



# HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES • 02/20/24

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A regular meeting of the Fire Board of Directors was held on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 5:00 PM** at Fire Station 23, Administration Board Room, 3350 Old Munds Hwy, Flagstaff, AZ. The meeting was also available through Zoom Video Conferencing.

**1. Call to Order.** Chairperson Hanecak called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**2. Roll Call.**

Board members present were Chairperson Tom Hanecak, Clerk Brad Bippus, Director Jay Smith, Director Carl Nelson, and Director Dan Stoffel.

Administrative personnel present were Chief Todd Miller, Battalion Chief Josh Pond, Superintendent Shelby Erickson, and Ms. Jayme Jones.

Visitor present was Mr. Wiatt Wong with VFIS Insurance.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation, Mission and Vision Statements, and Board Responsibilities.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a silent invocation was offered, and the district's mission, vision, and selected Board responsibilities were recited.

**4. Welcome Visitors.** Chairperson Hanecak welcomed Mr. Wiatt Wong.

**5. Call to the Public.** There were no public comments.

**6. Approval of Minutes**

A. JANUARY 24, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING – The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 24, 2024 Special Meeting. **A MOTION was made by Director Smith and was seconded by Director Stoffel to approve the minutes as presented.** The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.

**7. Finance**

A. WARRANTS – **A MOTION was made by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Stoffel to approve the warrants as presented.** The Board reviewed the District's warrants and credit card purchases paid in January. After questions, the motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.

B. FINANCIAL REPORT – Chief Miller presented Financial Report including the District's General Fund, Capital Fund, and Bear Jaw Fund Financial Reports including the Profit/Loss Budget Overviews, Bank Reconciliation, County's Fund Balance Summary, and Cash Flow Projection. He noted that according to the County, FDAT funds were recorded late; all other accounts are trending normally.

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## 8. Summary Reports & Correspondence.

- A. IAFF LOCAL CHAPTER 1505 SUMMARY REPORT – Engineer Ahrendt reported that 1505 is participating in Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl-a-thon.
- B. BATTALION FIRE CHIEF’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Josh Pond presented the Battalion Chief’s Report. There were 40 calls for service in January, lower than normal. See the written report for additional information provided.
- C. FIRE CHIEF’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Miller presented the Fire Chief’s Report. Chief Miller recognized the Apparatus Committee for their efforts in building the Type 6 Engine and developing specifications for the Type 1 and 3 Engine purchases. The committee is led by Engineer Reed; members include Chief C. Pond, Captains Modrell, Monreal, and True. A Type 1 Engine has been ordered. Chief Miller thanked Director Stoffel and Director Smith for serving on the Chief’s Budget Committee. Chief Miller thanked Chief C. Pond and Ms. Jones for working on the new website. Chief Miller presented the Board with his established goals for 2024. See written report for additional information provided.

After the Chief’s Summary Report, Chairperson Hanecak lead a discussion regarding the Chief’s goals. He explained that the Board had requested that the assigned goals include timeframes; he and Chief Miller established the following completion dates. In addition, Chief Miller commented that they removed some goals, and revised some goals as follows:

- Manage execution of General Obligation Bond sales reporting, budgeting, and related purchases.
    - Preparation of documents, board input, sale, and closing. – March 2024
    - Purchasing in accordance with policy and Board direction, identifying priorities, and executing. – December 2024
  - Revamp District website and integrate easier accessibility and automation to support our community, our partners, and District business. – June 2024
  - Implement and execute updated strategic planning process. – December 2024
  - Update HR Policy. – December 2024
  - Manage the replacement and transition of the Finance Manager position.
    - Initial action for replacement and transition – March 2024
    - Evaluation and adjustment if needed – December 2024
- D. FIRE BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chairperson Hanecak commented that it’s good to hear January had a low call volume. He believes it is “really cool” that we are building out the Type 6 Engine, which will provide significant savings. He appreciates that the District is employing internal talent to get it done.
- E. CORRESPONDENCE – There was no correspondence presented.

