

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

Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

1600 East Hanley Boulevard, Oro Valley, Arizona 85737

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairperson Cox Golder called the meeting to order on January 21, 2025, 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: Assistant Chief Grissom, Assistant Chief Perry, Deputy Chief Rutherford, Deputy Chief Jarrold, Deputy Chief Hilderbrand, Fire Marshal Akins, Finance Director Christian, IT Director Rascon, HR Director Delong, Media and Community Relations Supervisor Camarillo, EMS Division Chief Taylor, Professional Development Division Chief Leslie, Support Services Division Chief North, Billing Supervisor Massie, and Board Services Supervisor Ortiz

2. SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. FIRE BOARD REPORTS

There were no fire board reports.

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public issues presented at this time.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD TO SADDLEBROOKE SENIOR VILLAGE

Deputy Fire Marshal Druke presented the Community Recognition Award to SaddleBrooke Senior Village on behalf of the Golder Ranch Fire District Culture Committee. She thanked the organization for everything they do for the SaddleBrooke community and the support they provide Golder Ranch Fire District with the Lock Box Program. Eddie Cussack accepted the award on behalf of the organization and stated what an honor it was to be recognized by GRFD.



At 9:07 a.m. the Governing Board took a brief recess. The meeting was reconvened at 9:08 a.m.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. APPROVE MINUTES- DECEMBER 17, 2024, REGULAR SESSION
- B. APPROVAL OF THE RENEWAL OF THE REGIONAL HAZMAT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT THROUGH AN AMENDMENT TO THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN PIMA COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY, AVRA VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT, CITY OF TUCSON FIRE DEPARTMENT, DREXEL HEIGHTS FIRE DISTRICT, GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT, GREEN VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT, NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT, AND RINCON VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
- C. APPROVE AND ADOPT THE FOLLOWING UPDATED POLICY: 1022 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

MOTION by Vice-Chairperson Vette to approve the January 21, 2025, 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. He said it was great to be back and expressed his gratitude to the Board and the District for their support. Chief Brandhuber recognized Assistant Chief Grissom for recently obtaining his master's degree.

Chairperson Cox Golder thanked Board Services for all they do. She highlighted they held 8 GRFD Public Safety Personnel Retirement System meetings (when normally the pension board holds two a year). Chairperson Cox Golder also mentioned Human Resources (HR) and asked Director Delong if HR was adequately staffed.

Director Delong replied HR is currently staffed adequately. She mentioned the Board will see some new numbers in her report to support the new strategic planning and budgeting process that the Governing Board adopted.

Chairperson Cox Golder commented that, in light of the wildfires in California, she recommended posting on an editorial page in the Arizona Daily Star on what Arizona residents can do.

Media and Community Relations Supervisor Camarillo shared the current social media messaging focus, she added that she would look into doing an editorial page in the Arizona Daily Star.



President Jones wished the Board a happy new year. He informed everyone that the Union's annual Archery and BBQ event is scheduled for the 1st Saturday in March.

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

Vice Chairperson Vette asked how long the training will be for the Community Risk Technician's (CRT's) and when will they start.

Deputy Chief Hilderbrand explained the CRT's will begin training Wednesday, January 22nd. It will include onboarding with HR and training based on the District's culture. The following week will be OSHA training, driver training, etc. The new CRTs will start February 3rd and will begin with a mentor. Once they complete their taskbooks and feel comfortable without a mentor, they will begin responding to calls. There will be two CRTs per truck.

Board Member Shellenberger asked if they would be assigned to both north and south battalion areas.

Deputy Chief Hilderbrand replied for the initial trial, proof of concept, they will only be assigned to the north. After data is collected, it will be reviewed to determine a need.

C. SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION'S REPORT – Deputy Chief Jarrold presented the Support Services' division report to the Governing Board. He mentioned Fleet Technician Eddie Dicochea is the Treasurer for the Arizona Fire Mechanics Association and recently, Lead Fleet Technician, Phil Cantua, was elected the President of the organization. Deputy Chief Jarrold wanted to illustrate how both men were representing the District at a state level and leading the way in their field.

Chairperson Cox Golder asked what the status was of station 378.

Deputy Chief Jarrold responded the station was on schedule. They were working with the Arizona Water Company regarding a water line.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked about a cell tower lease, how long the lease was and was the District receiving a reasonable rate.

Deputy Chief Jarrold clarified that his team had a preliminary meeting with a company to make sure the infrastructure is in place, in order to be able to offer cell tower leases. Only one company has inquired about a lease so far.

Deputy Chief Jarrold explained the height of the tower will not be changing. It has been mentioned at the neighborhood meetings that there will be a tower at the



station for its infrastructure and that would be the same tower for lease by a cell company.

Board Member Shellenberger asked if the issue of the reflection of the new station's roof had been addressed.

Deputy Chief Jarrold replied they are working on taking care of it. The architects have been working on the issue. They believe it is the time of year and where the sun is in the sky at this time. Support Services is researching solutions to address the glare but they don't believe it will be an issue all year.

