

**APPROVED MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT
HELD ON TUESDAY, February 17th, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 18:31 by Board Chair Lee. Present at roll call were Board Members Mark Lee, Mary Bowen, Steve Hoffman about, Dan Simmons and Jerry Conrad. All members present; a quorum existed. Jared Riker from RikerTech present, Attorney Lauri Owen present at 18:39.

- Item 1: Lease Agreement, Bluespan Wireless: Introductions were made between the Board and representatives from Bluespan Wireless and RikerTech. Mr. Lee stated that the District Attorney would be arriving shortly. Board Chair Lee recognized Mr. Scott Stace, CEO of Bluespan Wireless and gave him the floor. Mr. Stace stated that Bluespan is a Tucson based company expanding in this area. Bluespan recently approached the Mescal-J6 Fire District in regards to providing services in the area and possibly using the District tower. Mr. Stace stated that his conversation with the Fire Chief identified issues with low internet bandwidth and poor radio reception from the existing tower. The Fire Chief requested Bluespan investigate some different possibilities in preparation for this evening's proposal. Mr. Stace stated that he was able to make contact with the contractor who built the tower, was able to locate the original permit and contacted Phoenix based Durham Communications. Mr. Stace was able to confirm that the existing 70' tower cannot be extended; the concrete foundation will not support a 30' extension. The permit filed with the County was indeed for 70'. The only other option is to construct a new, taller tower, a great expense. In addition to the expense of a new tower, the District does not possess enough land for a larger tower. Regulations require that, in the event of a failure of the tower, the tower would not fall outside of District property. Mr. Stace stated that his next step was to investigate what the District would gain as a result of extending the tower... Chief Moran asked for clarification in regards to the existing tower base, as he was under the impression the tower base was constructed with the possibility of extending it an additional 30' in the future. Mr. Stace confirmed that is not the case, the base will not support any extension. Mr. Lee introduced Ms. Lauri Owen of the Cochise County Attorney's office. Mr. Lee recapped the conversation to this point. Mr. Stace continued with his presentation and stated a summary of problems the District is facing: two-way radio communication is suffering due to lack of sufficient tower height, inter-station communications is suffering due to slow internet, and personnel email suffers as a result of poor service and outages. The solutions to these issues are: a higher tower to mitigate communication issues, better bandwidth, an interstation network, and a cloud based solution for email and external access. Mr. Stace provided two RF studies based on tower heights of 140' and 190'. The small gains received at those proposed heights would not be cost effective for the District. Leasing tower space at another location remains the most logical solution. Tucson Electric Power (TEP) owns a tower on Haystack mountain. Bluespan is currently negotiating a lease for their use, and is willing to approach TEP about a possible lease for the District, if the Board is agreeable. Separately, Bluespan Wireless proposed to install two dishes on the District's existing 70' tower and in exchange, provide the Mescal-J6 Fire District with point-to-point connectivity between all of the stations, a 20mg dedicated internet connection at all stations, telephone service to each location, and assist our IT provider with guidance in the setup. Mrs. Bowen inquired if this would allow local residents to secure internet service from Bluespan. Mr. Stace replied that anyone able to visibly locate the tower from their residence could obtain internet service from Bluespan. Mr. Stace ended his presentation by stating the commercial value of the package he's offering the District, in exchange for

