

**GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

1600 East Hanley Boulevard, Oro Valley, Arizona 85737

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairperson Vicki Cox Golder called the meeting to order on April 16, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

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

Staff Present: Fire Chief Brandhuber, Assistant Chief Cesarek, Assistant Chief Grissom, Assistant Chief Perry, Deputy Chief Rutherford, Deputy Chief Jarrold, Deputy Chief Wilson, Deputy Chief Hilderbrand, Deputy Chief Fire Marshall Akins, Local 3832 President Jones, Human Resources Director Delong, Finance Director Christian, Information Technology Director Rascon, Division Chief Price, Community Relations Supervisor Camarillo, Fleet Maintenance Supervisor Rainey, Fleet Maintenance Lead Technician Cantua, District Attorney Aversa, and Board Services Supervisor Ortiz

2. SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. FIRE BOARD REPORTS

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public issues presented.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. PRESENTATION OF PERSONNEL

• **PROMOTIONS**

○ **CHARLIE RANEY, FLEET MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR**

Division Chief Price introduced Charlie Raney as the new Fleet Maintenance Supervisor. Supervisor Raney was given a certificate for his promotion.

○ **PHIL CANTUA, FLEET MAINTENANCE LEAD TECHNICIAN**



Fleet Maintenance Supervisor Raney introduced Phil Cantua as the new Fleet Maintenance Lead Technician. Fleet Maintenance Lead Technician Cantua was given a certificate for his promotion.

- NEW HIRE
 - ALEX BARLEY, IT SPECIALIST
- IT Director Rascon introduced Alex Barley, the new IT Specialist. Chairperson Cox Golder administered the behavioral and loyalty oaths.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. APPROVE MINUTES- MARCH 19, 2024, REGULAR SESSION
- B. APPROVE MINUTES- MARCH 19, 2024, EXECUTIVE SESSION
- C. APPROVE AND ADOPT THE EXTENSION OF AN AGREEMENT FOR EMERGENCY CARDIOVASCULAR CARE TRAINING BETWEEN GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT AND DESERT FIRE CPR
- D. APPROVE AND ADOPT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ARIZONA STATE FORESTRY DIVISION AND GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT

MOTION by Vice Chairperson Vette to approve the April 16, 2024, Consent Agenda.

MOTION SECONDED by Board Member Shellenberger

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

7. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – Chief Brandhuber presented the Fire Chief's report to the Governing Board. Chief Brandhuber thanked staff for organizing the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony the day before. He said the event turned out well.

Chairperson Cox Golder asked if the proposed 4/10 work week was only for administrative personnel.

HR Director Delong confirmed it was for administrative personnel. Admin staff were asked if they would like to go on a 4/10 work week and eighty five percent said they would like to go to this schedule. Many staff members already have an alternative work schedule.

Chief Brandhuber elaborated that everyone would move to one schedule and the office would be closed on Fridays, to save money on utilities.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if the phones would be forwarded to someone to answer.



HR Director Delong responded it would be no different than weekends. Suppression still works on weekends and certain staff are assigned on-call duty such as IT and FLS.

Chairperson Cox Golder thanked GIS for the hiker rescue maps.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked how the District was doing in reference to how many people are on light duty.

HR Director Delong responded there are currently six people on light duty.

LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT – President Jones thanked the Board for approving the building and thanked staff for organizing the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. He mentioned the Union sent six members to Hawaii to assist the IAFF.

- B. COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION’S REPORT – Assistant Chief Perry presented the Community Risk Reduction Division’s report to the Governing Board.

Chairperson Cox Golder thanked Assistant Chief Perry for his work on the ISO.

Vice Chairperson Vette commented he noticed inspections were trending down.

Deputy Chief Fire Marshal Akins confirmed inspections were trending down for two main reasons: plan reviews are trending down, this is a direct correlation to inspections, secondly, FLS is currently doing hydrant inspections, this takes time away from doing building inspections.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked about White Rock Mine.

Deputy Chief Fire Marshal Akins informed the Governing Board the mine is outside of District boundaries, however, GRFD would be the first to respond in case of an incident. She mentioned the mine has a good relationship with GRFD and their staff works well with the District.

Board Member Shellenberger asked if the District’s ISO rating is a 2.

Assistant Chief Perry confirmed the District’s current rating is a 2. He is hopeful it will be able to obtain a class 1. Fifty percent of the rating is based on water distribution systems, which are out of the District’s control. This is difficult because there are so many water distribution systems within the District. He added GRFD is in great shape as far as the District’s side of the score.

