

**Minutes to the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoita-Elgin Fire District  
Monday, 27 June 2020  
0900**

**Call to Order**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call** – All Board members were present (Bahti, Johnson, Webber, Archibald and Dorney) Also present were Chief De Wolf, members of staff, and members of the public.

*The meeting began as usual in the training room of the fire house. There were, however, too many individuals present for COVID-19 compliance with regards to limited numbers people in a defined space so the meeting was moved to the engine bay. Unfortunately, there is no sound system in the bay for recording meetings; the single recording device was located on the Board Chair's table and did not catch everyone's comments. The required use of masks also interfered with being able to understand what was being said.*

**Call to the public** – Chaplain Mike Wright spoke a prayer over the board, department and public present. There were no others who asked to speak.

**Approval of the minutes to the meetings of June 22 and 30:** Motion to approve the minutes by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, discussion...

**Dorney**, correction change minimum wage to wage and typo at end of second line...

**Webber** – I'm not really sure that the minutes explain the concerns of the public...their concerns of the revolving door. I'm not sure it really explains what really happened. Chief Where do you want to begin. **Webber** - where it speaks of the revolving door (Anita Kay). Under payroll expenses, in the second paragraph under clarification. **Chief**, let me start over with that. (sirens going) So the original question was pay increases in the budget. So, what we have is... last year we increased our budget because we had people who were below minimum wage. January first, minimum wage went to 12.00 per hour. So, we moved our basic firefighter up to minimum wage. This year we're choosing to move them to \$12.75, so that's part of the increase right there. We have had a part-time EMS Director, we increased that to a full-time position, we added half that wage into this year's budget. **Webber** – So we were paying half out of the old budget. **Chief** – Yes. **Webber** – That's the clarification I wanted to make. **Chief** – those are the increases in salaries for the 2021 Budget. **Webber** – to go on, it enabled us to bring the Medical Director and one paramedic on board to bridge the gap – the time needed to move three EMTs to be paramedics. **Chief** – What we've had is a several year program where we wanted to get to two medics (paramedics) per shift. We achieved that this last fiscal year. We have two medics per shift now. That's an 18-month schooling so it took us a year to get to this point. We had a three-year grant that covered a medic position. **Webber** – while you were training the other people. **Chief** – correct. That expires November of 2020. Okay. **Webber** – right. **Chief** – so that grant goes away. It's just like our fuels mitigation grant – we bring on four or five people, when the grant expires, those people go away. This is the same exact thing. **Webber** – okay. Now, the EMTs and Paramedics are also firefighters? **Chief** – Yes, everybody on shift is a fire 1 & 2 which is a structure firefighter, they are wildland certified and they are either an EMT or a paramedic. **Webber** – Okay. And that was not, I don't think that was clear in the last Board meeting to Mrs. Belt. We can put a note in the minutes regarding this correction. **Archibald** – we can table the approval to the next meeting. **Webber** - I just want to be sure that the public's concerns, that

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we answer that, that they can see, that they can see exactly what took place. If the rest of the Board agrees, that's fine. Archibald amended her motion to table approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 22 to the next meeting.

**Minutes of 30 June 2020** – correct Weber to Webber – motion to approve by Archibald, seconded by Dorney, motion carried unanimously.

**Report from the Fire Chief** – *All computer/overhead viewing was not available due to having moved the meeting to the bay.* We ran 41 calls in June. The Ambulance transports are down; they are down across the state due to COVID. There's a pretty even spread to date between the crews with regards to calls. GRANTS – we were advised that we were denied the Fuels Mitigation Grant; the FEMA Ambulance grant is still out; the Fitness Equipment grant is also still out. Archibald – does the FEMA one require a match of any kind? Chief – it is a five percent match. Archibald – How about the fitness one? Chief – no match at all. Archibald – any idea when we'll here on the FEMA one? Chief – generally August. With FEMA and all they're doing right now it could go a little longer. The IGA with Palominas is going well. All three shifts (SEFD) have been down to the burn tower (at Palominas). We're going to start going down on a quarterly basis with our career and volunteer personnel. Their new engine has been slowed down again due to COVID, they have a reduced staff now. We're still hoping to take delivery in August. We have new masks for our face shields for our personnel (structure) which were designed by one of our career personnel. The Department of Corrections which generally comes around and helps will not be back in Sonoita until after the new year. The only other thing I have is with the vacancy of the Ops Chief position, the three Captains have stepped up and are covering the role and some of the shifts through August. Then we'll start addressing that and seeing how we're going to go forward after that. Archibald – Did we go up to the Bighorn fire? Chief – we did, we spent 14 days up there. We billed out right about \$43,000. We've had a couple little fires around here. Our engine boss is on his second honeymoon, he married a gal from Wisconsin so they're back there fighting mosquitos and doing another wedding for her family. He'll be back around the 14<sup>th</sup> so we'll be back up and running then. The crew on the Bighorn spent most of their time up on Mt Lemmon. There are pictures up on Facebook and Instagram.

