

MINUTES OF THE  
BUCKSKIN FIRE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT FIRE BOARD

4/24/17 –**Open Meeting** Minutes to be approved at open public meeting on June 14, 2017. A public Open Meeting of the Buckskin Fire Board was convened on April 24, 2017 at 9:00am in the classroom of Station I of the Buckskin Fire Department located at 8500 Riverside Drive, Parker, AZ 85344. The following matters were discussed at the Open Meeting. The Board may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03.(A.3) on any item of the agenda.

1. **Call to Order:** 9:12am

2. **Roll Call:**

Members Present: Chairman Jeff Daniel, Secretary/Clerk Wayne Posey, Board Member Glenda Gerson (via conference call), Robert Gory, and Don Rountree

Staff Present: Chief Chris Chambers, Pattie Lonnee

Guest Speaker: Brenda Tranchina, Human Resource Strategies, LLC

Public Present:

3. (Action Item) **Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to enter into a contract with Human Resources Strategies, LLC for the Fire Chief Recruitment and selection process.** Chairman Daniel states that he will ask each Board member if they have any questions for Brenda and begins with Glenda Gerson. Glenda Gerson: In the past, I understand there are Fire Chiefs who have been at multiple places, and this may be someone we wouldn't consider. Brenda Tranchina: Typically someone who has moved around would be viewed unfavorably. Someone who has moved around once or twice, I don't think you would want to automatically disqualify them, but it would be worth looking at the reason for the transition. Chairman Daniel: I do have a few questions, I do have your proposal in front of me and it says that you have worked with more than 50 fire districts within the state of Arizona. How many employees do you have? Brenda Tranchina: Just me, I'm a sole proprietor. Chairman Daniel: In the Introduction of Services, it says that "it is important that the Fire Board play a key role in certain aspects of the recruitment and selection process." What role have you asked the Fire Board to get involved with? Brenda Tranchina: Identifying the type of candidate you are looking for. What kind of traits and desired qualifications and experience that you feel would be necessary for the success of Buckskin Fire? Each Fire District is different and it is important that we tailor it to that to your needs and also have the Fire Board approve a final job description. If you have one, I can work with that and make revision that I would recommend. We would have discussions regarding minimum qualification and desired qualifications. From there I would get the recruitment brochure out and then I would receive the application packets. Some Fire Boards get involved with the assessment process and some say that is what I am paying you for. If we put through typically 6 – 7 candidates through the assessment process, some won't pass; others will pass with flying colors. Those who pass the assessment process will then go before the panel of Fire Chiefs who will provide feedback to me and I will then present the top candidates for the Fire Board to review. I will facilitate the interviews with the Fire Board, I draft questions and sit down and go over the questions with you before the interviews and facilitate the interviews with you. Once you determine the final candidate, I will work with you on the offer and determine if you are going to provide a contract. This is where the Fire Board is involved, at the very beginning and at the end. If the Fire

Board would like to be involved with reviewing the packets and selecting the candidate to interview, we can certainly do this as well.

