



BLUE RIDGE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF PUBLIC BOARD MEETING HELD AT THE BLUE RIDGE FIRE STATION SATURDAY APRIL 23, 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, Shannon Scott, Larry Lambert and Judy Varns.
- 4) Review and adoption of agenda:
Chairman Scott asked for a motion. Ms. Perelli made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented and Mr. Lambert seconded. There was no discussion and Chairman Scott asked for the vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- 5) Announcements: The next Board Meeting will be held April 23, 2022 at 10AM.
- 6) Reports and Correspondence:
 - a) Chairman's Report: Chairman Scott commented on what was going on with the PSPRS Local Board and the 457b plan document under revision. And to dispel recent rumors he commented on the Fire Department Closing and staff resignation.
 - b) Chief's Report: Brandon Sewell gave the Chief's report due to the absence of Chief Paine.
 - Personnel: 14 volunteer, 16 paid reserve, 4 full time, and 2 part time.
 - Apparatus Report: All vehicles in service
 - Incident Report: There were 17 total calls.
 - Training Report: There were 251 hours of training in March
 - c) Other Reports: None.
- 7) Old Business: none
 - a) Presentation and Board Discussion regarding Fire District Financial Audit for FY2020/2021.
Chairman Scott asked for a motion and Ms. Varns made a motion to review and discuss the audit report. Mr. Meakin seconded. Mr. Jim Saunders gave the presentation by speaker phone and Ms. Perelli had the financial audit report on overhead display for the audience.
- 8) New Business:
 - a) APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Discussion and possible action to approve the following minutes: Board Work Session held March 18, Board Meeting held March 19, Executive Session held the same day, Special Board Meeting held March 21, Special Meeting held March 31, Executive Session held the same day.
Chairman Scott asked for a motion. Ms. Varns made a motion to approve all minutes with one vote, Mrs. Meakin seconded. There was some discussion on the March 31st Minutes. Mrs. Meakin requested that the minutes be Ratified so she could change her vote on Item 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. Chairman Scott also asked if we would no approved the executive session minutes

because he had not reviewed them. All agreed and the motion was amended to reflect that the March 31st minutes and the Executive Session minutes would not be approved but place on the May Agenda. Chairman Scott asked for a vote. All minutes except the March 31st and Executive Session minutes, were approved unanimously.

- b) APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT: Discussion and possible action to approve the Financial Report from March 2022.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion. Mr. Lambert made a motion to approve the March 2022 and Ms. Varns seconded. The report was not read but was on display for all to see. Chairman Scott briefly went over the report for the audience. There was no discussion and Chairman Scott asked for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

- c) Discussion and possible action regarding how expense accounts are assigned to expenses and the alignment of those expenses to a Budget category.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to discuss. Ms. Varns made a motion to discuss expense and how they were coded to align with budget category. Mr. Lambert seconded. Chairman Scott made a few comments stating how important it is to make sure expenses are getting coded correctly. This allows for proper budgeting in following years if expenses are charged to the correct expense accounts. There was no action to be taken by the Board but a vote was taken anyway and passed unanimously.

- d) Discussion and possible action to set dates for Budget Work Session meetings.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to discuss. Mr. Varns made a motion to establish Bord Work Session on the upcoming budget and Ms. Perelli seconded. After some discussion on availability May 3rd was selected for the first of several Work Session. Sessions are open to the public.

- e) General Board discussion on Fire District Board responsibilities and duties per A.R.S § 48-805. "Fire district; powers and duties; definition". See document "Title 48, ARS 48-805, Summary Reference"

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to discuss. Mr. Lambert made a motion to review and discuss the "Title 48 ARS 48-805 Fire district; powers and duties; definition" document provided (also provided was a list of all statutes under Title 48) and Ms. Perelli seconded.

The document was on displayed on the overhead for the audience. Ms. Perelli explained what Title 48 ARS 805 was and stated that this was just a summary of one of the many statutes under Title 48. A few of the key items were read and discussed. Chairman Scott also comment on the Open Meeting Law, and Mr. Lambert commented on requirements the Board has to follow. There was no action taken but the Board.

- f) Discussion regarding previous tabled items from March 19th Board Meeting.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to discuss. Mr. Lambert made a motion to discuss that items listed. Mr. Perelli seconded.

