

MINUTES OF THE  
BUCKSKIN FIRE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT FIRE BOARD

**September 16, 2015 – Regular Session and Work Session**

Minutes to be approved at open public meeting on October 14, 2015.

A public Open Meeting of the Buckskin Fire Department was convened on September 16, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the training room of the Buckskin Fire Department located at 8500 Riverside Drive, Parker, AZ., 85344.

**Work Session and Regular Session**

The following matters were discussed:

1. Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call:  
Members Present: Chairman Jeff Daniel, Greg Bachmann, Robert Gory, Glenda Gerson  
Absent: Robert “Monty” Rust  
Staff Present: Chief Chris Chambers, Fire Fighter Brandon Quinn  
Public Present: Wayne Posy, Barry Gerson
3. Discussion/Presentation from Michael Kirk with Esmay Electric on a Solar System. Michael Kirk could not attend.
4. Close Work Session
5. Open Regular Session
6. (Action Item) **Approval of Minutes** submitted for Regular Session on August 12, 2015. Motion made by Glenda Gerson to approve the minutes of August 12, 2015, seconded by Robert Gory. Discussion: Glenda Gerson: I noticed in the minutes that item #7, when we were talking about approving filling the open position, the only thing I feel should be in there is the name of the fireman. Greg Bachmann: The other thing I would like to add is that I was not at the meeting; therefore I am going to abstain from voting.  
Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstention: 1  
Absent: Monty Rust
7. (Action Item) Discussion & possible action: **Acceptance of monthly expense report 08/01/15-08/31/2015.** All transaction approved by Administrative Fire Chief; documentation for these expenses were reviewed and authorized by a minimum of two Fire Board Members whose signatures are on the warrants issued to vendor(s), as per Buckskin Fire District policy and procedures. Motion made by Greg Bachmann to accept the monthly expense report from 08/01/15-08/31/15, seconded by Glenda Gerson. Approved unanimously.  
Ayes: 4  
Nays: 0  
Absent: Monty Rust

8. (Discussion) **Discussion and update from Pension Board Chairman.** Captain Matt Pellerin: We are looking into some of the people on disability pension. Per the code, we can revisit anyone that is out on an accident pension every year, if needed, unless they have been out up to 20 years. We decided when we had our Pension Board meeting; we should probably seek legal counsel to make sure we are doing this correctly. That is going to be an expense that we had not foreseen. I believe it is in all of our best interest that we have our legal counsel via phone or in person to advise us on the legal procedure to follow. The person in question will have the opportunity to come back and if he chooses, we need to pay for a physical evaluation. From my understating it is about \$3000.00. If he declines it voids paying him any further pension benefits. Beyond that, we will need the doctor's recommendation for him to come back to work. I feel we should investigate this. Robert Gory: In an issue like that, is it retroactive in anyway? Captain Matt Pellerin: That is something we would have to look at case by case. Chairman Jeff Daniel: We are going to get a hold of Bill Whittington? Chief Chambers: Yes, Pattie and I are going to the AFDA meeting at the beginning of next month and we hope to have the opportunity to talk to him. We have \$330,000.00 pending for future payments that is part of our liability. Captain Matt Pellerin: We have already paid over \$200,000.00 to him and they expect with his lifespan an additional \$300,000.00. Chief Chambers: This person does have a fulltime job with a different company. Greg Bachmann: I take it that the Pension Board is going to meet again, formulate a plan and then bring it to us. Captain Matt Pellerin: Yes, we are hoping to meet again on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hopefully, Monty Rust will be here so we can discuss and move forward with this.
9. (Discussion and possible Action): **Discussion on Solar System; and to approve if applicable.** Chairman Jeff Daniel: This was in reference to our work session. If it is okay with the Board we will go ahead and move on. Approved unanimously.
10. (Discussion and possible Action): **Update on SAFER Grant and Fire Board Approval.** Chief Chambers: We have been awarded the SAFER Grant in the amount of \$2,648,000.00, for 2 years. It officially begins February 2016 through February 2018. This grant is renewable. I did have some questions from some of the Board members, especially about PSPRS. This will be huge for our Public Safety Retirement because we will be hiring new guys on Step 1 of their 25-year plan. It will fund our Public Safety Retirement. Not only will it decrease our unfunded liability but it will also lower our employer contribution rate which is currently at 42.8%. We do not know at this time how much but it will lower it. This grant pays for salaries and the only overtime it pays is the 3 hours per week we get. It will not pay additional overtime. It does pay holiday pay, workman's compensation, insurance benefits per our internal policy, physicals and uniforms. We will have to purchase a few sets of turnouts. I have talked to two different companies on the turnouts and we should be able to do it easily within the \$6,000.00 a year budget that we have. If not, we have the options to use our Capital outlay or our Wildland monies we've earned this summer. We have roughly 6 months to initiate this program. It does say 14 people not just 12. We are currently checking into finding out if Brandon's spot is eligible. Robert Gory: How many people will we have then? Chief Chambers: Four on each station and four on each shift. This will help with the manpower on holidays and overtime. Robert Gory: If we have twice as many people can't we do away with all of that? You could just run straight time. Chief Chambers: We still have guys taking vacations so you have to back fill to a certain extent. Chairman Jeff Daniel: I have a copy of the grant program here and it says what are some ineligible expenses in hiring. One of them is costs of training and equipment. Uniforms and physicals, overtime so there is no overtime for those individuals. Salaries and benefits of fire fighters that are currently employed or hired prior to awarding date. We will not be able to train these people with this money? Chief Chambers: No. Chairman Jeff Daniel: When we bring someone in that means if they are a new fire fighter we're going to have to pay for it? Chief Chambers: They will already have their EMT and Fire 1&2 certifications. We will not be sending anyone for certifications. The additional classes, our in house training but the

