

**FRY FIRE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
January 28, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Huish called the Regular Meeting of the Fry Fire District Board to order at 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members in Attendance:	Joseph Huish, Board Chairman Eric Andersen, Board Clerk Robert McMurtrie, Board Member Norman Sturm, Board Member
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Board Members Absent:	Thomas Tucker, Board Member
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Staff in Attendance:	Mark Savage, Fire Chief Diana Jones, Billing Supervisor Steven Rodriguez, James Vincent Group
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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Mr. Huish led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Sturm gave the invocation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr. Huish reminded board members that they shall declare any conflict of interest. No board member declared a conflict at this time.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Huish opened the call to the public at 6:01 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Call to the public closed at 6:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Board Meeting on December 17, 2024.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting minutes of December 17, 2024. Mr. Huish seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. Review, discussion, and possible action on the monthly financial report for December 2024.

Steven Rodriguez from James Vincent Group (JVG) gave a PowerPoint presentation reflecting a summary of the financial reports for December 2024, and year to date. The non-tax levy revenue was over budget due to wildland, ambulance, and Prop 207. Tax revenue was under budget for the month and over budget by \$17.00 year to date. Total expenses for the month were over budget. Year to date non-tax revenue was over budget, and total expenses were over budget. A discussion followed. The board reviewed the warrants for the month and there were no questions.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to accept the December 2024 financial reports. Mr. McMurtrie seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion carried.

COMMAND STAFF'S REPORT

Operations and Staffing – Chief Savage provided the 2024 FFD Call Data Packet to members of the Board. Total call volume in 2024 was 4302, up 3% from 2023. Calls peak during the summer months and during waking hours. Call volume may be inflated during summer months due to snake calls. Sierra Vista Fire and Medical (SVFM) anticipates adding another BLS ambulance to their station 203. Our Station 142 runs 2:1 calls over our other stations.

Engineer Chavez and Firefighter Webb were deployed with a 4000-gallon tender to California to support their wildfire responses. They spent two weeks on a preposition assignment in anticipation of increased wildfire risk and fortunately weren't needed. Our crew and tender returned safely Friday night and are working to finalize the paperwork so we can submit an invoice to the Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM).

Aaron Kaiser is continuing to progress well with Mr. Ayers and working on some of his ACE certifications. Jimmy is planning to take terminal leave with his last workday scheduled for February 21, 2025.

Chief Mark Burdick from Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority gave a presentation to our Fire Officers. Thanks to Captain Short for coordinating this presentation. Deputy Chief Mauzy successfully completed the Finance for the Fire Service course at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg.

We are continuing to make progress on the development of our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan with Ironwood Strategic Solutions. As demonstrated by the call data, Deputy Chief Seamans was able to finalize the last of our 2024 data merge, which has been sent to Ironwood. We should receive a final draft of our updated plan within the next few weeks.

Facilities – Deputy Chief Seamans is continuing to work with Shive-Hattery Architects to develop our options for Fire Stations 141 and 143.

We are still working to coordinate matching paint for the maintenance shop.

Apparatus and Equipment – The second 4000-gallon tender has been registered and insured and put into service at Fire Station 143. The old 4000-gallon tender has been moved to Station 161 in Huachuca City. We anticipate replacing the tank and pump on the 4000-gallon tender and selling the 2000-gallon tender.

The cost of the repair work on the flooded ambulance is in this month's financial report. Mr. Ayers is waiting for a part to repair the liquid spring suspension system. Once that is fixed, the ambulance will get detailed and then scheduled for the power-load repair from Stryker.

Grants – We submitted Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant requests for an air trailer and vehicle-mounted exhaust filters. Although, there may be a hold on all Federal grants, it doesn't appear to directly affect us yet. Our current active grants are through the state.

The extrication tools funded by the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety have been placed into service on Engine 161 in Huachuca City. As soon as the rollout tray and tool mounts are built, they will be installed.

Our 2024 HFI fuel reduction grant from the Arizona DFFM has been approved! This will provide approximately \$150,000 in funding to reduce wildland hazardous fuels on another 100 acres in our highest risk interface areas. Meghan Lapointe, a new Resilience Specialist with the Ft. Huachuca Sentinel Landscape, has been incredible to work with. She has extensive expertise in GIS and has developed the maps and shapefiles required by DFFM for the grants.

We are continuing to meet with Verisk and hoping to be able to draft a Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) request to fund some fire modeling research through them to better identify our high-risk wildland interface areas. This would augment ongoing research by the USGS on Ft. Huachuca. We are also hoping to be able to leverage some of their work for a retrospective analysis of existing aerial LiDAR data that effectively brackets a significant piece of our fuel reduction work.

