



HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES • 06/20/23

A regular meeting of the Fire Board of Directors was held on **Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 5:00 PM** at Fire Station 23, Administration Board Room, 3350 Old Munds Hwy, Flagstaff, AZ. In addition, the meeting was also available through Zoom Video Conferencing.

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Hanecak called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

2. **Roll Call**

Board members present were Chairperson Tom Hanecak, Director Brad Bippus, Director Jay Smith, Director Dirch Foreman, and Director Carl Nelson.

Administrative personnel present were Chief Todd Miller, Chief Mike Greenwalt, Mrs. Robyn Wilson, and Ms. Jayme Jones.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation, Mission and Vision Statements, and Board Responsibilities.** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, a silent invocation was offered, and the district's mission, vision, and selected Board responsibilities were recited.

4. **Welcome Visitors.** There were no public visitors present.

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

6. **Approval of Minutes**

A. MAY 16, 2023 REGULAR MEETING – The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 16, 2023 Regular Meeting. **A MOTION was made by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Smith to approve the minutes as with correction to add Director Smith's name to Item 9. B.; the motion was unanimously APPROVED.**

7. **Finance**

A. WARRANTS – The Board reviewed the warrants and credit card purchases paid for in May. **A MOTION was made by Director Smith and was seconded by Director Nelson to approve the warrants as presented;** the motion was unanimously **APPROVED.**

B. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ms. Wilson presented the District's 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. She noted that finances are right on track; although, payroll is slightly under budget, which is balanced by overtime coming in slightly over budget.

8. **Summary Reports & Correspondence**

A. IAFF LOCAL CHAPTER 1505 SUMMARY REPORT – Engineer Kohl invited the Board to assist serving at the Pancake Breakfast on July 2, 2023. Directors Smith, Nelson, and Foreman agreed to attend. Chairperson Hanecak and Clerk Bippus will be out-of-town.

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- B. BATTALION FIRE CHIEF'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Greenwalt presented the Battalion Chief's Activity Report at his last meeting before his retirement on June 28, 2023. He noted that the GFR Academy is near completion, and he thanked those that covered staffing vacancies. The BC promotional process resulted in promoting Chris Pond. Additional promotions include Bryan Monreal to Captain, and Chris Sanchez and Lance Kohl to Engineer. There were 55 calls for service in May. Chief Greenwalt thanked the Board for four great years at HFD.
- C. FIRE CHIEF'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Miller presented the Fire Chief's Report. He noted that he appreciates the staff's recent efforts. Chief Miller recognized Chief Greenwalt for his four years of service at HFD and 22 years in Public Safety. He congratulated all those that were promoted, and he thanked those assisting in the promotional process. Chief Miller also thanked the Bear Jaw Crew for their work on the Community Clean-up project, and he presented a press release describing the immense accomplishment.
- D. FIRE BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chairperson Hanecak informed the Board that he received feedback from Chief Greenwalt regarding his time at HFD. He provided information about the recognition lunch and flag lowering ceremony honoring Chief Greenwalt.
- E. CORRESPONDENCE – There was no additional correspondence presented.

9. Public Hearing of Highlands Fire District FY 2024 Budgets pursuant to A.R.S. § 48-805.02 (A).

Chairperson Hanecak opened the hearing of the FY 2024 Budgets for public comment. There were no members of the public present; therefore, the public hearing was closed.

10. Topics of Discussion and Possible Legal Action

- A. CONSIDERATION TO ADOPT PSPRS PENSION FUNDING POLICY PER A.R.R § 38-863.01(A)(1). Chief Miller presented the PSPRS Pension Funding Policy. After questions a **MOTION was made by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Smith to approve the resolution to adopt the Pension Funding Policy as presented**; the motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.
- B. CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR FY 2024. Chief Miller explained that the district has not received information from the County Attorney's Office as expected, and he requested this item be tabled until information is received. The Board agreed.
- C. CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE RENEWAL OF IGA FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES IN FORT TUTHILL. Chairperson Hanecak stated that he and Director Smith will recuse themselves from this item due to their employment with Coconino County. Chief Miller explained that due to increased costs, contract fees need to be renegotiated; however, due to time constraints related to the County's budgeting process, this cannot be done until next year. Therefore, Chief Miller asked the Board to **extend the contract for one year for \$20,000. A MOTION was made by Director Foreman and was seconded by Director Nelson to approve the renewal of the IGA for emergency services in Fort Tuthill**. Directors Bippus, Nelson, and Foreman voted in favor and Chairperson Hanecak and Director Smith recused from voting. The motion passed.

