

PONDEROSA FIRE DISTRICT (PFD) GOVERNING BOARD

Held July 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
at Ponderosa Fire District, Station 82
11951 W Shadow Mountain Drive
Bellemont, AZ 86015

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Mark Christian, Board Chairman Tom Humphrey, Board Vice-Chairman Rick Tomjack, Board Clerk Deanna Hueston, Board Member	Members Absent: Bill Louis, Board Member
Fire District Personnel Present: Lee Antonides, Fire Chief Erin Hudman, Administrative Chief Mike Allen, Captain Chris Jeffers, Captain Clayton Cooke, Captain Josh Leopold, Engineer Richard Duran, Firefighter/EMT Tim Rodriguez, Firefighter/EMT	
Members of the Community: Judson Swearingen	Guests: Jennifer Frank, CPA, CFE, CGFM, Partner – HintonBurdick

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.01(H), the Board of Directors may make an open call to the public during a public meeting, subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions, to allow individuals to address the Board on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Board. However, members of the Board shall not discuss or take legal action on matters raised during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Review of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, June 17th, 2025

Discussion Summary: No discussion.

Action: Stand approved as written.

5. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- b. Discussion and possible action regarding financial reports ending June 30, 2025 presented by Jennifer Frank, HintonBurdick CPA's & Advisors

Discussion Summary: Jennifer Frank presented the year-end financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. While the preliminary figures show that the District ended the year in the black, additional adjustments are still pending. These will include the incorporation of wildland revenue and accounting for PSPRS considerations. A revised financial report reflecting these updates will be presented at the next board meeting.

Action: Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to accept the June 30, 2025 financials as they were presented, noting changes will be made and presented in August, Chairman Mark Christian seconded; unanimous.

6. OFFICIAL PINNING OF PONDEROSA FIRE DISTRICT ENGINEERS AND FIREFIGHTER/EMT'S

Chief Lee officially pinned Josh Leopold, Engineer, Richard Duran, Firefighter/EMT, and Tim Rodriguez, Firefighter/EMT.

7. CHIEF'S SUMMARY AND REPORTS

a. Annual number of calls to date and incident reports (response update).

- 1) Year to date, 259 requests for service.
- 2) Last year 235 (+24)
- 3) 67 requests for service since the last board meeting
- 4) Significant calls
 - a) 7/13 Wildland Fire, Parks (south of Boy Scout) 4 acres
 - b) 7/9 Wildland Fire, overheated brake fire. 10' x 12'.

b. Update on department training.

- 1) Department monthly training –
- 2) GFR – Regional preplanning of Restoration Forest Products

c. Committees

- PFAC (Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council) – did not attend
- PAC (Parks Area Connection) – Did not attend
- C3 (Coconino County Chief's Consortium) – Regional wildland conditions/response, proposed AFDA strategic plan, Jerry Bills departure from FFD
- CCWRG (Coconino County Wildland Resource Group) – No meeting held
- LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) – No meeting held

d. Status of department grants

- 1) Working on final acceptance of new fuels grant (NFHF 24-205) Under way.
- 2) AFG grant (2024) has been SUBMITTED for the washer/extractor, dryer, and turnouts. 5% cost match
- 3) Department of the Interior grant for skid units. AWARDED Working on phase to of the funding process. Anticipate funding in August.

- 4) 2024 ARPA Grant, Type 3, 6, or tender. Due January 24th. NO cost match. AWARDED Chassis is in Phoenix, utility bed is ordered and upfit equipment is ordered.
- 5) Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). Extrication equipment and AV/IT equipment for the community room \$56,204. Due mid-March, 100% grant. SUBMITTED
- 6) Homeland security grant for ballistic vests for firefighters. \$7000, 100% grant. Due the end of next week. SUBMITTED
- 7) FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending. This is funding that may be used for infrastructure. 1. The Agricultural and Rural Development grant for \$135,000 has passed the first approval. Final review and approval is scheduled for December 2025. 2. Request for infrastructure improvement at a cost of \$5,000,000. SUBMITTED

e. Residential and commercial development within the district.

- 1) Bellemont townhomes are going vertical, some hydrants in and paving underway
- 2) Civil work starting for the Parks in the Pines RV Park is continuing.
- 3) Business center next to Best Western, is tentatively scheduled for fall/winter 2025. Starting with storage units first.
- 4) Housing development and townhomes on Beatons East. 100-130 total residences. Shooting

f. Vehicle maintenance report, unexpected costs vehicle repairs.

- 1) E82 still at Bellemont Truck Repair for electrical, suspension, retrofitting.
- 2) E81 is in service but needs to come out of service as soon as E82 is done.
- 3) E813 has had some pump, plumbing, and air leak work done. In service.
- 4) E823 (Green Type 3) has had some pump and plumbing work done on it. Basic graphics installed. Truck is in service but we are still waiting on parts for the bumper turret.
- 5) C82 (white command rig) has a break issue. It is out of service until it can be repaired.
- 6) Fuels 82 has battery issues. Waiting on battery replacement.
- 7) Chipper Has a trouble code when it reached full operating RPMs. At Bellemont Truck repair.

g. Station 82 expansion status.

