

PONDEROSA FIRE DISTRICT (PFD) GOVERNING BOARD

Held August 19th, 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 Bill Louis, Board Member	Members Absent:
Fire District Personnel Present: Lee Antonides, Fire Chief Erin Hudman, Administrative Chief Laura Mroczka, Admin Manager Chris Jeffers, Captain Josh Leopold, Engineer Paul Pugh, Engineer Tim Rodriguez, Firefighter/EMT Dirch Foreman, Wildland Fire Specialist	
Members of the Community: Judson Swearingen Ron Schumacher Steve Nelson	Guests: Jennifer Frank, CPA, CFE, CGFM, Partner – HintonBurdick Erin Anding, Deputy County Attorney

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – MOVED TO AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

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.

- a. Discussion summary: Two members of the public were present and submitted questions, but they were no longer present for this portion of the meeting. Both questions were about agenda item 9M, which was then discussed next.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MOVED TO AFTER CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- a. Review of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, July 15, 2025

Discussion Summary: Discussion was had regarding some edits that Board Clerk Rick Tomjack felt should be addressed. All members agreed that there was nothing incorrectly documented, just a few things that need to be added and formatting corrected.

Action: An edit to the July 15, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes will be made regarding when executive session was motioned and approved, and the motion to go out of executive session. This will be reviewed by Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding before finalizing it. The board agreed that if these steps are taken, they will then accept the July 15, 2025, minutes. Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to accept the July 15, 2025, minutes as presented with corrections to the formatting and addition of the executive session documentation. Chairman Mark Christian seconded the motion; Unanimous.

5. FINANCIAL REPORTS – MOVED TO ITEM NUMBER 3 AS COURTESY FOR CPA SCHEDULE

- a. Discussion and possible action regarding financial reports ending July 31, 2025, presented by Jennifer Frank, HintonBurdick CPA's & Advisors

Discussion Summary: Jennifer Frank presented the year-end financial statements for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2025. Jennifer advised that the final numbers for FY24 will be available at the September Board Meeting. Budget to actual analysis, we're 8% into the fiscal year, and we've collected 1% of the budgeted revenue this fiscal year. At 7% of the budget, which is right on target. Vice Chair Tom Humphrey asked to review the employer pension contribution. It was shown as being split into two expense accounts. Chief Hudman found that code 5504 is for administrative staff through a 401k and 5503 is for operational staff through PSPRS. These both went into 5504, so that's why the totals were off. Jennifer stated she will look into this so it can be allocated better on payroll.

Action: Member Bill Louis made a motion to accept the July 31, 2025, financials as they were presented, Member Dee Hueston seconded; unanimous.

6. CHIEFS SUMMARY AND REPORTS – BYPASSED DUE TO LENGTH OF AGENDA

7. ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER REPORT – BYPASSED DUE TO LENGTH OF AGENDA

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – DISCUSSED AFTER APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained that after last month's meeting, this policy was re-drafted. The new policy incorporates operational staff input as well as several board members. Chairman Mark Christian states this new policy is more streamlined and easier to follow. Clerk Rick Tomjack agreed that this version is an improvement.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to accept the policy as written. Member Bill Louis seconded the motion; Unanimous.

- b. 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: Chief Lee confirmed that he was comfortable with the evaluation being conducted in public session. The Board reviewed the goals established during his previous evaluation and discussed their status, noting that the majority had been achieved, while some were partially met.

The Board then discussed new goals for the current evaluation. It was agreed that certain goals should be revised or removed. Chief Lee expressed that while the evaluation was generous, he did not wish to take full credit, as many accomplishments were the result of his staff's efforts.

The timing of future evaluations was also addressed. The Board agreed evaluations should occur annually, by calendar year beginning in January, acknowledging that there have been gaps in consistency in the past. The Board determined that no further discussion was needed on this item.

Action: Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to accept the performance evaluation for Chief Lee with the updates and additions to goals that were discussed. Chairman Mark Christian seconded; unanimous.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Discussion Summary: It was discussed with Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding whether these items should be discussed in Executive Session. Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding advised that item 9K could be discussed in both open meeting and executive session, depending on the topic as it's broad. 9L and 9M could also be discussed in separate executive sessions. She also advised if the Board wanted legal counsel it needed to be done in Executive session. It was decided to go into executive session to discuss 9K and 9L.

