



Rio Verde Fire District
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**MINUTES OF THE
RIO VERDE FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS GENERAL SESSION**

March 25, 2024

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The Monday, March 25, 2024, General Session of the Board of Directors was called to order by Chairperson George Kattermann at 9:00 a.m. in the RVFD Fire Station #442 Community Room, located at 17619 E. Rio Verde Dr., Rio Verde, AZ 85263.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Marty Bowin, Jeanne Finney, George Kattermann, Nancy Sewell, and Pete Sturman

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Chief Scott Krushak, Deputy Chief Chris Stewart, Fire Marshal Chris Cavanaugh, Administrative Manager Jennifer Jacobs, and Administrative Assistant Tatum Heinrich, Rio Verde Fire District

II. ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS

All commissioners were present.

III. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

The District's Certificate of Posting was presented, certifying that the meeting's agenda had been posted at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. This certificate was posted at the fire station, Rio Verde Post Office, Rio Verde Community Center, the Tonto Verde Community Center, and on the District and Trilogy websites.

IV. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There was no response to the Call to the Public.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 26, 2024 – General Session

Commissioner Sewell moved to approve the February 26, 2024, General Session minutes as submitted. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Finney and passed with a vote of 4-0-1, Commissioner Sturman abstaining.

March 6, 2024 – Special Session

Commissioner Sewell moved to approve the March 6, 2024, Special Session minutes as submitted. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Bowin and passed with a vote of 4-0-1, Commissioner Sturman abstaining.

VI. CLERK’S REPORT

The following meeting dates were listed:

- Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 9 a.m.
- Wednesday, May 22, 2024, 9 a.m.
- Monday, June 24, 2024, 9 a.m.

All meetings will be held in the Community Room at F/S #442, 17619 E. Rio Verde Drive, Rio Verde, AZ 85263.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Commissioner Sewell reported on the February 2024 financials:

Financial Report	
Revenue	\$284,331.60
Expenses	\$374,124.13
Other Income (Expense)	(\$249,930.00)
Net Income (Loss)	(\$339,722.53)
Transfers to (from) Capital Fund	(\$250,000.00)
Adjusted Net Income	(\$89,722.53)
Monthly Budgeted Net Income (Loss)	(\$82,758.23)
YTD Actual Net Income (Loss)	\$1,024,819.56
Borrowing from Capital Fund	\$750,000.00
YTD Adjusted Net Income	\$274,819.56
YTD Budgeted Net Income	\$307,561.97
General Fund Operating Cash	\$945,608.07
Capital Fund Cash	\$918,616.10
Capital Fund Advances to General Fund	\$750,000.00

Capital Fund Equity	\$1,668,616.10
Total Bond Fund Authorization*	\$5,101,858.64
Total Expenditures to Date	\$5,146,992.48
Total Interest to Date (Interest Earned)	\$47,800.48
Current Month Expenditures	-0-
Remaining Bond Equity	\$64.01

*The “Total Bond Fund Authorization” includes the \$5,000,000 bond, plus the cost of issuance.

Chairperson Kattermann raised the question of filing a lawsuit against EPCOR (water provider) for rock damages to the district’s trucks. This has been an ongoing problem. Kattermann requested that a staff member check with the attorney for the district in this regard.

Commissioner Sewell moved that the Board accept the February 2024 Financial Report as submitted. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Sturman and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sewell moved that the Board accept the February 2024 Monthly Transaction Report as submitted. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Finney and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sewell moved that the Board accept the February 2024 bank reconciliations as submitted. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Finney and passed unanimously.

Chairperson Sewell noted that the district would transfer \$250,000 from the general to the capital account.

VIII. COMMISSIONER OVERSEEING EMS

Commissioner Clerk Jeanne Finney reported the following:

Eleven (11) surveys (out of 36) were returned, with ten (10) claimed “Outstanding” service, and one (1) claiming “Good” service. There were no unusual or negative comments.

IX. NEW HEALTH BENEFIT PACKAGE

Administrative Manager Jennifer Jacobs advised the Board of a current three-year quote from Arizona Metropolitan Trust (working through Blue Cross/Blue Shield) to replace the current health benefit package (United Healthcare). Staff is awaiting quotes from other insurance companies.

Some questions were raised seeking more information about AMT. It was recommended to have our attorney for the district review the contract.

This subject will be placed on the April agenda (after more bids are obtained).

X. FEMA SAFER GRANT FY 2023/2024

Chief Scott Krushak asked permission of the Board to apply for the 2023/2024 SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant. This would incur a fee from the grant-writing consultant

with whom the district has been working. With the SAFER application, the district would apply for six firefighting positions, available over the next 36 months, and the district would have 36 months to fulfil the SAFER requirement. SAFER will not pay for any budgeted position.

Commissioner Bowin moved that the Board approve application for the 2023/2024 FEMA SAFER grant. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Finney and passed unanimously.

XI. AMBULANCE BILLING PROCEDURE

Commissioner Sewell moved that the Board approve the changes as related to third-party billing to the Ambulance Billing Administrative Procedure. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Finney and passed unanimously.

XII. ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION/RECONVENE TO GENERAL SESSION

Pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(1), at 9:36 a.m. Commissioner Bowin moved that the Board move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a human resource matter. Commissioner Sewell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

At 10:04 a.m. the Board reconvened to General Session.

