



Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Elected Officials of Rio Rico Medical & Fire District  
held on April 28, 2021 Station #3, 822 Pendleton Dr., Rio Rico, AZ

To comply with social distancing guidelines the Board meeting room at Station 3 was closed to the public.  
The meeting was held remotely

1. Call meeting to order
  - Meeting is being recorded
  - Meeting called to order by Michael Carlson at 5:31 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Call to the Public
  - Adriane Demotica – Fire Fighter with RRMFD approximately four years. Understands the Board will be discussing making the COVID vaccine mandatory. Adriane is representing several firefighters wishing to appeal and requesting religious exemption if the COVID vaccine be mandated. EMT's and paramedics are no strangers to the field of medicine and science. As we wish to refuse the vaccine, we are not conspiracy theorists or anti-vaccers. EMT's and Paramedics will be placed in an unenviable position of having to choose between their faith and their careers. Reference made to religious beliefs and testing of the vaccine and to Article 7 of the Civil Rights Act. Prefer vaccinations be totally voluntary, if you are thinking of making the vaccine mandatory, asking you to contemplate religious exemption as a reasonable accommodation. Have served tirelessly through two waves of the pandemic without the vaccine and will continue to serve and faithfully execute all duties and render excellent service to our constituents.
  - Michael Fielder – President of Local 4631 Union. In regards to the proposed discussion on mandatory COVID vaccines as noted by Adriane Demotica, there are some issues and concerns that have been brought forward. The IAFF encourages members to vaccinate but does not encourage mandatory vaccines; understands under some circumstances, objection to being vaccinated - individuals may receive an exemption or accommodation from their department. Guidelines for declining could require signing a waiver; meeting with Dr. Pereira for educational information regarding vaccines, restrictions on workers compensation and having this information as part of the employee's health data base file (can recant at later date). Supporting mandatory vaccines at this time with numbers trending down, no data showing our personnel contracting COVID from within RRMFD, all had personal exposure. Requested the Board consider some options.
  - Steven R. McEwen – 480 Camino Ramanote, Rio Rico – COVID vaccination and NSFD fire service Would like to speak on behalf of our firemen and express heartfelt thanks for service given in the NSFD area. In respect to COVID shots, there was an attempt with the Sheriff Department and Police Department to make this mandatory. Sheriff took a stand that it is a violation of civil rights in regard to making it mandatory and did not require it; the department in Nogales followed suit. Mr. McEwen agreed it is a violation civil rights; health is our own personal issue and other peoples' health is their personal issue; understands RRMFD comes in contact with a number of people, but that does not give the right to tell people how to run their lives. Statistics have shown the number of cases are down and herd immunity is up 87%; believes choice should be given to personnel without being criticized or compromised in their job. We are all Americans and should be treated as such.
  - Michael Carlson expressed gratitude to the Call to the Public participants for their time and comments. This vital information will be taken into consideration during the agenda item discussion.
4. Roll call for board members
  - Present remotely: Michael Carlson, Dean Davis and Dora Urias. Frank Bejarano joined meeting at 6:15 p.m.
  - Absent: Brad Beach and Frank Bejarano
5. Approval of minutes for the Special District Meeting and District Meeting held on March 31, 2021

- Motion to approve Special District Meeting minutes and District Meeting minutes made by Dora Urias, second by Dean Davis
- Motion passed unanimously by verbal vote

6. Fire Chief's Reports and Staff Reports:

a. Call Summary

- Total Calls: 272      911s 82      IFTs 120      Fires 5      Others 71

b. Operational Reports

i. Equipment, vehicle, station

- TRT 522 in shop getting emergency lighting, awaiting quotes for painting followed by decals at the Wilmot Prison
- Station 2 Weight Room painted

ii. Training -

- EMS Training via on-line platforms
- Minimum Company Trainings – Captains per quarter; individual shift/station trainings Tuesdays
- Basic Pump Operations for all Non-Driver Operators held April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>
- EVOC Driver Training for all Fire District personnel held April 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>
- HIPPA Training held April 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>
- UTV Driver Training held April 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>
- Fire Module Training held April 7<sup>th</sup>
- Ropes III training held March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup> – attended by Firefighters Hodgeson, Cortinas and Cruz
- Emergency Building Stabilization held April 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> – attended by Firefighters Hodgeson and Cortinas
- Confined Space Rescue held April 26<sup>th</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup> – attended by Firefighters Hodgeson, Cortinas and Cruz
- Fire Officer Leadership Program continued Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students have performed multi-company drills and took their final exam and passed. Candidates for the Captain process will include Firefighters, Fielder, Hernandez, Manjarrez and Sanchez