-approve a PSPRS Funding Policy

-approve revised Policies that have completed Board review

Ms. Perelli stated that these two items were mistakenly identified as tabled and to be put on a future agenda. The PSPRS Funding Policy should have been completely removed from any further action since it would now be address in the upcoming budget. The discussion on revision to Board policies will remain active but has so not been scheduled for further action at this time. There was no further discussion, Chairman Scott called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

- g) Board discussion with staff representative regarding staff concerns and potential staff resignations.

Chairman Scott asked for a motion to discuss. Ms. Perelli made a motion to discuss concerns with staff and Ms. Varns seconded. The Board was provided with a memo signed by Billy Chester and Dustin Chambliss and an employee list compiled from the BRFD Roster. Mr. Chester began to read the memo to those present but had to be reminded to address his comments to the Board since this

is who this memo was address to. The memo requested the resignation of Board Members Shannon Scott and Cindy Perelli by April 30th at 10AM. The memo outlined how “a large majority of staff” would be tendering their resignations” if this did not happen. (See addendum to these minutes to read a copy of this memo and employee roster). Mr. Chester then commented on recent rumors; Chairman Scott commented by saying the he understood that this was a discussion with the Board but there wasn’t really an opportunity for the Board to discuss the issues; there were some more brief comments made by Mr. Chester. Mr. Chambliss then commented that Chief Pain “said he would not work at Blue Ridge Fire Department as long a Shannon Scott and Cindy Perelli were on the Board”. When there no further discussion, Chairman Scott stated that the Board didn’t really have an opportunity to respond to the staff grievances and the he doesn’t have regret for anything he has done and had been on this Board for about 5 ½ years dedicated a total of 10 year in service to this community and BRFD. He said that he thought “most people don’t care what our accomplishments were and they were made with the cooperation of the Chief and we would not be able to do these things without cooperation and negotiations”. He further commented that he felt “it was a little unjust to ask me to resign when I don’t know the facts” of the request. Mr. Chambliss sated he would read the memo present to the Board earlier if Mr. Scott would like. The audience seemed in favor of Mr. Chablis reading the memo then former Board member Richard Eng commented that “this was really inappropriate and not how you handle this”. Chairman Scott stated that he “would prefer to have a better understanding of the grievances and would prefer not to handle it in public”. Mr. Chambliss sated that it would have to in a public forum because it would have to be discussed by all five Board members. Chairman Scott agreed. Mr. Eng made further effort to calm the public and said we should move on. Chairman Scott then stated that he wanted to move on with Call to the Public.

9) Call to the Public

Chairman Scott opened the call to the public stating that each person who is signed up to speak had 3 minutes each for their comments. Ms. Perelli stated that she would call people in the order they appeared on the Board Meeting Sign-in Sheet. Mr. Scott stated “ground rules” for the public session. Ms. Perelli had erroneously removed Dustin Chambliss and Billy Chester from the list because she assumed they had already made their comments, however they still wanted to speak as part of the public forum so they were added back to the list.

Speakers: (summary of comments)

Richard Eng

Mr. Eng reminded the staff the it was his previous Board the had brought the retirement system to BRFD then stated that he was very saddened to hear what was being said and that there were other avenues to take. He said that he “agreed with a lot of things that have been said but how it was brought about was not professional and should not have happened”. He had heard rumors and suggested that this was the “perfect storm”. The community, firefighters and Board are upset. He then suggested that “we need to go back to a full time chief and not have a Chief split between two counties”. He stated that “Mr. Scott and he had not always agreed but there are other avenues to take”. He further discussed Board procedures regarding Board officers and elected officials.

Dustin Chambliss

If staff leaves then there would be no ambulance and the district the district would lose its CON (Certificate of Necessity) and its very difficult to get that back. He asked that board ensure that the staff stays to ensure wellbeing in the district and as a property owner I want medical and fire service in our community.

Billy Chester

"We don't make this show of force lightly and I don't want to leave here. We are making a show with decorum and professionalism. I love this job and I don't want to leave for any reason. He stated that he "couldn't see the department without Chief Paine." He further commented on 3 different jobs he holds and that he knows this could lead to termination be he accepts that. He loves "you all and he love Chief Paine. I am bias but I don't see any way this will change with the current makeup" of the Board. Please consider other solutions.