**Acceptance of the Preliminary June 2020 Financials** – *Again, there were no PowerPoint slides available due to the location.* Financials were presented by MS Rutter. The financials are preliminary and would remain so until the Annual Audit was completed. At the pleasure of the Board the presentation was shortened to a minimum. One item of note that was mentioned was the fact that we've not received all of our projected tax monies as of the end of June. SEFD usually gets our full tax amount, we're at 98.4% for Santa Cruz and Pima County was at 97.3% which is again a little low. There were no unusual expenses in June. The total unbudgeted income helped to bring us up to an overall income for the year. Webber – we had quite a jump in internet provider. **Webber** – yes, we added a new internet provider and kept the old one, so we have two. **Johnson** – Well after a wild year, we end up \$6,500 in the green, which is not bad out of a million and a half budget. **Rutter** – and again that's because of the unbudgeted items. With the budgeted items we didn't do so good. **Archibald** -we didn't have any wildland. Motion to accept

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the financials as presented was made by Dorney, seconded by Webber, motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion and possible Action on HR Policy** – Brenda Tranchina – One of the things we had talked about at the conference in Laughlin to eliminate the use of the pronoun he throughout the manual – to change the references of He/She to the member. Johnson had subsequently submitted a couple other changes. (#1,2,3)

- Grammatical – reference to a tow that should be a “two”. Tranchina – we can correct that.
- 2. Bullying & retaliation – there’s a “he” in that section, replace with member. Concern for use of the word retribution. Tranchina - We can substitute the word retaliation for retribution.
- 3. Keep complaints confidential. Tranchina - You asked to keep complaints confidential, there can be no guarantee of confidentiality.
- **Archibald** – so once this is approved everyone will get a copy. **Chief** – yes, there are hardcopies available in the Day Room, the Admin’s office, my office and we will also be sending out section on the policy manual on a monthly basis to make it easier to review.
- **Dorney** - Page 189 – typo... think psychologies should be psychologist.
- **Webber** – page 188 the change was you removed the acronym EAP. What is EAP? **Tranchina** - Employee Assistance Program. **Webber** – you’ve changed this to district’s health care insurance. **Archibald** – Is that different than workmen’s comp? **Tranchina** – Yes.
- **Webber** – On page 191, there’s a note there that you wanted that removed, the section about paying for refreshers? **Chief** – Yes, we don’t hold them here anymore. That’s a holdover from when we were completely volunteer.
- **Webber** - On page 118, it looks like the change is regarding using a recording device to record individuals without permissions. This includes a second section with personal devices as well. **Tranchina** - Yes. **Webber** – is there a reason why we didn’t have this before. **Chief** – HR Policies are updated based on issues that happen all over the state. **Tranchina** – policies are tweaked based on things that come up in other districts over the year. Motion to approve the policy changes was made by Webber, seconded by Dorney. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion and question on questionnaire** – Dorney. (This was a questionnaire that had been put together several months ago by Annette Dorney that we’ve been tabling it since the COVID issue came up. A short survey on the performance of the Board and fire district.) How does everyone feel about it? **Archibald** - it might be time to do it. **Webber** – fine with me. **Johnson** – I’m good with it. It was decided to move forward with sending out the questionnaire.

**Question from the floor Johnson agreed to hear - Gary Soliere** – do you still have the HAZMAT classes here. **Chief** – yes, all structure firefighters have to do a refresher. **Soliere** – Once every two years. **Chief** – Yes.

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**Discussion and possible action regarding Annual Review of Chief De Wolf** – Archibald – I move we move to executive session for the Chief’s review. Seconded by Webber. Discussion – I’d like to invite Brenda in for the first part of the discussion. **Tranchina** – Mr. Chairman, let it be known for the record that the Chief was provided with a 24-hour notice as required by statute and he has elected to by written notice to have the matter discussed in executive session. Johnson – Okay. Vote motion approved unanimously. Board is adjourned to executive session. The Board held the executive session in the vacated training room. Upon going out of executive session (in session for about 2.5 hours) the executive session was adjourned and the regular Board meeting resumed. At the opening of regular session, the Board was cautioned to remember that discussions in executive session were confidential.

**Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn was made by Archibald, seconded by Webber, motion carried unanimously.

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