At 5:28pm, Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to go into executive session to discuss items 9K discussion and possible action regarding Open Meeting Law and 9L Discussion and possible action regarding a formal complaint filed by the Fire Chief against a Board Member. Chairman Mark Christian seconded; unanimous.

At 6:19pm, Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to return to regular session. Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded: unanimous.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion and possible action regarding the decommission of Fuels 82 and returning it to the state.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained this truck is a 1995 Chevy 1 ton pickup. It originally belonged to the Air Force. We obtained it from the state after the federal government got its use out of it. The truck will need a lot of maintenance work soon, and it's not worth it to continue putting funds into it. It will be replaced by our new type 6 that we obtained a recent grant for. We will pull the plow from it and use that plow on the new type 6.

Action: Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to decommission and return Fuels 82 to the state. Member Bill Louis seconded, Unanimous.

- b. Discussion and possible action regarding approval to sell C-82 at a low Kelly Blue Book value to potential internal parties.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained we had picked up the truck through federal surplus years ago. There is no need for the truck anymore as we obtained new command rigs last year. It has potential mechanical issues that will be costly in the future, and he feels it is best to part with it. There are several parties interested in the truck, and it will be offered up for approximately 3k, or whatever the low cost KBB value may be.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to decommission C-82 and sell it at a low Kelly Blue Book value as is with a waiver regarding repairs needed. Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded the motion; Unanimous.

- c. Discussion and possible action to approve the installation of a Ward Diesel Filter System on Engine 82 at a cost not to exceed \$10,000, to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project.

Discussion Summary: The Board discussed that Station 82 no longer requires the originally allocated \$95,000 for roof repair, as the work was sufficiently completed by Loven Contracting. The Board confirmed that funding is available for a full exhaust system, which will be installed once property tax revenue is received. In the interim, the Board agreed to proceed with the installation of a Ward Diesel exhaust system on Engine 82 as an additional measure.

It was also noted that while additional funding for a backup generator had previously been approved, the grant for that project was not awarded, and the supplemental funding will not be needed. Those funds will stay in the bond fund and reallocated towards some of the items requested during this meeting

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to approve the installation of the Ward Diesel filter system on Engine 82 not to exceed 10k. This will be funded from bond proceeds allocated for Station 82. Member Bill Louis seconded; Unanimous.

- d. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of a new BK M150 mobile radio for the new Type 6 engine from Niles Radio, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained this will be installed on our new 100% grant-funded Type 6. A new radio was not included in the grant submission. We now need to request the purchase of this radio as it is necessary for wildland use.

Action: Member Bill Louis made a motion to approve the purchase of a BK M150 radio for the New Type 6 Engine from Niles Radio not to exceed 5k. Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded the motion; Unanimous.

- e. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase and installation of AV equipment for the Station 82 community room, based on a quote from Executech in an amount not to exceed \$15,000, to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee stated PFD has been discussing community room upgrades for over a year. Larger TV mounted on the wall, smart boards on walls, cameras, microphones, and anything else that will make the room Teams compliant and easier to use for everyone who needs it. This was originally submitted for a grant through GOHS, but the grant was only approved for extrication equipment.

Action: Member Bill Louis made a motion to approve the purchase and installation of AV equipment for the Station 82 community room, based on a quote from Executech in an amount not to exceed \$15,000, to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project. Chairman Mark Christian seconded the motion; Unanimous.

- f. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of 14 wildland fire shelters, at a cost of \$500 each, for a total amount not to exceed \$7,000, to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained that as we have been going through our current wildland season it has been noted that the majority of our current fire shelters are not up to standard for use. It is a significant safety issue for the staff.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to approve the purchase of 14 wildland fire shelters, at a cost of \$500 each, for a total amount not to exceed \$7,000, to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project. Vice Chairman Tom Humphrey seconded the motion; Unanimous.

