

**GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD
BUDGET STUDY SESSION MINUTES
April 12, 2022 9:00 a.m.
3885 East Golder Ranch Drive, Tucson, Arizona**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Fire Board Chairperson Cox Golder called the meeting to order on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Board Chairperson Vicki Cox Golder, Board Vice-Chair Richard Hudgins, Clerk Wally Vette, Board Member Steve Brady, and Board Member Sandra Outlaw

Staff Present: Fire Chief Randy Karrer, Assistant Chief Patrick Abel, Assistant Chief Brandhuber, Finance Manager Dave Christian, IT Manager Herman Rascon, Board Services Specialist Maggie Hernandez, and Legal Counsel Donna Aversa

2. SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public issues presented.

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. REVIEW, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REQUEST FROM KVOA NEWS REPORTER FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH A BOARD MEMBER REGARDING A GRFD PERSONNEL MATTER

Two reporters from KVOA News were present for the public board meeting with a camera to record. Chief Karrer explained that we received a public records request from KVOA News for the disciplinary records on multiple employees in November 2021. He said we had to redact the medical information according to Arizona Revised Statute and felt it was inappropriate for the reporter to speak with investigators who prepared the disciplinary reports because the reports speak for themselves. Chief Karrer stated that he, himself, did an interview and discovered that the questions were directed more towards him. He added that an internal person is supplying them (KVOA) information. Chief Karrer said that some of the reporters' questions are for private medical information but that we remain it is inappropriate due to state statute.

MOTION by Vice-Chair Hudgins to go into Executive Session

MOTION SECONDED by Board Clerk Vette

MOTION CARRIED 5/0



- B. EXECUTIVE SESSION: THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §38-431.03.A(3) FOR DISCUSSION OR CONSULTATION WITH THE ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT REGARDING KVOA PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS AND REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW WITH A BOARD MEMBER.

***Note – executive sessions are confidential pursuant to Arizona law.*

MOTION by Board Clerk Vette to go into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03.A(3) for discussion or consultation with the attorney for the district regarding KVOA public records requests and request for interview with a board member at 9:05 a.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Board Member Brady

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

The regular meeting reconvened at 9:54 a.m.

- C. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REQUEST FROM KVOA NEWS REPORTER FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH A BOARD MEMBER REGARDING A GRFD PERSONNEL MATTER

Vice-Chair Hudgins read a statement for the Board's consideration in response to KVOA News' request to interview a board member.

MOTION by Board Clerk Vette to adopt the statement as read by Vice-Chair Hudgins denying the request for an interview and to provide KVOA with a copy of the statement

MOTION SECONDED by Vice-Chair Hudgins

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

Staff took a brief break and returned at 10:07 a.m.

- D. BUDGET STUDY SESSION

Chief Karrer provided an overview of the study session and what would be covered. He added that it will be a robust budget due to things out of our control, such as supply chain issues and inflation. He said that the salary is a large part of the budget and they want to remain competitive.

Community Relations Manager Braswell presented the need for a public educator position, which was formerly filled by Captain Adam Jarrold who is now back in the field. She explained the need for this position to be teacher-certified. Vice-Chair Hudgins asked why we do not go to high schools. Manager Braswell responded that it is simply a lack of resources. Chief Karrer commented about wanting to educate seniors as well.

Chief Perry presented the need for an Essential Services administrative captain position. He explained that the accreditation process is ongoing and they are time-consuming



projects. Currently, Chief Perry is working on all the projects himself. He stated that the position could give more exposure for suppression into an administrative position.

Finance Manager Christian presented the need for another billing specialist. He said they are projecting at least a 4% growth in ambulance transportations. He also said that he would like to have enough staff to follow up on insurance denials to bring in as much revenue as possible. Mr. Brady asked how long it would take to train a new person. Manager Christian responded that it would take only a short time.

Chief Brandhuber presented the new salary steps and scales for uniform and non-uniform personnel. Chief Karrer stated they did the salary surveys that were in the MOU. Igor from HR Knows provided a very comprehensive compensation schedule to the District. Manager Delong spoke about recruitment and retention. She said the market is slim for administrative personnel. Captain Cavaletto commented on the need to remain competitive in the market for firefighters. Board Clerk Vette asked a question about the scale. Chief Brandhuber answered.

Manager Delong presented the Nice concierge healthcare service to replace the Town of Oro Valley health clinic. Board Clerk Vette asked about their hours of operation. Manager Delong answered. Captain Cavaletto added comments regarding the benefits of the program.