Commissioner Bowin moved that the Board approve the hiring of three (3) additional EMT Paramedic civilians to manage the district's ambulance positions, with the caveat that they would be hired as soon as possible (July of 2024). That motion was seconded by Commissioner Sewell and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bowin moved that the district modify the Rio Verde Fire District Deputy Chief position to allow a 50/50 job sharing leadership structure per the proposal dated March 25, 2024. A team consisting of Commissioner Sewell (leadership), Chief Scott Krushak, Administrative Manager Jennifer Jacobe, and two (2) experienced captains chosen by the chief. They would report to the Board 12 months from the date of hire of the new shared Deputy Chief position and make recommendations to the Board on the success of that job share position. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Sturman and passed unanimously.

XIII. END-OF-YEAR PROJECTION/BUDGET STATUS

A year-end projection had been prepared and presented to the Board.

XIV. CHIEF'S REPORT

Legislative Report

- HB 2418 is dead; there will be no Fire District Advisory Board.
- The Arizona State Division of Forestry movement to remove the state forester is leaning toward allowing the state forester to remain as is.

Budget Timeline

Chief Krushak requested that the Board allow a proposed budget to be sent to the Board between the May and April meetings, so that there would be time for adjustments prior to the date it is due in May. The Board agreed to that timeline.

Strategic Plan Update

The Strategic Planning Committee has begun the lengthy update process, and a final product should be available within two (2) months. Chief Krushak commended Commissioner Sewell for recording notes for that meeting.

XV. DEPUTY CHIEF'S REPORT

Recruit Training

Deputy Chief Chris Stewart indicated that currently there are two (2) RVFD recruits in the fire academy who should graduate on May 10, 2024, and begin work with the district on May 12, 2024. For planning purposes, three (3) positions have been slotted for the September 23 2024, class should we need them. Chief Stewart also requested three (3) positions for the January class, but a decision has not yet been made on the request.

The district is two-thirds of the way through the initial training for the Blue Card Incident Command Training. A and C shifts have been trained, and B shift will begin on Thursday, March 28, 2024. As soon as this training is completed, everyone will be Certified Incident Commanders. Ongoing training continues through this grant.

Regional Wildland Meeting

Chief Stewart participated in the regional wildland meeting, with all cooperating agencies (federal, state, county, and local jurisdictions). May and June are anticipated to be big wildfire seasons.

The district received grant funding for Trilogy's fuel mitigation, clearing out the pathways into the community and washes. The HOA also has a significant amount of money to spend on clearing up this brush.

Josh Johnson has been preparing for the upcoming wildfire season with the Firewise residents in the Verdes.

Response Data

A presentation on response data was viewed by the Board. Overall responses were noticeably higher for Engine 441 and Rescue 441. Total response times are appropriate for covering the district.

Fountain Hills recently became a municipal department but did not build emergency transportation as a service delivery component into their system. They rely on an ambulance provider (AMR) to do that. Fountain Hills asked for a dedicated AMR ambulance, but the cost was prohibitive. They now rely on AMR as a shared resource in Fountain Hills, leasing space at one of the Fountain Hills fire stations.

The AMR ambulance can serve as far as Payson for emergency transportation. The RVFD is being called to Fountain Hills when the AMR ambulance is not there. The Fountain Hills backup is Fort McDowell, but Fort McDowell is not staffed at all times. Rio Verde is supposed to be fourth in line but frequently finds itself second in line for calls. The district has responded to Fountain Hills 30 times during this calendar year, with 14 individuals transported.

There has been no incidence to date in which there was no ambulance for the district.

There will be a meeting later on March 25 between the Rio Verde Fire District, Fountain Hills Fire District, and Fort McDowell to discuss the issue of emergency transport. Problems include:

- Technically, the district needs AMR’s permission to respond to calls.
- The district could be left without an ambulance when responding to out-of-district calls, and the district must be protected.
- District response trucks are sometimes turned around, as the Fountain Hills system hadn’t initially recognized an AMR ambulance in closer proximity.

The district wishes to be a good partner to Fountain Hills, but they must come to a resolution whereby the RVFD is always staffed with an ambulance.

XVI. FIRE MARSHAL’S REPORT

Fire Marshal Chris Cavanaugh reported the following for the month of February:

Permits issued:

	2024	2023
Sprinklers	12	0
Propane	9	1
Others	0	0
YTD (All Types)	40	27
	2024	
Sprinkler Plan Review	0	
Propane Plan Review	9	
Total Inspections	38	

Shea Homes has built a total of 914 homes to date.

Cavanaugh will bring new, proposed fee schedules to the Board at its April meeting.

The Rio Verde food trucks/movie night event was successful, despite the rain. Approximately 250 orders were received by the food truck.

XVII. ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER'S REPORT

Wildland Expense Update

Administrative Manager Jennifer Jacobs advised there was no change to the wildland report - the \$15,600.49 billed for the Diamond fire has been reimbursed. The additional \$78 was an administrative cost.

XVIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

XIX. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further Board comments.

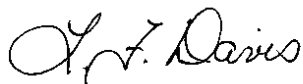
XX. CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS

Board members were advised that the proposed cell tower was now a moot point.

XXI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bowin moved that the Board adjourn at 10:55 a.m. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Sewell and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Libby Floyd Davis
My Personal Secretary (From Voice Recording)