Don Rountree: Would we possibly have Executive Sessions to get update from you on how the process is going? Brenda Tranchina: Yes I would be happy to do that at any point. We will decide base on the timeline established when to give you the updates. Typically we schedule the Fire Board interviews during the assessment period in the event we have candidates from out of state. We can do updates in Executive Session or we can do them on the phone. Don Rountree: We can do this by email I assume. If we do this on the phone, you would need to tell us if it would be appropriate to do it in Executive Session or in front of the residents. Brenda Tranchina: The whole process of selecting a Fire Chief is allowed per Open Meeting Law to do this in Executive Session. Bob Gory: Do they take into consideration retirement? Brenda Tranchina: Yes it is taken into consideration but not conserved typically as a negative if someone has retired out of another department. Bob Gory: What I meant was on the other side of that. If someone is going to retire, the first retirement; that they are not a year or six months away from retiring and we go to hire them and we don't know about it. Brenda Tranchina: I do phone interviews so I think so of that will come out in the interview screening process. Chief Chambers: I think what Bob is talking about is PSPRS; if someone has 18 years into it, we assume all their liability. I think that's what he is getting at. Am I correct? Bob Gory: Yes. Chief Chambers: I cannot speak for the Board, but if someone is retiring, I don't know what the Board is going offer them, a 401K, or if they have 20 years and they're in the DROP and they want to do 25 or even 30 years, that's a huge liability for our small department to take on. Brenda Tranchina: If you are saying that you are eliminating someone who is at retirement age and disqualifying them, you're looking at Federal age discrimination claim and you want to be cautious with something like that. Chief Chambers: Can they say there's no PSPRS offered and only a 401K? Brenda Tranchina: No, you can't do that if you are a PSPRS agency, you have to contribute. If you say you're not going to put into PSPRS you could be eliminating a huge potential of your candidate pool. Don Rountree: A Fire Chief would be a fire safety employee, correct? Brenda Tranchina: Unless you chose to completely not make it a public safety position and structuring it differently, and not involved in scenes. Typically Districts cannot afford to do that. Chairman Daniel: Back to Step One: Timeline Development; what is your average time from selection time to approving time; have you been average 3 month, 8 months, 10 months? Brenda Tranchina: Average is around 4 – 5. I have fast track some at 3, but that is really fast. We can typically say 4 -5, 6 at the most. I don't think we have to as far out at 8. I like to see the position posted for minimum 4 - 6 weeks. Chairman Daniel: Step Two: "Recommend that the Fire Board be involved and at the discretion of the Fire Board could involve staff; the community." How have you handled this in the past in reference to the negativity within the community of wanting this to happen? If we hire you as our firm, how do you handle that? Brenda Tranchina: If you choose to have input from the public, that's your choice and you certainly don't have to. If you do, that will be in public session and we would invite comment. If the negativity is that they don't want you to hire a Fire Chief, or not agreeing with your discussion of what is important? If they disagree about hiring a Fire Chief, my comment back to them is that the Fire Board has already voted to hire a new Fire Chief and we are in the process of establishing what we are looking for in a Fire Chief. I would cut them off if they want to gripe and moan that you shouldn't hire a new Fire Chief. Glenda Gerson: In the reverse of that situation, there are those in the public who would like to tell us what the Fire Chief should do and I think they are saying we don't have to involve the community members if we don't want to. There are two sides to this situation. There are people in the community who love the Chief and don't want this to happen, and there are people in the community who do not like the Chief and would like to tell us exactly what can or cannot do and what the Chief should