- D. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES & FIRE RESPONSE DIVISION'S REPORT – Assistant Chief Grissom presented the EMS & Fire Response division's report. He acknowledged Division Chief Leslie for his work at Professional Development and Division Chief Taylor for all of his work in EMS.

Vice Chairperson Vette asked what a cheater board was that was mentioned in the Honor Guard report.

Assistant Chief Grissom replied that he would have to get back to Vice Chairperson Vette with an answer.

Vice Chairperson Vette said he noticed the statistics for station 372. He noticed the station was slow. He asked if the crews were rotated to make sure they keep their skills.

Assistant Chief Grissom responded that all crews, regardless of their station, are required to attend training on a regular basis. He said slower stations are rotated, depending on need and the Battalion Chief to ensure skills are maintained.

8. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. DISCUSSION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE APPROVAL OF THE GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN CONTENT

Chief Brandhuber congratulated Assistant Chief Perry for his work on the Strategic Plan.

Assistant Chief Perry explained the District will be transitioning to a performance driven budget and would explain the philosophy of it. Assistant Chief Perry reminded the Governing Board they recently adopted a new organizational identity, which included a new mission, vision, values and motto. The next step is strategic planning. Seven strategic issues have been identified, and five strategic results have been developed to address those issues (some results address more than one issue). The third step is business planning which includes the lines of business, programs/services, and performance measures. Four lines of business were



classified, they include: The Office of The Chief, Community Risk Reduction, Support Services, and Emergency Response. Each line of business has a purpose, the key programs assigned to it and key results. Assistant Chief Perry reviewed the implementation and monitoring plan. The plan is to establish initial baselines for all performance metrics by January 1, 2026. There will be monthly performance reporting, quarterly key results reviews, and annual program appraisals. Strategic plan updates will be provided to the Governing Board and they will be presented to the Board for approval in December. In addition, budget integration will take place. This will allow performance data to show a need for budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year.

MOTION by Vice Chairperson Vette to approve the content of the Golder Ranch Fire District Strategic Business Plan as presented.

MOTION SECONDED by Board Clerk Outlaw

MOTION CARRIED 5/0

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

Finance Director Christian presented a summary of the financial reports to the Governing Board. Divisions are starting to plan the 2026 budget. In the month of December, \$651,373 was collected in ambulance billing. This is a record amount. Director Christian credited the billing department for processing the record number of transports and said it was a testament to Billing Supervisor Shelby Massie's leadership. A pre-biller was recently hired which has also allowed the billing division to keep up with the volume. There is currently a two-week turnaround from the transport to the time the incident is billed. He reported that year-to-date ambulance revenue is \$317,257. Wildland has generated \$500,000 year-to-date. In reviewing the ambulance billing statistics for the past year, Director Christian highlighted there were 691 transports in the month of December. He said this is the most he has ever seen for December.

In light of the amount of transports taking place recently, Chairperson Cox Golder asked if GRFD is able to respond to all the calls it receives.

Chief Brandhuber responded GRFD has plenty of ambulances in the district ready to respond to calls. He said this is something that is carefully watched by EMS Deputy Chief Wilson to make sure personnel are assigned where they are needed. There are reserve vehicles as well, in case there is a surge in calls. The automatic aid partners do respond to some of the calls.

Director Christian continued to explain in fiscal year 2021 there was an average of 17.2 daily transports and in fiscal year 2025 there was an average of 19.9 daily transports.



Vice Chairperson Vette stated, in the past, wildland revenue has been used to purchase equipment for wildland. He asked if management was again going to review the revenue earned to determine if it can be used to purchase equipment for wildland.

Chief Brandhuber replied that management will evaluate the surplus and deficits in the line items and use this information to evaluate the budget and determine if it can be used for apparatus and training. This is reviewed at the end of the budget year.

Chairperson Vette commended the billing team for doing well. He noticed the collection rate for billing used to be 86% and it has gone down to 82%. He asked why that was.

Director Christian attributed it to the fact that the billing division has transitioned to a new software program and the time it took to implement and learn the new program. Now that the software has been implemented, and a new pre-biller has been hired, the team is working to convert the receivables into cash.

Board Member Brady asked if there is a correlation between write-offs between individuals and insurance companies.

Director Christian asked Billing Supervisor Massie to answer the question.

Billing Supervisor Massie answered the billing division does write-offs with some individual bill statements and with insurance they always do appeals. She explained patients' balances are only written off once they are past due and can no longer be collected on. Insurance cannot be written off unless it is Medicare or Medicaid.

Board Member Brady expressed his concern of insurance companies denying claims.

Supervisor Massie replied this is always a possibility. With the pre-biller now trained, this new position enables the other two billing specialists to focus more time on appealing claims.

MOTION by Board Member Shellenberger 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

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be February 18, 2025

10. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public issues presented at this time.



11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Board Member Brady to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

MOTION SECONDED by

MOTION CARRIED 5/0



Sandra Outlaw, Clerk of the Board
Golder Ranch Fire District

