

ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2013

The following are the minutes of the Oracle Fire District Board meeting, held on Tuesday March 5th 2013.

Present: Chairman Bud Bristow, Clerk Charlotte Poole, Board members, John Doran and Manny Navarro (absent, Board member Ellie Brown), Interim Fire Chief Larry Southard, Administrative Chief Tina Acosta, Operations Chief Will Ramsay, members of the Oracle Fire Department Chain of Command and various members of the public.

#1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

#2 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES.

OFDBM Poole corrected one error in Feb. 4, 2013 minutes, page 4, states: 1.5 gallons and I-Chief Southard's correction is 1,500 gallons. Poole stated that there were other corrections made by I-Chief Southard. Poole made motion to accept minutes of the board meeting February 4, 2013 and corrections, seconded by OFDBM Doran. No discussion and approved by all board members.

#3 CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No public responded.

#4 CHIEF'S REPORT

- Grant Report: OFD has received a SFA (State Fire Assistance) grant, written by then Battalion Chief Southard two years ago. The entire grant is for \$38,250 and Oracle's portion is \$24,306 and will be completely administered by the Arizona Department of Forestry.
- Grant received in 2012 through Pinal County: Secured Rural Schools Grant, is in the final stages of close-out, through the office of Pinal County Emergency Management. OFD will receive \$18,854, to pay invoices from the Department of Forestry for the "Community Betterment" fuels thinning and \$4,333 to reimburse OFD expenses.
- Storage Building Report: OFD has received all documents, which I-Chief Southard took to Florence last week. However, the check for \$750 did not cover all of the expenses. An additional payment of \$350 is needed to

finalize the third site plan review. The board will be requested to sign the check. OFDBM Navarro has offered to take the check to Florence, on his way to work.

- Old Station Report: Move back into the space has been completed. Extra space appreciated.
- Financial Audit Report: Chiefs have spoken with Jennifer Phillips, CPA and are reviewing the long list of preparation work she is requesting. She will be at OFD the week of April 22, 2013.
- Out of District Response Guidelines: Chief Officers made corrections/clarifications, which will be incorporated into the guidelines presented at the last board meeting.
- Policies and Procedures Update: Chief Officers are currently reviewing the draft from Brenda Tranchina and hope to be done in a month or two. Chairman Bristow stated that as these policies concern personnel and perhaps they should be able to review and have input as well. Chief Ramsay responded that the Chief Officers' goal was to have a draft already reviewed by them, prior to handing it out for review by staff. This would make for a more streamlined approach. OFDBM Navarro concurred.
- Fire Board By-laws: OFD has a sample copy from the AFDA book and another Fire Board. I-Chief Southard will be meeting with Kate to make changes appropriate for the OFD Fire Board and will mail the draft By-laws to the board for review prior to the next monthly meeting.
- Part-time Bookkeeper: After going through normal hiring procedures (Job Opening was posted for 10 days at the Post Office, the bulletin board in OFD front office and on the OFD website), the only application received was that of Carol Mahoney. Mrs. Mahoney was interviewed, hired and started training with AC Acosta on February 26, 2013. She will have a large role in preparing for the financial audit.
- Vehicle Report: The fleet is good, except for Engine 693, which has a broken oil cooler, due to freeze damage. Still need to determine what needs to be ordered, in hope of completing repairs in-house.
- Pinal County Wildland Team: A group of wildland firefighting crews throughout Pinal Co. are planning their 2nd annual Drill and have requested it take place in Oracle, Tuesday March 26, 2013, 6:30am–approx. 5pm. A planning meeting was held today, involving representatives of 6 or 7 different agencies. We learned that approximately 135 people attended the drill held last year, just for Pinal

County. This year, they have opened the drill to Wildland agencies throughout Arizona, so this will be a very big event. This training / preparation event is NOT an OFD event. OFD is simply hosting the drill, but will inevitably benefit from the various agencies becoming more familiar with the community of Oracle. Staging will be at the Village Square, on the far West end of Oracle. Communication of the event will be very important.

- CERT report: An unannounced drill took place on February 11, 2013, which was a complete success. I-Chief Southard expected it to point out the weakness of the CERT group, but instead, it pointed out their strengths. A total of 9 CERT participated.
- Firewise report: The now combined CERT and Firewise meeting took place on the 18th of February. This combined method makes for longer meetings, but ultimately saves time as most Firewise members are CERTs as well, so they now only attend one meeting per month.
- Volunteer Pension report: none
- PSPRS (Public Safety Personnel Retirement System) report: none
- Brush Dump report: The brush was burned and the lot was graded two weeks ago, and looks better than ever. It is now prepared to contain brush for the driest summer months, when the risk is too high to burn until the start of the monsoons. The grading will be paid for by the Firewise account, which is funded by the \$3 per load fee.
- Call Load / Bank Account Balances: Included in papers submitted to Board members.
- OFD Firefighter / Volunteer Appreciation Dinner report: The dinner was held on February 22, 2013 and was very well attended. There were plaques, pins and certificates distributed for various accomplishments, from Firefighter of the year (Paul Farrell), years of service, milestone accomplishments, such as EMT certifications, and recognition of volunteers in the auxiliary groups. Pictures of the event are on the OFD website.
- Pinal County Special District meeting: To take place March 19, 2013 in Casa Grande, for all special districts, such as Fire, School, Water, etc. This is an annual event, featuring speakers from Pinal County government. This would be a good event for board members to attend. We need to send in our reservations this week.
- Financial workshop: As stated in the minutes from last month, there was a

financial workshop, presented by I-Chief Southard and Tina, however, it was not well attended due to the snow storm that hit the previous night. Discussion ensued. Chairman Bristow recommended that this be a beginning presentation prior to the upcoming budget meeting.

