed Rural Metro's services and did not feel he would ever need to call NWFD for services.
- Can NWFD continue raising rates because they decide more is needed?
- Fires are more remote as they once were; he did not feel all the equipment was necessary.
- Is NWFD under any restrictions limiting how much the rates can increase?
- Do you anticipate additional costs to servicing the area?
- He asked if most calls were snake removal?
- The most difficult part is the higher increase in rates.

- He did not receive any notice from Rural Metro; tonight was the first time he was aware their services would be discontinued.
- He asked what the choices were for fire protection.

Board Chair Carter commented:

- Ambulance service is provided through Southwest Ambulance; they hold the Certificate of Necessity for the entire area; current NWFD residents pay a fee if ambulance service is utilized.

Chief Piechura explained:

- Annual budget hearings are held that allow the public speakers to voice their concerns about new purchases and other budgetary issues.
- This is our third year of holding status quo on the budget.
- The area is part of 148 square miles of fire protection with 125,000 residents
- An interim water tender will need to be relocated in the area; another water tender will need to be purchased from annexation funds.
- There is a statutory rate cap of \$3.25; tax rates cannot exceed this amount.
- The budget cannot be increased more than 8% a year. If not expended, the 8% can be banked for subsequent years; NWFD has banked 16% and has not had levy increases for the past three years.
- 80% of NWFD calls are medical.

Chief Piechura commented that NWFD is not required to annex the area and that we are only conforming to the process of informing the residents of their options. NWFD is not obligated to respond to a non-resident fire. Property taxes paid by the residents are utilized to support facilities and purchase equipment, and District residents will receive first requests. NWFD will respond to non-residents if available.

George Carter encouraged the audience to attend the budget meetings that will begin sometime in March to address some of the concerns.

Pam Tilden spoke for a second time about the following:

- Would there be another increase when an additional water tender is purchased or is it already in the budget?
- Can ambulance service be refused?

Chief Piechura explained an existing water tender will be relocated in the area, and as the tax revenues are received from the Teal Blue and Camino de Mañana III areas, a new water tender would be purchased in about two years.

In speaking about refusing ambulance service, Chief Piechura remarked that this service is provided by law, and NWFD would transport under a life and death situation if the ambulance was available when needed.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to close the second public hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Approval of Teal Blue Annexation Boundary Change Impact Statement for the Annexation of an Area Located East of Thornydale Road and North of Moore Road in Pima County; and Authorization of Circulation of Petitions

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved with four ayes; Anka Mischel abstained:

Move to accept the Teal Blue Annexation Boundary Change and authorize the passing of petitions.

BUSINESS

Presentation and Discussion of the "Imagine Greater Tucson Program" by Mr. Arlan Colton regarding the Purpose "To Make Our Community a Vibrant and Healthy Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play for Current and Future Generations of All Ages"

Anka Mischel excused herself from the dais at 6:48 p.m. and returned at 6:49 p.m. Lee C. Mellor excused himself from the dais at 6:48 p.m. and returned at 7:06 p.m.

Chief Piechura introduced Mr. Colton, Director of Planning for Pima County, who gave the following presentation:

- Imagine Greater Tucson (IGT) – working toward regional consensus for growth
- Purpose – make Tucson a healthy place to live
- Population growth expected to double
- Holding meetings re: IGT
- Taking an on-line survey at imaginegreatertucson.org
- Three phases – talking, thinking & action
- Involvement of private & public sectors and non-profit organizations and citizens
- Necessity for future planning
- Ways to get involved
- Developing a future vision & action plans

Prior to discussion of the next agenda item, Anka Mischel recused herself from the dais at 7:08 p.m.

Discussion and Possible Action to Receive the Camino de Mañana III Boundary Change Impact Statement and Set an Annexation Hearing concerning Property Located West of Camino de Oeste and South of Tangerine Road in Pima County, Arizona; Possible Discussion Concerning the Character of the Property and the Impact of bringing it into the District

Chief Piechura explained that Camino de Mañana III is part of the Rural Metro subscription transition area; service to the area is anticipated to cease sometime next year. He continued to explain:

- The area has a secondary assessed valuation slightly over \$26,700,000.
- Anticipated revenue is estimated over \$500,000.
- The area is located between Fire Stations 37, 38, & 39; it will be accessible by Fire Station 34 upon completion of the Twin Peaks overpass project.
- No fire hydrants are within the area
- An existing water tender would need to be relocated; tax revenues would be utilized to purchase a new water tender.
- NWFD's rate would be 3 to 4 times higher than Rural Metro's subscription rate.
- The public hearing notice will be mailed to residents along with a joint letter from NWFD and Rural Metro.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with four ayes; Anka Mischel was recused:

Move to approve the acceptance of the Camino de Mañana III Annexation Boundary Change Impact Statement and furthermore to hold a Public Hearing to discuss the merits of the annexation on December 14, 2010, at 6:00 PM MST.

