



# HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES · 10/15/24

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A regular meeting of the Fire Board of Directors was held on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 5:00 PM** at Fire Station 23, Administration Board Room, 3350 Old Munds Hwy, Flagstaff, AZ. The meeting was also available through Zoom Video Conferencing.

**1. Call to Order.** Chairperson Hanecak called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

**2. Roll Call.**

Board members present were Chairperson Tom Hanecak, Director Jay Smith, Director Carl Nelson, and Director Dan Stoffel\*. Clerk Brad Bippus was absent.

Administrative personnel present were Chief Todd Miller\*, Battalion Chief Josh Pond, Ms. Jayme Jones, and Mr. Ben Archer-Clowes from James Vincent Group.

Guests present Mr. Steven Palmer\*, CPA from Hinton Burdick CPAs & Advisors, and District residents Mrs. Robyn Wilson and her son Nolan.

\*Attended through Zoom Video Conferencing.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation, Mission and Vision Statements, and Board Responsibilities.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a silent invocation was offered, and the district's mission, vision, and statutory Board responsibilities were recited.

**4. Welcome Visitors.** Chairperson Hanecak welcomed Mr. Ben Archer-Clowes from James Vincent Group and Mr. Steven Palmer\*, CPA from Hinton Burdick CPAs & Advisors.

**5. Call to the Public.** There were no comments from the public.

**6. Approval of Minutes.**

A. SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 REGULAR MEETING. Chairperson Hanecak entertained a motion to approve the minutes of September 17, 2024 regular meeting; the **motion** was moved by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Smith. Chief Miller pointed out errors for correction. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED** with corrections as discussed.

**7. (9. A. on the Agenda) PRESENTATION OF FY 2023 AUDIT BY HINTON BURDICK CPAs; CONSIDERATION TO ACCEPT RESOLUTION TO REVIEW AND RECEIVE THE AUDIT PURSUANT TO A.R.S. § 48-805.02.**

Mr. Palmer presented the FY 2024 Audit Report. Mr. Palmer informed the Board that the District had a clean, unmodified opinion, they found no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies, and the District is in compliance with all legal requirements.

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The District's net position as of June 30, 2024 was \$5,548,594; net position increased by \$217,443. Governmental capital assets increased \$2,217,680 net of depreciation of \$369,699. Total governmental long-term debt was \$13,450,224 on June 30, 2024. Mr. Plamer reviewed the long-term debt accounts, General Fund Balance, Cash, and Revenue and Expenditure Trends. Mr. Palmer informed the Board that the Audit has not been finalized and could be updated if necessary. After discussion, the Board tabled the resolution to review and receive the Audit until Chief Miller can review the Audit more thoroughly.

Mr. Palmer left the meeting at 5:23 PM, and Mrs. Wilson and Nolan left the meeting at 5:24 PM.

**Financial Report.** Mr. Archer-Clowes presented the Monthly Financial Report. He informed the Board that he prepared Reconciliation Statements for each account that corresponds with the Summary of Reconciled Cash Balances for a Board member to review and sign. He reviewed the Profit & Loss Budget Performance, and he was open to answering questions. The Board discussed the schedule for approving bills; there are members that still need the appropriate training. Mr. Archer-Clowes suggested the Board members get set-up in the system. The Board had no questions about the financial report.

Chief Miller suggested the Board take action to accept the financial report. Chairperson Hanecak entertained a motion to accept the financial report; the motion was moved by Director Smith and was seconded by Director Nelson. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.

