

ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

MONDAY APRIL 1, 2013

The following are the minutes of the Oracle Fire District Board meeting, held on Monday, April 1, 2013.

Present: Chairman Bud Bristow, Clerk Charlotte Poole, Board members, John Doran and Manny Navarro, Ellie Brown, Interim Fire Chief Larry Southard, Administrative Chief Tina Acosta, and various members of Certs/Firewise and of the public.

Meeting was officially called to order at 6:05pm.

#1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

#2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES.

Chairman Bristow called for approval of the March 5, 2013 minutes. OFDBM Doran made a motion to approve the March 5, 2013 minutes, Clerk Poole seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

#3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Albert Ortiz, Oracle resident of 30 years, stated that he is interested in the Fire Board position. He feels that his experience of 25 years of working for Oracle Fire District would benefit the board and the district.

Karen Hauca, Oracle resident of 4 years, stated that she is interested in the Fire Board position. She feels her experience in Fire/EMS over the last 30 years would benefit the board and the district.

#4. CHIEF'S REPORT

- Grants – In the process of working on SFA-11, with Tucson Dept. of Corrections crews doing brush thinning on Mt. Lemmon Hwy, part of the 18 mile community fire break. The Florence DOC crew is back on private property through the WFHF-11 grant. Another 10% match grant (no cost to the Department), the WFHF-13, is due on April 26th, which Chief will be writing during his vacation, with approval from the OFD board. Chairman Bristow stated that no approval is needed for him to proceed with writing the grant. We recently received the reimbursement check for the Pinal County Grant, which was written by Chief Southard and managed by Firewise member Rachel Opinsky.

- Storage Building report – We received all of the plans and are through all of the engineering portions of the permitting. We now need to decide whether to donate 5' of frontage road to Pinal County; a condition which was expected all along the process. Chief recommends this be an agenda item for the next Board meeting. About 2 years ago, there was a Title Report done, but this has probably expired and will probably need to be redone, at an approximate cost of \$200.00. However, the Title Company was not able to write a deed out of escrow (to present to Pinal County), so this will need to be done through an attorney, for an additional couple hundred dollars. The Title Report and Deed are things we can work on while waiting to make a

decision on the donation, at the next meeting. This could be included on the agenda for the April 8th meeting, which will be in Executive Session, but could be discussed as a separate item, as it concerns contracts.

- Audit Report – Tina gave the report that she and Carol are currently working on the 3 pages of questions and documents required by CPA Jennifer Phillips prior to the April 22 start of the Audit.
- Policies & Procedures manual – Chief Officers currently reviewing and will try to have something ready to present by May 6th meeting. At that point, the manually revised draft will be given back to Brenda Tranchina, who created the initial draft, for official revision prior to being distributed to board members. This will be a big project for the Board, as it takes several hours to read through the manual.
- Vehicle Report – E693 has a broken pump cooler. Our in-house Fleet mechanic cannot repair this, so it will need to be sent to the pump manufacturer in Phoenix. The part costs \$2,000 and the labor will probably be at least this amount. We can do some work here to lessen the work and costs in the shop. If we drive the truck up there, they can do the testing on-site, as well as performing our annual pump testing, so Chief recommends we take the truck to Phoenix for the repair and testing. We cannot get bids as it came from a specific manufacturer. Chairman Bristow stated that this is the Chief's decision. OFDBM Doran asked how long will it take (how long will the truck be out-of-service?). Chief said approximately 2 weeks. Wildfire season is coming up so it needs to be done soon.
- CERT Report – presented by Doug Johnson, co-Chair for CERTS/Firewise: The Community Emergency Response Team was created in 1985 by Los Angeles Fire Department; recognizing that citizens would most likely be on their own at the beginning of a major disaster, until first responders are able to arrive. They decided that some basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills would help improve survival. The program was then embraced by FEMA (following Katrina). About 12 people from Oracle took the first CERT training 7 years ago. We have had 2 additional classes, resulting in about 20 active members out of approx. 35. Most CERTS are also on the Firewise Board. They are currently recruiting for a new training. CERTs often help with office duties; working on Fridays and occasional weekends to monitor the brush dump. In an emergency, CERTS will be relied upon to "man the facilities": answer the phones, field questions, help with radio communications, etc. They have been trained to "fill in" on emergencies and even go out to the incident. The biggest test came a few years ago on a mutual aid assignment in San Manuel, during the Republic Plastics Fire. There is a support trailer, purchased by Firewise brush dump funds. Primarily the volunteers purchase uniforms and equipment. The website was created by CERT member Kate Horton. Over the past several years, CERTs have helped at various community events, such as the Oaks Festival. We have also held various drills, such as safe driving, address location and radios. We recently had a mass casualty disaster drill, in which the on-scene firefighters were down and the responding CERTS were first responders. About half of the CERTS are first responder certified, including advanced CPR. CERTS are currently working on trailer towing and Auto-dialer drills. The CERTS ensured the installation of a weather station. There is currently a combined CERT/Firewise meeting every other month, following the CERT training manual. Headcount: about 20 active members, combined about 35.