iii. Personnel –

- Firefighters Moffitt and Saenz left April 25<sup>th</sup> on UTV medical assignment to the Flag Fire in Kingman, Az. Approximately 1,400 acres with 0% containment
- Labor Management talks in regard to COVID vaccination

iv. COVID-19 Update

- No one out sick
- 76% of personnel are vaccinated
- Transports are down
- PODS in Nogales – RRMFD assisting at this site
- Rio Rico has a vaccination POD now open! Registration through Santa Cruz County Health Department

c. Fire Marshal

i. Inspections and Plans

- 274 NFIRS updated for March 2021. Pending COVID 19 positive and negative results
- Participated in 8 webinars/trainings
- No Burn Permits
- Burn Permit Banners with instructions will be placed at each of the stations
- 3 Inspections done, 2 Flow Tests done and 2 plan reviews done
- 5 Fire calls

ii. Community Events

- George Cluff, Zach Alvarez and Charles Bradley participated in cleaning Highway 82 MP 5 to MP 6. This piece of roadway was a dedication to the memory of "Chucky" Carlos Parra by his sister Jenny Parra.

7. Administrative Report:

- a. Presentation of monthly Financial Reports up to March 31st, 2021
  - Financial reports presented by Ana Holman
  - Equipment expense – last payment for the Engine 523 repair
  - Highest expense – uniforms for new employees for NSFD and start up expense
  - Michael Carlson noted the Expense Detail Previous Year Comparison slide and Month to Month slide may require a different type of presentation allowing for separation between RRMFD and NSFD income and expenses. The Board gave permission to enter into the IGA with NSFD provided there was no expense of NSFD that would come out of the RRMFD budget. Would like it presented separately to identify NSFD clearly and insure stand alone and no co-mingling of funds.
  - Ana Holman noted with the IGA, it is a contract service – income offsets expenses. Also noted funds for NSFD are carried over for NSFD expenses. There is no profit
  - Dean Davis asked if personnel were specific for NSFD. Sees challenge to break out numbers, could possibly color code NSFD for easier identification
  - Chief Amezaga noted personnel incurs needs of both districts. NSFD funds accepted to provide service needed to provide coverage; spent on personnel. Suggested a study session for specifics to meet reporting clarification for Board members.

8. Old Business:

- a. Update on the NSFD transition
  - Chief Amezaga noted all is going well. Following Board requirements.
  - Deputy Chief Johnson – gone as planned; few unanticipated minimal expenses came up during the move in; station cleaned up; 15 calls within area which relates to normal volume, primarily medical calls; have one vehicle needing a pump test, brush truck is still in the shop for repair and personnel are keeping busy entering updated information needed.
  - Chief Amezaga noted the NSFD Board meeting will be held May 13, 2021. Will recommend the adoption of the International Fire Code. Also acknowledged Frank Bejarano on signage for the stations-rough draft at designer for formalization. Upon completion will have made and placed at the two stations.
  - Michael Carlson mentioned he and Frank Bejarano fielded a call from a Rio Rico Fire District citizen regarding NSFD and the Nogales International article. Assured citizen the budgets were being kept separate and their taxes would not be increased or impacted by NSFD.
- b. Update, discussion and possible action to approve the RRMFD revised 2018 International Fire Code and Amendments approved by the Arizona State Fire Marshal's office
  - Fire Marshall Cluff received letter from the Arizona State Fire Marshal's office approving amendments
  - Dean Davis moved to adopt the 2018 International Fire Code with Amendments as presented, second by Dora Urias
  - Motion passed unanimously by verbal vote
- c. Update, discussion and possible action regarding the acquisition of a Type 3 fire truck
  - Frank Granados and Chief Amezaga have worked diligently on this and now need discussion regarding payment for vehicle and taxes. Have looked at options for financing and multiple discussions with the Budget Committee and Ana, it was discussed if we had funding available, it would be best to pay for the truck outright. Cost of truck is \$414,900.29. Options for payment are paying in full or paying for the truck \$392,898.00 at time of order and paying taxes \$22,002.29 upon delivery in 2022.
  - Board discussion included concerns regarding paying outright with Station 1 building in the future with bond work for funding; interest rates ranging between 2% and 4%; annexation, having a very positive year; currently funds will be available with carryover, wildland revenue and expense control. Purchase of this vehicle will also allow for additional wildland revenue.
  - Noted by Chief Amezaga, Ana Holman and Michael Carlson, current profit from wildland is \$155,000 which has been put aside for this truck and with carryover of \$250,000 would cover cost of truck. Values would be confirmed following completion of April and May financials. Chief Amezaga recommended structuring motion to include wildland revenue, carryover and financials in place as of June 1st to purchase truck for \$392,898 on order and payment of taxes \$22,002.29 upon delivery.

