



# Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District

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## REGULAR BOARD MEETING Camp Verde Public Library – Terracotta Room 130 Black Bridge Loop Road Camp Verde, AZ 86322 Wednesday, May 17, 2023 / 2:00 PM

~ MINUTES ~

### I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to notice, a Regular Meeting of the Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District was called to order by Chairperson Joshua Maxwell at 2:01 pm on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. Administrative Assistant Kerrie Tarver recorded the minutes. A quorum was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

**Board Present:** Joshua Maxwell – Chairperson; Danna Quinn – Clerk; Jenny Sabato; Ed Gee; and Jon Huey – Members

**Staff Present:** Fire Chief Terry Keller; Finance Director – Gabe Buldra (JVG); Fire Marshal Nate Bailey; Multiple Operations Staff; Administrative Assistant Misty Weatherford; Administrative Assistant Kerrie Tarver – Recorder.

#### A. Salute to the Flag of the United States of America and Moment of Silence to Honor all Military, Firefighters, and Police Officers.

Chairperson Maxwell led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

### II. RECOGNITION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

#### A. Introduction and Administering Ceremonial Oath of Office to Newly Appointed Board Members Ed Gee and Jon Huey – Chairperson Josh Maxwell

Chairperson Maxwell announced that the Board appointed Ed Gee and Jon Huey as Board Members to fill the two vacancies with terms that expire in November 2024. Chairperson Maxwell stated both members were officially sworn in and completed their required open meeting law training prior to the meeting. introduced and provided background information on himself. Jon Huey introduced and provided background. Board Members Gee and Huey introduced themselves and provided background information about themselves.

Chairperson Maxwell administered the ceremonial oath of office for Board Members Gee and Huey. Chairperson Maxwell stated that the new Board Members were officially allowed to vote on items but could abstain from voting if they deemed it appropriate.

### III. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS / STAFF RECOGNITION

#### A. Years of Service Recognition

1. Presentation or Acknowledgement of 25 years of service: Engineer Joey Martin
2. Presentation or Acknowledgement of 10 years of service: Fire Chief Terry Keller
3. Presentation or Acknowledgement of 5 years of service: Firefighters Jeff Santoro and Sal Unale  
Chief Keller presented certificates and years of service awards to Engineer Joey Martin and Firefighter Sal Unale. Battalion Chief Dale Duns accepted Firefighter Jeff Santoro's award on his behalf. Chairperson Maxwell presented Chief Keller with a certificate and years of service award and a plaque for his retirement.

#### B. Presentation or Acknowledgement of the 2022 Annual Awards: Copper Helmet; Customer Service; Unit Citation; Admin of the Year; Firefighter of the Year; and Officer of the Year.

Presented annual the awards and explained what each award meant. The awardees were: *Firefighter of the Year* Taylor Hammond; *Office of the Year* Captain Mike Loza; *Administrative or Support Employee of the*

*Year* Fleet Manager Rob Jennings; *Unit Citation/Engine Company of the Year* for Officer involved shooting incident Battalion Chief Dale Duns; Captains Jake Cecil and Mike Loza; Engineers Joey Martin and Jake Fitzgerald; Firefighters Brady Elliott, Randy Killman, Michael Rhorer, and Ricardo Machado. *Customer Service of the Year* Firefighter Travis Adcock; *Copper Helmet Award* Engineer Josh Good.

#### IV. BUDGET WORKSHOP

##### A. Discussion and Possible Staff Direction Regarding the 2024 Budget.

Finance Director Gabe Buldra provided an update on the progress of the budget. He commended the organization and members for looking at every line item to identify critical needs, needs, and wants. Mr. Buldra noted that the wants and some necessities were eliminated, and the vital needs were questioned and reduced in order to arrive at the budget offered.

Finance Director Buldra explained the tax and non-tax revenue sources and projections. The budgeted revenue was 9.2 million which may be conservative but achievable. Mr. Buldra explained that JVG was conservative on revenue and aggressive on cutting expenses. All non-critical spending was cut off and will continue through the first half of the fiscal year.

Revenue not included in the budget included the state appropriations, the lease with Taurus Technologies, ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding, proceeds for sale of property, and fleet services.

Finance Director Buldra reviewed the district's expenditures. Personnel being the largest driver, there was no step or COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for personnel. The Fire Chief and Administrative Manager positions were eliminated, and the other two administrative positions were reduced to 75% or 32 hours per week. Mr. Buldra suggested the Board evaluate the workload on administration to determine if 32 hours was appropriate and whether cutting would be a detriment before finalizing the budget. The overtime budget allows for one spot per day and holiday pay changed for only those on shift. The benefit costs were reflective of the health care, elimination of the opt out benefit, increased pension costs, reduction in worker's compensation rate based on reduction in wages, reduced uniform allowance. The items remaining to discuss were the administrative positions, stipends, and pushing the physicals six months to change the timing of the expense.