- Firewise Report – presented by Co-chair Mike Snyder: The Oracle Firewise Board was established in March of 2005, following a general public meeting to see who was interested, with a representative from the UofA Co-operative Extension, the OFD and several Oracle Citizens. The Firewise Board was formed with the goal of creating a recognized Firewise community; to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, and others to protect people, property and natural resources before the fire starts. The goal is to have community individuals take responsibility for safer home design/construction and landscaping/maintenance, which can reduce the loss during a wildland fire. Why do this? Besides creating safer homes and properties, the official Firewise recognition offers dependable insurance coverage, access to government grants and monies and community support on Firewise projects. Firewise is about Planning, Preparedness and Education (we're not an operational group). Education takes place at community events, such as the upcoming Oaks Festival, where we'll have an informational booth. Last year, there were groups that went into the local elementary school to teach Firewise programs. Last year, procured grants allowed brush clearing along major evacuation routes, and established a firebreak around State Park property, along with other projects. The brush dump also provides incentive for local residents to clear their properties, and provides revenues to support CERTS, the Fire Department and has provided AED units to all schools and many public buildings. Chairman Bristow asked whether these groups have By-Laws. Doug answered no, that they follow training guidelines for CERT and Firewise. Clerk Poole asked about annual Firewise renewals and Mike answered that they have to meet certain criteria to maintain the status and submit reports and renewals each year. There are 884 Firewise communities in the United States. In Arizona, there are 47, only 10 of which are stand alone communities (the rest are mostly Home Owners Associations). Oracle is #8 in Arizona, and the only one in Pinal County (as well as the CERT team). Doug thinks that the reason these programs work so well is that the groups and OFD work very well together and complement one another. Financially, we are obligated to spend \$2 or \$3 per citizen annually (spent by Oracle citizens at the brush dump, so we are always over the required amount). The auto-dialer is funded by OFD. OFDBM Brown asked about volunteers paying for their own equipment. Doug explained that they were provided with a t-shirt and bag with some basic items, after their classes, but had to purchase anything in addition. Chairman Bristow stated how much he appreciated their work.

- State-wide Wildland drill – held in Oracle March 26th. Organized by Pinal/Pima Wildland Team. There were approximately a dozen different agencies, and about 120 firefighters. They met at the Village Square, as the Command Post, and were broken up into 4 groups, located throughout Oracle for different skills training: chainsaw operations and safety at Oracle State Park, home triage on private properties on Hobe Rd., fire suppression/hose operations at the brush dump and basics refresher and fire shelter deployment at OFD. All groups cycled through all four skills stations throughout the day. The drill was very well attended and the participants were very appreciative of Oracle's efforts. They stated they would like to hold the training here every year. Chief thought the community would be concerned with seeing all of the fire trucks, but it all went very smoothly (and was well communicated). Doug heard a commander state that he would like to have the drill held over 2 days. If this happened, the community could possibly hold a BBQ for them, as this drill positively impacts the community of Oracle by the wildland crews becoming familiar with the streets and terrain. Chief thanked CERTS, who had people at each skill station throughout the day.

