

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE TWENTYNINE PALMS WATER DISTRICT
72401 HATCH ROAD, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA 92277**

JANUARY 23, 2013

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

Call to Order and Roll Call

President Moore called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m., 72401 Hatch Road, Twentynine Palms, California. Those responding to roll call were Directors Bo Bourikas, Chancey Chambers, Philip Cisneros, Sam Moore, and Roger Shinaver. Also present were Fire Chief Jim Thompson, Financial Consultant Cindy Byerrum, and District Secretary Cindy Fowlkes.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

None

Public Comments

Councilmember Jim Harris, of Twentynine Palms, asked that his letter be read into the minutes. Mr. Harris stated his support for the Board in whatever decision they make.

Stephen Urban, of Twentynine Palms, appreciates the Board and hopes good service will continue.

1. Update, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Retention of the Fire Department and Future Financial Actions

Chief Thompson stated he wanted to clear up the misconceptions presented at a City Council Meeting. The passing of Measure J, effective date July 1, 2005, sustained the operation of two fire stations for an estimated eight (8) years, with financial sustainability ending around June 30, 2013. Part of the eight (8) year plan was a known budget shortfall of approximately \$280,000 for fiscal year 2013/2014. There is a \$108,140 shortfall for Station 421 and \$131,562 shortfall for Station 422. In a salary comparison of Twentynine Palms firefighters versus the combat center, and San Bernardino County Fire, the salaries for Twentynine Palms is significantly lower, 36-43%, making them the second lowest paid in the county, behind Morongo Valley. Twentynine Palms offers 3% retirement at 55 while County Fire offers 3% at age 50 and at a higher pay scale. Covering most of the employee benefit costs is a perk given the low hourly rate, which in return saves in overtime pay. Chief Thompson pointed out, contrary to what was reported, there is no post employee benefits for Twentynine Palms firefighters. Chief Thompson further stated that all public agencies face an unfunded liability with CALPERS. If there is no additional funding, there will be a 50% service level reduction. This will balance the budget and add approximately \$200,000 to the fund balance for the 2013/2014 fiscal year.

Anna O'Hare, of Twentynine Palms, commented on Agenda Item #1 regarding Measure J and the eight year plan.

Reandy Leazer, of Twentynine Palms, commented on Agenda Item #1 noting the community cares about fire services but cut backs may be necessary.

Ben Holstrom, of Twentynine Palms, was in support of floating another measure and commented on Agenda Item #1.

Stephen Urban, of Twentynine Palms, stated the Board needs to do a better job supporting another measure and commented on Agenda Item #1.

Ed Vallerand, of Twentynine Palms, recognized the efforts the Board made to inform the public and commented on Agenda Item #1.

After discussion, the Board unanimously agreed that a joint meeting with the City would not be productive. Director Moore made a motion to stop the LAFCO application and retain the Twentynine Palms Fire Department, seconded by Director Chambers and approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Director Chambers, Cisneros, Moore, and Shinaver
Noes:	Director Bourikas
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

2. Consent Calendar
- Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on December 19, 2012
 - Audit List

Director Chambers moved to adopt the Consent Calendar, seconded by Director Cisneros and approved unanimously.

3. Items Removed From the Consent Calendar for Discussion or Separate Action
None

4. Department Reports

4.1 Fire Chief's Report

Chief Thompson reported the Department responded to 184 calls for assistance during December, bringing the total for the year to 2,399. There were two structure fire calls on the same day within 25 minutes of each other. The part time administrator will be leaving to relocate. Her last day will be March 1, 2013. Though that position has become an integral part of the department, there are no plans to fill it, resulting in a \$30,000 savings.

4.2 Finance Report

Ms. Byerrum, Financial Consultant, reported that Wayne is working on several issues with the auditors. The audit for fiscal year 2011/2012 is expected to be completed by next month. Operating expenditures, line items, repairs and maintenance costs are reflective of an effort to control costs. The projected fund balance is trending toward a positive outcome.

5. Closed Session – Conference With Labor Negotiators – Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6
Agency Designated Representative: Fire Chief Jim Thompson

Employee Organization: Twentynine Palms Professional Fire Fighters
IAFF Local 4266

Director Cisneros moved to enter closed session at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Director Bourikas and unanimously approved.


The Board returned to open session at 8:53 p.m. Director Moore announced that there was no reportable action.

6. Future Agenda Items and Staff Tasks/Directors' Comments and Reports

Director Chambers would like to see a five year financial plan presented to the Board by the Financial Consultant, Cindy Byerrum. Director Cisneros suggested that the five year plan be presented after the 2013/2014 budget to allow Ms. Byerrum an opportunity to get better acquainted with the District's finances. Director Moore would like to hold a workshop with the Fire Department on Monday, February 4, 2013, at 5:30 pm. Chief Thompson verified that cell tower revenue would be included on the workshop agenda.

7. Adjournment

On motion by Director Shinaver seconded by Director Cisneros and approved by the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.



Kerron E. Moore, President
Board of Directors

Attest:



Ray Kolisz, Board Secretary
Twentynine Palms Water District

APPROVED FEB 27 2013