

Palominas Fire District
Regular Board Meeting of the Governing Board
Palominas, Arizona
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 26, 2025
5:30 p.m.

ACRONYMS EOP/AOP...Emergency Operation Procedures/Administration Operating Procedures
A.R.S.....Arizona Revised Statutes ALS/BLS...Advance Life Support/Basic Life Support
ISO Insurance Services Office COLA..... Cost of Living Adjustment
ALS/BLS...Advance Life Support/Basic Life Support SCBA..... Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
IGA...Intergovernmental Agreement DOL..... Department of Labor
FLSA...Fair Labor Standards Act

1. Call to Order:

- a) **Roll Call/Confirmation of Quorum:** Tommy Stoner, Robert Montgomery, Valerie Rice, Cathy Chouinard, Kim Mauzy, Mark Prince, Vickie Simmons, Brittany Archer
- b) **Moment of silence**
- c) **Pledge of allegiance**

Call to the Public: No public comments.

2) Public Hearing for FY 2025-2026 budget: Steve Dirmeyer says that he's noticing that Workman's Comp is more expensive here than where he came from. He had no other questions or comments.

3) Action accepting Minutes (Monthly): Cathy Chouinard made a motion to accept the May 29, 2025, minutes. Valerie seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Abstain. Robert Montgomery stated that a comment was made at the June 5, 2025, meeting from a member of the public, Lloyd Trachtenberg, stating that he always sees the trucks at the gas station getting fuel, and that we should buy Red Dye fuel from the school. As it turns out, a few weeks earlier legislation was signed by Governor Katie Hobbs, due to the efforts of Representative Gail Griffin and Cathy Chouinard to get it approved. Robert Montgomery asked that we include this section in the previous set of minutes. Cathy Chouinard made a motion to approve June 5th, 2025, special meeting minutes. Valerie seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner recommends that if we are going to modify the minutes, they shouldn't be approved yet. The June 5th, 2025, meeting minutes have been tabled. Valerie Rice made a motion to approve the March 20, 2025, executive session minutes. Tommy Stoner seconded the motion. Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Abstain. Valerie Rice made a motion to approve March 27, 2025, executive session minutes. Tommy Stoner seconded the motion. Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Abstain.

4) Monthly financial reports and consideration of district financial matters pursuant to A.R.S. §48-807: The Balance Sheet. M&O bank balance is \$636,382.43. Capital Reserve bank balance is \$218,925.16. Total cash balance in Non-County Bank Accounts is \$649,918.05. Total cash in bank as of April 2025 = \$1,505,225.64. The Payroll Cash Flow Forecast for May 2025 shows \$60,448 payroll expended. May 2025 overtime totaled \$1,841.00. \$110,000 was transferred from the County M & O account to the payroll account during May 2025 as scheduled. At the end of May 2025, the ending balance in the payroll account is \$332,353. Cathy Chouinard made a motion to accept the

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May 2025 financials. Tommy Stoner seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

5) Discussion and possible action on the mechanic's report for our fleet: In past meetings there has been some frustration about the condition of our fleet. We asked Jeramie from Elite Sales & Service to talk about the condition of our fleet. Robert Montgomery states there have been some problems. Jeramie says that our old engine has a throttle linkage break. He had to manufacture the parts since they aren't made anymore. The Sterling tenders are the same. They don't make the parts anymore and finding parts is hard. It took a year and a half to find a brake pedal valve. Chief Prince states that Jeramie has done as asked by the previous Chief, which was to just fix specific things. Chief Prince states that Jeramie told him he hasn't serviced the water tender at Station 193 in the last 4 years. There were batteries replaced in it that were 10 years old. Robert Montgomery asked if the Board had any questions. Kim Mauzy asked if Jeramie would recommend that our fleet have services done ever so often regardless of mileage. Jeramie says he recommends once a year. Chief Prince says starting January, all vehicles would be serviced. He has also asked Jeramie to give a class on what should be looked at on a regular basis. Tommy Stoner asked if it would be better to schedule the truck services throughout the year instead of all at once. Chief Prince says he doesn't want to service the vehicles during April, May, & June.