Chief Savage anticipates recommending the addition of a WUI building code when we adopt our next fire code. This is expected to be in line with the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Yesterday we hosted a presentation from Orora Tech for local partners. Orora provides early wildland fire detection and fire spread models that are satellite-based. We are hoping to qualify for a pilot program this fire season while they continue to build out their platform.

Our fuels crew is continuing to make progress under our current 2021 grant. They are continuing to mitigate residential parcels in Ramsey Canyon and improve the fire resistance of some of the common areas in the neighborhood. We have funding to continue their work through March and recently submitted a reimbursement request to DFFM for their work through December.

We are still waiting for feedback on an EMPG request for funding our newest command truck (DC141). This is a 50% match grant for reallocated federal funding that could see us reimbursed for emergency management-related capital improvement dollars we have already spent. If approved, we may see approximately \$53,000.00 in grant funds.

The Florian / 3am team is continuing to improve the usefulness of their incident management system. We are caught up on reimbursement requests and reports and look forward to some additional functionality.

SEACOM – HR services were transitioned from the City of Sierra Vista back to Cochise County. Director Wilkins continues to improve staffing levels.

LEGAL – There is still no progress with our Motion to Dismiss regarding the Palominas fires. There has not been a hearing scheduled, and Mr. Matura is not sure how much longer we may need to wait on the court. The Board will be appraised of any developments.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review, discussion and possible action regarding new policies requested by HRSA.

Chief Savage stated the policies were sent to HRSA for review, and they approved all of the policies, the Language Access policy, the Non-discrimination policy, and the Complaint Process policy.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to adopt the new policies requested by HRSA. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

- b. Review, discussion and possible action regarding the election of Board Chairman and Board Clerk.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to nominate Joseph Huish as Board Chairman. Mr. McMurtrie seconded the motion. Mr. Huish accepted the nomination.

Vote: 3-0. Mr. Huish abstained.
Motion carried.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to nominate Eric Andersen as Board Clerk. Mr. McMurtrie seconded the motion. Mr. Andersen accepted the nomination.

Vote: 3-0. Mr. Andersen abstained.
Motion carried.

- c. Review, discussion and possible action regarding the sale of 3.68 acres of real property located on Sierra Sunset, just east of Moson Rd.

The Fry Fire District purchased a residential parcel approximately 10 years ago with the thought that it would be a useful location for a future fire station should integration with Sierra Vista Fire and Medical Department continue and the City of Sierra Vista continue expanding to the east along Hwy 90. Mr. Sturm asked if there is any cost to the District in keeping the property. Chief Savage said, no. A discussion followed.

No action taken on this item.

- d. Review, discussion and possible action regarding the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe.

Chief Savage provided Board Members copies of the quote for a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe to replace the 2011 Chevrolet Tahoe with 212,000 miles. This vehicle is competitively priced via the State of Arizona purchase contract. Mr. McMurtrie asked if the vehicle was included in the Capital Replacement Plan. Chief Savage said yes.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion carried.

- e. Review, discussion and possible action regarding employee retention, including the Retention Incentive and Annual Leave policies and the Advanced Firefighter / Driver Operator job description.

Feedback from the Fire Station Safety visits last year raised concerns about staffing apparatus and retaining tenured employees. Approximately 12 employees are expected to reach PSPRS eligibility within the next 3 years. The proposed retention incentive provides additional compensation for high-performing Tier 1 employees who may otherwise be considering retirement. This avoids pension spiking while incentivizing participation in the DROP program with significant savings (17.5%) to the Fry Fire District. If qualified, the employee can choose between additional incentive pay or vacation hours. Mr. Sturm would like to discuss any benefit or wage topics when wages are discussed during the budget process. Mr. McMurtrie stated attrition is natural and we should consider the impact of keeping individuals at the top of the pay scale which could prevent others from moving up. Mr. McMurtrie would like to see more information on the requirements and what other fire departments are doing.

Item was tabled until wages are discussed during the budget process.

Chief Savage stated the new Annual Leave policy recognizes the longer expected tenure requirements (25 years) for Tier 2 and 3 employees and adds an additional accrual rate for employees with greater than 20 years of service.

The Advanced Firefighter / Driver Operator job description reflects our need for experienced firefighters capable of competently operating fire apparatus and responding to wildland emergencies. Mr. Sturm asked if there is a pay increase for the position. Chief Savage stated there would be a 2.5% step increase for qualified employees, that this is not considered a promoted position. We currently have a Driver Operator stipend that this would replace. Mr. McMurtrie would like more information on the financial impact and how it affects the wage and step increase.

No action taken on this item.

REQUESTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

There were no requests from the Board Members.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 6:50 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Sturm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

DATED THIS 29TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
Fry Fire District Board