



BLUE RIDGE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD HELD AT THE BLUE RIDGE FIRE STATION MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2022

- 1) Call to Order: Chairman Shannon Scott called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Scott led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.
- 3) Roll Call of Board Members: Sylvia Meakin, Cindy Perelli, Larry Lambert, Shannon Scott and Judy Varns.
- 4) Review and adoption of agenda:

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to adopt the Agenda. Ms. Perelli made a motion to adopt the Agenda and Ms. Varns seconded the motion.

Chairman Scott said that he was reordering the items on the Agenda and adding two additional as follows:

Item a) was changed to item c), item b) remained the same, item a) became "Call to the Public" and item d) was added to allow the Board to go into emergency Executive Session.

He also provided an explanation on why this Special Meeting was called.

Chairman Scott asked for a vote and it was unanimous in favor of the motion with noted changes.
- 5) New Business:
 - a) Call to the Public. This item added to the Agenda to allow for public comment during this meeting.

Brandon Sewell, BFD employee:

Mr. Sewell introduced himself and stated that he represented all captains and personnel of BRFD. He commented that he "was giving praise to the Chief and felt that he doesn't get enough recognition. Chief has high integrity in the eyes of the staff. He has a lot of trust; leadership and we count on him as a good leader not just a Chief."

Mr. Sewell then described how the station was staffed, and on occasion how Chief Paine has responded to calls from his home which sometime requires him to stay at the at the Station to cover until an ambulance returns from the call. He stated that Chief Paine also covers shifts when there is a lack of people to cover them.

Mr. Sewell commented on some of Chiefs Paine accomplishments: securing the SAFER Grant which has brought in over \$500,000 for the District and has allowed Chief to bring in additional personnel to work at BRFD.

In 2018 Chief Paine was at Blue Ridge during the week of the Tinder Fire then participated in the huge cleanup effort after that. Mr. Sewell wanted to personally thank Chief Paine for all he had done.

Mr. Sewell stated that "in 2020 BRFD brought in \$200,000 in revenue, last year we brought in 0. One of the reasons we brought in \$200,000 was because Chief Paine went on a fire with me for 23 days. You don't understand the sacrifice of sleeping in the dirt, and the sacrifice of it being 120 when you're in your tent and it wakes you up and you have to wet yourself with water to cool down so you can go back to sleep. One time Chief Paine called me and asked if I wanted to take the water tender to California and I said yes. I then asked "do we have coverage?" He said "no, but guess who is going to cover your shift while you're gone? I will". "So, guess who will be covering my shift while I'm gone? Chief Paine."

"I really appreciate it and am very thankful for where we are going. But if the anchor wasn't dragging in the sand and he wasn't restricted we would be a lot further today. I'm not saying why he is restricted, but I'm asking from the captains, just let him do his job 100%. Has he given anyone a reason that he is not doing a good job? Who here thinks Chief Paine is doing a good job? So, thank you Chief, I appreciate it."

He further commented on Agenda item c) Discussion and possible approval to hire a temporary clerical employee. Mr. Sewell said "My first question: is there an application process? What are the requirements? Does this person have to have a master degree in finance and budgeting? Here is my question [*second question*]. Did the Board discuss this in an e-mail and already make a decision? From all the Captains, quite breaking the open meeting laws, quite conducting business outside of meetings. Thank you for your time."

Chairman Scott thanked him for his comments.

- b) Discussion and possible action to approve funding a stipend for all employees as a onetime benefit to assist with inflation relief.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion. Mrs. Meakin made a motion to approve funding a stipend and Mrs. Perelli seconded the motion. Chairman Scott opened up the discussion by stating that Chief Paine had asked Chairman Scott and the Board to look at creating some type of benefit for employees to help with inflation relief. Chairman Scott said he had looked at the budget with Chief Paine and had arrived at a 5.9% figure. This would be a onetime benefit retroactive from January 2022 through June 30th 2022 based on number of hours (gross pay) worked. This would be considered a stipend and an after-tax benefit and would not be carried over to the next fiscal year. He recommended that it be paid in two increments: #1 from January through March and #2 from April through June. Mr. Kyle Chambliss, BRFD employee asked if the second half could be paid in monthly installments or would that be too much burden on bookkeeping staff? That was left for further discussion. The discussion ended and Chairman Scott called for a vote and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

- c) Discussion and possible action to approve the hire of a temporary clerical employee to review previous years financial and budget files and compile a base line for the Districts use when developing the upcoming FY Budget.

Mr. Lambert made a motion to approve hiring a temporary clerical employee, Ms. Varns seconded. Chairman Scott opened the discussion by saying he had discussed this with the Chief and it has been discussed in one of our Work Sessions. There is a need to look at our Budget from a historical perspective and get a base line to understand how we are trending against previous years. Ms. Perelli also commented on why we are suggesting doing this. Chairman Scott stated that "it is the main purpose of the Board is to create the Budget and to watch over the Budget". The main objective is to make sure we are budgeting appropriately to meet the coming financial need of the District. We would be looking for someone with budget experience and Blue Ridge experience.

We would also not like to burden Chief Paine with this task since he is very busy and has been out sick recently.

Assistant Chief Bob Lashua asked who was requesting this? The Board or the Chief? Chairman Scott replied that the request is being made by two members of the Board, and that is why it is being brought to a Board Meeting. He also asked if we would be looking to cut out certain line items or overages on line items on the Budget? Chairman Scott said the we want to analyze how the money was spent vs what was budgeted so when we go into the budget cycle we can determine, with the help of the Chief how to align budget items more accurately. Mr. Lashua said the he agreed and said that ever Chief does this on an annual basis.

Chairman Scott thank him for his comments.

Mr. Brandon Sewell suggest the we involve some of the coordinators for training/EMS to understand the need for the upcoming Budget and further said that very little was spent on training this year. Chairman Scott said that this is why we would like to do this so we don't use just one year of data to arrive at a budget figure.

Mr. Kyle Chambliss asked if we knew who much this was going to cost? Chairman Scott said he estimated about \$2,400. Mr. Chambliss said "so we have someone we are paying already to the budget (Chief Paine) and we are going to hire someone else? It doesn't seem fiscally responsible to us. There was further conversation on the subject and Chairman Scott repeated that it was the Boards responsibility to develop the Budge with input from the Chief.

Mr. Chambliss continued with some more comments on options for creating a budget. Chairman Scott thank him for his comment.

There was no further discussion and Chairman Scott asked for a vote. The vote was as follows:

- Larry Lambert yes
- Shannon Scott yes
- Cindy Perelli yes
- Sylvia Meakin abstained
- Judy Varns abstained

The motion passed 3 to 2.

- d) Discussion to vote to go into **Emergency Executive Session** regarding personnel matters pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1) This item was added to the Agenda.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion. Mrs. Meakin made a motion to go into Executive Session and Ms. Perelli seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Special Board Meeting was recessed at 10:31

The Special Board Meeting was reconvened at 11:53

- 6) Adjournment:

There was no further business for the Board to conduct and Chairman Scott adjourned the Board at 11:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted: April 1, 2022

Cynthia Perelli
Clerk of the BRFD Board

Minutes Approved: _____

Clerk of the BRFD Board