6) Discussion and possible action to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget:

Valerie Rice made a motion to approve the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 with a tax rate of \$3.35. Cathy Chouinard seconded the motion. Valerie Rice: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Nay, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

7) Discussion and possible action to approve the Pay Scale for Fiscal Year 2025-2026: Chief Prince says that after the approval of the pay scale at the last meeting, he put together a document. He says he has no idea how the pay schedule came about, but it doesn't bring equity or fairness to the employees. The problem is we have a three-year employee making less than a one-year employee based on how things were created over time. The employee was making two cents less than the person who had only been with the department for a year. Chief Prince says he does have a proposal that is not ready to be presented yet but will help out with the current issue. The adjustment to this scale was made out of the Chief's salary to avoid changing the total payroll amount. Valerie Rice made a motion to accept the adjusted pay scale as submitted. Tommy Stoner seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

8) Discussion and possible action on Resolution 06262025 for moving funds from M&O to County Reserve: The resolution is to move \$490,000 to the Capital Reserve Account. Tommy Stoner made a motion to approve the Resolution 06252025. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

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9) Fire Chief Report: All items are for discussion and dialogue between Chief, Staff, and Board.

The Fire Chief will give a status report regarding various areas of the District's operations including but not limited to the following areas: We had a busy month. HME did come back from Tucson about a week ago. Prior to it coming back we coordinated with RWC for alignment. When they went to get it, it had a coolant leak. That was fixed and then taken for alignment. We have had a failure in the emergency lighting in the back end. Since it is our most reliable unit, the crews are still using it. The Freightliner is back in service. There has been no further action on the Ford. It has developed another oil leak, which the Board Chairman has seen. It also has the random lighting issue. We didn't feel like that was a safe unit to run, which is why we borrowed Whetstone's engine. One of the Brush trucks has returned from RWC. It had a \$5,800 bill to go with it. We bartered with them to get it down to \$4,997. The Chief spending limit is a topic that should be discussed due to inflation. Tender 193 required disassembly of the cab to reach the transmission leak. The bay doors were serviced today. There was more damage than originally thought from the fire. Antelope has fixed the electrical. The insurance has already cut checks to us. The whole EMS room had smoke damage, and the equipment has to be replaced. Chief Prince recommends an early notification system into our facilities. We've ordered two new sets of turnouts. The plan is to still replace and ensure functional fits for our people working. We had one resignation last week, which puts us at 10 employees from 11. We have two candidates for the Redshirt Program. Chief Prince stated he will be departing next week, so Friday will be his last day. Captain Dave Parry has accepted the role of Acting Chief until his return.

10) Discussion and possible action re: the appointment of an Interim Fire Chief and/or Permanent Fire Chief. The Board may vote to go into executive [closed] session, pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1), for the purpose of this discussion, including interviewing potential candidate(s) and/or consideration of assignment or appointment of an Interim Fire Chief and/or Permanent Fire Chief. The discussion may also include potential contract terms, including salary and benefits. (Note: In the alternative, the Board may choose to conduct this discussion in public [open] session.) Following the executive session, the Board may take action to appoint an Interim or Permanent Fire Chief. The Board may also direct staff concerning further negotiation of contract terms and preparation of a contract. The Board may also direct staff concerning a search for additional candidates for the positions of Interim and Permanent Fire Chief. Any formal actions will take place in public [open] session: Chief Prince says the contract the Board has is what former Chief Buonaccorsi had in place aside from some changes. He said he doesn't need benefits. The pay would remain at \$50 an hour for actual hours worked. This has gone before our attorney, and he sent back a few items that were red lined. The items was clarification because his wife wants to travel. Under section 4b it says it would require him to have an Acting Chief if he's gone for an extended period. Indemnification would go back to the date of hire. The termination or out agreement if the Board doesn't like his performance is a 30 day notice, or if he is unable to continue, he will give 30 days' notice. Those were the major changes to the contract. Performance evaluations would be done annually. He says the hours have been modified to 15 to 30 hours a week. This is a one year contract that will automatically renew as long as no one says otherwise. Robert Montgomery made a motion to accept the Chief's employment contract as presented. Tommy Stoner seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye,

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Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

11) Discussion and possible action for reviewing an existing Strategic Plan or creating a new Strategic Plan: Tommy Stoner says the Strategic Plan should have been in the office. Chief Prince says that it should be with the Clerk's files. Robert Montgomery suggests creating one, but Tommy Stoner says it would be a waste of time. He says that you spend all this time with community members doing the planning just for it to sit on a shelf until someone loses it. He says the Chief is the strategy person. Tommy Stoner suggests that the Chief put together an Operations Policy instead. He reiterated that we do not need a Strategic Plan. No action was taken on this item.