additional classes should be at a minimum. Chairman Jeff Daniel: This says uniforms and physicals, we need to be careful on what we agree to and what this actually says because I do not want to do anything wrong with this grant. Chief Chambers: Absolutely, we have a grant administrator and we have been on the phone and via email for the last week with different questions. We should have this all figured out quickly. What we are trying to figure out now is if Brandon Quinn eligible. If he is eligible that is great. Chairman Jeff Daniel: He was hired before the grant. Chief Chambers: Technically he was not. The Board gave us approval but he was not due to be hired until October 1<sup>st</sup>. Greg Bachmann: Chief Chambers didn't you say that physicals were covered because Jeff Daniel just read that they were not. Chief Chambers: I will show you our award letter because Barb figured physicals in our award letter. Robert Gory: That was great of Barb for doing that for us. Did we compensate her at all? Chief Chambers: Actually yes, when I asked her to write the grant it was minimal and the River Flames donated the money. We had our Wildland Grant and our Homeland Security Grant that we were writing at the same time. Robert Gory: Can we try to hire everyone local? Chief Chambers: Initially I am going to hire our qualified P.O.C.'s and then I will put out for the testing process. We have some of our volunteers that have not completed their Fire Fighter 1&2; they are in the process of getting it. My question to the administrator and to the committee is; can we put a stipulation when we test for this, that on February 16<sup>th</sup>, you will have your Fire 1 & 2 certification on the day of hire. That will allow some of the volunteers that we have now in class to qualify. If not, they could not qualify and I do not think that is fair to our local guys. Yes, we are going to try to hire as many locals and give them preference. Robert Gory: If someone wants to come from Parker? Chief Chambers: Oh absolutely. Barry Gerson: If you have someone from out of the area that is a paramedic and would like to join; would there be enough in that grant? Chief Chambers: Yes, the grant was figured for 6 EMT and 6 Paramedics. We already have two paramedics that we have talked with. Wayne Posy: Do they have to be certified based on the grant? Chief Chambers: Yes, well that is what I have to find out. They have to be NFPA compliant fire fighters. That was my question to the administrator. NFPA 1001 tells you what your compliance where volunteers and paid on call and then paid fire fighters. Wayne Posy: You can't take the young adults here in La Paz County and train them. Chief Chambers: I do not think so. That is why we have come up with some alternatives. We have some of our guys going to Texas to a certified academy. They will be taking online course for a number of days and then fly to Texas to take all the practical skills. Wayne Posy: The college here has some sort of training program don't they? Chief Chambers: They have a Fire 1&2 going right now, he has 10 people in it and it is a 9-month program, so they would not be certified until after our hiring date. Chairman Jeff Daniel: I understand it is 180 days until hire and it is a 2-year grant and you had made a comment in reference to the grant can be extended? Chief Chambers: Yes, you can apply for this grant multiple times. Chairman Jeff Daniel: But it is not an automatic renewal? Chief Chambers: No, it's not automatic. There is a clause in there that we need to research, if you hire military person, with military background that it could be a 3-year grant instead of a 2-year grant for those individuals. We can hire early but we would just have to get their approval. If for some reason you don't have the people hired by February 2016 then you have to notify them why they are not hired and they have to approve to extend that period. Our goal is to have everyone hired by February 2016. I do not believe we will have a problem with testing or having enough people. Chairman Jeff Daniel: What happens in the two-year time frame if we don't extend our grant or we don't get approval to extend our grant for a longer time? What happens if we find someone within those 14 people that we possible see a little bit better than another individual that is already been here? How are you going to handle that? Chief Chambers: The people that are hired under that grant are only guaranteed for those two years. If we have an individual that is exceptional, when you have somebody leaves Buckskin that is fulltime, we would choose that person as a replacement. Chairman Jeff Daniel: I just want to understand, from what I have been reading; you've said the right answer. I just wanted to see if you were on the same page. In reference to this grant do they have to be dive certified? Chief Chambers: No. Robert Gory: The grant ends and we are not getting it renewed; do you plan on keeping the two we have now and the other 12 are going away? Chief Chambers: Yes. Robert Gory:

