

**FRY FIRE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
March 25, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Huish called the Regular Meeting of the Fry Fire District Board to order at 6:01 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members in Attendance: Joseph Huish, Board Chairman
Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
Robert McMurtrie, Board Member
Norman Sturm, Board Member

Board Members Absent: Thomas Tucker, Board Member

Staff in Attendance: Mark Savage, Fire Chief
Diana Mercier, Billing Supervisor
Ben Archer-Clowes, James Vincent Group

Others in Attendance: Carter Kimberly, PARS – Arizona Employers Pension
Prefunding Program (AEPPP)
Gary West, Ironwood Strategic Solutions, LLC

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 6:02 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Call to the public closed at 6:02 p.m.

BOARD PRESENTATIONS

a. Gary West, Ironwood Strategic Solutions, LLC – FFD 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

Board Members were provided the final draft copy of the FFD 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Mr. West highlighted a few items. On the Mission, Vision, and Values page Mr. West gave kudos to the crew members who redefined the values of the District. The Strategic Plan team did a spectacular job defining where the focus should be and on developing goals and objectives. There were a lot of open and honest discussions. The team members worked hard and took on a shared ownership of the Plan. Mr. Sturm would like regular feedback on the progress of the Strategic Plan Team meetings.

b. Carter Kimberly, PARS – Arizona Employers Pension Prefunding Program (AEPPP).

Mr. Kimberly provided Board Members with a handout and gave an informative presentation. The Section 115 Trust Team is operated by Public Agency Retirement Services (PARS) and is partnered with US Bank and PFM Asset Management. The 115 Trust in Arizona offers a tax-exempt investment pension prefunding system outside of our treasury. There is no setup fee, no minimum contribution, and the District maintains control over the assets. There are two investment strategies, target index and managed tactical, and four portfolio options for each strategy. The fee structure starts at 32-55 basis points with a tiered fee schedule that allows the fees to drop as the assets grow. Funds deposited into the trust are restricted for pension costs.

Chief Savage stated if we open the trust and have excess money to invest, we will have an additional vehicle that may generate revenue in the long term on funds we will spend on PSPRS anyway, and it may provide some diversification from the LGIP account.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Board Meeting on February 25, 2025.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to accept the Regular Board Meeting minutes of February 25, 2025. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

a. Review, discussion, and possible action on the monthly financial report for February 2025.

Ben Archer-Clowes from James Vincent Group (JVG) gave a PowerPoint presentation reflecting a summary of the financial reports for February 2025, and year to date. The non-tax levy revenue was over budget due to wildland, interest income, and St. David. Tax revenue was over budget for the month and mostly on budget year to date. Total expenses for the month were under 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 February 2025 financial reports. Mr. McMurtrie seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

COMMAND STAFF'S REPORT

Chief Savage provided Board Members with the following monthly report:

Chief Savage thanked the Local 4913 for hosting a family barbeque on March 15. The event was well attended by our personnel and their families. A golfing event is in the works with the new Sierra Vista Golf Center for later this year.

Operations and Staffing – With the addition of Firefighter Roberto Iniguez last month and Paramedic Aubrey Anderson this month, we are finally fully staffed, with one additional firefighter online. We also added three part-time EMS personnel to our roster with Deputy Chief Mauzy working on an internal training program to qualify some of them for initial firefighting operations.

Aaron Kaiser is continuing to progress well with our fleet maintenance and repairs.

As shared previously by email, Chief Buonaccorsi is retiring from the Palominas Fire District at the end of this month. Chief Savage believes they are currently exploring interim options. We shared our congratulations and offer of support with Chief Buonaccorsi for critical incidents until they can find someone to replace him. Deputy Chief Seamans responded to a fire involving two RVs this morning to provide incident management support.

Facilities – Deputy Chief Seamans is continuing to work with Shive-Hattery Architects to develop our options for Fire Stations 141 and 143. They conducted a site visit with several interested construction companies two weeks ago and have interviews scheduled for the afternoon of April 2. Chief Savage would like to request at least one member of the Board participate on the panel.

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

Apparatus and Equipment – The 2000-gallon tender is being listed for sale on Public Surplus for \$50,000.00.