- C. SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION’S REPORT - Assistant Chief Cesarek presented the Support Services’ report to the Governing Board. Assistant Chief Cesarek commented Fleet Maintenance is doing great. There have been some changes with a recent vacancy and a couple of promotions. He emphasized it is important for personnel to pursue EVT tests and they are pursuing these challenges. Assistant Chief Cesarek gave an update on



Station 378. The GRFD Governing Board adopted the drainage easement at the last meeting. He is waiting for Pinal County's Board of Supervisors to adopt it. Staff will compile a view of calendars to prepare for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if all protective hoods had been delivered.

Assistant Chief Cesarek confirmed they had.

- D. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES & FIRE RESPONSE DIVISION'S REPORT Assistant Chief Grissom presented the EMS & Fire Response and Professional Development report to the Governing Board. Assistant Chief Grissom announced Professional Development is beginning its largest academy in GRFD history. It will be overseen by Division Chief Hastings.

Chairperson Cox Golder inquired as to why inter-facility calls have trended down.

Assistant Chief Grissom responded there is no trend, it varies month to month and year to year.

Chairperson Cox Golder asked if there were enough personnel trained in Wildland.

Captain Port answered there were ten new members recently added to the team. They will begin training before the season begins. With this addition, he believed there were enough personnel trained in Wildland and feels the team is prepared.

Chairperson Cox Golder commented that she noticed a high number of motor vehicle accidents (MVs).

Assistant Chief Grissom assured her all personnel are properly trained for on-scene safety and are prepared for this type of call.

8. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING RESOLUTION #2024-0004, APPROVING THE CALL OF ELECTION FOR THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF FILLING THREE VACANCIES ON THE GOVERNING BOARD IN NOVEMBER 2024

MOTION by Board Member Shellenberger to approve Resolution 2024-0004 approving the call of election for the Governing Board of the Golder Ranch Fire District for the purpose of filling three vacancies on the Governing Board in November 2024

MOTION SECONDED by Board Member Brady

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

- B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT RECONCILIATION AND MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT



Finance Director Christian presented the Golder Ranch Fire District reconciliation and monthly financial report.

Chairperson Cox Golder asked Finance Director Christian what billing charges other agencies.

Finance Director Christian answered other agencies are charged 6% of the cash collections.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what the market fee is.

Finance Director Christian responded he did not know but he would look into it.

MOTION by Board Clerk Outlaw to approve and accept the Golder Ranch Fire District reconciliation and monthly financial report as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Vice Chairperson Vette

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION: THE BOARD MAY VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §38-431.03.A(1) FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF THE FIRE CHIEF'S EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT AND THE FIRE CHIEF'S EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING COMPENSATION

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

MOTION by Board Member Brady to enter into executive session.

SECONDED by Vice-Chairperson Vette

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

The Governing Board entered into executive session at 9:45 a.m.

Those who entered into executive session included the Governing Board, HR Director Delong, Board Services Supervisor Ortiz and Attorney Aversa.

Attorney Aversa clarified Chief Brandhuber would be called into executive session at some point.

The Governing Board ended executive session at 12:20 p.m. and took a brief recess.

The Governing Board reconvened regular session at 12:42 p.m.

MOTION by Vice Chairperson Vette to enter into regular session

SECONDED by Board Member Brady

MOTION CARRIED 5/0



D. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE FIRE CHIEF'S EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT AND THE FIRE CHIEF'S EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING COMPENSATION

Chairperson Cox Golder stated the Governing Board performed the Fire Chief's evaluation. She read the motion as follows: Motion to approve the final evaluation to include the following goals: as well as to approve the Fire Chief's contract as presented. The Board updated the initial contract, adjusted compensation from the initial compensation, which was below market, to reflect a market rate, as supported by HR Knows, as the median salary among comparable departments.

MOTION by Vice Chairperson Vette as read by Chairperson Cox Golder

SECONDED by Board Member Shellenberger

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

Chairperson Cox Golder stated Chief Brandhuber did an outstanding job this year. She knows he will continue to do an outstanding job.

Vice Chairperson Vette said Chief Brandhuber built a strong team.

Chief Brandhuber thanked everyone who has made this past year successful.

E. BUDGET STUDY SESSION

Igor from HR Knows, an independent consulting firm, gave a presentation on salary surveys for both administrative and suppression personnel.