do. Does that make sense? Brenda Tranchina: Yes and this is where you have to make a political decision. More often than not, Fire Boards have chosen not to involve the community in the discussion. You can also allow the community to submit their thoughts in writing in advance to the Fire Board and it will be taken into consideration moving forward. Wayne Posey: Step 3, revising the Fire Chief job description, from my experience that's a very important document and can you provide the Board recommended qualifications education, college, certificates, training and all of that. Will you be able to assist the Board in developing the job description but the actual qualifications? Brenda Tranchina: Absolutely. If you have a current job description that lays out the duties I can work from that, if not I can start from scratch and put together a recommended job description in terms of essential duties, and what you want to consider as minimum qualifications and then the preferred qualifications. This would be based on best practices/industry norms. I am prepared to do that whether or not you have an existing document or not. Wayne Posey: Do we have one? Do we have job descriptions? Chief Chambers: Not really... there is one in the administrative book. Chairman Daniel: Step 5: How many times have you had to look outside our area, meaning Phoenix, Vegas, California which I would consider our geographical area? How many times have you had to go beyond that, like New Mexico and have you had to go back East? Have you had a good pool to interview with? Brenda Tranchina: We should get a good pool through advertising in the Western Daily Dispatch that covers nine states and you will get people from this state, but if you have people looking to move, they will be looking in the Western Daily Dispatch anyway. We will post on the Arizona Fire District website and the Fire Chief's website as well. Bob Gory: Will they be required to move into this area, I mean the Parker area? Brenda Tranchina: This will be part of the discussion I will have with the Board. Some fire departments say that the Fire Chief will have to live within our district and others who say they don't have to live within our geographical district, but within a certain response time total or miles, because we need them to respond to emergencies. This will also be part of our discussion and you will need to decide what makes sense for the residency for the Fire Chief. Chairman Daniel: Step 6: Review applications, this is the last line, Human Resource Strategies will select six candidates. Do you normally get that many realistically or is it two or three? Brenda Tranchina: It varies. I have had where we had seven candidates and six went through the process, and I have had as low as two and some that it was a heck of a challenge to narrow it down to seven or eight. It will vary depending on the appeal of the district; if it pays competitively, if the benefits are competitive, if the area is desirable, if the department is desirable. There are many things that impact the candidate pool that we draw. Wayne Posey: In Step 7, during the assessment center, there is some kind of confidentiality for those candidates as for applying for a job and they may be employed, normally that is done off site, can you touch on that for a moment? Brenda Tranchina: Up to a certain point we can do whatever we can to protect the confidentiality. My second point is that we are talking about the fire service and they have perfected the concept of the grapevine/rumor mill. It does become difficult so it will depend if you want updates and if that is done in Executive Session. Up to a certain point it may not be common knowledge who is applying but once we invite candidates to the assessment center, the word will be out. Chairman Daniel: Step 7 in the last paragraph, based upon the results, we may have up to three candidates in the final interview with the Board; will you be involved/present during that process? Brenda Tranchina: Yes, I will be present throughout the entire process. The assessment center process will be two days, either at the end of the second day or the next day, I will meet with the evaluator and come up the recommendations for the Fire Board on who they should interview. I would then meet with you that night or the next day, then in Executive Session I would talk with you and recap the process and the candidates, then plan the finalists' interviews. We will not bring forth candidates that do not meet the requirements and you will need to determine who will be the best fit for your

fire district. Chairman Daniel: Step 8; final interview with the Board. Brenda Tranchina: I will provide you with all the information/ranking. We may even give you the opinion of the evaluators. Everything will be transparent and we want to share that information. Step 9: the background review; my only question is wouldn't you want to do an in-depth background review prior to getting this far or is there a particular reason you do it at Step 9? Brenda Tranchina: Typically background reviews are done at the end when you come down to your one or two final candidates. Background reviews are more than just criminal background reviews; and we don't want to do this sooner which could jeopardize their current position. The application asks if you have a criminal background and if they don't divulge it; that is certainly telling. We do a preliminary check in the beginning and a full background check at the end. Don Rountree: It is not uncommon in the fire service for the Board to interview family members. Is this something could possibly do in this case; particularly does the wife want to move here. Brenda Tranchina: That is not something I typically recommend and there are some departments that do this, but this is not common practice with fire districts that are hiring Fire Chiefs, are there are potential issues with that. Step 10: Final offer; from your proposal it looks like you have hired 13 – 14 fire chiefs and my question is how many have had contracts? Brenda Tranchina: I would have to go back to count, but I would say definitely more than half. Typically the only time a fire board chooses not to do that is when they are promoting from within but I would say the majority are doing that. Jeff Daniel: Would you then assist us with developing the contract if we decided to go in that direction? Brenda Tranchina: Yes I would definitely assist you with the contract but I strongly recommend seeking assistance from your legal counsel as it is a legal contract. Jeff Daniel: If we do decide to hire you as our firm, will be the only district you are working on are you working on two – three fire districts at this time? Brenda Tranchina: Currently I am working with one other fire district in Arizona. Jeff Daniel: Does any other board member have any questions? Glenda Gerson: Please clarify because it was confusing; you mention working as we but said it was only you. Brenda Tranchina: I apologize for the confusion, but I think I must have been referring to when the panel of fire chiefs interview the candidates. I facilitate it, but I do not participate in the interviewing process. I am very selective as to whom I choose to be on the panel. Glenda Gerson: Do you pay them separately or does it come from the fees you are charging us? Brenda Tranchina: No, I do not pay them. Departments around the state do this as pro-bono. They are on salaries with their district and their district allows them to go out to do these interviews. The only thing that we do is provide them with their hotel room and their meals. Jeff Daniel: Asked the board members if they have any additional questions or concerns. Wayne Posey replied no, Don Rountree replied no, Bob Gory: Don't take this personally, but let's say this process takes 4 – 5 months, and the only way you can expedite it is with our help; remember we are spending tax payers money here, do you ever reduce your price to speed things along? Brenda Tranchina: No, I've never had that situation come up; but went on to explain a unique situation with another department who did not hire a new fire chief and instead had an interim fire chief; then 10 months later came back and went through the process again; at which time I did discount my fee. Jeff Daniel: Any other question? Glenda Gerson: My questions have been answered. Jeff Daniel: Thank you Brenda. Wayne Posey: Brenda is welcome to continue on the phone for the rest of the meeting if she would like. Jeff Daniel: Discussion and Possible Action for the Board to enter into a contract with Human Resources Strategies, LLC for the Fire Chief recruitment and selection process. Chairman Daniel asked if there is any further questions and or put in a motion. Bob Gory asked how soon can she be able to start the process. Brenda Tranchina: In approximately two to three weeks as there is preparation on my part. Jeff Daniel: Would you be able to attend our next board meeting scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup>, in the evening as most of us currently work, and her reply was yes it is doable. Jeff Daniel: If there are no other questions, is there a motion? Wayne Posey: Mr. Chairman I would like to

