

**Minutes to the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District
Tuesday, February 23, 2021
0900**

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Garber, Archibald, Dorney, Webber, Johnson.

Approval of the minutes:

- January 29, 2021 – not approved, Webber to rewrite
- February 1, 2021 – motion to approve by Webber, seconded by Archibald, motion carried unanimously
- February 8, 2021 – motion to approve by Webber, seconded by Archibald, motion carried unanimously

Chief's Report – See copy of Chief's report at the end of these minutes.

Ops Chief Report – After the introduction of our Operations Chief, Marc Meredith, Marc presented two brief reports that are found at the end of these minutes.

Monthly Financial reports and consideration of financial matters pursuant to A.R.S. §48-807: MS Rutter presented the January financial statements including the Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statement and the Cash Flow Forecast. She also queried the Board on when the investigation and Board action would end as she believes we've spent upwards of \$114,621 on investigation-related expenses since the beginning of the fiscal year. Chairman Johnson advised that the Board was well-aware of the amount of dollars that have been spend and didn't need to be reminded.

Current Events: Sue Archibald resigned her position as of the adjournment of the meeting as she had moved outside of the district and would no longer qualify to be a board member. (Board members must be district residents.) [The Board has 90 days to fill the vacated seat. If no one is selected within the 90-day timeframe, the county will fill the seat.]

Update on Board Survey: Dorney – this item was tabled, but will stay on the agenda until the Board is ready to post the survey.

Discussion and possible action to replace the Fire Chief – Board Chair Johnson presented a single-page document to fellow Board members that detailed his perception of the options available to SEFD for hiring a new Fire Chief. The general consensus of the Board was that there wasn't enough information to make a decision at this time. Dorney specifically asked to get our ducks in a row and take it to a special meeting. More information was to be gathered.

Discussion and possible action on Resolution 2021-2-EMS-1 for the GOHS Grant

it had been determined after printing the agenda but prior to the meeting that this resolution was no longer necessary. No action taken.

Possible Executive session for legal advice: Board Chair Johnson advised that Attorney Aversa was very busy and not available for a meeting so no executive session was held.

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Review, discussion and possible action on pay audit for Chief De Wolf from Walker & Armstrong: This discussion was quite convoluted, but the summary is as follows: Johnson stated the Board still didn't have the final information from Walker & Armstrong. Johnson was concerned with getting accurate figures from the auditors – they calculated it one way (based on a calendar year) and he (Johnson) calculated it differently (on what we actually paid; he is concerned for accuracy as there aren't 52 weeks in a year as the Auditor uses) and Johnson wanted to get them both on the same page. The "summary" concerned alleged overpayments in compensation over three years. During the discussion, when asked of possible remedies, Johnson stated solutions could include sending a demand letter or turning it over to our insurance agency. After Johnson speaks with the attorney, they will communicate to the whole board at the next regular meeting unless the attorney feels they need to take action sooner. No action was taken. Webber and Garber are open to having an earlier meeting if necessary.

Adjournment: motion to adjourn was made by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved on March 29, 2021, _____, Board Clerk.
Reba Webber

Good morning

Let me start by saying how impressed I am with the members of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District. Each and every day these brave first responders answer the call. They do their best not to get caught up in all the extra drama we have had lately.

We posted for the open Ops Chief position internally. We had two candidates apply for the position Captain Aaron Sapienza and Acting Operations Chief Marc Meredith. Last Friday we had interviews and a testing process. Congratulation goes to Marc Meredith. We will be posting for the open Captain position on A-Shift that currently is being filled by Acting Captain Emma Laird.

We are gearing up for the up coming Wildland season. We will be doing our refreshers and 3-mile pack test in early March.

We would like to thank Mac's Towing for getting us cars so we could demo the new battery-operated extrication tools. We demo 4 different company's tools. We will to be placing order next month for our new battery-operated extrication tools. Our current extrication tools are about 15 years old. We received a grant from the Governor's office to pay for the new tools. With the extra money from the grant, we will also be purchasing new safety vest, cones, and extrication gloves.

All our vehicles are running pretty-well. We had to send one of the older ambulances in for repairs. Unfortunately, it died on the side of the road and had to be towed to Tucson. Good news is we did not have a patient in the back when it died. The high-pressure oil pump was replaced. We applied for the FEMA grant for funding to replace one of the aging ambulances.

