



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

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, July 14, 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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Chairperson - Leslie Hine

NA

Vice Chairperson - Philip Henn

Sheila Amoroso

Peter Burns

Scott Peterson

Kim Taha

Jerry Wetta

Anton Wilke

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

Brain Gilbert, Dave Hamilton, David Maxwell, John Krajnak, and other members of the public.

Call to Order:

Town Administrator Gary Neiss opened the meeting by highlighting conversations with the City of Scottsdale, Cave Creek and Rural Metro. During a meeting with Carrie Dyrek (Cave Creek Town Manager) and Cave Creek Fire Chief, Jim Ford discussed plans to pursue a master contract with Daisy Mountain and potentially invest in at least one fire station and possibly creating a partnership with Daisy Mountain to construct a second fire station to on the west side of Cave Creek. Currently the Town of Cave Creek is in the process of evaluating revenue streams to fund a fire program.

Mr. Neiss had a follow up conversation with the Scottsdale City Manager, Jim Thompson and the Scottsdale Fire Chief, Tom Shannon. Both Mr. Shannon and Mr. Thompson explained they are very interested in servicing the Town of Carefree. Scottsdale would need to understand the level of service needed by the Town of Carefree. Additionally, Scottsdale requires the same level of service at each fire station within the City of Scottsdale city limits. If Carefree decides to partner with the Scottsdale Fire Service Carefree's service level must meet Scottsdale's service requirements. In addition the City of Scottsdale will determine the financial requirements associated with a Carefree/Scottsdale partnership.

Town Administrator Neiss had a follow up conversation with Chief Davis from Rural Metro. Rural Metro also expressed interest in partnering with the Town of Carefree and would offer a competitive rate. Rural Metro is committed to keep the Cave Creek fire station.

Agenda Item One: Approval of the Public Safety Committee Minutes from the June 16th, 2021.

Committee Member, Wilke requested to have "7 years" corrected to "4 years." Committee Member Wilke **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the June 16th Minutes subject to approved changes. Motion was **SECONDED** by Committee Member Henn. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Agenda Item Two:

Committee discussed highlighting the key insights and takeaways from prior presentations. Topics of discussion included (but were not limited to): Automatic aid vs Mutual Aid, Carefree's current fire program and financial standings, potential ways to fund a future fire program, the pros and cons of potential partnerships such as Rural Metro, the City of Scottsdale, and Daisy Mountain.

Committee Member Amoroso stated that she does not feel that Carefree has a true indication of actual costs associated with Automatic Aid. She also warned Carefree needs to prepare for a potential large event.

Committee Member Wilke called attention to the fact that there are three interested providers offering fire protection services to the Town of Carefree. Mr. Wilke feels strongly that Carefree is in good standings when it comes to ownership of emergency equipment and is positioned well as a low to moderate fire house.

Committee Member Wilke indicated that there is not enough revenue to service Carefree's existing fire program. He explained that the fire service contract will continue to increase in costs in the upcoming years. If Carefree decides to transition towards Automatic Aid, the Automatic will be a more expensive.

Geographically, Mr. Wilke believes the north portion of the Town would be a high risk area, if Carefree decides to pursue a master contract with the City of Scottsdale.

Additionally, Committee Member Wilke stated that weather conditions have an impact on fire prevention. He continued to explain that rain fall has decreased in the previous years. This has had a direct impact resulting hotter and dryer summer months. Committee Member Wilke would like to encourage the residents of Carefree to clean their properties and remove dry the brush to help prevent fire emergencies.

Committee Member Jerry Wetta explained that the Town of Carefree is currently in a better position than Cave Creek due to Carefree owning their own fire station and emergency equipment.

Committee Member Wetta believes the first course of action for the Town of Carefree will be to determine whether or not Carefree should sustain Mutual Aid or pursue Automatic Aid.

Mr. Wetta believes that an extension of Carefree's contract with Rural Metro would be the most economic option for the Town of Carefree. Committee Member Wetta continued to explain that a partnership with Daisy Mountain would not be beneficial for Carefree due the geographic location of the Daisy Mountain fire house. Mr. Wetta believes that the best automatic aid partnership for Town of Carefree would be the City of Scottsdale. One drawback of a master contract with an automatic aid partner is that Carefree will not have oversight to the level of service and costs and all decision making will be determined by outside governing entity.

