

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD
HELD WEDNESDAY, May 4th, 2022 AT 6:30 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 1832 hours by Board Chair Mark Lee. Present at roll call were Board Members: Mark Lee, Phyllis Ellis, and Robert Murray. Brian Hughes attended via phone. Mary Bowen was absent.

Item 1: **Call to the Public:** This is the time for the public to comment. Members of the Board may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01(H), action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date."

Mary McCool, chair of J6/Mescal CDO presented the board members with paperwork (included as an attachment in the District's official minutes) and stated that the current budgeting process may not be the best practice.

No other member of the public was present.

Item 2: **Five-Year Plan:** Review, discussion and possible action to approve the 2022/2023 Draft Five-Year Plan.

Mr. Mark Lee made a motion to post the 2022/2023 Draft Five-Year Plan.
Motion dies for lack of a second.

Mr. Robert Murray made a motion to table posting of the 2022/2023 Draft Five-Year Plan for review and approval, until May 25th.
Motion dies for lack of a second.

Fire Chief John Moran stated, he has prepared a limited 5-year plan after much discussion the last several months and not knowing if the board made any decisions, went with the format we have been using. Mr. Mark Lee said, he also presented a 5-year plan, and he assumes Mr. Robert Murray has a 5-year plan that he is ready to present tonight because he had made quite a big deal over the last few months to which Mr. Murray replied, no, he didn't. Mr. Lee explained, the way the process works is Chief Moran presents a budget tonight, he will explain it, answer questions and then we are required to post the budget for a minimum of 20 days, but that Chief Moran is allowed more time than that for the budget to be posted. This gives the board and public time to review the budget in detail and if there are questions during this time frame, the public and the board can call Chief Moran. Chief Moran added, there is also an email address

for questions pertaining to the budget and comments to the board, which would then be considered at the June meeting, if not sooner. Mrs. Ellis questioned the roll-over of several items to which Chief Moran responded, he did not remove items because they are not complete. Mr. Lee remarked that a lot of these things in the 5-year plan are ongoing. Mr. Brian Hughes added, some of the roll over every year needs to be addressed, but some things like the SOPs and practices, will be on there every year. Mrs. Ellis said, after hearing Mr. Lees and Mr. Hughes input roll over in the 5-year plan, it enlightened her a little bit as to what change to expect but that some things will never go away and are ongoing. Mrs. Ellis added that Mr. Murray has mentioned having work sessions and if that gets decided, there wasn't three board members there and the final version got voted on by all the board members, we certainly could help the Chief with the 5-year plan. Chief Moran responded that we have discussed this many different times over the year and it has never come to action, the board needs to pick a lane and go down it and he will then be happy to put it in working place. Chief Moran added that there is no requirement that the 5-year plan be included with the budget or posted, we do it as a courtesy to the public. Mr. Lee reiterate that there is no legal requirement to post the plan. Chief Moran added, we just have to have one for the County.

Item 3: Fiscal Year 2023 Budget: Review, discussion and possible action to approve the 2022/2023 Draft Operations, Maintenance and Reserve Budget, as submitted by Chief Moran.

Phyllis Ellis made a motion to table the posting and acceptance of the Draft Budget until the meeting on May 25th. Robert Murray seconded the motion. Motion carries 3 – 1 with Mark Lee – no, Brian Hughes – yes, Phyllis Ellis – yes and Robert Murray – yes.

Chief Moran went over the FY2023 Draft Operations & Maintenance Budget. Mr. Murray inquired on tax increase percentages and what we can anticipate collecting. Chief Moran responded, he is unsure and that he is concerned with the effects of rising costs overall. With taxpayers likely facing struggles, we should plan on tightening our belts this year. Mrs. Ellis, Mr. Lee, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Murray questioned several items in the budget including payroll, fuel cost increase, contributions and private donations, administration, professional services, possible funds to carry over and line-item discrepancies, to which Chief Moran provided detailed explanation. Mr. Lee commented that according to these estimates we should fall below the \$500,000 threshold for the next two years. Mrs. Ellis added, depending on what we do with whatever is left over at the end of the year. Mrs. Ellis expressed concerned with incorrect coding to which Mr. Lee responded, in reality it doesn't make a lot of difference since we have the ability to transfer money between line items as needed. Mrs. Ellis added that when we have the final vote on the approved budget, the line items need to be as close as possible. Mr. Lee said he disagrees. Mr. Hughes said he thinks we still have plenty of time to put this out and doing it prematurely leaves room for errors. Mr. Lee stated, we are trying to get in front of the posting requirement, and this is just a preliminary budget. Mrs. Ellis replied that she thinks we can still post on the 25th and be safe.

Item 4: Adjourn: Brian Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phyllis Ellis seconded the motion. Motion carries 4 – 0 with Mark Lee – yes, Brian Hughes – yes, Phyllis Ellis – yes and Robert Murray – yes.

Mark Lee adjourned the meeting at 1948 hours.

Minutes compiled and submitted by
Denise Serna
Administrative Assistant