- g. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of ESO modules for scheduling and timekeeping in the amount of \$2,925 and asset management/checklists in the amount of \$1,374. for a total cost not to exceed \$5,000 to be funded from bond proceeds originally allocated for the Station 82 roof replacement project.

Discussion Summary: It was discussed that it will help out tremendously from an administrative financial side, as well as an operational side especially for staff who are away on assignments. The Board discussed the operational and administrative advantages of implementing these ESO modules. From an administrative and financial perspective, the modules will streamline scheduling, timekeeping, and asset management, reducing inefficiencies and improving recordkeeping. Operationally, they will provide significant support for staff, particularly those who are deployed on assignments or working remotely, by offering accessible and centralized tools for tracking schedules, time, and equipment. The Board recognized that the software would enhance accountability, reduce manual workload, and improve overall efficiency across the district

Action: Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to approve the purchase of ESO modules for scheduling and timekeeping in the amount of \$2,925 and asset management/checklists in the amount of \$1,374. for a total cost not to exceed \$5,000. Chairman Mark Christian seconded the motion; unanimous.

- h. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution No. 2025-05 authorizing the purchase of extrication equipment and associated training under the FY 2026 GOHS Grant in the amount of \$28,534.00.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee reported that the District received a partial award from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) for the grant submitted earlier this year, which originally requested funding for both extrication equipment and A/V equipment. Because the award was not sufficient to cover both components, the Board discussed priorities and determined that extrication equipment represents the most critical operational and life-safety need

Action: Member Bill Louis made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-05 authorizing the purchase of extrication equipment and associated training under the FFY 2026 GOHS Grant in the amount of \$28,534.00. Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded; Unanimous.

- i. Discussion and possible action regarding approving a hardship request to waive a bill of \$1,574.92 for incident 25-00237 on 7/3/2025.

Discussion Summary: A brief explanation of the situation was discussed. The Board determined that a precedence needs to be set. Chief Lee explained that this isn't something that comes before the board very often. It is believed the last time was around 2015. Chief Lee asked the board to consider the precedence being set. The board also discussed the difference between being in district and being a taxpayer, and in our response area which is not tax based. It was decided by the board that it is not fair to tax based residents who pay for services to extend a hardship for this invoice. Chief Hudman added that we do bill consistently, and we do not recoup even half of what we bill. There

is something to be said that this party is trying to resolve this debt. There was also discussion regarding a discrepancy regarding the timeframe of this call start to finish. The board ultimately decided from a business aspect of recouping costs; they are not in favor of honoring the request.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to not approve the request regarding hardship request to waive a bill of \$1,574.92 for incident 25-00237 on 7/3/2025. Member Bill Louis seconded; unanimous.

- j. Discussion and possible action regarding the appropriateness and lawfulness of maintaining a SharePoint site for board member access to district documents, considering the use of personal computers, personal email accounts, and related privacy and security concerns.

Discussion Summary: Chief Lee explained this was originally brought up in June and stems from the Board asking for specific documents. Chief Hudman added she created this for the Board members after last month's meeting. She advised that there is a lot of sensitive information in the share drive. She warned that if documents are accessed on a personal computer, and we get audited, that personal computer may be confiscated. She discussed the dangers involved in this kind of access so the board is aware of the liabilities.

Action: Chief Hudman to correct this. The Board came to the decision that they are happy with the access they currently have and do not feel they need this electronic access on a share drive. They feel using a computer at the station or having the hard copies pulled will be a safer solution.

- k. Discussion and possible action regarding Open Meeting Law compliance.

Discussion Summary: Discussed during Executive session.

Action: Informative discussion advised by Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding during Executive session.

- l. Discussion and possible action regarding formal complaint filed by the Fire Chief against a Board Member.

Discussion Summary: Discussed in Executive Session.

Action: Tabled for the next meeting.

- m. Discussion and possible action regarding selecting Administrative Chief Erin Hudman to fill the position of Fire Chief upon the retirement of Chief Lee Antonides.

