



MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT

448 N. Warren Rd. Benson, AZ 85602

Phone (520)586-4690 Fax (520)586-8598

Fire Chief Report

October 2024

Presented at November 2024 Board Meeting

Incidents: 60 total; fire (7); EMS (37); other (16). Mutual aid received -2; given -2.

Total up to Nov 17 for 2024 – 535 same time last year 2023 - 458 – up 77 calls. **This represents a 16% increase.**

Hazard Mitigation Collections: \$436 collected in and deposited since the last Board meeting. Just over \$12K still working on. We have had more billable incidents so far since the last collection period.

Apparatus:

Working on parking brake on brush truck

Anode rods need to be replaced in tenders, other water carrying apparatus

Chief's truck to have fender, paint match, lettering by prison done soon

Smaller vehicles are coming up on biannual oil changes. Normally done in-house to save money.

Ladder testing will be done this month. This is mandatory per NFPA 1932.

Equipment: Found station and admin fire extinguishers were out of compliance. Working on getting this done as soon as possible. Will most likely use company from Sierra Vista.

Buildings: Admin roof – Complete roof replacement was only option as all shingles were dried out to point would not cover and were breaking and being blown off roof. Completed November 13, 2024. Total cost \$12K. VFIS- insurance carrier covered \$11,997K, so basically a new roof without money coming from operating budget. Will be replacing yellowing, damaged and water-stained ceiling tile soon.

Helipad and Repeater: Going to put mobile repeaters in GOHS grant, asking for 5-Pyramid repeaters, working on costs, but looks like approx. \$2700/vehicle. This will NOT replace the need for large repeater on Haystack. It will only boost signal from apparatus to handhelds. This is an important piece, however, because of all the dips and valleys, especially on I-10, we will need both. We need to conduct our own test along our response area, not just our district area. After that, we can assess where the trouble spots are and then will be able to determine what areas will be potentially improved by Haystack. We pretty much know we will not be able to cover every nook and cranny, but this will give our crews vital information, so comm plans on scene can be created, IE: have one vehicle stop where we know has coverage and turn on mobile repeater to assist in signal boost IF possible. Mr. Nervik has been assisting so I will respectfully ask him to report on where we are at on Haystack.



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We will be conducting MANDATORY board training on Saturday December 7, 2024. This is a State mandate and all board members and new fire chiefs must complete it within 1 year of appointment. We will be conducting it now as it will educate us on items that will put us all on the same page and will be of great benefit as we move forward toward kicking off our strategic plan project. This will begin in January of 2025. More to come on that.

I attended the FDSA meeting in Florence, AZ on Thursday. It is an organization that assists special districts with knowledge and potential political and financial opportunities. Update to come. We are part of the founding agencies.

Public records requests for Sept 2024 at \$924.37. YTD since tracking began in Aug = \$2406.24

I conducted the first "meet the chief" and had a couple of individuals show up. Very good discussions and I look forward to more individuals joining us at the next meeting. Dates to follow.

I will be meeting with the boundary mapping personnel to go over our area. An extreme, sudden illness has put the meeting off temporarily.

Will be working on protocol for our dispersal of free smoke detectors. Will also be getting detectors that "shake the bed" for those hard of hearing.

I dug into our ATT bill and found that we have been paying \$300/mo for unused tablets and hotspot. These have been disconnected and will be seeing those savings going forward. Total paid unnecessarily \$3600.

We continue to work on our email with GoDaddy. We have been approved for our .gov suffix. Mr. Temple has been instrumental in helping in this area. We are estimating our annual payout for their services is \$6000. We are looking at everything from free up to that and comparing. Several personnel have been removed from email, resulting in immediate \$300/mo savings. More to come.

I had a lengthy conversation with Natalie, and we are doing fine budget-wise. October is a heavy month for tax income, we are past our very lean months. Yr for yr, we are a bit under budget

No news on our Gary Sinese Foundation grant for 7 AED's and all accompanying equipment. Hopefully soon. Only time will tell how our needs stack up against others.

