

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

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:00 a.m.  
1600 East Hanley Boulevard, Oro Valley, Arizona 85737**

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Vice-Chairperson Vette called the meeting to order on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9 a.m.

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

Member Absent: Chairperson Vicki Cox Golder (Excused)

Staff Present: Fire Chief Tom Brandhuber, Assistant Chief Perry, Assistant Chief Grissom, Assistant Chief Cesarek, Deputy Fire Marshal Akins, Deputy Chief Rutherford, Deputy Chief Jarrold, Deputy Chief Wilson, Finance Director Christian, HR Director Delong, Acting Technology Director Martinez, and Board Services Supervisor Ortiz

**2. SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Those in attendance said the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. FIRE BOARD REPORTS**

Board Member Shellenberger mentioned the SaddleBrooke Rotary Club held a meeting in San Manuel. Community Education Supervisor Dan Habinek held an informational booth and presented on behalf of the District. Board Member Shellenberger commented on what a wonderful job Supervisor Habinek did. The District received a lot of positive feedback on his participation.

Vice-Chairperson Vette said he and Board Member Shellenberger visited the academy. He said the recruits are working hard and learning a lot.

Board Member Brady added, he too, visits the academy. He said the training cadre is doing a great job.

**4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no public issues presented.



## 5. PRESENTATIONS

### A. PRESENTATION OF PERSONNEL

- RETIREMENT
  - HERMAN RASCON, TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR
  
- YEARS OF SERVICE
  - JAMES CISSELL, PARAMEDIC- 10 YEARS
  - JOHN COLBY JR., PARAMEDIC- 10 YEARS
  - DENNY HAWKINS, ENGINEER- 10 YEARS
  
  - RYAN COOLEY, FIREFIGHTER- 5 YEARS
  - ROBERT METZ, FIREFIGHTER- 5 YEARS
  - BRENDAN PEELER, PARAMEDIC- 5 YEARS

Assistant Chief Cesarek recognized former Technology Director Herman Rascon for his retirement from Golder Ranch Fire District (GRFD). AC Cesarek recognized Mr. Rascon's wife, Lisa, for her support of Herman's 15-year career at GRFD and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Chief Brandhuber presented Director Rascon with a plaque from the GRFD Governing Board, the Arizona State flag and the US flag as well as the certificates certifying the flags were flown over Station 370.

Local 3832 President Jones presented Director Rascon with a plaque and thanked Rascon for his contributions here and congratulated him for his retirement.

Captain R. Cramblit presented Paramedic Cissell with a pin and recognized him for his 10 years of service with the District.

Captain Strieter presented Paramedic John Colby Jr. with a pin and recognized him for his 10 years of service with the District.

Captain B. Daily presented Engineer Hawkins with a pin and recognized him for his 10 years of service with the District.

Paramedic Kukahiko presented Firefighter Cooley with a pin and recognized him for his 5 years of service with the District.

Captain Hoffman presented Firefighter Metz with a pin and recognized him for his 5 years of service with the District.

The Governing Board took a brief recess at 9:32 a.m.



The Governing Board reconvened at 9:36 a.m.

## 6. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. APPROVE MINUTES- JANUARY 20, 2026, REGULAR SESSION
- B. APPROVE AND ADOPT RESOLUTION 2026-0002 TO DECLARE ITEMS AS SURPLUS AND DIRECTION TO STAFF TO SELL OR PROVIDE ITEMS TO NEIGHBORING FIRE DISTRICTS OR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

**MOTION** by Board Member Shellenberger to approve the February 17, 2026,  
Consent Agenda

**MOTION SECONDED** by Board Clerk Outlaw

**MOTION CARRIED** 4/0

## 7. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – Chief Brandhuber presented the Fire Chief’s report to the Governing Board. He thanked Deputy Chief Jarrold for his support of Chairperson Cox Golder. He also thanked Battalion Chief Hastings for his support of the District Chaplain. Fire Chief Brandhuber also thanked the Governing Board for allowing staff to recognize personnel for their milestones.