Mr. Kaiser repaired the liquid spring suspension system on M1431. The ambulance has been detailed, and the power-load repair has been completed. The final repairs include replacing two rear door latches and an air conditioning condenser. These repairs should be done in the next week which will prepare the unit to be placed back into our reserve lineup pending inspection by AZDHS.

Grants – We submitted Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant requests for an air trailer and vehicle-mounted exhaust filters. Senator Ciscomani provided a letter of support for the regional air trailer request (FFD and PFD). We recently submitted an MOU outlining the responsibilities for PFD and FFD under this grant request – in brief, we will host the vehicle and include it in our automatic aid responses.

Firefighter Michael Bocook submitted a State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) request for approximately \$80,000.00 in funding to purchase a suburban to better support the Cochise County Regional SWAT Team. The vehicle would provide better protection with less advertising for our tactical medics. These grants have been scored, and Chief Savage will be

attending the Southern RAC meeting early next month as the rural fire department representative to determine allocations.

Sunsites Pearce Fire District submitted a Gila River Indian Community Grant request in the amount of \$192,000.00 to update the Cochise County radio cache. We are serving as the host agency and would be responsible for managing the grant should it be approved and funded. Cochise County will serve as the initial recipient and pass the grant funds through to us. If funded, this request would establish two new radio caches (West and East) with 20 radios each.

We have received no feedback regarding our grant request to the AZ Governor's Office of Highway Safety for approximately \$90,000.00 to support the purchase of additional stabilization equipment and extrication tools for Station 141.

Our fuels crew is finishing up their work for the season. We will finalize the 2021 HFI Fuel Reduction Grant and will submit our last reports and reimbursement request in April. We are continuing to make progress on our 2024 HFI Fuel Reduction Grant with a contract crew. This grant provides approximately \$150,000.00 in funding to support the continued reduction of wildland hazardous fuels on another 100 acres in our highest risk interface areas.

There is no feedback on an EMPG request for 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 work to improve the usefulness of their incident management system. We are scheduled for a meeting next week to review their updates and continue to look forward to some additional functionality on the platform.

SEACOM – Director Wilkins continues to improve operations at SEACOM. The center has 14 full-time dispatchers and another 4 in training – a significant improvement from a few years ago when they were down to 6 full-time dispatchers.

The SEACOM Board approved our dispatch subscription through FY2026. This maintains our annual cost of \$30,000.00 which is still likely to see a significant increase at the end of FY2026, when we are anticipating moving to a fee per call schedule. So far, the rough estimates have our annual cost, based on roughly 4,500 calls per year, closer to \$75,000.00 per year. Assuming the cost increase, we will continue to work to ensure that we are able to take credit for in-kind services, such as the time Deputy Chief Seamans spends working on SEACOM / Spillman issues.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review, discussion and possible action regarding adoption of the FFD 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

Chief Savage requested the Board adopt the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to adopt the FFD 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

- b. Review, discussion and possible action regarding design work, construction manager at risk (CMAR) process, and capital improvement planning with Shive-Hattery Architects for Fire Sta. 143.

Chief Savage requested Board participation in the interview process on April 2, 10:00am to 2:00pm.

No action taken on this item.

- c. Review, discussion and possible action regarding Arizona Employers Pension Prefunding Program (AEPPP) / Section 115 Trust Program.

Mr. McMurtrie is apprehensive about opening another account. Mr. Sturm said we do not have a lot to invest in the Trust, and we are already getting interest on funds equal to what the conservative strategy fund would possibly provide. Mr. Andersen said he would like to see a comparison of our current investment strategy and the proposed strategy.

Item tabled until next month.

- d. Review, discussion and possible action regarding an update to the Corrective Action / Disciplinary Process policy.

Chief Savage stated the update takes the non-disciplinary, verbal discussion out of the disciplinary process.

Mr. McMurtrie made a motion to accept the updated Corrective Action / Disciplinary Process policy. Mr. Sturm seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

REQUESTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

There were no requests from Board Members.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Andersen made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:09 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Sturm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

DATED THIS 26TH DAY OF MARCH 2025.

Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
Fry Fire District Board