The recruitment and retention budget was set to zero. The discussion revealed that it was for promotional processes and external expenses.

There was a discussion regarding the administrative positions. One full-time position was eliminated, and a portion of the duties were contracted out, while the remaining responsibilities fall on existing positions. The elimination of a full-time position and reduction in hours to the existing positions was found to be too aggressive. After considering a shared chief, the size of the district, and the potential to offset the costs, the Board directed Finance Director Buldra to put administration back in at full-time.

Finance Director Buldra reviewed the remaining expense categories and explained the methodology used to budget. There was a discussion regarding the need to put some things on hold and performing some type of risk analysis. The discussion included the lack of money, increased costs in the future, and the critical need to pay off the line of credit. Mr. Buldra explained that some areas were evaluated, and others were cut in order to get to where the plan would work. Board Member Gee recommended having a plan in place on how to manage any incurred risk.

There was discussion and explanation regarding the vehicles and equipment budget. Due to the need to delay and defer replacements the apparatus repairs will increase as they age. The budget is about \$30,000 short of where it needs to be, but the district is seeing significant savings in the first year with a Fleet Manager on staff.

Finance Director Buldra stated the district will be at a zero balance at the end of the fiscal year 2024. There will still be another painful year due to no reserve funding. Board Member Gee asked about contingencies in the budget. Finance Director Buldra explained that typically there is a fund balance but the district does not have that and would need to look at other areas to take the cut. The only place for contingency right now is with budgeting for only the necessities.

An updated five-year projection will be prepared for the district after the budget is completed. Finance Director Gabe Buldra explained the statute requirements for adopting the budget and the typical process. There was a discussion on the mil rate, budget progress, fees, and evaluation of budget performance.

Chairperson Maxwell opened the discussion to the public and Janet Aniol stated she hoped to continue to see a strict budget for quite some time and discussed the requirements for a public hearing. Chairperson Maxwell asked if a hearing had not occurred in the past and Ms. Aniol clarified that most people may not understand the process and last year the hearing took about 10 minutes.

Chief Keller stated there was some advantage to adopting the budget in July and Finance Director Buldra stated he would like to have a discussion with the county regarding cashflow and does not want to speak out of turn if the budget was not ratified. There was a discussion regarding the mil rate.

*Chairperson Maxwell made a motion to tentatively adopt the Budget as discussed with a tax levy of \$3.50. Board Member Sabato Seconded.*

There was further discussion regarding the option or the new Board Members to abstain.

*Chairperson Maxwell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.*

## V. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

### A. Public Forum:

#### 1. Public Comments

Janet Aniol thanked Battalion Chief Dale Duns for all the years he assisted with the annual fourth of July parade. There was concern over who would assist this year and when Chief Duns walked into the meeting and said that his crew would be on duty that day it made a lot of people happy. She thanked Chief Duns and his crew.

Ms. Aniol discussed the taxes with Yavapai College district and their decision to increase the taxes to 5%. The Beaver Creek Community and Cornville Associations are pushing to get the fire science program reopened in the Verde Valley. In order to get that to happen, enrollment needs to increase, and Ms. Aniol was thinking of potentially having organizations offer scholarships to encourage enrollment.

Ms. Aniol gave an update regarding the land swap between Yavapai County and the US Forest Service to add 80 acres to the park.

#### 2. Executive Staff Response to Public Comments

The VACTE program was discussed as another source for the fire science program.

### B. Consent Agenda – Discussion/Possible Actions:

1. Regular Meeting Minutes April 25, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes April 25, 2023
3. Special Meeting Minutes May 4, 2023
4. Executive Session Minutes May 4, 2023
5. Resolution 2023-06 Changing of County Check Signers
6. Resolution 2023-07 Changing of National Bank Check Signers

*Chairperson Maxwell made a motion to approve consent agenda items 1 through 4. Board Member Sabato seconded. The motion passed with Chairperson Maxwell, Clerk Quinn, and Board Member Sabato voting yea. Board Members Gee and Huey abstained.*

Chairperson Maxwell stated that item 5 was a resolution to remove Robyn Cook and add Board Members Ed Gee and Jon Huey to the County bank account.

*Chairperson Maxwell made a Motion to approve Resolution 2023-06 Changing of County Check Signers as presented. Board Member Sabato seconded. The motion passed with 4 votes yea and Board Member Huey abstained.*

Chairperson Maxwell stated that item 6 was for the removal of Robyn and the addition of Board Members Huey and Gee to the district's bank accounts.