President Jones invited the Governing Board to attend the Union BBQ & Archery Shoot on March 7<sup>th</sup>. The judges include Oro Valley Police Department (OVPD) Police Chief Kara Riley as well as Rockin’ 4 Heroes CEO Steve Rokowski. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, the Union will be sending personnel to Washington DC for a conference as well as to meet with legislators.

- B. COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION’S REPORT – Assistant Chief Perry presented the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) report to the Governing Board. He noted CRR is using an app that it will release to the public in hopes of reducing slips, trips, and falls.

Board Member Brady asked where the app will be released.

AC Perry replied it would be rolled out to the senior population within the District. The division would most likely release it to the Splendido community first.

Board Member Shellenberger stated he spoke to Deputy Chief Wilson about the app. He asked if AC Perry could explain it in a little more detail for the audience.

Chief Perry happily explained the app. He stated it is downloaded on the user’s phone and teaches/shows the person how to maintain balance. In turn, the increased balance assists with reducing falls.



Board Clerk Outlaw asked if the app could be rolled out by the Community Resource Technician (CRT) program.

AC Perry replied that was an option. He said his division is still evaluating ways to release it.

Board Clerk Outlaw said she would like to see a presentation on the app. Vice-Chairperson Vette thanked Community Relations Supervisor Camarillo for her work on the website along with everyone else that worked on it. He said it looked great.

- C. SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION'S REPORT – Assistant Chief Cesarek presented Support Services' report to the Governing Board. AC noted the former Station 378 has been successfully turned over to the Robson community. AC Cesarek reported the drawings for the Fleet building has been submitted to Pima County for approval.

Vice-Chairperson Vette asked who was eligible for the Episeek screening.

AC Cesarek said the screening is available to all personnel, suppression and administration, who are 40 years of age or older.

Vice-Chairperson Vette asked who would be financially responsible for the new road in SaddleBrooke.

AC Cesarek responded SaddleBrooke will need to have some financial involvement. The District would pay for some, however, SaddleBrooke would need to foot the bill for the rest.

Board Clerk Outlaw inquired about the drone program mentioned in the Support Services' report.

AC Cesarek stated the program would be funded by a grant through the Department of Health Services (DHS). The District would partner with Oro Valley Police Department and it is called 'Drones For First Responders'. There are two fire stations that meet the requirements and would be perfect locations.

Chief Brandhuber added staff are working on the contract and it will be presented to the Board for approval.

- D. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES & FIRE RESPONSE DIVISION'S REPORT – Assistant Chief Grissom said the academy is still going strong with twenty-four recruits. He also mentioned he is proud of the Professional Development staff for all their hard work. AC Grissom thanked Operations Support Supervisor Bravo, Deputy Fire Marshal White, and Applications Specialist Bela for their work on the transition from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) reporting system.



Chief Brandhuber thanked Fire Marshal Akins for all her work on the Canyon Del Oro (CDO) softball clubhouse.

## **8. REGULAR BUSINESS**

- A. 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 CONSIDERATION OF FIRE CHIEF BRANDHUBER'S EMPLOYMENT INCLUDING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

NOTE: THE CHAIRPERSON WILL CONFIRM CHIEF BRANDHUBER RECEIVED NOT LESS THAN 24 HOURS WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

**MOTION** by Board Member Brady to enter executive session.

**SECONDED** by Board Clerk Outlaw

**MOTION CARRIED 4/0**

The Governing Board entered Executive Session at 9:49 a.m. for Items 8A and 8B.

Those who entered Executive Session included the Governing Board, Fire Chief Tom Brandhuber, HR Director Delong, District Attorney Aversa, and Board Services Supervisor Ortiz.

(Fire Chief Tom Brandhuber received the 24-hour notice of Executive Session.)

- 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 THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH NORTH TUCSON FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION LOCAL 3832

The Governing Board reconvened into regular session at 10:30 a.m.

*Vice-Chairperson Vette reminded those in attendance, Executive Sessions are confidential [pursuant to ARS §38-431.03(C)].*

- C. DISCUSSION OF THE GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PSPRS) FUNDING LEVEL

Chief Brandhuber stated Finance Director Christian prepared a presentation for the Board upon the request of Vice-Chairperson Vette.