12) Discussion and possible action on Knox Box keys: Tommy Stoner says we were holding onto Fry Fire's Knox Box keys, and we lost them. We had to pay to rekey every business in their district and change all the codes, then buy them new keys. He stated you don't keep anyone else's Knox Box keys. He also stated that this issue was taken to the Board, and it was voted on to not keep the keys in our district due to liability. His opinion is not to have Fry's keys in our possession. Chief Prince says he returned the keys due to not having a way to secure them. He says there are ways to secure them. They rely on us for automatic aid, so our choices are to have the key or break a window trying to access the buildings. He says this is an operational component. Robert Montgomery asked if Chief Prince was looking for action on this item. Chief Prince responded that to him, this is an operational issue but would leave the discussion to the Board. Tommy Stoner says that since the Board voted on it, they either have to reverse it, or keep it the same. Robert Montgomery made a motion to affirm the Knox Box key issue is operational. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard asks if Chief Prince was looking for the boxes like Fry Fire has for the boxes. Chief Prince stated that he is, but they aren't cheap. Valerie Rice asked if the boxes would be able to be relocated if needed. Her concern was that if we sold a vehicle, would the box be removed. Valerie Rice: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

13) Discussion and possible action on PFD pursuing a Bond: Chief Prince says that out of the last few Board meetings, he was asked to put something together for a bond discussion. He says he's done research. This is preliminary and based on statutory limitations. Per statute, we would be limited to 6% of the total assessed value of the District in pursuing a levy. Some additional costs would be special elections costs, bond council and financial components. Some priorities for this would be to replace a water tender, another brush unit, an interface engine, a new apparatus bay and a new mobile home at Station 191, and possibly another utility vehicle. The remaining amount could be used to replace the SCBAs, which are due to be replaced in the next 5 years. Robert Montgomery asked the Board's opinion of pursuing the bond. Cathy Chouinard and Valerie Rice stated it's worth looking into. Tommy Stoner says it's a horrible idea to put our district into debt like this. Kim Mauzy says he's for it because we need to replace our equipment. Robert Montgomery asked what the next steps would be for Chief Prince. Chief Prince replied with reaching out to a company to get more information about it. Cathy Chouinard made a motion to have Chief Prince gather more information for a bond for the March or November 2026 ballot. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Nay.

14) Discussion and possible action on the Foudy Road property and possible sale: Robert Montgomery says at the time the land was purchased, there was discussion was to sell part of it if

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needed. Robert Montgomery would like to investigate the current value for the acreage. He would like the information for the whole 24 acres and keeping 4 acres for future use. Tommy Stoner says the reason it was purchased was for a future station in that area. Chief Prince asked to add the Kedron property to the list. Tommy Stoner says that the Board can't discuss the Kedron property because it was not on the agenda. Chief Prince asked Dave Parry to add it to the list for potential liquidation. No action was taken on this item.

15) Discussion and possible action on purchasing new or used apparatus: Chief Prince says this is the discussion about a pumper. The agency he's going help out is liquidating a 2008 Pierce. The only reason is because they don't want to replace two pumpers at one time. It has 26,000 miles on it and they are asking \$150,000. Tommy Stoner made a motion to authorize Chief Prince to purchase the engine for up to \$170,000 if he deems it's good enough. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

16) Discussion and possible action to change the Holiday Pay policy: Chief Prince states the Board had a discussion prior to his arrival about the current policy language. The current policy states that all full-time employees get 8 hours of holiday pay regardless of if they worked it or not. That is kind of hard to provide incentive. So, in lieu of doing that, he worked with Brenda Tranchina to give 72 hours of PTO instead of time and a half. The people that would get time and a half would be the ones working. They would get 16 hours of time and a half on the holiday. Once the clock hits midnight, they get straight time. Tommy Stoner made a motion to approve the Holiday Pay policy change as proposed. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye.

17) Adjournment: Cathy Chouinard made a motion to adjourn. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Cathy Chouinard: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Maury: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye. Adjournment at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes approved by the Palominas Fire Board:

Signature

Date