- Oaks Festival – Saturday April 20th. Firewise will have a booth and OFD will be represented by the fleet at the rear of the parade, however the old fire engine will not be in the parade this year, due to bad brakes. So far, replacement parts have not been found. Chief suggested making a float with the old engine being pulled on a trailer, holding all of the board members. OFDBM Brown asked what will happen to the old engine; if it's fixable. Chief responded that it is not currently fixable, but we could possibly take it to a specialist. But at about 70 years old, this would be difficult and costly.

- Chief's Class at the National Fire Academy – Chief traveled to Emmitsburg, Maryland for the "Situation Awareness and Common Operating Picture" class, March 24 – 29th. It was an Incident command class, but dealt with the "other side of Incident Command", or all of the other connected agencies at County/State/Federal levels. It stressed the importance of developing relationships with these agencies prior to an emergency.

- Brush Dump – May 1st is the County-wide ban on burns, so we'll try to get one more burn at the brush dump. This morning, we attended a residential burn (with a valid burn permit), as the property owner had accumulated a very large pile of brush. We sent an engine to stand by in case an ember ignited surrounding vegetation. We are already into fire season. We had a small brush fire on Coronado Ridge a few weeks ago. The property owners had already had their property cleared last year. It is important that we be able to respond rapidly to these incidents.

- Call Load and Account balances reports – will be included in packets to board members, along with the agenda for the next meeting.

- Vacation – Chief will be off April 4 – 16, using 5 flex days and 2 vacation days. While gone, he will prepare a draft budget, as well as write the upcoming WFHF grant, that is due April 26th, and finalize reviewing the draft of the Human Resources Policies and Procedures. This is an extra long trip for him, as wildfire season is coming up and he will not go away during this time.

#5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT FIRE BOARD BY-LAWS –

OFDBM Doran made a motion to adopt the By-Laws. Clerk Poole has some questions, but seconded the motion to adopt the By-Laws and open them up for discussion. Chairman Bristow asked for a background on the presented By-Laws. Chief responded that he started with the By-Laws from Clarksdale F.D. as well as a sample from the AFDA book, he added and deleted where appropriate and came up with this draft, as a basic working piece. Chief stated that the By-Laws are like the Policies and Procedures: you start off with something, but it will need to be edited over time. OFDBM Brown requested an explanation of the last two paragraphs on the first page; Section 1, article 3. Chief explained that he put it there due to issues from the past regarding family members working in the same department and was trying to avoid these same issues. He did not find this clause in any other By-Law sample, but created it for the OFD By-Laws. Chairman Bristow then read the paragraphs to the public:

"Employees of the Oracle Fire District shall not be members of the OFD Board and conversely, a member of the OFD Board shall not be an employee of the Oracle Fire District (A.R.S. 48-805 B.1).

Members of the OFD Board shall not have a relative employed by the Oracle Fire District and conversely, Oracle Fire District employees shall not have a relative of the OFD Board. The term

"Relative" is defined in ARS 38-481. This rule does not apply to Fire Explorer or volunteer auxiliary groups such as Firewise Board members or CERTs."

Oracle resident Albert Ortiz asked how this would be controlled in an election. OFDBM Doran responded that it wouldn't apply. Discussion ensued regarding a relative not being in a supervisory position over another relative. That in the case of the OFD Board, they supervise the Chief, and the Chief supervises the other employees, so there would be no conflict. Chairman Bristow said he was concerned about limiting relatives in this District, as it is such a small community. Chief replied that we currently do not have any employees who are related to one another. OFDBM Brown said that this could happen in the future. OFDBM Doran stated that this type of clause is common practice in private business.

Oracle resident Karen Hauca stated that at Golder Ranch Fire Dept., there are currently no relatives on the Board and working as employees, however, they do have employees (firefighters) working for the Department who are related and are assigned different shifts.

Clerk Poole questioned Article IV, Section 6, Procedures to Fill a Vacancy, #4. whether interviews should take place at the next regular meeting or the next scheduled meeting, which would delay the decision by a month. OFDBM Doran would prefer "next meeting". Chairman Bristow stated he doesn't know whether they need to conduct an oral interview. Chairman Bristow asked that #4 be changed to: The Board of Directors will appoint an interim member to complete the term of the vacancy".

Regarding Article III, Section 1, OFDBM Brown stated that she was not ready to approve this section and would prefer to readdress it at the next meeting. OFDBM Doran made a motion to table the By-Laws until the next meeting. No discussion. Unanimous vote in favor of tabling until next meeting.