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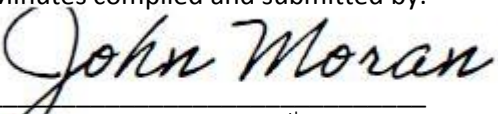
tower space, is approximately \$1500 per month. Jared Riker, of Rikertech, stated his agreement with Mr. Stace's overall assessment, and that poor connectivity issues results in poor communications. There was additional discussion as to how the phone system and call forwarding will work, with many different options available. Mr. Riker agreed that the cloud based file system would work well for the District. Mr. Stace stated a cost of approximately \$2 per staff member per month. Chief Moran confirmed the ability to create a District intranet. Mr. Riker expounded on the wide array of possibilities by using the cloud based office system, including up-to-date software without the expense of licensing renewals, shared calendars, etc. Mr. Riker stated his fees were \$45.00 an hour and \$35.00 for remote maintenance. There was additional discussion regarding generational use of the internet, the level of knowledge necessary for the use of the new system, and that our existing staff is very "tech savvy" but will still require training on the new system. Mr. Stace explained the difference between a dedicated and shared internet service provider, and guaranteed the speed of their product regardless of time of day or the number of additional customers subscribed. Mr. Simmons inquired as to Bluespan's price range; Mr. Stace replied that prices start at \$49.00 per month and go up, with 5MB service being the lowest. They offer in excess of 40MB but only on a custom basis. Mr. Simmons stated his understanding that this will solve/enhance our IT issues, but does not address our radio communications issues. Mr. Stace confirmed as such, and stated that was the second part of his presentation. Mr. Stace opined that the District could lease tower space for many years in comparison to the expense of building a higher tower, and provided he received permission, he would like to investigate the possibility of obtaining a tower lease for the District on Haystack mountain. Mr. Simmons inquired as to the frequency type of our radios and clarification as to some of the transmission issues staff was experiencing. Chief Moran replied the District is VHF and static and poor voice transmission are the main issues. Mr. Simmons stated that as the quality of radio transmission is based on line of sight between towers, the only solution would be to go higher. There was additional discussion as to current equipment, where it was obtained, the placement of service agreements, if relocating our existing equipment would be an option, and whether the system was subpar to begin with or if lack of regular maintenance has contributed to the issue over the years. Chief Moran stated that Canyon State recently serviced our repeater and short of a small adjustment it was in perfect working order. Mrs. McCool stated that prior to the tower being erected that a study was done around the District to ensure that the system would work as expected. Mr. Lee believes the Board authorized a maintenance plan and they were supposed to be checked out every year. Mr. Lee stated that after the tower was installed, he inquired with the Fire Chief at the time, and later, with the Chief Operations Officer, and they both confirmed the system was working as designed... but he could just tell they were insincere. Mr. Riker remarked that the server is constantly going down and that could possibly be affecting the repeater, and that excess heat may be the culprit. Mr. Lee replied that was one of the reasons the District purchased the office building; so the equipment would be stored in a climate controlled area. Chief Moran inquired as to the time frame to install and setup their equipment, with two-to three weeks being the reply. Mr. Stace stated that by the time the contract is reviewed and approved, etc. that he would expect to finished in thirty days. Chief Moran inquired as to the power source for their equipment and who would assume that cost, Mr. Stace replied shore based power would be used with solar/battery backup. Ms. Owen

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inquired as to the length of time for Bluespan to have an agreement ready, Mr. Stace replied he could have one to her tomorrow. Mr. Simmons inquired as to the status of insurance. Mr. Stace stated the normal process is to indemnify, to which Ms. Owen concurred. Mr. Stace stated he would seek guidance from Ms. Owen in regards to the indemnification verbiage. There was additional discussion as to if the current permit allows the lease of tower space. Ms. Owen stated she would like to see the contract before the Board moved forward. Motion by Mrs. Bowen to direct Attorney Lauri Owen to begin contract negotiations on behalf of MJFD with Bluespan Wireless, second by Mr. Conrad. Mrs. McCool confirmed that there will be a final approval by the Board, and inquired as to the esthetics of the equipment. Mr. Stace replied it is small and hardly noticeable. Motion carried 4-0. Chief Moran stated we could add this to the Agenda of the February 23rd, 2015 meeting. Chief Moran gave permission for Mr. Stace to investigate possible tower leases.

- Item 2: Call to the Public: Mrs. McCool confirmed that every Board member received a list of her questions regarding the tower item and cautioned the Board as to the requirements for public record storage and using a cloud based system.
- Item 3: Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Bowen, second by Mr. Conrad, motion carried 4-0 and meeting adjourned at 19:54.

Minutes compiled and submitted by:



John Moran, February 17th, 2015