

**APPROVED MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD  
HELD ON Wednesday, August 31 2016, 6:30 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 18:31 hours, by Board Chair, Mr. Mark Lee. Present at roll call were Board Members, Mr. Jerry Conrad, Mrs. Mary Bowen, Mrs. Sue Dupee, and Mr. Dan Simmons

- Item 1:        Minutes: Minutes from the Regular Board meeting held on July 27, 2016 and the Executive Session held on July 27, 2016 were reviewed by the Board. Mr. Lee noted a typographical error in the first line of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Miss Stites will change Boar to Board. Mrs. Dupee made a motion to approve the July 27 minutes with the correction requested by Mr. Lee. Mr. Conrad seconded the motion, which carried, 4-0. Mr. Simmons abstained voting because he was absent from the July 27 meeting.
- Mrs. Bowen made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes from the July 27 meeting, as written. Mr. Conrad seconded the motion which carried, 4-0. Mr. Simmons abstained voting because he was absent from the July 27 meeting.
- Mr. Lee noted that there was an incorrect date of the Executive Session listed on the August 31, 2016 agenda; it read July 17, but was actually held on July 27 with the Regular Meeting.
- Item 2:        Financial Report: Chief Moran presented the Certificate of Compliance for the financial report containing June 2016 and July 2016 data to Board Chair, Mr. Lee for signature. Having reviewed the financial detail prior to this evening's meeting, Mrs. Dupee made a motion to approve and sign the Certificates of Compliance, with Mr. Simmons seconding the motion, which carried 5-0.
- Item 3:        Fire Chief's Report: Chief Moran's report gave facts and data for the month of August.
- MJFD responded to 41 incidents during the month of July, with an average turnout time of 3:35.
  - Training in August has been tailored to orienting new FF staff, including extrication, MVA training, and personal protective gear. Chief noted that the response time in the daytime has been quicker than during the night, due to several FFs spending time at Station One.
  - The apparatuses have all been in good shape this month. Chief notified the Board that Mr. Owen Keily, a Mescal resident, has offered to initiate conversations with Ford on behalf of the District, regarding the turbo repair and recall involving Rescue 171 in June.
  - Landscaping and building maintenance has been ongoing at all of the District's facilities. The Administration Building has adopted two kittens, named Hook and Ladder, in the ongoing attempt to curtail the rodent problem in the office. Staff has also tried electronic devices, Irish Spring soap, and sealing entry places from the outside.
  - Billing for non-residents continues, with one payment of \$250 received in August. As a side note, Chief notified the Board that the District's accounting firm has recently merged with another accounting firm in Tucson, which has enhanced their resources. Chief said that administrative staff is delighted with HBL's availability, willingness to help in any area needed, and their knowledge has been a major asset to the District's ability to carry on daily functions. Chief and HBL staff will be embarking on initiatives to clean up out of date invoices, and issues that need resolution.
  - September 27, 2016 is First Responders Appreciation Day. Stan Greer of Mill Works, in conjunction with other area businesses is supporting an event, offering first responders free breakfast and lunch on Saturday. Chief Moran may be contacted for additional information

- Chief Matthews of Palominas Fire District, arranged for quarterly meetings of area fire chiefs. His intent in creating this new organization is to allow for smaller meetings, focused on resource sharing, networking, and training specific to Cochise County fire districts. The second meeting was held August 8, with Senator Gail Griffin as the guest speaker. Senator Griffin provided updates on legislation related to pensions, mergers, and the \$3.25 tax levy cap. Senator Griffin presented each Fire Chief in attendance with a certificate of the March 30, 2016 Legislative Concurrent Resolution-1006, honoring Arizona's first responders. The Senator noted that she is intimately aware of the Community Development Organization, which she and the Chief discussed at length, and said that if there were issues that she would contact the Chief directly.
- Communications: Work on the county wide communications/dispatch system progresses, with little input from fire districts around the county. The general consensus is that the Sheriff's Department is not including the area districts in this initiative and that the Sheriff's Department feels that the districts are not adequately prepared to participate in the planning, and considers the area fire districts to be unorganized. As a result, the CCFCA is working to create a county wide dispatch for fire districts within a year, possibly a year and a half. A barrier to this initiative, is the very high cost of the individual digital radios needed for the new dispatch, and education and background for dispatch personnel. Mr. Simmons talked about his involvement with Pima County's similar system which was a long process, with high cost, and many complications.
- Palominas Fire 1 and 2 Fire Academy: MJFD is sending three students: FFs Steve Nastasio, Tatiana Lucio, and Brandee Kearny, and Chief will be an assistant instructor. The cost per student is \$580, which Chief said is a very good price and state certification will be given upon completion. MJFD will cover the cost of tuition, and in return the individuals have pledged at least one year service to the District. Fire Fighter Sean Kuhn is attending the Fire Academy via Cochise College. Kuhn's course is significantly more expensive, as it's part of a degree program. MJFD also provided Kuhn with tuition assistance. Chief noted that with the exception of one new person, these participants are established MJFD staff and he has every confidence that they will complete their courses and be better fire fighters and community servants as a result.
- Arizona Fire School is starting next week, September 7-11. One officer and three fire fighters from MJFD will be attending. Tuition for the individuals will be refunded to the District upon completion by the Arizona Fire Fighter's Fund.
- The District's liability and property insurance is due for renewal in November 2016. The District's insurance agent has recommended that a certificate of insurance be required, along with a facility use agreement for any group using the Community Room. Staff will present a draft for Board approval at the September 28 Board Meeting.
- File Server: There has been trouble with our file server, and a temporary solution has been implemented. Google Drive is in use but is not ideal, mostly because it's a general login and tracking of use is not possible. More appropriate alternatives are being researched.
- The firefighting staff has recently hired new individuals, and the District is now at it's worker's compensation maximum, which has not happened in the three years Chief has been with the District. Chief reports that participation is at a high level, and that staff is happy and satisfied with the status quo.

