

**Palominas Fire District
Regular Board Meeting of the Governing Board
Palominas, Arizona
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 30, 2026
5:30 p.m.**

ACRONYMS:

A.R.S... Arizona Revised Statutes

PFD... Palominas Fire District

SEACOM... Southeastern Arizona Communications

1. Call to Order:

a) **Roll Call/Confirmation of Quorum: Tommy Stoner, Valerie Rice, Robert Montgomery, Kim Mauzy, Vickie Simmons, Steve Abel & Brittany Archer – Cathy Chouinard was absent.**

b) **Moment of silence**

c) **Pledge of allegiance**

2. Call to the Public: Steve Boice was present. He states he has the Single Star Ranch. He said he understood there is an issue with liability if the Hereford NRCD uses the training center classroom. He proposed an MOU, or a contract to continue using the building. He says he doesn't want to see us not work together.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Discussion and possible action on approving the minutes of PFD Governing Board for the following meeting(s):

May 28, 2026, Regular Meeting [The Fire Board postponed approval until the Clerk reviews and possibly corrects the minutes: Valerie Rice determine that the meeting had been adjourned before Chief Prince resigned. Tommy Stoner stated that he would correct the minutes and send them over.

June 11, 2026 Regular Meeting: Tommy Stoner states that there is a typo on the agenda and that the June 11th meeting was a special meeting. Valerie Rice made a motion to approve June 11, 2026, minutes. Robert Montgomery second. Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye.

June 25, 2026, Regular Meeting: Valerie Rice made a motion to approve the June 25, 2026, minutes. Robert Montgomery second. Robert Montgomery: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Abstain.

4. Financial reports & consideration of district financial matters pursuant to A.R.S. §48-807:

Balance Sheet: M&O bank balance as of June 2026 is \$10,804.85 Note: June 30, 2026 transferred \$477,977.54 to Chase Bank-payroll account. Requesting Board Resolution to transfer funds to Capital Reserve. After transfer Capital Reserve bank balance will be \$907,851.30. Capital Reserve bank balance is \$429,873.76. Total M & O bank balance as of June 2026 is \$440,678.61

Total cash balance in Non-County Bank Accounts is \$1,108,316.76.

- Chase Bank – Payroll \$756,283.08
- WF Checking \$ 72,283.68
- WF Savings \$279,750.00

Total cash in bank as of June 30, 2026 \$1,548,995.37.

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Revenue over expenditures year to date is \$123,165.79.

Revenue received in June 2026 in M & O is \$34,057 as detailed below:

Tax Revenue - \$26,896

FDAT Revenue - \$ 5,077

Interest Income - \$ 2,084

Total expenditures M & O in June 2026 - \$153,114. June 2026 M & O variance - \$(119,057)

For July 2025 to June 2026 overall total expenditures are 89.97%. Target = 100.00%. The Payroll Account Cash Flow for June 2026 shows \$68,006.94 payroll expenses expended for two payrolls in June 2026. The Fire District received the Smart & Safe deposit from the state of Arizona in the amount of \$11,261.31. PSPRS expenditures - June 2026 are \$11,299. Payroll bank account balance as of June 2026 is \$278,305.54. Two transfers from the County M & O account in the amount of \$275,000 were completed in June 2026 for upcoming payrolls. There was an issue with Paychex where the calculation for overtime was changed to two and a half times rather than the half time. Chief Abel asked if the Board wanted him to cover that on this item instead of the Chief's report. Robert Montgomery says he would like that and Tommy Stoner agreed. Chief Abel stated that this was Paychex fault. He says that Brittany caught it when doing the PSPRS uploads. He also states that Brittany and Chief Prince did nothing wrong. He says that the customer service from Paychex was very disappointing. When someone finally reached back out, they let us know that it would be 3-4 weeks before they could get us corrected information. Vickie Simmons was working on it as well, and the amounts came out roughly the same. This mistake cost the employees around \$16,000. Valerie Rice asked how long we had been with Paychex. Brittany state 2018, then corrected it to January 2019. Chief Able says that there are a few that owe more than \$3,000. He asked that we figure out how many pay periods between now and the end of the year and make the deductions each pay period until it's paid back. Valerie Rice made a motion to approve the June 2026 financials. Robert Montgomery seconded the motion. Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye.