During discussion of the motion, Chief Piechura noted that Rural Metro's Union representative offered their services to assist NWFD in passing petitions within the area. In response to Mr. Carter requesting that residents be given proper notification, Chief Piechura explained that Rural Metro has a data base of their current subscribers; 70% of the residents do not have subscriptions. A joint letter from NWFD and Rural Metro will be mailed to the subscribers with hearing notices and every effort made to notify all residents within the area.

Anka Mischel rejoined the dais at 7:14 p.m.

Adoption of Resolution No. 2010-037 Approving Amendment No. 1 to the Intergovernmental Agreement for County Fire Dispatch with Drexel Heights Fire District

Chief Piechura explained that the IGA entered into in 2008, identified NWFD as the lead entity to begin planning and implementing programs for the future County Fire District

Center that will be located at the Pima County Sheriff's Communications Center on 22nd Street; completion is anticipated in 2014. Approving the amendment would shift control of the dispatch center to Drexel Heights Fire District (DHFD); the decision is supported by the fire chiefs of both districts. Various reasons for this decision are:

- DHFD currently operates a dispatch center with qualified dispatchers.
- DHFD is in the process of receiving an updated Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Program.
- DHFD has improved the processing of 9-1-1 calls for current providers.
- Shifting control to DHFD would save NWFD an estimated \$500,000 in start-up costs.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved with three ayes; Anka Mischel and David Talas voted nay:

Move to adopt Resolution No. 2010-037 approving Amendment No.1 to the Intergovernmental Agreement with Drexel Heights Fire District that shifts responsibility of the Dispatch Center from Northwest Fire District to Drexel Heights Fire District.

During discussion of the motion, Ms. Mischel asked if this meant NWFD would remain with the City of Tucson for dispatch services. Chief Piechura explained that the PCWIN Program gave an opportunity to have an integrated communication system between fire districts, the County, the Police and Sheriff Departments and to be co-located in one building. The County is going to utilize the facility on 22nd Street, and the City received funds to remodel their Price Road service center for an EMS and fire communication's center. There was discussion to possibly bring this item back at the November meeting for further determination to either remain with DHFD or to remain with the City of Tucson.

Mr. Talas questioned if the equipment would be compatible with NWFD's current equipment or if additional equipment would be needed. He emphasized the need to assure that DHFD would be able to take NWFD's work load and to have dispatch increase with better services to the residents and not decrease.

Chief Piechura commented that DHFD provides services to many fire districts throughout the County. They will be receiving a hybrid Level 2 CAD system which will handle the submitted call loads. NWFD truck terminals would need to be upgraded regardless of what entity provided services. If the Board wanted a detailed analysis of the options to stay with the City or to go with DHFD, this would need to be brought back at a later meeting. He clarified that NWFD is still committed to the Pima County IGA PCWIN, and NWFD will need to decide if we want to continue with the City for dispatch services.

Chief Piechura introduced Carla Reese who will be joining NWFD as the administrative manager.

Discussion and Possible Action Approving Filling the Vacated Battalion Chief Shift Position with a Captain on the Current Battalion Chief Promotional List and Effects of the Promotion on Lower Ranks of the Organization

Division Chief Horvath explained the following four items that were discussed with the Union and provided a detailed memo explaining the item:

1. The BC position needs to be filled in order to provide the proper level of management service.
2. Four candidates are eligible from the current list and have had opportunities to serve as BCs in the past. A cost would be incurred if a captain's position needed to be filled; this is an unbudgeted item.
3. Realign a Division Chief to fill the vacated Battalion Chief opening on shift.
4. Realign a current administrative Battalion Chief to a shift Battalion Chief.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Anka Mischel, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to approve filling the vacated Battalion Chief Shift position with a Captain on the current Battalion Chief promotional list.