*Chairperson Maxwell made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-07 Changing of National Bank Check Signers as presented. Board Member Sabato seconded. The motion passed with 4 votes yea and Board Member Huey abstained.*

**C. Financial Report and Updates – Finance Director Gabe Buldra (JVG)**

**1. Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of April 2023 Finance Report**

Finance Director Gabe Buldra reviewed the key points from the finance report. He announced that there will be a full audited trial balance next month and it will reflect all assets and liabilities. The Board thanked Mr. Buldra and stated they liked the format of the financial report and there was no further discussion from the Board.

*Chairperson Maxwell made a motion to approve the April 2023 finance report as presented. Board Member Sabato seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed with 4 votes yea and Board Member Gee abstained.*

**D. Staff Items:**

**1. Fire Chief Report: A report from the Fire Chief. Discussion and possible action regarding current events and recent activities, including meetings and events attended; updates on human resources; finance and grants; County, State, and AFDA information; special projects; and other potential administrative items. – Chief Keller**

Chief Keller presented the Chief's report as written and noted the status on the congressional spending for the ambulance is in progress. The application was submitted but will not be reviewed until after June first. Chief Keller thanked the Board for the recognition and gave appreciation for the staff and community's support.

**2. Operations Report: A report from the Battalion Chief. Discussion and possible action regarding significant incidents, incident data, training, public education; wildland assignments; EMS; and other potential operational updates – Battalion Chief Duns**

Battalion Chief Duns reviewed call data, gave updates on the wildfire season, and gave an update on the status of the SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) packs.

**3. Fire Marshal Report: A report from the Fire Marshal. Discussion and possible action regarding current events and activities including public education, fire prevention, meetings and events attended, permits issued and closed, significant projects, inspections, social media statistics, and other potential updates. -Fire Marshal Nate Bailey**

Fire Marshal Nate Bailey presented the Fire Marshal report as submitted. He informed the Board that the fee schedule will be presented to the Board in the next couple of months.

**4. Fleet Report: A report from the Fleet Manager. Discussion and possible action regarding current repairs; maintenance; significant projects; and other fleet activities. – Fleet Manager Rob Jennings**

Fleet Manager Rob Jennings presented the fleet report as written. He noted if the oil leak on E831 was a head gasket, it would be a big-ticket item as it would need to go out for service due to the lack of equipment to complete in house.

**5. Discussion/Possible Action: Consideration of Rezoning the Salt Mine Road Property from Residential to Commercial; Approval of Resolution 2023-08 Designation of Agent for Rezoning Application; Approval of Resolution 2023-09 Designation of Owner/Signer for Rezoning Application – Chief Keller**

Chief Keller stated that in order to rezone the Salt Mine property, a resolution is required to designate the district's agent to apply for the rezoning and for the Board to designate someone to sign documents. Chief Keller stated it is beneficial to have the property rezoned to commercial.

*Chairperson Maxwell mad a motion to move forward with rezoning the Salt Mine from residential to commercial and to approve resolution 2023-08 Designation of Agent for Rezoning Application; Approval of Resolution 2023-09 Designation of Owner/Signer for Rezoning Application. Board Member Sabato seconded. The motion passed with 3 yea votes. Board Members Gee and Huey abstained.*

6. **Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of Resolution 2023 – 010 Designation of Applicant's Authorized Representative and Alternate Authorized Representative Forms Submission to The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military – Fire Marshal Nate Bailey**

Fire Marshal Bailey stated to request recovery costs associated from the flood event, DEMA (Department of Emergency and Miliary Affairs) requested a resolution to designate staff as representatives to submit documentation and opens the opportunity for grants.

*Chairperson Maxwell made a motion to approve Resolution 2023 – 010 Designation of Applicant's Authorized Representative and Alternate Authorized Representative Forms Submission to The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military as presented. Board Member Quinn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

7. **Discussion/Possible Action: Review and Approval of Human Resources Policy # 400.03 – Vacation – Battalion Chief Daniel Elliott**

Battalion Chief Elliott stated that with the financial issues and budgeting only one overtime position per day the policy needed to be modified. The request is to reduce the number of staff allowed on vacation per shift from three to two. Due to the vacation policy being a Human Resources policy it needed Board approval. Labor acknowledged that it was necessary. Due to four staff being at the maximum and ten others approaching the maximum amount of vacation allowed to accrue and not allowed to take time off, the leave cap was increased from 600 to 700 hours.

There was a discussion regarding handling the vacation requests already approved. Anything requested after July first has been held for approval, vacations already approved would not be taken away.

*Clerk Quinn made a motion to approve Human Resources Policy # 400.03 – Vacation. Chairperson Maxwell seconded.*

Further discussion included the intent to re-instate the policy once the district recovers financially.

