



# HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES · 12/17/24

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A regular meeting of the Fire Board of Directors was held on **Tuesday December 17, 2024, 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 Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
2. **Roll Call.** Board members present were Chairperson Jay Smith, Clerk Carl Nelson, and Director Tom Hanecak. Board members absent were Directors Brad Bippus and Dan Stoffel.

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

\*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.** There were no public visitors.
5. **Call to the Public.** There were no public comments.
6. **Acknowledgement of incoming Board Officers.** Former Chairperson Hanecak announced that Director Nelson will be serving in the position of Clerk and Director Smith as Chair. Chief Miller commented that he looks forward to working with them. The Board discussed increasing the term limit of officers to two years.

## 7. Approval of Minutes

- A. NOVEMBER 19, 2024 REGULAR MEETING. A **MOTION** was made by Director Hanecak and was **seconded by Clerk Nelson to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2024 meeting.** After corrections were identified, the motion was unanimously **APPROVED.**

## 8. Financial Report

- A. Mr. Ben Archer-Clowes presented the November Financial Report. He informed the Board that revenues have "caught up" due to significant tax money received in November. Expenses are currently over budget due to wildland reimbursable wages. Chairperson Smith informed Mr. Archer-Clowes that Clerk Nelson is not comfortable signing Reconciliation Reports without a better understanding of the reports; Mr. Archer-Clowes said it is not necessary for him to sign them. Chairperson Smith informed Mr. Archer-Clowes that the Board will discuss if the Reconciliation Reports are necessary going forward.

# HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

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Chairperson Smith entertained a **motion** to approve the financial report as presented; the motion was moved by Clerk Nelson and was seconded by Director Hanecak. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED**.

## 9. Summary Reports & Correspondence

- A. IAFF LOCAL CHAPTER 1505 SUMMARY REPORT – Engineer Ahrendt noted that there is a new sign on I-17 for the highway clean-up, and the Toy Drive is “coming up.” Union officers have participated in the Strategic Planning process; Engineer Ahrendt thanked Clerk Nelson for his participation in the committee.
- B. BATTALION FIRE CHIEF’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief C. Pond presented the Battalion Chief’s Report. There were 53 calls for service in November. He described Battalion Chiefs’ Activity, Calls of Note, and Training (see written report for details).
- C. FIRE CHIEF’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chief Miller presented the Fire Chief’s Report. He described activities related to Leadership, Management, Public Relations, and Safety (see written report for details). Chief Miller recognized Austin Braunberger for his promotion to Squad Boss, and Chief C. Pond for completing the Chief Executive Officer Program. Chief Miller thanked Chief C. Pond and Ms. Jones for their efforts organizing the Annual Awards Celebration.
- D. FIRE BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S SUMMARY REPORT – Chairperson Smith asked if Chief Miller had heard from community members about insurance. Chief Miller explained that the District can provide insurance companies with a letter to explain coverage and the ISO rating. The Arizona Fire Chief Association is “working on a more permanent solution”. Chief Miller has tried to help reduce the impact of increased tax bills; however, he is not sure if it will make any difference.

Director Hanecak asked Chief C. Pond about the “take aways” of the Chief Executive Officer Program. Chief C. Pond believes the networking aspect was very beneficial, and it opened his perspective to supporting the Chief as well.

- E. CORRESPONDENCE – The Board reviewed two Community Feedback responses thanking HFD for having a Halloween Event, and County Elections thanked HFD for the use of Station 23 for a General Election Polling Place.

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

- A. UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS. Chief Miller updated the Board about the Strategic Planning process. Chief Miller will email a draft of the plan when available, and the plan will be presented to the Board for approval in January. Clerk Nelson was glad to participate with staff to work on the plan. Chief Miller informed the Board that the surveys reports conducted for the plan will also be shared with the Board.
- B. CONDUCT FIRE CHIEF’S EVALUATION AND IDENTIFY GOALS FOR 2025. Chairperson Smith asked Director Hanecak to present the Chief’s evaluation. Director Hanecak informed the Board that the Chief’s evaluation was conducted like in prior years; however, staff input was an added component.

# HIGHLANDS FIRE DISTRICT

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Director Hanecak apologized to Director Stoffel for not getting the evaluation form to him prior to his vacation, which caused his feedback to be left out. He thanked the other Board member for their feedback and comments. Director Hanecak explained the components of the evaluation, which included Performance Criteria, Staff Input, and Goal Accomplishments. Director Hanecak described the process and reviewed the rating given for each component (see written evaluation document). Director Hanecak informed the Board that the Chief's goals for 2025 will be established after the Strategic Plan is completed.

Director Hanecak told Chief Miller, "Generally, you are killing it here." He believes the "coolest" thing is the Chief's "drive and ability to receive feedback and make necessary change to the benefit of the District, especially for the staff." He informed staff, "Knowing that the Chief likes feedback, being honest is the only way that meaningful change is going to happen."

The Board discussed the weight to be given to each evaluation component. The Board agreed that the weight will be distributed as follows: 50% Performance, 30% Staff Input, and 20% Goals. The overall score is 4.51, which is "Outstanding." Chairperson Smith entertained a **motion to accept the Chief's Evaluation; the motion was moved by Director Hanecak and was seconded by Clerk Nelson.** The motion was unanimously **APPROVED.** Chief Miller thanked the Board and Staff for the feedback, and he gave credit for the success to the entire team.

C. REVIEW BOARD TASK CALENDAR. The Board reviewed the Board Task Calendar.

11. **Board Member comments.** There were no further comments.
12. **Adjournment.** Chairperson Smith entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting; the **motion was moved by Director Hanecak and was seconded by Clerk Nelson.** The motion was unanimously **APPROVED.** The meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne Jones