Our SCBA compressor has been repaired finally. It was down for 5 months due to not being able to find parts to repair it. Our compressor is about 15 years old. The repairman told us that the compressor will have to be replaced sooner or later. He also told us that even with the repairs that were completed our compressor could last week to maybe a year. A new compressor could cost around \$50,000.

We had 61 calls for Service in January. A-shift had 22, B-Shift had 13, C-Shift had 24. We had 29 in Zone 1, 4 in Zone 2, 9 in Zone 3, 2 in Zone 4, and 17 in Zone 5. 24 of the calls were EMS, 6 were MVCs, and 7 were Control burns. We are now doing lock outs. We will only do them if there is a life threat. We bought a kit and are training our members on safety getting into a vehicle. We also have a form that the vehicle owner must sign relieving liability for any damage.

We started to work on next year's budget. We will be presenting at the next board meeting. We had a little increase in assessed value this year.

Any questions?

Acting Chief Jon Buonaccorsi's Report



SONOITA-ELGIN FIRE DISTRICT

“PROUD PAST STRONG FUTURE”



Fire District Board Meeting
February 2021
Member Update

New Volunteers

Since the January meeting, we have had two new recruits start the process and one finish it. We are looking at some COVID friendly solutions to expand the number of recruits who start our process and will have an update at the March meeting.

Departures

We had two members depart for other departments. Hiring by larger agencies continues in 2021 and we expect more members to find opportunities with them before the end of the year. It is our goal to retain our members for as long as it makes sense for both them and SEFD but the draw to bigger agencies will always be a challenge.

New Members

Matthew McGrath- Matt is from Tucson and finished his EMT studies in 2019. In addition to volunteering with us, he works as an Emergency Room Technician at Banner University Medical Center, South

Members on Assignment

As part of the effort to vaccinate as many people as possible in the Tucson metro area, two of our members- **Finn Gibbs** and **Karina Hilliard** (via PVFR) are serving on a team at the Univ of AZ at the new 24hr distribution site

Firefighter Academy Completion

Austin Dale and **Karina Hilliard** recently completed their FF I/II academy via Helmet Peak Fire. They are awaiting the results of their state testing and should know soon. We are quite proud of both of them!

by: Ops Chief MARE Meredith



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Fire District Board Meeting
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EMS Initiatives

SEFD continues to evaluate our EMS role in the community and the needs of the department. As a result, we are undertaking the following initiatives. For each one there is a brief description and the hoped-for impact.

EMS Apparatus

We currently operate three ambulances- M831/M832 (2006 Ford F350 type III) and M833 (Dodge 3500 type 1). The three combined have mileage of nearly 280,000 miles, with the two Fords having over 110k each. Repair costs for M831 and M832 are increasing, as the frequency of repair. We have submitted a FEMA AFG grant seeking funding for a new ambulance but competition is steep. We should know by this summer if we have received it. If we do, a new medic unit should be online in early 2022. If not, we will need to consider purchase of a used unit.

EMS Scope of Services

SEFD is authorized by the state of Arizona to provide 911 response within our CON. This works well for our patients that we transfer but because of the billing structure associated with being solely a 911 provider, it can be problematic for patients who we do not transfer- even when that is an appropriate decision. We do not want people to hesitate to call 911 or seek our help. Accordingly, we are pursuing two things-

- Recognition as a “Treat and Refer” agency. This status, granted by the state, allows an EMS agency to provide assessment, some treatment and referral of patients for non-emergent follow-up and bill for those services at a reduced cost. We hope to have the application submitted in March.
- Development of a department policy for “gratuitous services.” By developing a policy that states what minor assistance and/or treatment we will offer at no cost, it ensures that have properly documented encounters with patients without the patient incurring any charge. We currently offer blood pressure checks at the station for free and will use that existing model to create this policy. It should be ready for consideration at the March meeting

EMS Recognition

The state offers designation to select agencies that recognizes them as “Premier EMS Agency Program” (PEAP) members. This recognition is valuable for grant applications and other considerations and we have been encouraged by our base hospital to apply for it. We intend to do so next month and provide an update at the April meeting.

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Website: www.sefd911.org



SONOITA-ELGIN FIRE DISTRICT

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EMS Grants

We have been awarded a grant of nearly 10k by the Coyote Crisis Collaborative to be a regional holding site for pediatric trauma kits. These kits are specially designed for pediatric patients and can be rapidly deployed in the event of an event involving multiple pediatric patients. These kits will be made available to our neighbor agencies if needed.

by: Ops Chief Marc Meredith