*Chairperson Maxwell called for a vote. The motion passed with 4 yea votes and Board Member Huey abstained.*

8. **Discussion/Possible Action: Presentation from Taurus Technology re: the Ground Lease of District Owned Property on Stardust Circle in Rimrock; and Other Matters Related Thereto. – Chief Keller**

This item was moved up on the agenda and discussed after the staff and Board recognition.

Paul Giovanni from Taurus Technology provided an update to the Board. The site was resurveyed, and a tower was purchased and should arrive the following week. Taurus Technology will seek a permit to build a tower for viable cellular companies. The tower will be built to 60 feet, if a carrier lease is obtained a special site permit will be obtained and the remainder of the tower will be built to a maximum of 100 feet.

Mr. Giovanni explained the commitment from Taurus Technologies and the number of hurdles encountered including re platting the land, COVID, and the County fiber project. Mr. Giovanni stated Taurus Technology is fully committed to building the tower and has already spent \$100,000 on engineering. Originally the intent was a smaller build, but the community wanted more substantial use. Overall, the project is a \$600,000 commitment.

There was a discussion on potential cellular providers and the benefits which include increased communication for the district, broadband for the community, and cellular capacity. Taurus will



maintain the structure for the district.

There was no action taken and the Board thanked Mr. Giovanni for the update.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:**

**A. Discussion/Update: Regarding the Letter Submitted to Representative Quang Nguyen on March 6, 2023.**

The district received \$750,000 through state funds, one other district received \$1,000,000. The district is fortunate to receive the funds through representative Quang Nguyen.

The Board discussed a formal appreciation for Representative Nguyen for following through on his promise. Clerk Quinn was to write a formal thank you letter and set up a photo opportunity.

**B. Discussion/Possible Action: on Pursuing a Joint Management Agreement with Sedona or Verde Valley Fire Districts.**

Chairperson Maxwell stated the Board has been educated on the potential to pursue a Joint Management Agreement (JMA) and they would like to identify a direction.

There was a discussion on how soon a JMA could happen. Chairperson Maxwell stated that both Sedona Fire and Verde Valley Fire have begun discussions with their Boards and legal counsel. A general timeline of 60 days to three months was identified.

No action was taken, and Chairperson Maxwell will report back at the next meeting with an update.

**C. Discussion/Possible Action: on Pursuing Interest from Internal Interim Fire Chief Candidates.**

The Board discussed formally requesting applications for an internal Interim Fire Chief for a three-to-six-month appointment while they flush out a JMA and to fill the seat when Chief Keller leaves. There was a discussion about the budget and the impact on the process and how candidates would apply.

Janet Aniol from Beaver Creek stated her community would prefer Battalion Chief Dale Duns due to his past experience and expressed thoughts on the compensation.

The Board discussed whether they were looking for a fully qualified person for the position or someone preparing for a potential promotion who may not have all the qualifications. There was a discussion regarding the minimum qualifications and potential candidates. Battalion Chiefs Elliott and Duns stated they were not interested in applying and that Battalion Chief Strauss was not interested. Fire Marshal Nate Bailey stated he was interested and willing to fill the role.

Labor provided input for the need to appoint an interim if the Board is wanting to pursue a JMA and not rush the process. The role would and decision making would need to be clarified with a normal level of accountability even if the assignment was temporary. Board Member Huey and Chief Keller agreed that the Interim Chief would need to take over full responsibility but not make big changes. There was a discussion regarding potential animosity due to the need to make necessary decisions and then returning to original assignment.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that based on the discussion he would like to put Fire Marshal Nate Bailey in the position starting two weeks before Chief Keller's exit or immediately and to start pursuing a JMA. The Board agreed and discussed the process for providing directions to make a temporary appointment.

Administrative Assistant Kerrie Tarver and Fire Marshal Nate Bailey were directed to get contract options for a suitable interim chief contract for up to a six-month period that considers the full authority to act as fire chief while continuing to perform Fire Marshal duties. A special meeting will be held on May 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am.

**D. Future Agenda Items**

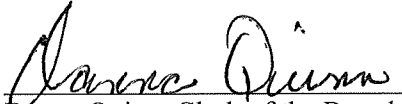
Discussion/Possible Action: Regarding the Day of the Week and Time for the Monthly Board Meetings.

Discussion/Possible Action: on Pursuing a Joint Management Agreement with Sedona or Verde Valley Fire Districts.

Discussion/Possible Action: on Pursuing Interest from Internal Interim Fire Chief Candidates.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Maxwell adjourned the meeting at 4:49 pm.

  
Danna Quinn, Clerk of the Board