Do these people know that if they got on during this grant in 2 years from now they are going to be severed? Chief Chambers: Yes they will absolutely know. Captain Matt Pellerin: Just so everyone knows, this is common in the fire service in the last few years. These grants have gone out to even bigger departments. They'll hire to supplement the crews that they have. When you go in, you sign a letter stating I know at the end of this grant, if it is not extended, I will no longer have a job. Chief Chambers: If we supply uniforms, the grant supplies the uniforms. If we do not supply the uniforms, then the grant does not supply them. Wayne Posy: Congratulations to Chief and BFD on this grant, it's fabulous. However, I believe with this grant, the Board needs to put in some stipulations with their motions. One of the stipulations would be approving this grant, that in the event there is no grant available after two years, that the new positions will be laid off and no current fire fighter's position will be laid off. The second stipulations on approving this grant there should not be an impact on the budget in the next two years. The funds needed for training or PPE must be absorbed within the budget. That way going forward if there is a change in Board they understand what decision this Board made and it is in that motion. Chief Chambers: The second part of his motion is not realistic, we're going to have to cover the cost for turnouts, and you are going to recoup that over and over from PSPRS and from saving on holiday weekend coverage. Wayne Posy: I think you and I are saying the same thing. There are going to be off sets on overtime and there are going to be increases in turnouts but there should be no dollar increase impact in the next few budgets. Chairman Jeff Daniel: I definitely do not want the budget to go up tremendously or much at all because of this fortune. Chief Chambers: I am not saying it is going to go up. I am saying if you put a certain stipulation on it. Let's take for instance this year we have earned over \$70,000.00 on Wildland, if we had this extra manpower we could have double it with two engine bosses and extra manpower. Some of the stuff is going to be additional costs. For Wildland we're obviously going to have to buy these guys Wildland gear. Every year put in for a grant through our forestry. I agree with everything you are saying Wayne. Some of this will be offset. We may need more in the training budget but it is going to come from somewhere else. Greg Bachmann: Chief Chambers, how about step increases and pay raises? Chief Chambers: It does not have any step increases or pay raises for the grant personnel. Greg Bachmann: It will be a fixed wage for two years? Chief Chambers: Yes. If we only hire four of the six paramedics, there is going to be \$12,000.00 extra in salaries. That is something we will have to look at when each fiscal budget comes up. That is all the money we have to work with, so yes they need to know coming in there probably is not going to be a step increase or pay raise. Greg Bachmann: I am foreseeing we will have to prepare and approve two budgets next year. Chief Chambers: Their budget will be separate. Their salaries and others will have to go onto our budget for a complete budget but everything we get, all the grant funds that are coming in are totally separated. Barb would like to help us proctor this grant. There are certain things we need to do to make sure everything is in line, and some of the stuff we have cut out of our budget, we'll have to put back into our budget. Not necessarily adding money but we will have to figure out how. Like our juvenile fire setters, the programs going to the schools and River Flames has donated money for the coloring books. Barb is going to help us promote what the additional manpower is doing for the community. This will show them what we have done in the community with the grant and it can help renew the grant. Robert Gory: Is Barb expecting to be compensated for that or is she doing this for a community affair? Chief Chambers: No, she will expect compensation but we have money set aside. Not only do we have River Flames, but we also have money set aside for the assistant for Pattie. Chairman Jeff Daniel: We also have to be careful because it says again some of the items that are ineligible; pre-application costs such as; grant writing fees, administrative costs, and indirect costs associated with hiring of fire fighters. Chief Chambers: None of her monies will be coming out of the grant. It will be coming out of the stuff we have already budgeted for the second position. Wayne Posy: I know you had discussed about La Paz County residents but if he does not like my second stipulation, I have another. That BFD establishes a recruiting policy for residents of military veterans of La Paz County to priority for the positions, to allow for the conduit for a large portion of the \$2,600,000.00 to remain in La Paz County. I am not saying you have to do it, but I believe we