Mike Bowne

He stated that he had heard a lot and fully respected the firefighters and has also made an application to sit on the Board. He said that the Board should know what they need to do and "if you have a problem then solve it".

Caroline Weimer

She was in total support of Chief Paine and the entire EMS crew. She then described her personal situation and experience with a medical situation. She was upset with the current Board and that "they didn't act with professionalism and that policies and Board producers were not made readily available to the public". She requested that the Board not except Chief Pain's resignation and put all grievances aside. The EMS service are critical to our communities and aging population. Keep our outstanding Fire Fighter/EMS staff so we continue to have our excellent service.

Dan Goodwin, relinquished his time to Mr. Eng.

Mr. Eng

He stated that his Board hired Chief Paine and that it's tough when there is poor communication and the Board has to step up and do things when the Chief is not there. "This is not a win, win situation and it breaks my heart that you guys would leave. We have provided you training so you could be here and if Phil Paine decides that he can't be here then that is his decision." He had heard rumors that this could lead to an apology but this could not be confirmed. "We don't want this divided community".

Pat and Ray Macholtz

We are in support of Chief Pain and love our fire department. If there is a problem with then Board then it needs to be corrected.

Larry Butler

I am a volunteer at here and have worked with 3 different Chief. Chief stands out as one of the finest people I have had the opportunity to work with. He focuses on his employees, has an open-door policy. Chief Paine responds to calls even when is not scheduled to be at Blue Ridge. He knows his employees and treats them with respect. "My concern is that there will nobody here to (inaudible comment)".

Linda McDermott

She is really saddened the it has gotten to this degree of animosity and division, and that it ever happened. The Board is responsible and you need to do your job. Like Mike said "if you have a problem fix it." We will do what is necessary to have a Board that will do what they need to do to fix this" and have service we need on the mountain.

Mike McFarlin

He feels for these "gentleman and ladies" that have served in our community. I've had them in my house. We have a band of brothers here. Our community is number one and if you need to step down and do what's right you need to do.

Alma Seward

She was on the Board that hired Chief Paine. We were in a situation (without a Chief) and were going to have to look for a candidate when Mr. Paine became available. "He was like a god send". She suggested that the Board establish a group like a "reunification committee" to try and deal with the issues and take care of it.

Brian Alexander

Been a resident of 22 years. Also had firefighters at our house; I appreciate their time an effort for this community. Understand the some of these things will be done/discussed in secret discussion, but we really appreciate what has been do in our community.

Calvin Higen

I want the board to hear what I have to say. I'm a full time resident and not going to speak for anybody else. It's clear to me the Chief has tried to solve problems that he had with you and they have not been solve. Two of you have become "such a burr under the saddle of the Chief that he wants to leave" if you two don't. "We can't do without these people but we can do without you". I'm pretty this is what the fire department people wanted to say but can't say. You can leave and we will replace you with two other people to do the job.

Sharon Carry

We are part timers. Board name tags would help. We don't know acronyms when you are speaking.

Evilan Headley

New resident, RN retired with certs in stroke and trauma. Would put these guys ahead of (any others in this profession) in the valley. Would take these guys over 50 Board members. Don't know about Board qualification but I know these guys and I have their back because they have mine. Other comments about staff. I'm getting older and may need their services and want to know they are there.

Casy Samsil

Thanks for being here and we need you all (the staff). You all (the Board) need to fix this, because some of these guys aren't going to be here. We know the Chief Paine may not come back. You need to get this fixed now for the community. This is important and needs to be addressed and address now. I'm like mike, please fix this.

Dustin Cambliss – time give up by another speaker

Mr. Eng has stated the need for a full time Chief. More comments about Chief Paine and his duties in Pine Strawberry and his schedule at Blue Ridge. How he comes to cover shifts when they are not filled by other staff; when there is personnel out ill, on top of his other duties, family and church community. "He is a full time chief here". He has an assistant Chief, Bob Lashua. Comments regarding his qualification, experience, and how he covers for Chief Paine when he is not here (because of his shift duties in Pine Strawberry). Some comments about his salary and no needing benefits thus saving the district money. If the district was to hire another chief it would cost over \$100,000 to get 8 more hours of a Chief's time. Commented the Board By-Laws weren't on line then quote Rule #4, b) from the By-Laws.