Item 4: Governing Board Election Update: Chief Moran spoke with Mr. Tom Schelling on Wednesday, August 31, and verified that there will be no election for Board Members in November. The two write in candidates, Mrs. Sue Dupee, and Mr. Owen Kiely, will be appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The District will be charged the \$500 administrative fee, but will not incur the cost of an election or the other associated costs.

- Item 5: Budget Review for Fiscal Year 2016: Chief asked the Board to reference the FY 2016 Cash Flow Projections handout. He explained that there was roughly \$1000 worth of revisions made to some income line items. He said that the District collected all but 2 percent or \$5053 of anticipated revenue, and did not spend \$52,342 of the anticipated and budget expenditures (18 percent).  
The District ended Fiscal Year 2016 with a surplus of \$75,642.71, and this is after depositing \$20,000 into the District's Reserve Account. The surplus has allowed the District to reduce its tax rate from 1.46 to a \$1.36 (rounded off), which saves the tax payers nearly \$20,000.  
Chief Moran said that the District is repeatedly accused of fiscal irresponsibility which he takes issue with because he sees the District carrying over these high dollar amounts every year, which is necessary to sustain the District during the lean summer months. Due to paying staff for calls, the district has not failed to miss one call since implementing the policy. The level of service has increased 10 fold, in his opinion, and the level of professionalism, training, and satisfaction is superior to any time period in the past. Chief Moran said that he is quite tired of hearing the persistent and redundant criticism from Mrs. Mary McCool, representing the Community Development Organization. He notes that she has had some legitimate concerns, but her repeated comments about the District's fiscal irresponsibility do not wash, and that the proof is right here in these numbers. He finished by saying that it is his hope that in FY 2017 the District comes within 2 percent of its tax collection as well.
- Item 6: Cochise/Pima County Tax Levy Rate: Chief asked the Board to refer to the FY 2017 MJFD Tax Levy Comparison hand out. In June of 2016, the Budget was prepared using a tax rate of \$1.4599, but after analyzation of the District's financials, and a carryover of roughly \$75,000 from FY 2016 to FY 2017, the tax rate was reduced from the initial figure of \$1.4599 to \$1.3625, which saves the tax payers, \$19,175. Mr. Simmons asked what the tax rate was previous, to which Chief responded was \$1.3429. Chief noted that since the economic decline from 2007 forward, the District has lost roughly \$100,000 in tax revenue due to declining property values. Even with revenue loss, Chief stated that the District continues to operate in the black.
- Item 7: Personnel Safety: Chief spoke about the accelerated number of incidents of violence to first responders all over the country, and although Mescal, J6, and Benson are small towns, these incidences could happen here. He said that he would like to purchase "bullet proof" vests to keep in an apparatus for the safety of firefighters should a situation develop while responding to a call. He said in addition to the protective gear, he suggested defensive training of staff, self defense training, and other initiatives. Mr. Simmons and Mr. Conrad, who both have law enforcement backgrounds, offered their experience and knowledge as resources. In no way is Chief Moran or any member of the Board suggesting that policy changes should be made to arm the firefighters with fire arms, but wants to consider allowing Mace, or cayenne pepper spray, and engaging with local resources to provide MJFD first responders with training and options for personal protection.  
Mr. Lee took a moment to make the following comment. He said that he is proud to have a leader in Chief Moran who is thinking and acting proactively to real and possible issues that face MJFD's firefighters, EMTs, and other staff. He is not waiting for a catastrophe, to consider what should be done in the wake of a tragedy. He said that he believes a superior leader anticipates possible scenarios and tries to prevent the negative outcomes, rather than reacts to situations which have already been

devastating. Mr. Lee reminded the Board and public that three or more Board Members may not meet informally without breaking the Open Meeting Laws, but that if Mr. Simmons and Mr. Conrad could use their knowledge and experience in a brainstorming meeting with Chief Moran to find and consider options and solutions that would help to protect the District's first responders, that he would be in complete support of that. In addition to options, developing a policy that defines protocol in the event that staff is faced with an active shooter, or a dangerous situation that the first responder encounters. With Mr. Lee, and the Board's support, Chief Moran agreed to engage Mr. Simmons and Mr. Conrad to begin these discussions.

Mr. Lee, Chief Moran and the rest of the Board reiterated that they are not condoning or suggesting the use of fire arms by MJFD staff but trying to supply these individuals with real and effective solutions to keep them safe while performing their jobs and protecting the community.

Item 8: Call to the Public: Mrs. Mary McCool, representing the Community Development Organization, provided the Board with a document that she feels outlines discrepancies in District prepared financial documentation and asked for these items to be considered and discussed by the Board.

Chief Moran asked for a moment to return to Item Number 6 of this agenda to make a comment that he did not make earlier. Chief said that he spoke to Mr. Tom Schelling about the change in the tax levy rate and how it affects the District's adopted budget, and that it is Mr. Schelling's opinion, as well as the District's attorney, that the Board could choose to produce a modified projected two-year budget, but that because of the relatively small dollar amount it may not make a substantial difference and may end up causing more confusion in the end.

Item 9: Adjourn: Mr. Conrad made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with Mrs. Bowen seconding the motion. The motion carried 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 19:39 hours.

Minutes compiled and submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy L. Stites". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Stites, Administrative Assistant  
September 3, 2016