should establish a priority. That would look at as a motion for this Board. Chief Chambers: You have to watch what you state because then you will have people say you are discriminating against them. All of our fire fighters are required to live within our area that the Board adopted. Greg Bachmann: That includes Havasu, Parker, and Big River. Chief Chambers: I think we should put an article in the paper stating Buckskin Fire District and the Board will give priority to local applicants. Wayne Posy Director of the Buckskin Sanitary District continued making comments with regard to the grant. Greg Bachmann: I accept the Safer Grant and that the staff works on a plan to incorporate it into the operation of the fire department. I am comfortable with accepting the grant and directing staff to formulate the procedures that the department will follow for instituting the grant and present it at the next meeting. Greg Bachmann: I am not saying let's approve the grant and the department not have any procedures and policies in place. Chief Chambers: We have all of our hiring policies in place. We are going to be going through the testing process with a couple of our P.O.C.'s rather quickly. Chairman Jeff Daniel: Can we have it by next meeting? Chief Chambers: Absolutely. Motion made by Greg Bachmann to accept the Safer Grant and direct staff to start forming policies for the grant and present it at next Board Meeting which will be October 14<sup>th</sup>. Seconded by Glenda Gerson. Ayes: 3  
Nayes: 1 Chairman Jeff Daniel  
Absent: Robert "Monty" Rust

11. (Discussion and possible Action): **Website update** Chief Chambers: Barb had created our original website and it needs to be updated. When you're talking about policies and procedures, we need to update the website to include the process for hiring and she would like to create links. What I am asking is that we use the budget we already have in order to hire her on an as needed bases to keep our website updated and current. Greg Bachmann: Hire Barb to do that? So much per hour or so much per month? Chief Chambers: Yes, it would be so much an hour. We have the funding available and I will bring before the Board on what her hourly rate is going to be. She will be updating the website and helping with the grant. I would like to have the website updated and get the links on it. Chairman Jeff Daniel: Where are we going to get this money, from River Flames? Chief Chambers: No, it comes out of what the Board has budgeted for Pattie's assistant. Chairman Jeff Daniel: Why don't we bring in someone part time that knows how to do websites and assist Pattie in other financial stuff? Chief Chambers: That is what I would like to do with Barb in the future. Is have her as the couple hours a week person or as Pattie's back up. Wayne Posy: May I make a suggestion, is give him a not to exceed amount. Whatever dollar amount so that he can do whatever he needs to get done. Motion made by Greg Bachmann that we hire Barb not to exceed \$200.00 to update the website. Seconded by Glenda Gerson. Approved unanimously.  
Ayes: 4  
Nayes: 0  
Absent: Robert "Monty" Rust