Bert Chaney

Property owner for 4 years. Live in tonto Basin and have same service (fire and medical) as here with same Board. Has been in public safety. Grew in family with family members served in public safety; dad was a fire fighter in Phoenix. "I'm aware how this works but I'm not aware of the issues you guys have other what I've heard here. If you staff leaves it's going to because they want to; If the Chief leave its because he wants to. Its going to be on their own volition." He is disappointed that the staff "would hold us (the public) hostage and threaten to leave". "You've got to follow the rules. If they don't, they are actionable and could be held accountable for it." It's the Board job to do research to find out if they can do this legally. Their job (the Board) is not fun and you really have to know what they are going through to know that". They need to do their research. The rules are there to protect everybody.

Mr. Chaney's time was extended by Chairman Scott: There were further comments regarding his experience with eh State Legislature, then he continued to comment on staff and the Oath of Office they take to protect and serve the community. He again reminded the Board that they should do research to see if the crew could be held accountable for this action taken. "I don't want to see this kind of hostility between people that are just trying to do a job."

10) There was no further discussion and Chairman Scott adjourned the Board Meeting at 12:35PM.

Respectfully submitted: April 25, 2022

Cynthia Perelli
Clerk of the BRFD Board

Minutes Approved: _____

Clerk of the BRFD Board

April 23, 2022

Members of the Board,

The attached list of employees respectfully request the resignation of Board Chairman Shannon Scott and Board Clerk Cindy Perelli. We, as a large majority of the staff believe it is in the best interest of the District and the community it serves. We request these resignations be tendered as soon as possible but no later than April 30th @ 10:00 am.

Absence of these resignations at the requested time may result in a large majority of the staff tendering their resignations shortly thereafter. Please note, the staff **does not** intend to immediately cease work leaving the District without emergency services, but provide reasonable notice and likely coincide with any potential absence of Fire Chief Paine.

We thank you for your years of service, appreciate your understanding in this matter, and hope the Board Members in question will take our request into serious consideration.

Respectfully,

Officers representing the staff body specifically listed in the attached roster.

William "Billy" Chester

Dustin Chambliss

	Name		Rank	BM Resignation	Emp Resignation
	ADMINISTRATION	2			
1	Lashua	Bob	Asst Chief/CEP	1	
1	Wise	Beth	Admin	1	
	Allen	Danny	Chaplain	A	
	Full Time Staff	3			
1	MacNeal	Ryan	FF/EMT	1	
1	Sewell	Brandon	Captain/CEP	1	
1	Sobel	Cat	FF/CEP	1	
	Reserve Staff-CEP	11			
1	Chambliss	Dustin	Captain/CEP	1	
1	Chambliss	Kyle	FF/CEP	1	
1	Chester	Billy	Captain/CEP	1	
1	Cordova	Tommy	FF/CEP	1	
1	LaMaide	Adam	FF/CEP	1	
1	Richey	Chad	Captain/CEP	1	
1	Shannon	Reeny	Engineer Act Captain/CEP	1	
1	Turley	Garrett	FF/CEP	1	
1	Smith	Coby	FF/CEP	1	
1	Barry	Mike	FF/CEP	1	
1	Graham	Zach	FF/CEP	1	
	Reserve Staff-EMT	6			
1	Lees	Bryan	FF/EMT	1	
1	Vasquez	Ben	FF/EMT	1	
1	Underhill	Charlene	FF/EMT	1	
1	Sewell	Megan	FF/EMT	1	
1	Knaeble	Dick	FF/EMT	A	
1	Arroyo	Cesar	FF/EMT	1	
	Volunteer Staff	7			
1	Ackerman	Dennis	Safer	1	
1	Allen	Janice	EMT	1	
1	Butler	Larry	FF/EMT	1	
1	Ihns	David	FF	1	
1	Unhock	Bill	FF	1	
1	Wetter	Donald	EMT	1	
1	Chambliss	Jennifer	EMT	1	
	Patten	Ryan	Safer	1	

Employee Counts	Total	29	
	CEP	14	27
	EMT	7	
	Vols	7	
	Admin	1	
		29	