

ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday April 8, 2015 / Approved May 14, 2015

Meeting was officially called to order at 6:30pm, Wednesday April 8, 2015 at 1475 W. American Ave., Oracle, AZ.

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Clerk McMurry (Acting Chair), OFDBMs Bristow, Navarro, and Smallhouse. Members Absent: Chairman Brown

Staff Present: Chief Larry Southard, Admin. Chief Acosta, and on-duty firefighters.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES.

OFDBM Bristow made a motion to accept the minutes from March 3 and also from March 14, 2015 as written. The motion was seconded by OFDBM Navarro. All were in favor. Motion passed.

3. CALL TO PUBLIC.

No response from public.

4. CHIEF'S REPORT – see end of these minutes.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PROCUREMENT AND DISPOSITION OF FIRE DISTRICT EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES (CARRIED OVER FROM MAR. 3rd. MEETING).

The policy that had been approved by the Pinal County Attorney last month and rewritten for the Oracle Fire District, was included in the packets sent out to the Board members prior to this meeting. Board members were satisfied with the policy with the approval of the County Attorney. OFDBM Bristow moved to accept the policy as provided. Clerk McMurry seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

At the May 14, 2015 Board meeting, OFDBM Bristow requested that wording be added to the Procurement and Disposition policy stating that preference is given to people residing within the Oracle Fire District and/or Pinal County for purchases.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE 2015/2016 OPERATIONS BUDGET INCLUDING A REVIEW OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP HELD ON MARCH 14th. THE PROPOSED BUDGET INCLUDES NO INCREASE IN TAX RATE AND A DECREASED TAX LEVY. THE PROPOSED BUDGET WILL NEED TO BE POSTED IN THE MINER NEWSPAPER ON APRIL 15th AND 22nd, 2015. A PUBLIC HEARING CAN BE SCHEDULED 30 DAYS AFTER

ADVERTISING.

After a brief discussion, OFDBM Bristow requested that an asterisk be added to the Capital Outlay Fund on the proposed budget to note that \$50,000 of the Capital Outlay funds will be allocated to erecting the dismantled storage building that is currently on OFD adjacent property to the east of the Fire Station.

OFDBM Smallhouse made a motion to accept the schedule for posting the proposed budget and to meet on Thursday May 14th for the next regular Board meeting as well as for the official Budget hearing. This date will be exactly 30 days after the first posting of the budget. OFDBM Bristow seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed 2015/2016 wage and vacation scale, which accepted by the Board, to be reviewed next year to possibly separate sick leave from vacation time. In the meantime, the Board requested that a caveat to the 360 hour maximum accrual for PTO hours be added stating that anything above 360 hours could be presented to the Board on a case-by-case basis for possible approval.

Regarding the 2015/2016 salary for the Fire Chief, OFDBM Bristow made a motion to increase it from \$55,000 annually to \$60,000. OFDBM Navarro seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed. The Board also gave Chief Southard the authority to increase the salary of the Administrative Chief and to place this position on the same Step schedule that the Assistant Chief and other positions are on, stating that this is a Management decision and not a Board one, as with the Fire Chief.

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION REGARDING FUNDS CURRENTLY BEING HELD IN OUR PINAL COUNTY TREASURER'S ACCOUNT. A PAPER TRANSACTION WOULD CREATE TWO SEPARATE RESERVE ACCOUNTS. ONE ACCOUNT WOULD BE "GENERAL FUND" AND THE OTHER ACCOUNT WOULD BE "CAPITAL OUTLAY". BOTH ACCOUNTS WOULD CONTINUE BEING HELD BY THE PINAL COUNTY TREASURER.

After a brief discussion in which Admin. Chief Acosta explained that anything to be spent from these Reserve funds would have to be approved by the Board prior to the purchase.

OFDBM Bristow moved to accept the resolution as presented. OFDBM Smallhouse seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING OBTAINING A REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL OF THE OLD FIRE STATION LOCATED AT 1010 MT. LEMMON HWY.