12. (Report) **Chairman's Report:** Jeff Daniel Nothing at this time.

13. (Report) **Fire Chief's Report:**

- a. Summary of Incident Report/Activity Log  
43 Medical aids, 51 Brush Fires, 2 Boat, 7 Public Assist on boat, 4 Boat Fires, 1 snake abatement, 1 Public Assist, 2 Vehicle Accidents, 2 Structure Fires, 1 Fire Alarm, 1 Illegal Burn, 1 Dispatch Error, 1 Hazmat. 118 Calls. Up 83 calls from last year. Including Labor Day and Wild Land.
- b. Monthly Activities

- IMD training is going well. Nathan says the fee for training will remain the same with additional fire fighters.
- CEO of hospital was let go. Vickie is currently taking over and they partially hired another CEO.
- P.O.C.'s attended fire school and did a great job Labor Day weekend. They are excited about Safer Grant. We are pushing them to get the education they need by the time the grant comes out.
- Drill on September 29<sup>th</sup>. It's a joint drill with Mohave PD and Sheriff's Dive Team.
- I went back to Fire Rescue International. It was an eye opener. A lot of networking back there and a lot of good programs. Especially with 12 people we are going to have to start instituting them. We've talked a lot about strategic planning but 5 and 10 year plans do not work for Buckskin because we cannot forecast that far ahead. It's nice to have but we need more of a two year forecast. Some of the stuff they are doing we are going to incorporate social media now. We are going to get with Greg from the Health Department, so his people can help out a little bit. We're also going to do it in house, there are ways to help with Twitter, Facebook, etc, so we can promote the fire department.
- Our billing is going very well. We've collected \$2188.00 and we still have about \$3,384.00 pending. Plus the additional we have for Labor Day Weekend and weeks following.
- We were awarded a laptop for hazardous materials from Emergency Services.
- Wild Land has changed their billing process and Pattie will now get reimbursed for any hours that she puts in for wild land billing.

c. Upcoming activities and events.

- La Paz Fire Chiefs meeting was yesterday in Ehrenburg, They had four different hospitals represented there. IMD, Vegas, Lake Havasu, and La Paz. All were trying to get people to take their patients to their facilities.
  - Hospital community meeting on the September 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Pipeline Safety Course is a free course on September 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - Primarily we are just going to be focused on the grant and getting that up and running. Keeping the Board updated on what's happening.
  - Pattie and Glenda will be attending a Board training class next week.
- Robert Gory: Can you take some of the guys and have them drive around and tell people to clean up the brush and stuff near or around there house to prevent fires? Chief Chambers: Yes we do that quite a bit.

14. Call to the Public. Consideration and discussion of comments from the public. *Those wishing to address the Buckskin Fire District Board need not request permission in advance Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01(G), the Fire District Board is not permitted to discuss or take action on any item raised in the call to the public that is not specifically identified on the Agenda. However, individual Board members may be permitted to respond to criticism directed to them. Otherwise, the Board may direct that staff review the matter or ask that the matter be placed on a future agenda.* Public input is limited to two (2) minutes per session unless a greater amount of time is approved by the Board. ***The Fire District Board cannot discuss or take legal action on any issue raised during the Call to the Public that is not on the current Agenda; due to restrictions of the Open Meeting Law.*** Wayne Posy: I would just like to thank the Board for the opportunity for the input and I want to congratulate the Board, BFD and especially Chief Chambers for the fabulous opportunity.