#5 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SEEKING "PAST DUE RENT" OWED TO THE FIRE DISTRICT FROM FORMER TENANT PRECISION TUNE-UP AT 1010 E. MT. LEMMON HWY.

I-Chief Southard explained the history of accepting the tenant, as the previous OFD board thought the rent would help pay for the storage unit, that had been purchased and was awaiting permit. Southard assured that the tenant vacated the property and left it in clean and good condition and that to collect any back rent (\$9,943) would incur attorney fees, that could exceed the amount owed. Additionally, considering the ill health of both the tenant and his wife, the probability of recovering anything is very low. I-Chief Southard emphasized that there was close to \$11,000 paid by the tenant, which did, indeed, help pay for the storage unit.

Discussion ensued. OFDBM Doran asked where the previous tenant lived now and I-Chief Southard replied that he lives in Tucson with family and, to his knowledge, does not have any assets worth pursuing. The owner of the heavy equipment used for the business came to Oracle and removed everything while the tenant was moving out.

OFDBM Doran made a motion to discuss item #5. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bristow. Unanimous vote to discuss item #5.

OFDBM Doran stated that as the former tenant now lives in Tucson and does not have any real assets, that it would not be worth pursuing the past due rent. OFDBM Poole concurred, with her past experience as a Landlord.

OFDBM Poole made a motion to accept I-Chief Southard's recommendation to not pursue past due rent. OFDBM Doran seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Bristow apologized for not making a call to the public for comment on the issue #5. He asked if anyone in the audience had any questions or comments. No one responded.

#6 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO FORM A FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE TO BEGIN THE PREPARATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2013/2014 OPERATIONS BUDGET. THE FIRE CHIEF RECOMMENDS A COMMITTEE BE MADE UP OF AT LEAST 2 BOARD MEMBERS AND ALSO INCLUDE THE FIRE CHIEF, THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHIEF AND THE OPERATIONS CHIEF.

OFD Clerk Poole reminded the board that there had been discussion on this

previously and that Chairman Bristow and OFDMB Doran had volunteered to be on the committee, along with Clerk Poole. She asked if they needed action to form a committee. Discussion for meeting date ensued. Decision to hold a special budget meeting was made for Wed. March 13-2013 at 4pm. Clerk will post the meeting.

Chairman Bristow stated that we need to take action on hiring a permanent Fire Chief and requested this item be added to agenda for the special meeting, next Wed. March 13th at 4pm. Entire board and public are invited to attend.

#7 SIGN A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXISTING FIREWISE AND FIRE EXPLORER CHASE BANK ACCOUNTS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE PINAL COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE.

Discussion: Signatures for the Firewise Account will be I-Chief Southard and Judy Sparkman, Treasurer for the Firewise group. For the Explorer Account, it will be I-Chief Southard and Ops. Chief Ramsay. It has not yet been determined what will happen with the "Recreation Fund", still located at Chase Bank. It will be opened up to Staff, at the next Staff meeting in April, what to do with the funds, which were withheld from Firefighter's and Explorer's paychecks over the years.

The Resolution that I-Chief Southard prepared for today's meeting, needs to be amended to reflect just the Firewise and Explorer bank accounts.

Clerk Poole made a motion to approve the Resolution. OFDBM Doran seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Clerk Poole will come back to sign the revised Resolution.

#8 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RESIGNATION AND REPLACEMENT OF ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER.

Chairman Bristow reviewed the existing law regarding this situation: Title 48.803 (b), which states that if a vacancy on the district board occurs, other than the expiration of a term, the remaining board members shall fill the vacancy by appointing an interim board member, etc. OFDBM Doran asked if someone currently on the board in a 2 year term could be moved into this vacant 4 year position. OFDMB Navarro replied that he didn't think so. Chairman Bristow concurred, and stated his belief that the resigning board member would be replaced "along with everything else that goes with it". Clerk Poole asked if it's interim until the end of the term. The other board members agreed that it would be.

Clerk Poole handed out copies of her resignation letter to the board members and read the letter out loud. Her resignation would take place on or before June 3rd.

Chairman Bristow stated that the OFD board accepts the resignation and will need to make some provisions to appoint an interim board replacement. OFDBM Doran suggested putting a letter out to the community and following the procedures of the Oracle School District board. They would then interview perspective board replacement candidates.

OFDBM Navarro interjected that before they proceed, he had hoped the board could work together as a team. He did not know anything about the situation and was caught off guard. OFDBM Doran stated that he had spoken to OFDBM Poole at length and understood her predicament as he too receives numerous negative calls. He also stated what's going on has got to be stopped even if the Board has to take legal action. OFDBM Navarro asked that problems of the past remain in the past so that they could move forward, but Clerk Poole replied that these problems are in the present. More discussion ensued. Clerk Poole stated that she had to take care of these issues in a way that would not affect the OFD board or Fire District or firefighters. Chairman Bristow spoke on behalf of the board that he was sorry to see the resignation. I-Chief Southard asked if there was anything the board wanted staff to do. OFDBM Navarro reiterated that we need to get the word out to the public that we have a vacancy to fill. An interested person would then need to submit a letter of interest and a resume. Further discussion ensued and it was determined that an Executive session was needed to discuss the resignation and the replacement. Due to time constraints, the Executive session will take place at the end of next month's regular board meeting: April 1, 2013. This will be noted in the meeting agenda.

#9 ADJOURN

OFDBM Doran made a motion to adjourn. OFDBM Navarro seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Administrative Chief Acosta