

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District  
Meeting Held April 28, 2009**

A Special meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on April 28, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Clarkdale Fire District Station #21, 895 First South Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.

Board of Directors:

Jim Elmer, Chairman

Seth Murphy, Clerk

David Ahern

Ron Ballatore

Bill Snyder

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief

Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: None.

**CALL TO ORDER.** The meeting was called to order at 4:07p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

**ROLL CALL.** All members were present.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC.** None

**FY 2009/2010 PRELIMINARY BUDGET – Discussion and consideration of adopting the fiscal year 2009-2010 preliminary budget.** It was noted that a grant for mobile data terminals has been included in the budget. Chief Moore explained that all but one agency in the Verde Valley will be participating in the grant and that should the grant be successful, the District will obtain \$21,000 worth of equipment for \$4,000. Chief Moore explained that the grant match was taken out of Capital Reserve. Chairman Elmer stated that he was initially concerned about the on-going maintenance costs. He stated that there are many advantages of having the units. Discussion followed regarding mobile data terminals, their uses, how they impact communications, etc.

Boardmember Snyder inquired as to the need for two heart monitors. Chief Moore explained that it is possible that a paramedic is on the engine on a call and another paramedic who is providing station coverage needs one also.

Chief Moore explained that the draft budget only included one heart monitor because he expected to purchase one outright in FY09/10 and one in FY10/11. Now the intent is to apply for a grant to obtain two heart monitors in FY09/10. If the District is not successful in obtaining the grant, there are no funds budgeted in FY09/10 to purchase a heart monitor outright.

Chief Moore explained that the grant amount budgeted for a new engine was increased due to new NFPA standards. He also noted that the staff has already designed the new engine and received a cost estimate for it, which is what the grant is based on.

The Board reviewed the cuts which were presented for their consideration should they wish to drop the tax rate. Boardmember Snyder suggested that if the grant is not received, and there are funds available at the end of the year, that the District could consider purchasing a heart monitor.

Discussion followed regarding grant applications expected to be submitted in the 2009/2010 fiscal year.

Clerk Murphy stated that he has hard time reducing the mil rate considering the needs of the District. He stated that reducing the mil rate a few cents does not really change anyone's tax bills. He stated that the District is going to see a 10 to 20 percent decrease in revenue in FY10/11 and the expenses will be going up. Dropping three cents only cuts \$20,000, however the budget has already dropped due to the decrease in property valuation.

Clerk Murphy stated that people may complain about their taxes, but it is a real problem when people start complaining about their service. He stated that he feels Boardmember Snyder is financially savvy and an asset to the District, but he cannot agree with a three cent reduction. Clerk Murphy stated that he got involved with the District because there was a serious lack of service. The District started with one of the lowest tax rates in Arizona and should be proud of that, but should not lower the rate again at this time. He stated that the District has issues with service delivery; equipment and apparatus needs and the placement of the station. Do to this he does not feel that it is appropriate to reduce the mil rate.

Boardmember Snyder stated that if the three cent drop in the mil rate does not cause a significant impact on the budget, why not give it back. He stated that people on the street don't realize they are not getting the level of service the firefighters feel they should provide, they just know that they are paying taxes. From "the people on the street" standpoint, they want to see their taxes go down and they are happy with the service.

Clerk Murphy stated that it is doable to make a slight reduction in the mil rate, but it will not be noticeable and people will still be upset. He stated that he has a hard time running a district on such a low mil rate when there are huge improvements needed that are expensive. He stated that when there is a serious problem, they need to be able to provide that service. He added that the standard is not that far out of reach, yet the district is not close.

Boardmember Ahern stated that what he hears from the citizens is that they want good service. He stated that the staff has done an extraordinary job putting together the budget.

Chairman Elmer stated that he does not feel that the District is losing service. He stated that the District paid off a loan and is gaining more than losing. Now the citizens have the benefit of the loan being paid off and there is \$130,000 or \$140,000 more to work with in the budget than the year before. Chairman Elmer stated that the District has more people on the engine, including a paramedic on every shift. The District will never meet NFPA on every item, it is a tool to strive toward. He stated that he does not feel that the District is being negligent, they are still gaining. The staff can make it work, and there will still be some carry over because of the good job they are doing.

Boardmember Ahern stated that new apparatus is needed, and land for the District to have its own building on. There will be big expenses in the future.

Boardmember Snyder moved to adopt the preliminary budget with mil rate of 1.5523 for FY 09/10. Chairman Elmer seconded. The motion failed with Boardmember Snyder and Chairman Elmer voting in favor and Clerk Murphy, Boardmember Ahern and Boardmember Ballatore voting against.

Boardmember Ahern moved to adopt the preliminary budget with the mil rate of 1.5823 for Fy09/10. Clerk Murphy seconded.

Ron Ballatore stated that he is concerned about dropping the mil rate. He is not comfortable yet with what the District has to meet future needs. He stated that it would be great to get a grant for the engine, but it may not be successful. He stated that there has been a great deal of hard work that has been done to give good service, but some of it has been good luck.

Chairman Elmer, stated that the budget includes a small cost of living increase for the employees, which Chief Moore did not budget for himself. He stated that if the Board is not going to lower rate, he feels that the Chief should also receive the same increase as the other staff.

Boardmember Snyder stated that he communicates with the people who are paying commercial tax rates and they think that anything that can be done to work with the community to lower rates should be done. He has also talked to other people who feel the rate should be lowered. The public has no idea what the needs of the District are, they feel that they are receiving good service.

Clerk Murphy removed his second to the motion. Boardmember Ahern removed his motion. Boardmember Ahern made a new motion to adopt the preliminary budget with the mil rate of 1.5823 for FY 2009/2010, to include a 2.5% increase to the Fire Chief's pay and that amount be offset elsewhere in the budget by the Fire Chief. Clerk Murphy seconded. The motion carried with Boardember Ballatore, Boardmember Ahern and Clerk Murphy in favor and Boardmember Snyder and Chairperson Elmer opposed.

**MAY REGULAR MEETING DATE – Discussion and consideration of changing the date of the May regular meeting.** It was noted that the May regular meeting date was previously moved by the board in order to adopt the preliminary budget and to meet the publishing deadlines for the consideration of the final budget. Since the preliminary budget has been adopted, there is no longer a need to have the May meeting earlier in the month.

Clerk Murphy moved to change the May regular meeting date back to its normal date of May 21<sup>st</sup>. Boardmember Ballatore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – A listing of items to be placed on a future agenda.** No future agenda items were listed.

**ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

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Jim Elmer, Chairman

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Date

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Seth Murphy, Clerk

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Date