

**FRY FIRE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
April 22, 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 Thomas Tucker, Board Member (electronically) Norman Sturm, Board Member
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Board Members Absent:	Robert McMurtrie, Board Member
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Staff in Attendance:	Mark Savage, Fire Chief Billy Seamans, Deputy Chief Diana Mercier, Billing Supervisor Ben Archer-Clowes, James Vincent Group (electronically)
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Others in Attendance:	John Price, Shive-Hattery Architects (electronically) Thomas E Yazzie, Shive-Hattery Architects (electronically)
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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 6:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Board Meeting on March 25, 2025.

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

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

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

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

b. FY2026 Annual Budget progress update.

Ben Archer-Clowes gave an overview of the FY26 Budget process, revenues, expenses, and current position. The proposed budget will be brought to the Board in May for a tentative adoption, and again in June for the final adoption.

The FY26 Budget tax revenue saw an increase of 6.45% in our assessed value. At our current levy rate of \$3.39, the NAV increase results in additional tax revenues. Our FDAT is capped at \$400,000.00. Non-tax revenues are being increased on the ambulance revenue side to \$1,750,000.00. This reflects the rate increase approved by AZDHS. We anticipate keeping interest income the same, and have added a very small increase in the event the Huachuca City contract is renewed. Chief Savage stated we provided two proposals to the Town of Huachuca City and hope to have their decision after their Town Council Meeting on Thursday. Wildland and Grant revenue are projected to remain the same.

On the expense side, Merit steps are anticipated for those eligible as well as a proposed COLA increase of 2.5%, and increase in our Paramedic incentive to maintain parity with SVFMD. PSPRS costs are increasing significantly. The tentative budget will also include funding \$150,000.00 into capital reserves.

No action taken on this item.

COMMAND STAFF'S REPORT

Chief Savage provided Board Members with the following monthly report:

Operations and Staffing – As previously shared, Chief Buonaccorsi retired from the Palominas Fire District. Mark Prince has been named Interim Chief through the end of June. We have been pleased with improvements in performance seen this month and are continuing to offer support.

Deputy Chief Mauzy coordinated quarterly incident command training this month. These incident management drills focused on wildland interface fires and included partners from the U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Vista Fire and Medical Department, Fry Fire District, and Palominas Fire District.

We submitted two proposals to the Town of Huachuca City in response to their request for proposals for Fire and Emergency Services. They are currently under review, with an anticipated recommendation to the Town Council expected this Thursday. The Town had a structure fire in some vacant structures. Deputy Chief Seamans responded and managed the incident, as well as the origin and cause investigation. Preliminary findings indicate that the fire was arson, and four individuals are currently under investigation.

We had a few staffing hiccups in the past few weeks. One of our Firefighters injured his shoulder during training evolutions. We also received notice that we will be losing a Firefighter/Paramedic to Santa Rita FD. We have an eligible Firefighter available on our hiring list, and are awaiting the outcome of the Huachuca City Emergency Services RFP process to backfill the position.

Facilities – Deputy Chief Seamans is continuing to work with Shive-Hattery Architects to develop our options for Fire Stations 143. They supported interviews this past month with a few general contractors, and we have an item on tonight's agenda to select a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR). Chief Savage shared his appreciation to John Price and Thomas Yazzi with Shive-Hattery and Deputy Chief Seamans, Captain Kean, Firefighter Hansbrough, Mr. Andersen and Mr. Sturm for participating on the interview panel.

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

Apparatus and Equipment – The 2000-gallon tender has been listed for sale on Public Surplus. We received no bids during the last cycle and will be re-listing it for another few weeks. In the interim we have loaned it to Whetstone Fire District while their tender is out of service for repairs.

M4617 has been inspected by AZDHS and is finally back in service. We will be submitting the final receipts for the repairs to the insurance company later this week.

Grants – No news on our Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant request submitted 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 trailer 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 to purchase a suburban so our tactical paramedics can better support the Cochise County Regional SWAT Team. The vehicle was not funded by the

Southern RAC. The application is being resubmitted as a Congressionally Directed Spend (CDS) request with strong support received from CCSO and SVPD.

Firefighter Bocook is also finalizing a CDS request for financial support for Station 143's renovation and remodel. This request will also include some additional upgrades to our fire training facility.

We have received no feedback on the Sunsites Pearce Fire District submission of 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 yet 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.

Chief Savage shared a draft of our final report for the 2021 HFI Fuel Reduction Grant with DFFM. We are working on the final reimbursement request. It appears as if we came in over on production (with approximately 170 acres treated, and 158.5 projected), and under on cost (our total project cost was approximately \$81,000.00 less than projected). We will submit our last reports and reimbursement request later this month.

We are continuing to make progress on our 2024 HFI Fuel Reduction Grant with a contract crew. The 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 still 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 has updated their incident management platform and is continuing to work to improve the usefulness of the system for departments like ours. We are scheduled for an ongoing status meeting with them to ensure functionality is maintained 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. This month the JPA Board approved a Cost-per-Call fee schedule of \$16.00 per call which has our annual cost, based on roughly 4,500 calls per year, closer to \$75,000.00 per year. We still have the option to request credit for in-kind services, such as the time Deputy Chief Seamans spends working on SEACOM / Spillman issues.

This month Chief Savage attended meetings with the City of Safford and Graham County to support an ongoing discussion with SEACOM regarding the potential of expanding regional dispatch services to include agencies in Graham County.

Legal – The Board was provided a copy of the Motion to Dismiss received by Mr. Matura. Chief Savage will continue to keep the Board apprised of any developments.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. 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. This item may include the selection of a CMAR and/or direction moving forward with plans, phasing, and fee schedule.

Deputy Chief Semans thanked Shive Hattery for attending the meeting and shared the names of the three companies that were interviewed as candidates, Marsh Development, Kappcon General Contracting, and Lloyd Construction.

John Price, project manager and architect of Shive Hattery explained the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) selection process to select the general contractor. Deputy Chief Semans stated Marsh Development is local, out of Huachuca City, they came in with the lowest cost and shortest construction time, and he is comfortable with the quality of their work based on some of the construction they have completed.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to select Marsh Development for the design work, construction manager at risk (CMAR) process, and capital improvement planning with Shive-Hattery Architects for Fire Sta. 143. This item may include the selection of a CMAR and/or direction moving forward with plans, phasing, and fee schedule. Mr. Andersen seconded the motion.

Vote: 4-0.
Motion carried.

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

Chief Savage stated this item remains from the presentation Carter Kimberly gave last month. Investment performance data requested by the Board was shared with them previously. There is no cost to set up the Trust and get input and financial planning perspective from their finance managers. He does not recommend moving money from the LGIP into the Section 115 Trust, but suggests opening it as an option and funding it with money we may avoid paying into PSPRS for individuals in the DROP program. The Board deferred to Chief Savage as long as there is no risk, no cost, and no negative impact on the taxpayer.

Mr. Sturm made a motion to move forward with opening the Arizona Employers Pension Prefunding Program (AEPPP) / Section 115 Trust Program. Mr. Andersen 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 7:12 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Sturm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

DATED THIS 23RD DAY OF APRIL 2025.

Eric Andersen, Board Clerk
Fry Fire District Board