GOHS grant is being written. Will be asking for lighter, electrically driven extrication equipment. There are numerous benefits to this including: lighter, resulting in one person being able to carry and



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potentially operate, resulting in decrease in back or other injury. More power in spreaders and cutters, potentially decreasing extrication time, which in turn decreases time to surgical care, which then leads to very impactful results in patient outcomes as it pertains to the "Golden Hour". We are trying for RAMs and air bags, both of which our current ones are not reliable and are heavy, cumbersome and one person cannot move without risk of injury. New would be lighter but stronger. We are also writing for mobile repeaters as mentioned above. We believe the two go hand in hand as we take care of issues either on the highway, within district or both.

Working on grants, funding potential with Special District Advocate Group. Initial information from contact is we "tick" several good boxes. We will see as I've already received notice that one source is severely limited this upcoming year. These grants are just so very competitive. That's why I've chosen the individual I have, to help us so far. He has garnered \$30 million for other agencies all while being incredibly affordable. We will, as necessary, bring in others depending on specific areas of expertise.

Meeting with VFIS, Volunteer Fire Insurance Services to gain understanding of how they can assist us. They have several programs we may take advantage of which will also help produce the best strategic plan possible.

Activities

The AFG grant has opened. Captain Olander is heading up writing specs for a new combo pumper, heavy rescue. If awarded, the district will have 5% match. Our period of performance would be two years as manufacturers are having trouble keeping up with demand. If awarded, this vehicle will combine the capabilities of three of our current apparatus. We will have to modify it a bit to fit within our current station as they are stock 6"-18" longer than what we can accommodate.

We will then again consider writing for the SAFER grant, asking to fund most likely between 3-6 personnel.

I am working with other Fire Chiefs towards a Department of Forestry grant specifically designed for Wildfire Mitigation. It would be done hopefully prior to wildfire season. We have a significant issue in this area and, if awarded, we could drastically reduce this risk to our citizens.

Training: upcoming training on new SCBAs and radios. Also working towards getting one to two personnel to Incident Safety Officer class in February as November class was canceled.



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I attended the CCEMS and Fire Chief's meetings in October. I also attended a presentation on the new OSHA standard for fire agencies. It is a daunting document and will impact our district for the foreseeable future if signed into law. Some people say it will move forward, some say it will be stalled with the change in administration. Only time will tell, and I will be keeping on top of it going forward.

I attended a meeting on NFPA 1970 which is a new comprehensive Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural and Proximity Firefighting. It also now covers work apparel (something the district will be required to provide), SCBA, and Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS), which is an alarm that sounds so a downed FF can be located should they not be able to use radio. Some of the biggest changes are to SCBA (which we are in alignment with as we just received new ones). The biggest change is in what is called a structural firefighting hood. This is a pull-over balaclava hood that covers the FF head, neck and partial face. It is put on after the breathing mask and there should be no skin showing. It only can protect the FF so much as a more rigid one would not allow for head rotation or flexion, resulting in an even more decreased lateral vision. The new standard calls for these hoods to now be made with a protective vapor barrier, shown to be more effective in preventing chemicals within the fire smoke from penetrating the thin skin the hood covers. FFs have a much higher instance of cancers of the head/neck/throat and brain because of the lack of a better barrier. However, this protection comes with negatives as well including decreased motion, harder to make seal with mask, less flexible, increase in heat retainment in head/neck/face areas. So, just an example of one issue. These new hoods will be purchased as we can to protect our FF as much as possible. We will need to write for a micro-grant of some type to get new turnouts for our personnel as ours are "timing out" at their 10-year mark. This is an NFPA, soon to be OSHA standard we will be required to meet. Much more to come here.

I am in Phoenix this week attending the EMT re-entry course. 9-5:30, M-Sat. 11/17-23. After this course, if everything goes well, I should be able to test for my National Registry EMT. The next step would then be to return sometime within the next few months for a 10-day course for re-entry to then be eligible to test for my National Registry Paramedic Certification. I lost my cert after 37 years during COVID as there were no refreshers available. This is a State approved program for folks with the same issue. This is part of our contract with International Medical Directors. I am paying for my certifications, the District is covering lodging. The plan is then for IMD to stand us up to deliver PM services to our citizens at a cost savings of \$12-15K, should we send someone to this type of training on our own money. It basically allows us to elevate the capabilities of our district for our citizens in a very cost-effective way. More to come.

Mandatory Board Training Dec 7th. Materials have been distributed. We will have guest speakers and also members of other CC district boards training with us.

******1st notice of this mandatory training, where there will be a quorum present. This will be training only NO business will be conducted or decisions made*****.**