During discussion of the motion, Mr. Mellor stated he did not think there was a freeze on promotions or hiring because of the SIP taken by employees. Mr. Talas questioned if we have the right resources in the position and asked if an assessment had been done to look at all options. DC Horvath remarked that all possibilities have been discussed with the Union; the memo provided in the packet explained some of these issues. She stated that the District made a decision a little over 4 years ago to go to a two BC system. Discussion pursued.

Prior to discussion of the next agenda item, Anka Mischel recused herself from the dais at 7:46 p.m.

Discussion and Update regarding Southwest Ambulance Service within Northwest Fire District

Battalion Chief Bradley commented that NWFD has continued to work with Southwest Ambulance (SWA) to address operational issues since the update given this past June.

NWFD transported 6 patients last year; 9 patients were transported this year. Staff anticipates receiving a proposal from the City of Tucson addressing communication issues. Both NWFD and SWA concur that lack of communications is the largest contributor to operational issues. The majority of NWFD transports have been justified and attributed to the following:

- Lack of interoperable communications and an intergraded system
- Lack of trust associated with ETAs being provided by SWA
- Delayed response times due to resource allocation issues

BC Bradley explained that SWA communications were previously dispatched by the City's communications as part of the dispatch consortium. The radio frequencies SWA spoke on are owned by NWFD, and in order for SWA to utilize these frequencies there needed to be cost recovery. SWA previously rejected NWFD's offer to utilize these services, and SWA management has expressed a renewed interest in discussing an agreement to use the radio frequencies. He noted that this would solve some communication problems, but it does not address issues associated with NWFD having the ability to dispatch and track the units for response times and locations.

The meeting recessed at 7:55 p.m. and reconvened at 8:02 p.m.; Lee C. Mellor rejoined the dais at 8:03 p.m.

Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Guaranteed Maximum Price for Fire Station No. 30 and Fire Station No. 32 Rebuilds

Division Chief Emans introduced the following individuals who have been associated with this project: Paul Mickelberg, WSM Architects, Doug Wagner, Project Manager, and Jared Pale, Project Architect. DC Emans remarked that this project is within budget.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Lee C. Mellor, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to accept the Guaranteed Maximum Price from Sundt Construction in the amount not to exceed \$5,547,018.00 for the reconstruction of Fire Stations 30 and 32, with funding provided by the 2010 bond sale, and to authorize the Chairman, Clerk of the Board and Staff to execute the documents.

During discussion of the motion, DC Emans explained that the County previously requested NWFD to pave a portion of Pomona Road back to the exits; funds have been set aside for this item. This request might change with the La Canada area improvements that will begin in December; information will be provided as it is known.

Paul Mickelson provided large scale drawings of both projects and explained the designs, structures, ingress, egress, parking and other components involved.

Adoption of Resolution No. 2010-038 Authorizing a Right-of-Way Easement in Favor of Tucson Electric Power Company at the New Central Services Campus Property

Division Chief Emans explained that, upon approval of this item, electric power is anticipated to be at the site sometime in December.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to adopt Resolution No. 2010-038 authorizing a Right-of-Way Easement in favor of Tucson Electric Power Company at the New Central Services Campus property.

Discussion and Possible Action Authorizing Staff to begin Requests For Proposals (RFP) No. 1004 for Agenda and Meeting Management System

David Gephart explained that staff is reviewing ways to become more efficient in the preparation of agendas and meeting management. This item will be brought back to the Board for further discussion after RFPs have been received.

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by David Talas, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to authorize staff to begin Requests for Proposals (RFP) No. 1004 for agenda and meeting management system.

During discussion of the motion, Mr. Nassi asked if the costs are known for this item and if they are within budget. Mr. Gephart explained these costs will be known following receipt of RFPs. Pricing will be determined based upon either NWFD purchasing the software, which would be a capital item, or does not purchase the software and has it maintained offsite by the vendor which would be an ongoing operational cost.

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 about future dispatch services.

ADJOURNMENT

George Carter made the following motion, seconded by Anka Mischel, and approved unanimously with five ayes:

Move to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Northwest Fire District Board at its November 14, 2010, Regular Governing Board Meeting.



Lee C. Mellor
Clerk of the Board