## 9. Topics of Discussion and Possible Legal Action.

- A. PRESENTATION BY WIATT WONG WITH VFIS INSURANCE; CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE RENEWAL OF VFIS INSURANCE POLICY. Chairperson Hanecak addressed Mr. Wong and introduced the Board. Mr. Wong introduced himself and said he was honored to be our

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property and causality carrier. He informed the Board that the District is experiencing a smaller than usual increase of 3.6%. The District's 5 year loss ratio is 29%. The inflation of repair costs and parts have doubled; however, they are trying not to pass all that additional cost. Mr. Wong reviewed many of the coverage enhancements added to the policy. See written proposal for details. Mr. Wong discussed the agreed values identified for our apparatus, and he believes they are getting a bit low. Chief Miller said he would consider increasing the values. Mr. Wong informed the Board about the potential risks of cyber-attacks and the availability of additional coverage. After questions, a **MOTION** was made by Director Stoffel and was seconded by Director Smith to approve the VFIS Policy renewal with adjusted rate for increased apparatus of no more than \$4,613.00 (\$50,000 overall premium). The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**. The Board thanked Mr. Wong and he left the meeting.

- B. (E.) PRESENTATION OF BEAR JAW FIRE & FUELS REPORT. Superintendent Erickson presented Bear Jaw Annual Report. The crew removed 22,599 bags of ground litter, and 6,325 cubic yards of slash during the 2023 Community Clean-up project. They also completed several Firewise Assessments, 760 acres of prescribed fire, and successful ignitions of 1927 piles. The crew responded to 9 incidents in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, and California, working 111 days. See written report for details. Superintendent Erickson answered the Board's questions. Chief Miller thanked Superintendent Erickson for his report and the hard work of the crew.
- C. (B.) CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE THE FIRE BOARD HANDBOOK & BYLAWS. The Board reviewed the Fire Board Handbook and Bylaws. Ms. Jones informed the Board that a few revisions have been applied regarding changes to A.S.R. identifiers. Director Nelson requested the Handbook and Bylaws reflect the information provided in the Notice of Regular Meetings. Director Stoffel asked how the Board reviews its own performance for improvement (page 7) and self-evaluates (page 8). The Board discussed doing an evaluation towards the end of each year, and they decided to consider it in more detail. The Board also discussed the responsibility of co-signing warrants and where that should be reflected in the handbook. A **MOTION** was made by Director Nelson and seconded by Director Stoffel to accept the revision the revision as discussed. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.
- D. (C.) CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE ANNUAL NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETINGS. The Board reviewed the Notice of Regular Meetings. A **MOTION** was made by Director Smith and was seconded by Clerk Bippus to accept the Notice of Regular Meetings without a semicolon as discussed. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.
- E. (D.) DISCUSSION/UPDATE ON THE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS. Chief Miller presented information regarding the sale and closing of the General Obligation Bonds. Chief Miller reviewed a timeline of activities taken to close the process successfully on March 7<sup>th</sup>. See written Staff Briefing for details.

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- F. DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES. Chief Miller informed the Board that he has not yet decided how to fill the Finance Manager position. He is heavily leaning on hiring the James Vincent Group.
- G. CONSIDERATION TO APPOINT CITIZEN MEMBER TO PSPRS LOCAL BOARD PER A.R.S. § 38-847 (3) LOCAL BOARDS. Ms. Jones informed the Board that her PSPRS Local Board position expires on March 30. The Board must appoint a citizen member to the PSPRS Local Board or may reappoint Ms. Jones for another term. A **MOTION** was made by Chairperson Hanecak and was seconded by Director Stoffel to appoint Ms. Jones to the PSPRS Local Board. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.
- H. REVIEW BOARD TASK CALENDAR. The Board reviewed the Board Task Calendar.
10. **Board Member comments.** There were no further comments.
11. **Adjournment.** A **MOTION** was made by Director Stoffel and was seconded Clerk Bippus to adjourn; the motion was unanimously **APPROVED**. The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Jones