



**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE TOWN OF CAREFREE
PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, MAY 26TH, 2021

WHERE: VIA ZOOM *

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

Members of the Public Safety Advisory Committee participated by technological or methods pursuant to §A.R.S. 38-431(4).

SILENT ROLL CALL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairperson - Leslie Hine
Vice Chairperson - Philip Henn
Sheila Amoroso
Peter Burns
Scott Peterson
Kim Taha
Anton Wilke

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Jerry Wetta

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

Rural Metro Fire Chief, Brian Gilbert; Daisy Mountain Fire & Medical Chief, Brian Tobin, Town of Cave Creek Town Manager, Carrie Dyrek; Dan Jarrett, David Hamilton, Cave Creek Deputy Fire Chief, Jim Ford; Carefree Rural Metro Fire Chief, John Kraetz; Attorney, Mark Robens (joined at 2:22); Carefree Rural Metro Fire Captain, Ryan Travis and City of Scottsdale Fire Chief, Tom Shannon.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Town Administrator, Gary Neiss; Town Clerk, Kandace French-Contreras and Administrative Assistant, Carrie Carter.

Call to Order: Committee Chair Leslie Hine, Town Administer, 8 Sundial Circle, Carefree AZ

Committee member Kim Taha **moved** to approve Agenda Item #1, submission of minutes of the May, 26th 2021, Public Safety Committee Meeting. There was a **second** by Committee Member Peter Burns. The motion **carried** unanimously.

Committee Chair Leslie Hine opened the meeting and introduced Jim Ford, Town of Cave Creek, temporary Deputy Fire Chief.

Deputy Fire Chief Ford is in essence, on loan from the City of Scottsdale to the Town of Cave Creek for at least a year. Ford provided an overview of his employment credentials and his current involvement with the Cave Creek fire program. Ford has been a resident of Cave Creek since 1975 and has served 30 years as the Deputy Fire Chief with Rural Metro and the City of Scottsdale, joining the Town of Cave Creek in 2020.

Mr. Ford continued to explain how the Fire Service Program functions in the Town of Cave Creek. Cave Creek operates on an individual voluntary subscription program between the residents and the businesses. Less than half of the Cave Creek residents are supporting the fire program.

Recently a sequence events including the Cave Creek Complex Fire, Buffalo Chip Fire, the East Desert Fire and the Ocotillo Fire caused major damage to residential homes and threatened several Cave Creek structures. These fires required extensive efforts from neighboring municipalities, resources, and fire equipment to protect Cave Creek.

Shortly after the Ocotillo Fire, the surrounding municipalities sent letters to the Town of Cave Creek, explaining that the Automatic Aid region was concerned with responses provided to the Town of Cave Creek with the assistance in recent fire aid. The letters collectively explained that unless the Town increases their level of fire service, the Town of Cave Creek may not receive the same level of service as previously provided. As a result, the Cave Creek Town Manager reached out to City of Scottsdale Deputy Chief Ford and asked Jim to review the Cave Creek Fire Program. Jim was tasked to research Cave Creek's Community impact on the Regional Automatic Aid System; identify the requirements needed to take part in the Automatic Aid System and the financial burdens associated with joining automatic aid; and lastly review community fire protection options such as establishing a master contract with Rural Metro; the cost associated with creating a new fire district; the amount of building a standalone fire house; and to review the expenses associated with developing a property tax for residents.

Deputy Fire Chief, Jim Ford researched the overall costs associated with a new fire service? The estimated cost which was presented to the Town of Cave Creek incorporated both the cost for startup and the costs to continue the fire program. The startup costs include 3 components:

- 1) A onetime capital costs, which includes: obtaining property and resources needed to acquire a fire station, fire apparatus, the initial dispatch center, the purchase of mobile and portable radios and PPE.
- 2) Annual cost and ongoing operational costs. These cost encompass staffing, payroll benefits and a 3 tier pension plan.
- 3) Funding and the revenue sources.

Deputy Chief Ford will continue to research how the Town of Cave Creek would fund a new fire program. Funding options include increasing the sales tax for public safety; create a public safety property tax – based on assessed value; a third option includes grant availability.

The Town of Cave Creek came decided to move forward with the intent of becoming part in Automatic Aid. To become part of the Automatic Aid program, the Town of Cave Creek has to take the required steps of

acquiring and developing a plan to become part of the Automatic Aid system, find facilities, identify budget options and future funding options, create a fire service number, initiated a preliminary contract with Automatic Aid providers, and Cave Creek has to take steps to reduce fire risks.

Deputy Fire Chief Ford further summarized Fire Protection Options presented to the Town of Cave Creek.

- Option One: Cave Creek can keep the current its current fire program as a voluntary subscription plan.
- Option Two: Cave Creek has the option to have a subscription service with Rural Metro.
- Option Three: Cave Creek can create a new community or a Fire District. In order to create a fire district, a community would need to turn over the taxing authority to a third party.
- Option Four: Cave Creek can install a standalone Fire Department
- Option Five: Contract for fire / ALS service with an Auto Aid Provider

Deputy Fire Chief Ford clarified the difference between Hazard Calls versus Existing Response Service calls and explained the impact on homeowner's insurance and insurance rates.

Mr. Ford further reviewed the requirements to join Automatic Aid as well as requirements and costs associated with the program. Some of these requirements include:

- Must be part of the Phoenix Fire Regional Dispatch System. This system automatically selects the closest, most appropriate dispatch unit.
- Must become part of the Phoenix Regional Wireless Cooperative Program
- Adhere to firefighter training standards
- Understand that members of Automatic Aid have a reciprocal agreement and does not ensure that jurisdictions will not always match the amount of aid given or received.
- Participants shall retain ownership of property and equipment used during a service call.
- An understanding that there isn't a reimbursement of services
- Life Safety Council

Mr. Ford explained the Tonto National Forest provides additional fire aid through the State of Arizona and the National Forest Service.

Explaining that there are several methods to calculate response times, these include the initial dispatch time, time to get out of the fire house, and wheels turning. In addition, he explained how the City of Scottsdale measures customer satisfaction. Jim described with each incident, crew members provide an independent survey. Additionally the Town regularly surveys the community residents who in turn provide feedback on a regular basis.

Committee Chair Leslie Hine thanked Deputy Fire Chief Ford for his presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.