Igor reviewed the compensation project phases and the benefits project phases. He explained the sources of the market data, he explained the methodology which included selecting comparator agencies and their salary survey. Igor explained the labor economics environment. He mentioned at the end of 2023 there were 9.6 million job openings. Of that, only 5.9 million were hired. Economic indicators followed, affecting labor costs. He explained ECI measures inflation for job salaries and wages, CPI is the inflation of goods and services, core CPI is the inflation of goods and services minus energy, gas and good costs. He continued to explain PCE is the personal consumption index. This shows how much more an employee spends over a certain amount of time. After compiling the compensation study results, Igor recommended increasing 2.6% of the entire salary structure according to the World at Work national study. The District is recommending a one-time payment of 2.6% based on annual pay in July of 2024. Igor said his agency studied forty-four non-uniformed jobs. Nine of the jobs were found to be 5% or more below the labor market. He recommended re-grading thirteen jobs to a higher pay scale to align with the market. He recommended keeping thirty-one jobs unchanged. His agency studied ten uniformed jobs. He recommended reducing two steps in Grades 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, and 39. He recommended reducing one step in grades 35 and 36. He made recommendations to uniformed grades that were less than 95% of comparators. With these recommendations, uniformed grades will now be within 95-105% of the 10 listed comparators. Igor explained medical premiums in the US. He



stated the figures for average premiums for singles and families for various plans. After review, GRFD's health plans at every level (except for EE single) do better than the comparator. Igor stated GRFD offers twelve holidays, this is a good benefit and is in-line with comparators. Igor stated overall, GRFD paid time off (PTO) is competitive in two ways: 1. The amount of hours allowed is rich compared to any organization in Arizona. 2. The PTO policy is different than most in that sick and vacation are in one bank. GRFD is competitive with Northwest Fire District (NWFD), Timber Mesa, Bullhead, Phoenix, Chandler and Mesa. He concluded his presentation by stating GRFD has good, healthy, well-designed benefits.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if the two lower levels are deleted in suppression if it will cause compression with people who have been here a year or two.

Igor said it may, however, it is better to have compression than not to have a competitive rate to recruit new employees.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what would happen if GRFD does give a 2.6% one-time lump sum payment.

HR Director Delong answered it would not change the annual rate. The recommendation would be to pay the 2.6% annual one-time lump sum.

Chief Brandhuber elaborated that it would be best to do a one-time payment. It could potentially make salaries behind. However, it is a calculated risk he is willing to take.

Igor concluded his presentation.

Finance Director Christian presented the 2024/2025 budget.

Chief Brandhuber stated he did not budget for the election. If it is needed the money will be taken from the contingency fund. He has also committed \$2.5 million a year for capital.

Finance Director Christian said there is approximately a \$2.8 million increase in the labor budget. The proposed budget is \$49, 117,558. Debt services is \$3 million. In order to meet the \$49 million budget, the levy will need to be raised 7%. Finance Director Christian explained some of the sources of revenue such as Prop 207, ARPA funds (Covid grant). He lowered the fees for service, the District has not met it in the past and he is trying to be realistic with its projections. Membership and interest income are holding but will eventually fall. One-time expenditures will be covered by one time revenues.

Budget Analyst, Alicia Roberson, presented aspects of the budget. She explained \$36 million was budgeted for labor, this is 74% of the budget. Sixty-six percent of salaries and wages are for labor costs. Suppression labor costs are \$26 million, the next highest is Fire Headquarters at \$3.4 million, followed by Fleet Maintenance.



Finance Director Christian said an additional \$.04 is needed for Operations and Maintenance (O&M). The debt service will be reduced by \$.02 because the District will no longer have bonds. It will be satisfied in 2025. He said he recommends a \$.12 mil rate increase going from \$2.64 to \$2.66. Finance Director Christian commented labor budget salaries are up 2% or \$429,224. He commented there has been an increase in health insurance and workers comp. The District self-funds workers comp so it covers claims as they are received.

Vice Chairperson Vette inquired as to why the training overtime increased in the Professional Development budget.

Division Chief Hastings explained when suppression attends training the extra duty costs are assigned to Professional Development's budget. He and Deputy Chief Rutherford were trying to budget this line item appropriately.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why the cost for uniforms increased.

Chief Brandhuber stated right now not all suppression personnel have class A uniforms. These are needed for special events, such as funerals, which the District has experienced in past years. Chief Brandhuber increased this line item to purchase class A for all suppression personnel.

Finance Director Christian stated there are three new positions proposed. They are a Public Educator (Specialist), Fleet Electronics Technician, and an HR Generalist.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why an additional Public Educator was needed since the District has Dan Habinek.