## 8. Summary Reports & Correspondence.

- A. IAFF LOCAL CHAPTER 1505 SUMMARY REPORT – No Report presented.
- B. BATTALION FIRE CHIEF'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Lopez presented the Battalion Chief's Report. There were 91 calls for service in September. Chief Lopez described Battalion Chiefs' Activity, Calls of Note, and Training (see detailed written report). Chairperson Hanecak asked about the Rover position. Battalion Chief Lopez informed him that District employed a Rover in 2019; however, assigning an Engineer to the Rover position provides much more flexibility. Engineer Poggi-Jenkins provided information about his work schedule.
- C. FIRE CHIEF'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Miller apologized for his remote attendance due to a back and hip injury. Chief Miller recognized Firefighter Greenwald for her GFR Firefighter Academy graduation; she was also recognized as Recruit of the Week. Chief Miller recognized Firefighter McIntyre for successful completion of the Engineer Taskbook; he has qualified as an Acting Engineer. Chief Miller thanked Captain Modrell for his efforts taking the role of Cadre Instructor and everyone that provided training and support. The Board reviewed the Fire Chief's Report (see detailed written report).
- D. FIRE BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY REPORT – Chairperson Hanecak noted that there will be a general election here on November 5, and he will serve as the site inspector. He asked staff to have a heightened level of situational awareness. The Board discussed cancelling food distribution on site due to the election.
- E. CORRESPONDENCE – There was no correspondence presented.

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## 9. Topics of Discussion and Possible Legal Action.

- A. (9. B. on the Agenda) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING HR POLICY 30.02 COMPENSATION SCALE. Chief Miller informed the Board that Superintendent Erickson requested rates for Wildland Firefighter W1-5 to be returned to the pay scale. The pay rates were removed from the scale in July since entry level Wildland Firefighters were paid at a Step 6 level to be competitive with Flagstaff. It was noted that on January 1, 2025 the Wildland Firefighter Step 1 rate of \$14.49 will be below the State Minimum Wage of \$14.70 and will need to be adjusted. Chairperson Hanecak entertained a motion to approve the revision to HR Policy 30.02 Compensation Scales to include rates for Wildland Firefighter, W1- Steps 1 – 5; the motion was moved by Director Smith and was seconded by Director Nelson. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.
- B. (9. C. on the Agenda) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRE CHIEF'S EVALUATION. Chairperson Hanecak stated that in previous meetings, the Board has discussed the Fire Chief's Evaluation and how to approach rating criteria. Recently the Board has utilized the Chief's Reports, Community Surveys, and the Board's feedback as rating criteria. Chairperson Hanecak and Chief Miller agree that a more comprehensive evaluation would be more beneficial. The Board discussed implementing a 360 evaluation to include input from staff, partners and/or peers, and eventually the public. Chairperson Hanecak has worked with Chief Miller to determine appropriate questions to ask staff, which will be forwarded to the Board for review.

The Board Chairperson Hanecak opened a discussion about peer/partner feedback. He believes that a few questions could be integrated into this evaluation; however, he proposed that a more complex method could be strategically developed for next year. The Board discussed peer/partner feedback. Chairperson Hanecak believes that staff input should weigh more heavily than peers. Director Nelson believes partners and peers should be kept separate and to add that component next year is reasonable. Chairperson Hanecak believes a customer satisfaction survey may also factor in next year. Chief Miller is onboard with 360 feedback, and he believes staff comments should have the most weight. He suggested ways of scoring the evaluation, and he believes partner and peer input could be more difficult to quantify due to their varied levels of participation. Chairperson Hanecak believes adding to the complexity of the evaluation will require a lot more discussion and strategic planning might provide more information.

After further discussion, the Board decided to table adding partner and peer input to this year's evaluation. Chairperson Hanecak wanted to "publicly appreciate Chief Miller for being willing to go down the route of an evaluation like this. For everyone that will be providing feedback, constructive feedback is extremely beneficial. Since you guys have good transparency, trust, and honesty in the fire district, and I know the Chief would appreciate seeing that on his evaluation too." Chief Miller welcomes any input that can identify what we are doing good and where we can be better. The Board will finalize the questions before the next Board meeting. Chairperson Hanecak will send an email to the Board with evaluation questions to ask staff, and the Board should respond to Chairperson Hanecak only.

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C. REVIEW BOARD TASK CALENDAR. The Board reviewed the Board Task Calendar. Chairperson Hanecak asked that the Audit Resolution be moved to November.

10. **Board Member comments.** There were no further comments.

11. **Adjournment.** Chairperson Hanecak entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was moved by Director Nelson and was seconded by Director Smith. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**. The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Jones