

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Clarkdale Fire District
Meeting Held August 13, 2009**

A special meeting of the Clarkdale Fire District Board of Directors was held on August 13, 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
Ron Ballatore
Bill Snyder
Vacant

Staff:

Joe Moore, Fire Chief
Joyce Driscoll, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Rex Williams, Jerry Brown, Normalinda Zuniga.

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Elmer.

ROLL CALL. All members were present. A quorum was present.

NEW BUSINESS

BOARD APPLICANT INTERVIEWS – Applicant interviews and discussion and consideration of applicants for the Board of Directors vacancy.

All applicants were asked the same questions, which were:

1. Why do you want to join this Board?
2. Are you aware of the time commitments?
3. As a board member, what criteria will you use in making decisions regarding district needs vs. taxes levied?
4. What do you think are some of the challenges that the Clarkdale Fire District faces?
5. Please explain your view of what the role of the Fire Chief is.

Rex Williams was the first applicant. His general responses to the questions were:

He was on the city [Clarkdale] council when the district was forming and he was highly in favor of it. He wants to get back into public service. He once was a police officer. He has lived in Clarkdale 10 years. He met Chief Moore when he had lock box installed at his house. He is familiar with budgets, has management experience and was director of governmental relations for Rider Trucking. He feels has something to bring to the board.

Mr. Williams stated he was not totally aware of the time commitment of the board. The time commitments were explained by Clerk Murphy. In response to the time commitment, Mr. Williams stated he is retired.

Mr. Williams stated that he understands the tax levy and that he understands that there has been a lot of investment made into the District, i.e. doubled staff. He stated that he does not feel the public is fully aware of the improvements. He stated that planning needs to occur regarding the economy and to not get behind the curve regarding the District's needs.

Regarding challenges, Mr. Willams stated that the District is fairly new and it is still establishing responsibilities. It is looking to provide the best service possible with the funds it has. He stated the need to plan for the future and mentioned its autonomy from the town.

Mr. Williams stated that the job of the Fire Chief is to hire and train good people, to step in when employees have problems, and to ensure things are getting done. He stated that the Chief has "PR" responsibilities, to be the face of the fire district and to be liaison to other fire districts.

He stated that if selected he will need time to get up to speed and be made aware of needs so he can effectively contribute. It was noted that he served three years on the council and did not serve out his full term due to a health issue, which is now resolved.

Without objection, and with time remaining until the next interview, the board tabled applicant interviews in order to address the next agenda item.

Auditor Proposal – Discussion and consideration of a proposal by Beecher & Company to provide audit services. Chief Moore explained that fire districts which have a budget over one million dollars must have an audit. He explained that staff was not pleased with the auditor they used last year for the financial review. Beecher and Company provided an estimated a price of \$4,900, which does not require Board approval; however the auditor is requesting a signed contract which does require Board approval.

Bill Snyder expressed concerns about getting the audit in plenty time for review prior to the deadline. Ron Ballatore inquired as to local auditors. Chief Moore stated that the staff and Verde Valley Fire District staff obtained three quotes, none of which were from Verde Valley businesses.

Discussion followed regarding the role of the auditor and the recognition that this is the District's first audit. As a result of the Audit, there may be items the District will discover it should start doing. The auditor should also make suggestions as to policies that the District needs to have in place.

Boardmember Ballatore moved to authorize Chairman Elmer to sign the engagement letter hiring Beecher and Company as the District's auditor for FY08/09. Clerk Murphy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Without objection the board resumed the board interviews agenda item.

Board Applicant Interviews – Applicant interviews and discussion and consideration of applicants for the Board of Directors vacancy (continued).

The next applicant was Normalinda Zuniga.

She stated that she is a lifelong resident of Clarkdale and she feels it is time for her to get involved. She stated that she works for the Town and she has witnessed the transition of the Fire Department to a District. She stated that the District has made amazing progress. She stated that she feels the District is on the right track and she would like to be a part of it. She stated that she can adjust her schedule to accommodate meetings.

It was noted that she has been volunteering for the District. She stated that since she has been volunteering, she has seen the immense coordination and paperwork it takes to run a District. She does not feel that the general public is aware of this. She feels that in order to provide the District with what it needs to respond to calls, taxes may need to be raised and that it cannot have one without the other.

Regarding challenges, she stated that coming from the perspective of a new district, challenges would include the need for a new fire station and that there is an ongoing challenge of keeping the public aware of what the fire district is doing. She stated that people make comments regarding taxes going up and this can be dispelled by boardmembers being transparent and explaining needs.

She stated that there are a lot of things that go on that she didn't know about and the role of the Chief is to hold it all together. Because it is a small district, there is a lot of agency coordination, there are a lot of things to consider. The Chief needs to retain good working relationship with other entities and oversee day to day operations.

Ms. Zuniga stated that she is a Planner with the Town of Clarkdale. She is the local chairperson for the 2010 census and is liaison for the Town's Design Review Board, Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. She stated that since she has been volunteering with the District, she has realized the talent the District has and that it is amazing and good things are happening. She stated that she is excited for the district and wants to be a part of it. She noted that should she be appointed to the board she feels she would need to stop volunteering as it may not look appropriate for her to do both.

The final applicant was Jerry Brown.

Mr. Brown stated that he has been in the community long enough that he has a good relationship with the community. He stated that the Board is doing a good job, and he would like to make a positive contribution. He stated that he was on the hospital board for 20 years. It was rewarding, however they instituted term limits so he is no longer on the board. He sees this is an opportunity to get back involved. He stated that one of the things he would like to do is to support the mission of the District and to work with the other members of the Board. He stated that he did not support the formation of the District. He did not feel that it was made really clear how the finances were going to be balanced.

He stated that he is aware of the time commitment. Being experienced at being on a board, he likes to be prepared. He stated that he does have a time conflict with the next meeting. He has taken measures to make sure his schedule accommodates all of the meetings after the next meeting. He stated that he feels that it is important to understand the needs of the community are and what the function of the District is. He considers fire protection an essential service. He stated that sometimes local governments get beyond the definition of an essential service.

He stated that expenditures need to be “needs” driven. He stated that he is not as concerned about the levy/revenue side as he is with it being need driven, that purchases are prudent. He does not like spending money just because it is there, or to have money just for money’s sake.

Mr. Brown stated that challenges faced by the District include a leased facility which is barely adequate, an engine which is due to be replaced and the current state of the economy. He stated it is challenging to adequately address needs of community in these times.

He stated that the Fire chief is the chief administrative officer; the Board gives guidelines and policies and he executes them. He stated that he does not believe in micro-managing, however the Board should always ask the Chief’s opinion regarding matters it is considering.

ADJOURNMENT. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Jim Elmer, Chairman

Date

Seth Murphy, Clerk

Date