#6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERSON TO FILL A VACANT SEAT ON THE FIRE BOARD

As this agenda item will be in Executive Session, the board decided to move this to the end so that the public would not have to wait through the session.

#7. DISCUSSION REGARDING FIRE HYDRANTS AND FLOW TESTING REPORTS

Chairman Bristow stated two of the Board members had heard of problems and requested a report from the Chief. OFDBM Doran explained that he called the Arizona Water Company to see when was the last time they checked the fire hydrants. They said it was once a year. Chief stated that we have to get their approval to check them. The water company was not able to provide a document that the hydrants were checked and maintained, which is why this item is on the agenda. Doran stated that he knows of a few hydrants that are "a disaster". Chief explained that we maintain hydrants by cutting down grass, weeds and brush, at least once a year. About 4 years ago, we painted all 126 hydrants. Chief has noticed that some need to be touched up again. We flow test them with a special device and place results in a book (which he brought to the meeting). In the book, every hydrant is numbered and color coded and listed in alphabetical order by which street it is on. The book is available for anyone to look through. The PSI numbers are deceiving. One or two PSI is not the standing pressure, but the residual pressure left in the system while flowing the hydrant. This shows that we are allowing some

pressure to remain for the residents. The book he brought shows the entire water system in Oracle and the problem is not the hydrants but the water system underground, some of which are 2" or 4" water mains, and the hydrants need minimum 6". OFDBM Doran recounted that several years ago, he and John McIver, were working with the AZ Water Co. trying to pressure them to bring a new line up from Oracle Junction, and increasing the size of the lines. After harassment, McIver moved away from Oracle and everything came to a halt. Doran wants to know what the OFD is doing about this. Chief responded that to compensate for the small water lines, AZ Water could boost the pressure and use pressure reducers wherever necessary. The Water Co. tries to reach a balance, as per the AZ Corporation Commission, of a minimum 15 to 30 PSI per resident. They could increase pressure by placing individual pressure reducers at each meter. Oracle resident Albert Ortiz said that a well-trained Fire Engineer can monitor the pressure. They are used to different types of pressure. Chairman Bristow said we need to ensure there is adequate pressure. Several people stated, "We can't control that". OFDBM Doran said the water company could. He asked what the water company is going to do to continue the new line up to Oracle. Chief agreed the existing lines are not sufficient. That the water company was trying to bring in a larger parallel line, one mile per year, and that it got as far as Biosphere Road. Doran requested the Chief to contact Arizona Water Company to find out what their intention is regarding finishing the line to Oracle. Chairman Bristow said that a letter of concern could be drafted to ask about the progress and when they plan on completing the project. Oracle resident Chuck Smallhouse stated that at that time, the community felt the need for a fourth water storage tank. He monitors the one next to his house, and it's often dry. The water company does not monitor it often enough, but he loses water and calls them. This should all be addressed in the letter of concern. Chief agreed that our community is very vulnerable. Mr. Smallhouse recounted an incident when there was a burst pipe, during fire season, and the water company didn't inform anyone in Oracle, so everyone continued using water as usual.

Chairman Bristow read from the agenda, the clause on going into Executive Session, to discuss personnel and contractual matters. OFDBM Doran made a motion to go into Executive Session. Clerk Poole seconded. The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. 7:30pm

The Board reconvened from Executive Session at 9pm.

#6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERSON TO FILL A VACANT SEAT ON THE FIRE BOARD

OFDBM Doran made a motion to discuss the vacancy on the board. OFDBM Navarro seconded. The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. OFDBM Brown stated that there were many extremely well qualified people who applied, and that it was a difficult decision. This was a decision that the board truly worked on. Chairman Bristow requested a motion to appoint someone for the vacancy. OFDBM Navarro made a motion to appoint one of the candidates Bill McMurry. OFDBM Doran seconded. The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion to appoint Bill McMurry to fill the vacant seat left behind by Clerk Charlotte Poole.

OFDBM Doran made a motion to adjourn. OFDBM Brown seconded. The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Meeting adjourned 9:05pm

Minutes respectfully submitted, Tina Acosta