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- D. REVIEW STAFFING PRESENTATION. Chief Miller presented Staffing: Past and Present PowerPoint describing the issues with staffing levels and related attrition rate. Chief Miller reviewed slides reflecting historical staffing data and challenges we face from recent staffing deficits. Challenges include limitations with meeting minimum staffing, fewer actors, more probationary employees, gaps in leadership, the need to train a medic, limitations in recruitment, and potential retirements. Chief Miller also discussed solutions, some already implemented and some to be considered. After questions, the Board discussed ideas for recruitment. Chairperson Hanecak requested the PowerPoint presentation be sent to the Board.
- E. REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF COMPENSATION STUDY. Chief Miller presented an Executive Summary of the Compensation Study conducted by Brenda Tranchina. He reviewed the process, background, and findings. Director Foreman asked for budget information regarding recommended bonuses for Administrative staff and HFD Fuels. He said that he was not comfortable with approving budget and pay scale together. In addition, he believes that “the Compensation Summary is flawed, and search data is wrong”. He doesn’t understand “why the Fuels crew doesn’t warrant comparable pay with others on the department and admin staff doesn’t warrant additional pay either.” Chairperson Hanecak thanked Director Foreman for his opinion.

Chief Miller continued reviewing the recommended pay increases for Paramedics, Firefighters to 75% of benchmark agencies and increases to Engineer, Battalion Chief, and Fire Chief to the average of benchmark agencies. Compensation adjustments have been included in the FY 2024 Budget and have initially been approved (to post). The Compensation Committee will work on a strategy to maintain good compensation policies and improve any that are deficient. He thanked the Board for “their willingness to look at issues facing us today.”

Chairperson Hanecak asked for thoughts from the Board. There were no comments. He said, “there will be more to come on this one in the future.” He asked Director Foreman to expand more on his comments about the budget and compensation study overlapping each other. Director Foreman explained that the two items are dependent relative, and it is unfortunate that they are being asked to approve a budget that has questionable decisions about compensation. Chief Miller explained that the District has historically had the practice of approving all HR policy, which must be approved if modifications are made to compensation in the budget. Chairperson Hanecak agreed that the Board should approve the HR policy first and then approve the budget that supports the decision. He asked the Board if anyone has serious objections to considering these items in the current order. Director Foreman said it was fine.

- F. CONSIDERTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT & CERTIFY FY 2024 BUDGETS. Chairperson Hanecak asked the Board to entertain for a motion to adopt the FY 2024 Budgets; discussion will follow. A MOTION was made by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Smith to approve the resolution to adopt and certify the FY 2024 Budgets. Chairperson Hanecak opened the item for discussion. Director Bippus had no comment. Director Nelson had no comment. Director Smith commented that \$18,000 was budgeted for the \$20,000 Fort Valley IGA. Director Foreman confirmed that Administrative staff wages were not changed; however the budget

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amount increased \$5,000. Ms. Wilson explained that the increase was due to the 4% COLA and merit increases, but she confirmed that the pay scale was not increased. Director Foreman confirmed that no pay increase was appropriated to the Fuels Crew salaries. Ms. Wilson confirmed this to be correct. Ms. Wilson informed the Board that Admin and Bear Jaw pay scale have not changed. Director Foreman commented that they “absolutely” should be. He stated that the Crew Superintendent position was retitled from Captain; however, the intention was that the pay would remain the same as a Captain. Chairperson Hanecak stated that positions that were currently at market value based on the data collected remained equal, because there are limited funds to allocate to wages. Director Foreman believes that there are funds available to apply to compensation; he did not agree and will vote no.

Mrs. Wilson believes that the comparable benchmark agencies selected were flawed. Ms. Jones agreed with Ms. Wilson, and she commented that they were not consulted about selection of the benchmark agencies as the Compensation Summary indicates. Chairperson Hanecak asked Mrs. Wilson if she believes all the numbers in the Compensation Survey are flawed. Mrs. Wilson said not all of them; however, Mrs. Tranchina did not appropriately analyze job responsibilities. Chief Miller explained that this concern was brought to his attention; however, with the budgeting timeline, all decisions were made based on the market survey. He said potential flaws in the data will be rectified. Director Smith said he understands the concern, especially with the Fuels Crew, but without seeing the study, it hard to know the equity of the positions to Forest Service. Director Hanecak explained the position and process of the Compensation Committee. He said, “we were trying to play catch-up with the best information we have, knowing that there is a lot of work to do in the coming year.” Director Nelson said, “you can’t fix it all in one turn.” After further discussion, the Board voted on the motion to approve the FY 2024 Budget. Directors Bippus, Nelson, and Smith voted in favor; Director Foreman voted no. The motion **PASSED**.

G. CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE HR POLICY 30.02 COMPENSATION SCALE. Chairperson Hanecak said that the Board has already discussed the content of this policy. Chief Miller informed the Board that the policy revision codifies the compensation adjustments reflected in the budget as recommended by the Compensation Committee. **A MOTION was made by Director Smith and was seconded by Director Nelson to approve HR Policy 30.02 Compensation Scale as presented.** Directors Bippus, Nelson, and Smith voted in favor; Director Foreman voted no. The motion **PASSED**.

H. REVIEW FIRE BOARD TASK CALENDAR. The Board reviewed the Task Calendar.

11. **Board Member comments.** There were no further comments.

12. **Adjournment.** **A MOTION was made by Director Nelson and was seconded Director Bippus to adjourn;** the motion was unanimously **APPROVED**. The meeting adjourned at 6:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Jones