Discussion Summary: Discussion was had regarding this being an unfinished business item, as it was item 9C on last month's agenda. No action was taken, so it was technically not tabled. Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding clarified that if the item was not tabled,

it could go to either unfinished business or new business. She also noted that 9C from last month and 9M from this month are not the same agenda item. 9C from last month cannot be discussed as it was not properly agendized. 9M may be discussed since it was properly agendized. No Board member requested to add 9C to the agenda for August.

A discussion took place between board members and Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding and the board does not have to seek out external candidates, applications, etc. if the board is considering appointing an internal candidate for the Fire Chief's position

At the advice of Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding, the Board discussed whether to move this agenda item into executive session or keep it in the regular meeting. The decision was made to keep the discussion public

Chairman Mark Christian outlined his rationale in support of appointing Chief Hudman as Fire Chief. Vice Chair Tom Humphrey and Member Deanna Hueston also expressed favorable opinions regarding the appointment. Conversely, Member Bill Louis and Clerk Rick Tomjack voiced concerns about proceeding with the appointment.

Chief Hudman then presented her perspective on the potential appointment. She emphasized that the Fire Chief and Administrative Chief are distinct roles that cannot realistically be managed by one individual. She explained that while the long-term plan includes adding three Battalion Chiefs, that structure is still several years away. Under the proposed approach, the Administrative Chief would transition into the Fire Chief position, one Battalion Chief would assume the role of Operational Chief, and another Battalion Chief would backfill that vacancy. Chief Hudman clarified that many Administrative Chief responsibilities would remain under her purview, while a significant portion of the Fire Chief's current operational duties would be reassigned to the new Operational Chief position

The Board discussed salary considerations. It was noted that the Fire Chief salary would not transition to the appointed Fire Chief until Chief Lee's retirement and departure from PFD, even though the appointed Fire Chief would be mentored by Chief Lee during the year leading up to his retirement.

Member Bill Louis inquired about whether a contract would be established for the new Fire Chief. Chief Lee noted that he does not have a contract. Chief Hudman clarified that implementing a contract for the newly appointed Fire Chief would be a decision of the Board, in agreement with the appointee

Chief Lee then mentioned that he has letters of recommendation for Chief Hudman by various parties. Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding advised that since these documents are not part of the Board Packet, they should not be shared at this time.

Clerk Rick Tomjack expressed interest in making a motion to table this agenda item and combine it with Item 9C from the previous meeting. Chairman Mark Christian responded that he had not requested a motion on this matter. He further stated that he did not feel it necessary to table the item and prolong discussion. Chairman Mark Christian asked the Board if additional discussion was needed and then called for a motion on Agenda Item 9M regarding the appointment of Chief Hudman as the next Fire Chief.

Member Deanna Hueston made a motion to appoint Chief Hudman as Fire Chief to succeed Chief Lee upon his retirement. Chairman Mark Christian seconded the motion.

Member Bill Louis then sought clarification that the Board was concluding discussion on the selection process and related concerns raised earlier. Chairman Mark Christian explained that the intent was to proceed with the appointment motion at this meeting, and to address outstanding matters from the prior agenda items and the succession plan at the September meeting.

The Board discussed issues including salary discrepancies, the interview process, and timing for further consideration of these items. Chairman Mark Christian confirmed that these matters would be addressed at the next meeting.

Chief Hudman expressed concern that the Board did not appear to be unified in its decision. She stated that while she appreciates the support and the Board's consideration, she did not feel prepared to accept the appointment until there is greater consensus.

Deputy County Attorney Erin Anding advised that the motion on the table could either be withdrawn or moved forward for a vote. Following this advice, Member Deanna Hueston withdrew her motion.

Action: Chairman Mark Christian made a motion to table this agenda item to the September Board Meetings agenda. Clerk Rick Tomjack seconded; 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).*

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

Discussion Summary: Discussed previously in open meeting as noted above.

- b. Possible discussion pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for discussion or consultation with the District's attorney for legal advice regarding Open Meeting Law compliance and guidance on corrective actions and future compliance.

Discussion Summary: Discussed in Executive session as noted previously.

11. ADJOURNMENT – At 10:24pm, Clerk Rick Tomjack made a motion to adjourn the August 19, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, Chairman Mark Christian seconded the motion; Unanimous.



Mark Christian, Board Chairman

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