Vice-Chairperson Vette said he asked for the presentation, with no expectation of immediate action, but rather for the Board's awareness of the District's current status of the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) contributions.



Finance Director Christian explained the Arizona Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) Actuarial report is available to anyone on the PSPRS website. The most recent report he would be referencing, states on its cover page, "As of June 30, 2025, Contributions Applicable to the Plan/Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2027". What this essentially means is that there is a two-year lag between when the actuarial is received and when the District sets its budget for the contribution rate. This disconnect is important because anything the District does, with respect to contribution rates for the District, will be applicable for the 2027 actuarial report.

Director Christian clarified that Tier 1 and Tier 2 employees are the only tiers the District has an unfunded liability. Tier 3 is fully funded for both the medical and pension. When referring to the unfunded obligation, it is essentially Tier 1 and Tier 2 employees collectively. The actuarial dated June 30, 2025, identified the District was 90% funded. The way it was derived was not by looking at the present value of the obligation, but by looking at the actuarial value of the obligation, the liabilities and assets, actuarially determined as opposed to the net present value of the obligation. If the present value (of benefits) (PVB) was shown, it would have been 73% funded. The total actuarial present value of benefits was \$152 million. The actuarial value of assets was shown to be \$112 million.

What was used to determine the contribution rate was the actuarial value. Director Christian declared the actuarial value was a bit of a mystery. He said, as an accountant, he dealt with present values and net present values by discounting values over time. Actuaries use a very different formula. The formula includes assumptions about life expectancy of beneficiaries, payroll, and all the factors that are involved in determining what the obligations look like. The metric the District used was the 90% funding status. He noted that it did drop from 93% the previous year. The 3% degradation in the District's funding status was broken down by the reconciliation provided in the report. Asset gains and losses were smoothed over seven years for Tiers 1 and 2. The return on market value of assets for the year ending June 30, 2025, was 11% for Tiers 1 and 2. On a smoothed, actuarial value of assets basis, the average return was 7.9% for Tiers 1 and 2. When the report referred to the liability experience, it referred to the payroll base and the liability experience itself. Director Christian reviewed a historical summary of rates and noted in 2022 the District sold bonds for \$22 million to pay towards its unfunded liability. The unfunded amortization changed from 12.94% to .29%. In 2021, the total pension contribution rate was 25.95%. In 2022, it was 13.87%. Since 2022, the unfunded contribution began to grow as the unfunded status began to grow. The 2025 contribution rate was 19.7%.

Director Christian explained a table that showed how each million dollars that would be contributed to the fund would affect the District's funding status. In September of 2025, under the direction of Chief Brandhuber, Director Christian transferred \$4.5 million to PSPRS. The \$4 million was residual money set aside from the sale of the Certificates of Participation (COP) bonds. He estimated that the \$4 million will



change the District's contribution rate from 19.7% to approximately 18%. This will change the District's funding status rate to approximately 92 to 93%.

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

Finance Director Christian presented the GRFD reconciliation and monthly financial report to the Governing Board. He stated, although the District finished the month 3% unfavorably, it was still within the 5% target. There is still one grant, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, that needs to get closed. In terms of reports from the Treasurer's Office, the District has \$238,000 in Pinal County and \$28 million in Pima County for a total of \$29 million. For ambulance billing, suppression averages 22 transports per day. In January, there were a total of 688 transports. To-date there are no wildland fires to report.

**MOTION** by Board Member Shellenberger to approve and accept the Golder Ranch Fire District reconciliation and monthly financial report as presented.

**MOTION SECONDED** by Board Member Outlaw

**MOTION CARRIED 4/0**

**9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be March 17, 2026.

**10. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

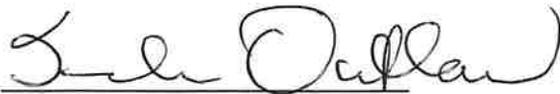
There were no public issues presented at this time.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Board Member Shellenberger to adjourn the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

**MOTION SECONDED** by Board Clerk Outlaw

**MOTION CARRIED 4/0**



Sandra Outlaw, Clerk of the Board  
Golder Ranch Fire District

