

**GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES
STRATEGIC PLANNING STUDY SESSION
Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
3885 East Golder Ranch Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85739**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairperson Vicki Cox Golder called the meeting to order on June 4, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

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

Member Absent: Board Clerk Outlaw -absence excused

Staff Present: Chief Brandhuber, Assistant Chief Grissom, Assistant Chief Perry, Assistant Chief Cesarek, and Board Services Supervisor Ortiz

Attorney Donna Aversa was also present.

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. STRATEGIC PLANNING STUDY SESSION WITH ADVANCED STRATEGY CENTER

Chief Brandhuber stated he was excited to work with the firm Advanced Strategy.

Assistant Chief Perry stated the district partnered with Doug Griffin from Advanced Strategy, located in Scottsdale, to facilitate the district's strategic planning.

Mr. Griffen introduced himself as the Director of Advanced Strategy. He explained he conducted four or five online sessions, one hour each, with administrative and suppression staff. This type of forum allows personnel to be heard. He mentioned the community survey is underway. It will survey government, businesses and community stakeholders.

Assistant Chief Perry mentioned the survey was posted on the district's social media. Community Relations Supervisor Lydia Camarillo is working with the Chamber of



Commerce to obtain feedback from businesses. Assistant Chief Perry stated the other government agencies the district works with were also asked to complete the survey. He said it is a detailed, anonymous survey that takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. It does track the type of response it is: government, business, or resident.

Doug remarked Golder Ranch Fire District (GRFD) has an extraordinary reputation. Its identity in the community is positive. He commented that internally, culture is important. As an entity grows, it is important to attend to the values of the organization.

Doug asked the board what was important to them as a board member of GRFD.

Board Member Brady replied he believed it is important to be involved in the community as it grows.

Board Member Shellenberger mentioned this is the third governing board he has served on. He is amazed with GRFD. He lives in SaddleBrooke and he receives positive feedback on a regular basis. The residents there have nothing but good things to say about the district.

Vice Chairperson Vette said it has been a wonderful experience to serve on the board. The district takes care of its employees through things such as training. In addition, the board is responsible with the taxpayers' money. They are lucky to have taxpayers who support the district.

Chairperson Cox Golder said she has been on the board the longest. She has been on the board since 1988. They started in a house on Hawser Road. She is proud the community has supported the district. People apply to work for GRFD because of its reputation. She said the district has strong leadership. Chief Brandhuber has brought in great leaders.

Doug asked the board what they believed was behind the community support.

Chairperson Cox Golder responded she believed it is the employees.

Doug reviewed the responses from the internal sessions. One question was: What are the best things about working for GRFD? Some of the top responses included: work life balance, family environment, overall positive attitude & family vibe, supportive environment, teamwork, benefits, and the rewarding nature of serving the community.

Doug noted when 'rewarding nature of serving the community' is a response, this is directly related to a high level of retention. He suggested the district continue to work on teaching culture, and emphasizing values as the district grows.

Vice Chairperson Vette commented it isn't just leadership that reinforces culture. It's reinforced at all levels, captains, paramedics, engineers and firefighters. The newer employees learn it from existing personnel.



Doug agreed that strong culture is emphasized by peers. He reviewed the survey responses of positive aspects of working for the district. They included good compensation/benefits, work life balance, impact on the community, top of the line equipment/facilities, good organizational leadership, focus on customer-service, transparent/open communications and the desire to constantly improve the organization/operations.

The next item from the survey, Doug reviewed with the board, was: Concerns for the Organization. They included responses such as the level of population/growth in the region, managing the budget and fiscal challenges, making sure to support administrative team, maintaining transparency in communications, providing opportunities for leadership progression, providing necessary levels of training/education for the teams and attracting future personnel (this was not the complete list of responses). In terms of ranking, compensation & benefits was number one.

For the overall assessment, Doug stated personnel were asked: All things considered, as you assess the positives for the GRFD today (what's in our favor) vs. the concerns (what's in our way), do the positives outweigh the negatives or vice-versa?

Positive somewhat outweigh the negative	52 people
Positive far outweigh the negative	33 people
Negatives somewhat outweigh the positives	13 people
Positives and negatives balance out	11 people
Negatives far outweigh the positives	3 people

Doug commented that the number of people that responded the positives outweighed the negatives was the most he has ever seen.

He continued to review the next question on the survey: The level of community risk ahead; As you reflect on the overall level of change that is likely for our community/region in the decade ahead, would you say that the level of COMMUNITY RISK will be higher or lower than it is today?

Somewhat higher	65 people
Much higher	23 people
About the same	13 people
Somewhat lower	2 people
Much lower	2 people

In the section of the survey "How We are Viewed" in the Organizational Reputation portion, Doug said the question was: One of our operating principles (call it an unofficial motto) is 'Community First'. To what degree do you feel the communities that we support would say that GRFD lives up to that principle?



Strongly agree	68 people
Somewhat agree	31 people
Neither agree nor disagree	7 people
Somewhat disagree	0 people
Strongly disagree	0 people

The next section of the survey covered GRFD’s mission, vision and values. Doug explained Mission is what we are assigned to do, Vision is what we aspire to do as an organization, Purpose is the impact that we want to have on the lives of our stakeholders and the difference we want to make to the community, Values are the behaviors and beliefs that will guide the organization and its culture in the execution of mission, vision and purpose, and lastly Strategy is described as the actions to put into play across a specific timeline (this was not covered in the previous survey).

In a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being extremely effective, Doug stated the mission was rated 7.09. Vision was rated 7.09 as well. The top-rated values that matter to personnel were: integrity, accountability, professionalism, transparency and work ethic. Doug mentioned GRFD incorporates its core values in a statement ‘A DIRECT approach’. Personnel overwhelmingly agree they liked the values incorporated in a statement.

Chief Brandhuber commented he liked it incorporated in a statement because it made it easier to remember.

Doug asked the group if they believed personnel put the values into practice.

Assistant Chief Grissom believed personnel operated with values in mind.

Doug said what is good is that the values are spelled out.

Chief Grissom added that leadership hires people with values. So, when they go into the field, leadership knows they will practice them because that is part of who they are.

Chief Perry said he believed personnel subscribe to the values. The only comment he would make is that he thinks there are too many and they could be narrowed down.

Doug expressed that he believed the values need to reflect the organization’s culture.

Chief Cesarek said people aren’t reciting A DIRECT but they are applying the values when they work.

Doug continued to review the survey. He said personnel were asked how effective from 1 to 10, 10 being extremely effective, they thought the current motto is. The average response was 6.98.

Doug concluded by saying his experience with GRFD was positive, based on his experiences with other districts. People appreciated the anonymity and that they could



see the results after each question was asked. The community survey will be open for two weeks. Out of 305 possible participants for the internal survey, 50% participated. In his experience, this is a high participation rate.

Chief Brandhuber asked Doug if he recommended asking more people to complete the survey.

Doug responded it would not change the outcome; however, it will engage more people.

Chief Brandhuber said he would appeal to more people to participate in the survey and ask for their input. He will consider placing it in the weekly update.

Attorney Aversa asked Doug what he would recommend the board should do to keep the family and strong culture.

Doug replied it was the little things such as consistency of training, after action reviews, having frequent interactions with the community and asking for their feedback. It is about the attention to fundamentals. He said leadership needs to spend time focusing on culture. He stated, "Feedback is the breakfast of champions".

Chief Brandhuber thanked Doug for his work on the project and thanked the board for their time.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Board Member Brady to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Vice Chairperson Vette

MOTION CARRIED 4/0



Wally Vette, Vice Chairperson of the Board
Golder Ranch Fire District
SO

