



TUBAC FIRE DISTRICT

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TUBAC FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
January 27, 2021

1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m., by Mary Dahl. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Roll call of Board Members: All Board members were present; Mary Dahl and Herb Wisdom at Station #2 and Mike Connelly, Bill Kirkpatrick, and Pete Benequista remotely. Also, in attendance at Station #2 were Chief Horvath, Deputy Chief Rivera, Deputy Chief Guerrero, and Nancy Lindsey. Gabe Buldra, Dave Shelton, Josh Shelton, and Mark Matula attended telephonically.
3. Report from Board Members: None
4. Reading of public comments submitted via email: Nancy Lindsey read an email from Tubac Firefighters representative Charlie Alvarez in which he stated the support from the firefighters for the agenda item requests for purchase of a new ambulance, an ATV, cardiac monitors and changes to the District's Mission Statement.
5. Correspondence: Email received from Banner UMC recognizing staff for a job well done recognizing a suspected stroke/large vessel occlusion; card received thanking staff for their steadiness in these sketchy times.
6. Chair's Report : Mary Dahl updated the Board on the progress being made in Santa Cruz County on the Covid-19 testing and vaccinations.
7. Chief and Staff Report: Chief Horvath presented the staff report.
8. Monthly Financial Report for December 2020: Gabe Buldra presented the financial reports for the month of December 2020.
Key points for the month:
 - A. Santa Cruz County revenue for December is \$344,215 which is \$127,077 under budget.
 - B. Non-Levy revenue is \$41,983 which is under budget by \$31,692.
 - C. Ordinary expenses for the month totaled \$384,207 which is over budget by \$10,250.
 - D. Year-to-date Santa Cruz revenue is \$1,755,262 which is \$53,158 under budget.
 - E. Year-to-date Non-levy revenue is \$4,551,343 which is \$3,906,793 over budget.
 - F. Year-to-date ordinary expense is \$2,057,892 which is \$145,006 over budget

9. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of minutes from December 16, 2020 regular meeting
- B. Approval of monthly financial reports

Herb Wisdom made a motion to approve the consent agenda and Pete Benquista seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.

10. Discussion and possible action to approve Inventory Policy: Chief Horvath explained that the District did not have an inventory policy in place and in applying for FEMA grants determined that it is a grant requirement. Staff, along with the assistance of the District's financial manager, prepared a policy that includes the procedures required for safeguarding the assets owned by the District that also conforms with the requirements for grant applications. Mary Dahl requested that some minor grammatical changes be made to the policy while Pete Benequista stated that the policy was very thorough and a very important document for keeping track of District assets. Pete Benequista made a motion to approve the inventory policy with the grammatical corrections requested by Mary Dahl and Herb Wisdom seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.
11. Discussion and possible action to approve a parcel annexation process for TFD: Chief Horvath explained that staff worked with the attorney to develop the Property Inclusion/District Boundary Change Request Form and resolution for property owners whose land is contiguous to the boundaries of the fire district, but not within the existing boundaries to benefit the district as well as the property owner for fire coverage. Mike Connelly asked what the process is to utilize the forms to which Chief Horvath explained that the homeowner makes the request and the request is brought before the Board for approval and if approved a resolution is prepared authorizing the amendment of the Tubac Fire District's boundaries. Bill Kirkpatrick made a motion to approve a parcel annexation process for TFD and Herb Wisdom seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.
12. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV): Deputy Chief Rivera explained to the Board that the request to purchase a Polaris Ranger XP 1000 is in the current fiscal year capital purchase plan in the amount of \$20,000 and that the unit, he continued, will be utilized as needed for any emergency within areas our ambulances have limited access to as well as to continue participating in the response to wildfires and all hazards incidents within the state of Arizona. Chief Horvath explained that the District turned down 6 wildland assignment last year due to not having the ATV that could have generated substantial revenue for the District. Herb Wisdom made a motion to approve the purchase of a Polaris Ranger Crew XP1000 from Polaris Government & Defense in the amount of \$16,998.26 plus tax and Bill Kirkpatrick seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.
13. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of a new ambulance: Deputy Chief Rivera explained to the Board that the District continues to struggle with the high maintenance costs associated with keeping the 2008 ambulances in service and operational. Our frontline ambulance fleet, he continued, consists of 3 new units and 1 older unit and a second older unit being utilized as a backup. Staff is requesting purchase of a new ambulance that will allow for the surplus of three of the older 2008 units with one being kept as a backup. Board members Mike Connelly and Pete Benequista asked if the purchase of a new ambulance was in this year's capital purchase plan with Herb Wisdom asking if the District currently has the money available to pay for it, to which Gabe Buldra replied that the purchase is well within the District's capital plan and that the District does have the money available for the purchase. Chief Horvath added that the delivery time would be 150 days after the manufacturer receives the chassis which very well may be into next fiscal year. This ambulance, she continued, would be built to our specifications and with the fleet now consisting of four new units the need for purchasing more units should not come up for possibly 10 years, but the plan would then be to stagger the purchase of replacements for better budget forecasting purposes in the future. Chief Horvath informed the Board further that staff will probably submit a request in July for purchase of a new gurney for the ambulance. Pete Benequista made a motion to authorize the purchase of one ambulance from Republic EVS/Medix in the amount of \$172,854.00 and Herb Wisdom seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.

14. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of new cardiac monitors: Deputy Chief Guerrero explained to the Board that the Philips MRX cardiac monitors that the District currently uses have come to the end of their useful service life as was predicted as the purchase for new units was included in the capital purchase plan with an anticipated cost of \$200,000. A panel of four Tubac fire employees evaluated 3 different monitors with three vendors and had the opportunity to get hands on with the monitors with in-person demonstrations and to ask questions. The panel determined that the Philips Tempus Pro exceeded overall in the evaluation criteria and best fits the needs of the department. Dave Shelton from Enerspect Medical Solutions provided a brief Zoom presentation of the monitor for the Board. Board members Herb Wisdom and Pete Benequista asked about training and equipment warranties to which Dave Shelton explained that training would be provided in house for staff and the manufacturer, Philips, provides an inclusive 2- year bench warranty with Enerspect including an additional 3-year extended warranty. Pete Benequista made a motion to authorize the purchase of four Philips Tempus Pro cardiac monitors in an amount not to exceed \$181,836.63 and Herb Wisdom seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.
15. Discussion and possible action to approve changes to the sick and vacation personnel policies: Chief Horvath explained to the Board that this item was originally presented in December 2020 for board review and approval. The current sick leave policy, she continued, is outdated and unattainable and she asked the Board to consider approving the requested changes to the sick leave policy regarding sick leave pay out and sick leave buy back to be implemented in this fiscal year and changes to vacation leave accrual be implemented next fiscal year. Mike Connelly stated that the Board has a fiduciary responsibility and that as he sees it, the employees are well paid, have great benefits and are well-equipped and Pete Benequista added that a sick leave benefit in no way should be considered a pension of sorts that is payable at an employee's retirement, that it is a benefit that is great if it needs to be utilized when an employee is sick and unable to work. The sick policy change request, Mike Connelly stated, has the potential to be costly to the District and he asked the Chief if it is more of a feel good thing to which Chief Horvath replied that it is to encourage employees to not use their sick leave and to incentivize with the potential of a buy back at retirement. Mary Dahl stated that the current policy has never been reasonable and obtainable and a policy that doesn't benefit anybody makes no sense and feels that doing everything that's reasonable and possible to keep employees in the District is something the Board should consider. Mike Connelly and Pete Benequista asked how this sick leave policy compares to neighboring fire districts Rio Rico and Green Valley to which Chief Horvath replied that she does not know what is in their policies. Bill Kirkpatrick stated that he feels admittedly confused over the changes to the sick leave policy and feels it should be tabled for another month to find out what the policies are at Rio Rico and Green Valley and to possibly get Brenda Tranchina involved to provide HR perspective. Mike Connelly and Pete Benequista agreed with Bill Kirkpatrick's suggestion and Mike Connelly made a motion to table the changes to the sick policy until next month with Pete Benequista seconding the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.
16. Discussion on debt schedule of bonds: Mike Connelly asked Gabe Buldra if all of the bonds are callable and if the District has cash on hand to cover the debt to which Gabe replied that the bonds are all callable and that as of January 31, 2021, the District has \$6.2 million in the bank. Mike further commented that the Board needs to be cognizant of the debt the District bears and its impact on the taxpayers and feels that the Board at the very least should consider paying down some of the debt. He continued by stating that a taxing District should not have an excess amount of money in savings and that in his opinion it would be ideal to have no debt and operate within an operational budget. Gabe Buldra commented that he agrees debt is not good, but it can be necessary to fund big purchases. Mike Connelly in closing requested an action agenda item be included for next month's meeting to pay down the bond debt.
17. Discussion on District's mission statement: Pete Benequista explained that he feels the District's mission statement doesn't accurately state the mission of the District. Mary Dahl commented that the firefighters want to assist Mr. Benequista in rewording of the mission statement and asked that he reach out to Charlie Alvarez to continue the process which can be discussed at a future meeting to which Mr. Benequista agreed.

18. Future Agenda Items:

- A. Debt schedule of bonds
- B. Policy manual changes
- C. Changes to mission statement

19. Next Meeting: February 24, 2021 at 1:30 pm

20. Adjourn Meeting: Herb Wisdom made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. and Pete Benequista seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed.