Deputy Chief Pearce presented his slideshow regarding Operations' need for more firefighters. He explained how he got to the number of 179 seats and with PTO accounted for, they need 227 firefighters total, which means they are requesting 9 more firefighters. He answered all questions from the Board.

Finance Manager Christian presented version #1 of the proposed budget to the Governing Board. He first discussed the total costs for the budget. He stated the proposed budget has an increase of approximately 10%. The new Hanley building will increase the budget because of utilities. The election will be \$250,000, but that will be saved if there is no election.

Manager Christian stated that the labor costs consist of approximately 69% of the overall budget, combined with capital improvement plan, it will be 81%. He broke down the labor costs by category for the Governing Board, along with the other categories of the budget costs. He also listed the major revenue sources, with the biggest portion coming from property tax revenue. Mr. Vette asked about ambulance revenue collection. Manager Christian answered.

Manager Christian stated that the proposed Mil rate is currently set at \$2.43 with a total budget of \$48,267,409. He noted that the Mil rate is currently at \$2.37.

Next, Manager Christian explained the total labor cost in more detail. The total number of employees for this budget will be 296, which includes 3 new administrative positions and an academy to fill vacancies created by retirements and other potential separations



from the District. Mr. Vette asked if Special Teams covers Wildland as well. Manager Christian responded yes, and listed the other 'teams' that are included in Special Teams.

Manager Christian next discussed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He stated that the CIP contained the next highest costs in the budget; the total five-year CIP is being funded at \$3,042,893. The Board was provided with a list of the CIP requests. Manager Christian and Chief Cesarek answered questions by Board Clerk Vette. Chief Cesarek provided more detail to the items highlighted on the slide. Manager Christian explained the carryover projects from last fiscal year into this fiscal year.

Next, there were discussions on the cost roll up for each department. Department heads answered questions from the Governing Board regarding their individual department budgets. Board Member Brady asked about the ambulance that has been on hold. Chief Karrer expressed frustration as well. Chief Cesarek explained that the supply chain has affected all of their vehicles and that there is a recall they are specifically waiting for in regards to this ambulance. Mr. Brady asked about using the same or different vendor next time. Chief Cesarek noted the importance of uniformity. Chairperson Cox Golder asked about boundary impact line item. Chief Karrer explained it is a placeholder for now. Chairperson Cox Golder asked if the counseling service is for employees. Chief Karrer replied yes and added comments in favor of the counseling service. Manager Delong noted that there was only a slight increase in cost.

Chief Karrer explained some of the adjustments in regards to travel and conferences and some of the other adjustments and/or cuts. There was discussion regarding the election and having to budget for two counties in case there is one. Chairperson Cox Golder asked a question about TRT. Chief Karrer answered her question about the training. Board Member Brady asked about academies and staffing for this year. Chief Karrer explained the need for paramedic academies like the one that was just held this year.

Board Clerk Vette asked if we could get somebody in-house to do sand/oil pumping. Chief Cesarek replied that it is better done by a professional outside of the organization. He also stated Chief Price has done a great job by finding a different company to reduce the cost. Board Clerk Vette asked about the solar panels and their effectiveness in the utility bills. Manager Christian stated they just received a refund check for around \$10,000.00-\$15,000.00.

Manager Christian explained the general fund leases and debt service on the general obligations bonds for the upcoming budget year. Manager Christian stated there will be a resolution to sell the last piece of the bonds on the next regular board meeting agenda. The Board asked about the increase in cost of station 378. Chief Abel answered.

Mr. Vette asked about the two hydrants that are being requested. Fire Marshal Akins answered and explained that the hydrants will help buildings and homes within 600 feet of each hydrant.



Manager Christian discussed the 2022-2023 revenues and proposed Mil rate. The District net assessed value rose to \$1.423 billion. The proposed O&M tax rate is \$2.43 to levy the proposed budget. The proposed mil rate is \$0.14 for the debt service levy. Manager Christian stated that this is a good time to utilize the stabilization reserves.

The Board requested to put the presented budget as a tentative budget on the next agenda. Chief Karrer complemented the staff on their hard work in putting this budget together and their efforts to keep the budget as minimum as possible, keeping inflation in mind. Chief Karrer complemented the Labor group as well. Board Member Outlaw commended the staff on their hard work as well.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Vice-Chair Hudgins to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Clerk Vette

MOTION CARRIED 5/0



Wally Vette, Clerk of the Board
Golder Ranch Fire District
m/h