make a motion for the Board to take action and enter into a contract with Human Resource Strategies LLC for the Fire Chief recruitment and selection process for a total of a professional fee of \$14,500.00 plus any incidental costs or any other district cost such as backgrounds checks or additional advertising, candidate expense and facility costs for the assessment center. That is my motion and my comment is that we should not have any costs because we can use the Boat Safety House therefore there would be no cost. Jeff Daniel: There has been a first to hire the firm, is there a second? Bob Gory: I will second it.

Ayes: 5, please not that it was unanimous to hire the firm.

Nayes:

Absent:

Abstain:

Wayne Posey: Obviously this process is going to require scheduling meetings and stuff, is it appropriate for us to have Pattie communicate directly to Pattie to set up meetings, or how do you want to handle this? Jeff Daniel: Chief, how would you like to handle this? Chief Chambers: We do not have any problems with the times. It was agreed that Pattie Lonnee would work with Brenda Tranchina in facilitating the meetings. Don Rountree: Can you have Pattie send her a job description and anything along that line. Jeff Daniel: To clarify, Brenda to send Pattie the job description ahead of the meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup> in order for the board to review it. Don Rountree: It would be good to have as many meetings on our regular day. Bob Gory: That would be a good idea because people don't look at the paper, they just show up. Don Rountree: Also let us know ahead of time if we need to go into executive session. Brenda Tranchina: The board can also decide if they want to invite public comment on the job description and/or ideal candidate; which would not be in executive session. Chief Chambers: Can a union member be in the executive session. Brenda Tranchina: The board can designate a union representative to be invited into the executive session. Don Rountree: As much as we would want to speed up this thing along, the one thing issue I would not want to speed along is the actual recruitment period. We want to make sure they come here and make sure they want the job before we move along. Brenda Tranchina: When we meet I will bring forward a proposed timeline at that time we can work with.

4. **Call to the Public.** Consideration and discussion of comments from the public. *Those wishing to address the Bucksfire 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.***

Jeff Daniel: No one present at this time.

5. Adjourn: 10:11am

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Jeff Daniel, Chairman

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Date

Pattie Lonnee  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Assistant

6/4/17  
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Date

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY MAY REQUEST A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION BY CONTACTING, CHRIS CHAMBERS, FIRE CHIEF OF BUCKSKIN FIRE DEPARTMENT (928) 667-3321 PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED MEETING. FACILITIE ARE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.