Assistant Chief Perry stated Dan's position was initially established to create curriculum. The new person would do the community outreach.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what the new HR employee would do.

HR Director Delong responded the new person would write policies. In the past, there was a suppression employee on light duty that had the skill set to work with Lexipol to write policies. Since that employee has returned to the field, there has not been a person assigned to write policies.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if it would be difficult for a person, new to the District, to write policies.

HR Director Delong responded there would be a learning curve, however, there are people that could assist him/her and she believed it would be accomplishable.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if the part time person could go full time.



HR Director Delong replied the part time HR employee is not interested in going full time.

Chief Brandhuber mentioned in his budget letter to the Board, he addressed positions that are needed but are not able to be budgeted this fiscal year, such as an IT person and part-time employees.

Finance Director Christian reviewed the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He said the goal is to budget \$2.5 million each year. It is a sinking fund, which means that money is saved each year. The purpose of this is to self-fund larger apparatus instead of financing. The first project is a water tender, \$133,333 will be saved for three years. Director Christian said money is held every year for ambulance replacements. The burn tower addition was removed from the CIP until a feasibility study is done.

Board Member Brady commented that the amount saved for ambulances seems low.

Assistant Chief Cesarek responded he is seeing increased costs for ambulances. In the past things were done a certain way. Ambulances were purchased from certain vendors. He said the District has to change the ways they are doing things in order to stay ahead of the curb. An example of this is purchasing a chassis from a lesser know vendor and having another vendor build the ambulance the way the District would want it. If cost saving methods such as this are done, he believes the District will be fine.

Finance Director Christian remarked the goal is to keep the impact on the mil rate consistent at \$2.5 million each year.

Finance Director Christian began his presentation on the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) portion of the budget. He explained there are three primary cost centers in the O&M budget: administrative support, emergency operations and logistic support.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what the substantial increase in costs for resilience training was.

Chief Brandhuber said money was budgeted in this line item for the Struggle Well program. Although the program is at no cost to the District, it still has to cover expenses such as extra duty for personnel to attend as well as the costs of meals.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what the increased costs for Essential Services were for.

Assistant Chief Perry explained the increased costs for labor were attributed to the new position.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why there was such an increase in the line item for memberships and licenses.



IT Director Rascon explained the increased cost was due to the new software, ImageTrend as well as the increased fees for Microsoft licensing. He explained once the District converts to ImageTrend, the majority of the costs for Zoll will go away with the exception of archiving, which is needed to preserve old records for records requests.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if the Nice program is being utilized.

HR Director Delong responded utilization of the program is high. In addition, medical premiums are minimized due to the Nice program.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why the cost of Professional Services has increased.

Finance Director Christian said it has increased because he is bringing an additional software online. In addition, the cost of the Paycom software has also increased.

Board Clerk Outlaw commented that the bank fees seemed outrageous.

Finance Director Christian replied more people are paying their transport bills by credit cards and there is a fee for this. The billing division is aware of this and is researching alternative options.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if a credit card charge could be applied.

Finance Director Christian replied the Arizona Department of Health Services (AZ DHS) restricts costs for transports.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why department 330 in emergency operations has increased.

Finance Director Christian explained labor costs have increased as well as the cost of utilities, the contingency fund and commercial insurance.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked why department 335- EMS increased.

Deputy Chief Wilson said in the past the EMS Captains (ECs) were not classified in this department, they have now been moved to department 335, which includes three ECs.

Vice Chairperson Vette inquired about the costs in department 350.

Deputy Chief Rutherford explained the costs of the Community Assistance Program (CAP) Team was moved to this department; some dispatch fees are now assigned to this line item as well.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked if as many people are sent out of town for training is necessary.



Chief Brandhuber replied he felt there was value in attending training and just as much value in the networking that is done. He felt comfortable with the training staff attended. He added that there is a lot of internal training done, he will make sure to report on this more to the Board.

Chairperson Cox Golder believed the District absolutely had to raise the mil rate to stay afloat.

Board Clerk Outlaw agreed. She believed it was important to be conservative but forward thinking. She noted station roll-ups were tightened up, the narratives were result oriented and gave detailed justifications.

Board Member Shellenberger said he did not see a lot of pork barrel. He believed the little things help morale.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 21, 2024.

10. CALL TO THE PUBLIC


There were no public issues presented at this time.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Vice-Chairperson Vette to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Board Member Brady

MOTION CARRIED 5/0



Sandra Outlaw, Clerk of the Board
Golder Ranch Fire District
S/O

Vice-Chairperson