- 1) Warranty issues – roof leak seems to have been corrected, HVAC filter issue ongoing. We are due for our 1 year walk through. Upcoming PFD events.

h. Upcoming Department Events

- 1) RT-130 Refresher for Contractors on 7/16 and 7/19
- 2) Strategic Planning starts on 7/24
- 3) Coffee with the Chief – August 9th from 09:00 – 12:00 at the Parks Feed and Mercantile.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- c. Discussion and possible action on proposed revisions to Policy 60.03 – Uniform Regulations

Discussion Summary: The Board and staff engaged in a discussion regarding Policy 60.03 – Uniform Regulations. Rather than revising the existing policy, it was agreed that the District will develop a new version from the ground up. The goal is to create a more cohesive and easily understood policy that also incorporates practical options for the crews. This item was tabled and will be included on a future agenda.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- d. Discussion and possible action regarding Chief Lee's annual evaluation.

The Board may vote to enter Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1) for the purpose of discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee, or employee of the public body.

Discussion Summary: The Board discussed Chief Lee's annual evaluation, which was compiled into a single summary document based on the individual evaluations submitted. After review, the Board requested additional time to thoroughly consider the evaluation and determined that the item should be tabled until the next meeting.

- e. Discussion and possible action regarding a \$2,500 annual stipend for vehicle maintenance allocated to the Fire Chief.

Discussion Summary: The Board was presented with the current stipend policy, which specifies a \$2,500 annual stipend for the individual assigned to vehicle maintenance responsibilities. Chief Hudman informed the Board that Chief Lee had assumed this role and, under the policy, should be eligible to receive the stipend.

Chief Hudman clarified that as an exempt employee, Chief Lee would not regularly receive overtime compensation associated with the stipend, unlike non-exempt firefighters. Additionally, it was noted that while Chief Lee has received cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and step plan modifications, he has not received the 3% annual raises granted to the firefighter ranks.

Despite this context, Chief Lee expressed strong opposition to receiving the stipend.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to approve a \$2,500 annual stipend for Chief Lee while he is responsible for vehicle maintenance, with the understanding that the stipend will continue until such time as the responsibility is reassigned. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Tom Humphrey. Member Deanna Hueston voted in favor; Clerk Rick Tomjack voted in opposition. The motion passed.

- f. Discussion and possible action regarding the Fire Chief position: job description approval and hiring process timeline.

The Board will review and consider approval of the proposed job description for a future Fire Chief position. The Board will also discuss and may take action on the application timeline, candidate screening procedures, interview structure, and/or appointment schedule.

Discussion Summary: The Board reviewed the proposed job description for the future Fire Chief position and held a discussion on the potential hiring process, including the application timeline, candidate screening procedures, interview structure, and appointment schedule.

During the discussion, a majority of Board members expressed interest in appointing Chief Hudman to the Fire Chief position. One Board member raised concerns regarding the scope of the agenda item and stated that a formal appointment was not explicitly listed for action and all board members were not present. This Board member also expressed that the position should be opened to a national search and questioned Chief Hudman's qualifications for the role.

Chief Hudman clarified that she had not requested to be appointed as Fire Chief. The conversation was extensive and included differing views among Board members. No formal action was taken at this time.

- g. Discussion and possible action regarding transferring \$5,308.74 from the general fund to the capital fund from FY26 wildland revenue.

Discussion Summary: The Board discussed the proposed transfer of \$5,308.74 in wildland revenue received in FY25 from the Rattlesnake Fire assignment. The intent is to move the funds from the general fund to the capital fund to support future planning initiatives identified through the Strategic Planning Committee.

Action: Tom Humphrey made a motion to approve the transfer of \$5,308.74 in wildland revenue received from the FY25 Rattlesnake Fire assignment from the general fund to the capital fund. Deanna Hueston seconded the motion; unanimous.

- h. Discussion and possible action to reallocate funds originally designated for Station 82 roof repairs to cover the funding gap for the Ponderosa Fire District Emergency Generator project, funded in part by a \$135,000 FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending grant through Agriculture and Rural Development.

Discussion Summary: The Board discussed the proposal to reallocate funds originally designated for roof repairs at Station 82 to help cover the funding gap for the Ponderosa Fire District Emergency Generator project. The generator project is being partially

funded through a \$135,000 FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending grant awarded via Agriculture and Rural Development.

Chief Lee stated that roof repairs at Station 82 will no longer be necessary, making those funds available for reallocation. He recommended using the available funds to offset the estimated \$50,000 difference the District must contribute toward the generator project.

Action: Rick Tomjack made a motion to approve the reallocation of funds from the bond account designated for Station 82 roof repairs to cover the remaining cost of the Emergency Generator project. Deanna Hueston seconded the motion. Unanimous.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION - *The Board may vote to go into an Executive Session on any agenda item, which will not be open to the public, pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3).*

- i. Possible discussion regarding Chief Lee's annual performance evaluation pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1).

11. ADJOURNMENT – At 8:57 pm, Member Deanna Hueston made a motion to adjourn the July 15, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded the motion; Unanimous.



Mark Christian, Board Chairman