5. Fire Chief Recruitment Authorization: Some board members want Chief Abel to start the process to recruit a Fire Chief. He would like to point out that they have a relationship with Brenda Tranchina. Tommy Stoner asked if anyone wanted to move item 7 to 6. Tommy Stoner asked if we could find an Assistant Chief to move into Fire Chief. He says typically an Assistant Chief focuses on operations. Chief Abel asks if the Board wants a Fire Chief or Assistant Chief. He says the pool for Fire Chiefs is very shallow. Valerie Rice asked why it was shallow. Chief Abel said that a lot of people don't want to move into the Fire Chief position. Buckskin Fire has been looking for a Chief since January. Tommy Stoner says he thinks we'll go ahead and hold the Assistant Chief discussion. Tommy Stoner made a motion to authorize Chief Abel to go ahead and begin recruitment. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner says nothing should stop him from working with Brenda Tranchina. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye.

6. Fire District Payroll Step Increases: The board approved the salary scale in May 2026. The one that was approved was 2.7% COLA. If a person does a good job, they get a step increase. Chief Abel

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looked at Fry's scales and noticed the percentages between the steps. Tommy Stoner made a motion to approve the pay scale as proposed. He would like to add the COLA and the step rates on it. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye. Tommy Stoner made a motion to give step increases annually based on performance on July 1. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye.

7. Fire Chief Job Description, Salary Range and Recruitment Timelines and Expenses:

Chief Abel says everyone has a binder with the information in it. He asks if the timeline works for the board. Tommy Stoner says it's not necessary to have a range. We should just set it at one rate. Tommy Stoner suggested leaving the salary as is. Tommy Stoner suggests \$110,000 as a starting point. He says the money is there if we find the right person. Tommy Stoner made a motion to approve \$110,000 starting salary. Robert Montgomery seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye.

8. Assistant Fire Chief Position: Tommy Stoner suggests not doing this right now and eliminating the item from the agenda.

9. Strategic Plan: Chief Abel says that if the board would like to do this, the cost would be about \$500. Tommy Stoner says he isn't a fan of them, as they just sit on a shelf and are never used. We have already done one and we can't find it. If we could do a strategic plan lite, maybe. He says he's not in favor of going out and getting community members to come in like they did the last time. Chief Abel says that he is a true believer in the plans. Tommy Stoner agrees with having a plan. He says they get voted in to make those decisions, yet we call the public in to make these decisions. Chief Abel says the public doesn't make the decisions, they provide input. Tommy Stoner says that he sees it as a headache and that it will not be used. He said that he can agree with a plan for vehicles. Chief Abel says that the board represents the community. He says that it's a public meeting, but you can be very selective about who you choose to participate. He says that when you have differing priorities, you will have people with hidden agendas and people going underground. Chief Abel says that there is some significant financial planning that this district needs to do. This item was tabled. Valerie Rice will sponsor this item.

10. Water Tender: This item was tabled. Tommy Stoner will sponsor this next month.

11. August Fire Board Meeting Date: Valerie Rice says to move it up to August 20th. Tommy Stoner says to leave it on the 27th and have Chief Abel call in. Chief Abel says he'd prefer to zoom the meeting. Tommy Stoner states that doing Zoom makes it awkward. The board suggests changing the date to the 20th. Valerie Rice made a motion to move it to August 20th. Robert Montgomery

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seconded the motion. Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye.

12. Reimbursement to Steve Abel: The board asked Chief Abel to be here informally because of rumors about this unqualified, terrible person they were bringing in. He says he expended \$600 to come here. Tommy Stoner made a motion to reimburse Chief Abel to attend the second board meeting upon their request. Valerie Rice seconded the motion. Tommy Stoner: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Kim Mauzy: Aye.

13. Fire Chief report: Paychex was the bigger issue and it's been corrected. Station 191 needs to be staffed. We need to readvertise for firefighters. We have a captain's position open. Chief Abel said repairs should be about \$5000 for the stations. The HME broke down on highway 92 this morning. The Training Center roof is still leaking. The Expedition is broken again, and he thinks we need to replace the vehicle. It can be discussed at the next meeting. August 7th is an officer's meeting.

14. Items Carried Over from Previous Fire Board Meeting: Tommy Stoner does not want the disposal of district property and Board policy manual on the agenda anymore. He states that if he wants to put them back on, he will contact the office. He says to put the Facilities Policy back on the agenda.

15. Adjournment: Valerie Rice made a motion to adjourn. Robert Montgomery seconded the motion. Kim Mauzy: Aye, Robert Montgomery: Aye, Valerie Rice: Aye, Tommy Stoner: Aye. Adjournment at 8:05 p.m.

These Minutes were approved by the Palominas Fire Board on _____
Date

Board Clerk