Chief Southard explained that he spoke with a representative of Oracle Land and Homes regarding obtaining market comparisons and zoning for possible sale of this building. Once the comps are received, Chief will contact the Behavior Health agency next door with an offer, as they had vocalized interest in purchasing the building in the past. Discussion to be continued at the next Board meeting.

9. CHIEF'S REPORT:

Financial, Budget & Account Balances Report: Documents will be presented by Admin. Chief Acosta.

Staff Report: Captain Farrell will be presented with the Oracle Firefighter of the Year award. Several of our part time Reserve Firefighters have taken full time positions with other fire departments. Interviews have recently taken place to fill some of these vacant staffing positions. Annual Employee Evaluations have been completed.

Vehicle Report: All of our first line vehicles are currently in service.

Fire Station & Equip Report: All OFD equipment is currently in service.

Fire District: The 2nd 2015 AFDA Conference will be held in Tucson on June 26th and 27th. Recent legislation has made it a requirement for Fire Board members to attend several specific classes and those classes are being offered at this conference. Chief Acosta and Chief Southard will attend the conference on both days.

Training Report: Golder Ranch Fire District invited OFD to participate in a "Live Burn" exercise at their Training Center in Catalina on Wednesday May 13th. Several of our firefighters are planning on attending.

Events: A Tree Workshop is being held on Saturday, May 16th at the Oracle Community Center. We held a similar workshop last July that was attended by approximately 70 people. By popular request the same guest speakers have been invited to speak again. The event is being funded by a Firewise Grant.

Current Fire Conditions: Fire conditions have been upgraded to High. The unusual May rains have helped to delay the 2015 fire season, but we are still expecting a significant fire season once the temperatures warm up, the RH drops and the grasses dry out. On the positive side... our oak trees appear to be much healthier and better hydrated than they were last year at this time. A lightning strike ignited a large tree at the Cherry Valley Ranch (across the Highway from the Oracle State Park) and even though it was raining at the time, the fuels surrounding the tree were scorched to the dirt. This was our 4th grass/brush fire in 2015.

Wildland Fire Report: We are near the top of the rotation list for being deployed under our state wildland contract. Being able to borrow an outside Engine Boss,

including having adequate staffing for our fire district will determine our deployment availability.

Grant Report: The WFHF 2015 grant has been submitted and we should know in the next few months if we will be awarded with this grant. The Florence Wildland crew has been back working in Oracle during the past few weeks and we have received many favorable comments about their work. They have also adjusted their schedule from 10 hour work days to 12 hours. The Firewise Grant we are currently working on should allow us to do fuels treatment projects on approximately 10 more properties. Fuels work under this grant is being prioritized for single treatments that impact multiple homes, properties located outside of the WFHF grant areas and those properties that have received a High Hazard score on their Firewise Evaluation. No projects located outside of Oracle Fire District boundaries are being considered under this grant. Pinal County has reimbursed us for the first progress invoice that we submitted. The 2nd progress invoice is pending.

Donations: None.

CERT/Firewise Report: CERTs and Firewise participated in the Oaks Festival event. Firewise will hold their next meeting on May 12th at 4:00. Fire Board members are always welcome to attend the meetings.

Brush Dump Report: The brush is nearly over-flowing. Coordinating adequate staffing, including the availability of heavy equipment and recent windy weather conditions caused the last scheduled burn in April to be cancelled. As contractors are becoming increasingly busy, it is becoming more difficult to coordinate the brush burns, so consequently the size of the brush pile has gotten very large. The current size of the brush pile has reached approximately 1000 feet long, 6 to 8 feet tall and around 30 feet deep.

Call Load Report: Statement to be provided.
Respectfully submitted by: Fire Chief, Larry Southard on May 7th

10. ADJOURNMENT

OFDBM Bristow moved to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by OFDBM Navarro. All were in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm

Next Board Meeting: THURSDAY, May 14, 2015 at 6:15pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Tina Acosta - Administrative Chief
Reviewed by OFD Board Clerk Bill McMurry