Based on prior conversations with Fire Chief John Kratz, Jerry Wetta explained that the Rural Metro supports many emergency calls from the commercial buildings along Cave Creek Road within the Town of Cave Creek.

Mr. Wetta expressed the importance of Carefree potentially investing in a Brush truck. He explained that the brush truck can quickly mobilize from the fire station to the other side of Black Mountain and the to the North side of Carefree.

Vice Chairperson Henn feels the City of Scottsdale presents the best fire protection partnership for the Town of Carefree.

Mr. Henn expressed concern regarding the costs of Automatic Aid. Noting, the proximity of recent fires to the Town of Carefree and questions if Rural Metro has the capacity to handle a large fire and shared concerns surrounding Mutual Aid by explaining that fire protection is not guaranteed from neighboring communities.

Committee Member Henn expressed the need to invest in a new fire truck.

Phil asked the committee to propose a municipal sales tax increase of 2% to fund automatic aid.

Committee Member Taha explained based on Carefree's historical data mutual aid has always been an appropriate solution for Carefree. A transition into the automatic aid program is not necessary for Carefree at this point but appears to be the safest and most efficient course of action for the future. Ms. Taha pointed out that Carefree has utilized the Mutual Aid service 7 times in the last several years. Of those 7 calls, 2 of the calls were cancelled prior to the arrival for Mutual Aid assistance. Kim continued to explain that Carefree is not projected to experience enough future development growth to justify the cost associated with automatic aid.

Committee Member Scott Peterson expressed concerns surrounding the justification of potential rate increase, if Carefree decides to participate in Automatic Aid. Questioning, can the committee members successfully explain to the Carefree residents the reasons why Automatic Aid is better than Mutual Aid?

Mr. Peterson raised additional questions surrounding the pros and cons of partnering with neighboring community for fire service. Can Carefree independently participate in Automatic Aid (without a Master contract with another organization)?

Chairperson Hine noted that there are political ramifications associated with the selection of a neighboring community for a master contract. For instance, the fire program for the City of Scottsdale and Daisy Mountain are governed by their own governing boards. Additionally, Rural Metro is part of a large organization that oversees their fire program.

More recently Rural Metro has gone through a number of corporate changes and file for Chapter 11 in 2013.

Chairperson Hine believes it is important to pay attention to the Town of Cave Creek and follow close attention to how Cave Creek decides to navigate their fire program. It is also important for Carefree to produce an appropriate solution to protect all of Carefree's borders as well as future fire protection.

Ms. Hine would like to better understand the requirements associated with Carefree joining Automatic Aid and would be interested in having an assessment done to determine what equipment Carefree has in place, what is required for Carefree to join Automatic Aid and what is the gap?

The committee also assembled a list of the recommended components for the Town of Carefree Town Council.

Committee Member Burns noted, if Carefree decides not to transition to an automatic aid platform, Carefree would be an island surrounded by an ocean of automatic aid.

Mr. Burns expressed concerns for the west side of Carefree's border, if the Cave Creek Rural Metro fire house relocated to another location or was no longer housed in Cave Creek.

Committee Member Burns would like to better understand the expenses associated with each prospective partner as well as the ongoing operation costs.

Chairperson Hine surveyed the committee to gain a better understanding of their current standings. Currently, Committee Member Wilke is in favor of Automatic Aid; Committee Member Peterson is in favor of automatic aid, if the committee can justify the costs; Committee Member Wetta is in favor of mutual aid, Committee Member Amoroso is in favor of Automatic aid, with a price increase justification; Committee Member Taha is neutral and feels strongly that financial reports will have a significant impact on her decision making, and Committee Member Burns is in favor of automatic aid, but would like to see the cost analysis depicting the cost for Carefree to the separate organizations.

Chairperson Hine guided the conversation to discuss potential components of the 2021 Fire Report. Committee members discussed the importance of including a comparison of Automatic

Aid vs Mutual Aid. Additionally, the committee would like to include historical data and future projections for fire services in Carefree; call volume statistics, ways to improve response times and efficiencies; a breakdown of revenue costs and how to raise fire emergency funds and community outreach recommendations. Additionally, if the committee determines to pursue Automatic Aid, the committee will need to demonstrate why Mutual Aid is deficient.

Agenda Item Three:

Committee Chairperson Hine opened the meeting for questions, comments and or requests for future agenda items.

Agenda Item Four: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 pm.

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