- Dean Davis moved to approve the purchase of the Type1/Type 3 Fire Truck cost as presented \$392,898 w/o sales tax contingent upon the April, May financial information for the District coming out as perceived at this point positive enough to pay for this purchase in total within this fiscal year. Second by Dora Urias
- Motion passed unanimously by verbal vote
- Clarification made regarding purchase time frame. Once financials information is compiled, should the values be in line with motion, truck can be purchased. Should the financials not be within values of the motion, truck will not be purchased. Financial obligation must be met to be able to move forward. Should this not occur, will return to the Board
- Chief Amezaga expressed Kudos to all those involved in this process.

9. New Business:

- a. Discussion and possible action to approve March 31st, 2021 monthly financial reports
  - Motion to approve the March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 monthly financial reports made by Dean Davis, second by Dora Urias.
  - Motion passed unanimously by verbal vote
- b. Discussion and possible action regarding COVID vaccinations for RRMFD employees
  - Board discussion included this being at the Chief's discretion; discussion with legal; need to mandate as a requirement; how people feel about being serviced by non-vaccinated persons; lack of statistics showing spread of virus through hospitals and fire district; what is the public's view. Heard from member of the public and two firefighters; District needs to keep in mind what does and does not make sense; what is best for our customers; appropriate accommodations/exceptions.
  - Michael Carlson asked Chief Amezaga about his feelings. AFDA and IAFF have not come to a point to mandate; encourage getting the vaccine; some Districts have mandated others have not; hospitals and clinics have not mandated.
  - Chief Amezaga has mixed feelings. Legally we can mandate but would rather work through as a team; policy change and enforcement of policy. Should it become required for training or entering medical facilities; revisit at later time
  - Frank Bejarano noted Dr. Pereira would be willing to discuss with personnel medical information, facts regarding the vaccine to address concerns. Sooner the better to set up presentation. Suggested getting information before making a decision and revisiting in 3 months.
  - 11 personnel are not wanting the vaccine; of those, 7 had COVID. 76% of personnel vaccinated.
  - Additional discussion amongst Board members including having those individuals not wanting the vaccination get additional testing at their expense; policy if vaccinated and not vaccinated regarding mask, PPE and rules; reopening of border will possibly cause mask mandating; RRMFD has the responsibility to lead the way; clients rely on us to be perfect.
  - Michael Carlson suggested tabling for 90 days with the following being met:
    - Educational process must happen ASAP
    - Rough draft of policy for mandatory COVID vaccination with implications and consequences for non-compliance
    - Contingent with infection rate within county not deteriorating.
  - Chief Amezaga suggested setting up a Zoom meeting for personnel with Dr. Pereira (all personnel may attend, required for 11 not vaccinated). There are strong arguments for the vaccine but there's also the individual's rights that have been brought up. You are paying the employee to do a job, this is not a volunteer position, they are being paid for a service and there are expectations that need to be done. Wants to remind employees they are employees of the Fire District and they have to comply.
  - Michael Carlson stated this would be tabled for 90 days until July subject to those items listed above.

10. Upcoming meeting discussion:

- a. Monthly Board Meeting – May 26th, 2021  
Chief Amezaga noted for Michael Carlson and Frank Bejarano – Strategic planning meeting May 4<sup>th</sup> 8:30 a.m. at the Tubac Golf Resort. Meeting will be between 2-3 hours

11. Adjournment:

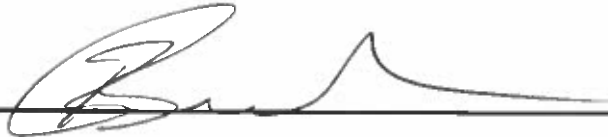
- Motion to adjourn made by Dean Davis, second by Dora Urias
- Motion passed unanimously by verbal vote

- Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

**Dated this** 25 **day of** June **, 2021.**

**Rio Rico Medical & Fire District Elected Official**

***Brad Beach,***



**Clerk of the Board**

