

APPROVED MINUTES 11192024

**MINUTES
SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024
9:30 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Tim Wilmes

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, David VanderNaalt, Phil LaBarbera, Phil Griswold.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Fire Chief Rob Schmitz, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Casey, Human Resources Manager Lisa Neubert, United Sun Cities Fire Fighters Association (USCFFA) Vice President Brandon Crossno and Trustee Chris Marin.

BUSINESS CONDUCTED:

- I. Chairperson Wilmes stated this would be a presentation only of the 2024 Cooperative Services Study. Discussion on study results will be on the November 19, 2024, board meeting agenda. Clarification questions on the presentation can be asked at the end of the presentation.
- II. ESCI Managing Director Joe Powers gave a brief history of ESCI. ESCI was formed in 1976 and was acquired by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) in 2008. Originally employees of ESCI were contracted and many had full-time jobs with fire departments. In 2022, ESCI began directly employing ESCI employees rather than contracting with them.
- III. ESCI Senior Project Manager Chris Truty presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2024 Cooperative Services Study. This study used data collected from the Sun City Fire District, the Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, and the Buckeye Valley Fire District. Mr. Truty noted that at the time of the study compilation, Buckeye Valley Fire District had just joined the Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, but their data was collected separately as they had no shared data at that point.

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- IV. The project scope was to determine the benefits and risks of joining together with the Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, which consists of North County Fire and Medical District, South County Fire and Medical District, and Buckeye Valley Fire District.**
- V. The study gave an overview of general fire service partnering strategies such as: Mutual/Automatic Aid; Sharing Services (fleet, fire prevention, communications); Contractual; Functional Consolidation (Training, Administration); Operational Consolidation; Joint Powers Authority; Full Consolidation.**
- VI. The Study identified four challenges for the Sun City Fire District which were funding, manpower, hiring and retention, and mental health.**
- VII. The Study reviewed the demographics of all three entities including the following: population, area size, communities served, governance, schools, population densities, incident densities, call volumes, response times, operations, staffing, wages/benefits, and finances.**
- VIII. Mr. Truty reviewed three strategies presented in the study, which included staying status quo, joint powers authority (JPA) participation with AFMA, participation with other neighboring fire departments, and options for shared services.**
- IX. The study concluded with the pros and cons of joining with AFMA. The pros include AFMA being a larger organization, allowing more opportunities for personnel; greater organizational depth; slightly better wages/benefits; enhanced fleet services, and possible cost savings. The cons include shared governance; added board responsibilities; community character difference; challenging organizational assimilation; expansive segregated jurisdiction; BVFD assimilation in process; little operation benefit; and unknown costs. ESCI uses a rating scale of “0” (do not recommend) to “10” (recommend). ESCI’s recommendation for the Sun City Fire District joining with Arizona Fire & Medical Authority was 3.5.**
- X. Chairperson Wilmes opened the meeting up to follow-up questions on the presentation.**
- XI. Board member Phil Griswold asked why the study looks at the 90th percentile. Mr. Truty stated that using the 90th percentile eliminates outliers versus averaging, which includes outliers in the data. He also asked about how ESCI got the school numbers for the district. Mr. Truty stated that they use America Community Survey, which provides data for school age people in communities.**
- XII. Chairperson Wilmes asked where the data for apparatus and equipment condition came from. Mr. Truty stated the information was submitted by each agency for their respective apparatus and equipment.**
- XIII. Chairperson Wilmes asked about what is meant by the “commitment factor scale.” Mr. Powers stated this factor evaluates the overall workload of the system. The ideal commitment factor range is 16% - 24%. At this range, firefighters get to eat, sleep, train, etc.**
- XIV. Board member LaBarbera inquired about the years of data used. The year range was 2018 through 2022. At the time of the study, data for 2023 was not available. Board member LaBarbera asked about the challenges of mental health. Mr. Powers stated this was a growing issue for many departments and our department is likely to see more of**

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this in the future. Chief Schmitz noted that the timing of the data was around the same time as the passing of Firefighter Shane Godbehere.

- XV. Chairperson Wilmes asked that a copy of the PowerPoint presentation be shared with the department. Mr. Powers said that copy would be emailed to Chief Schmitz.
- XVI. Board member Phil Griswold made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 a.m. Board clerk Stephen Arnold seconded the motion. The board voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 a.m. (M: Phil Griswold/S: Stephen Arnold) Vote – Aye: Tim Wilmes, Stephen Arnold, David VanderNaalt, Phil LaBarbera, Phil Griswold. Nay: None. Abstain: None.)

FOR THE BOARD

Stephen Arnold

**Stephen Arnold
Clerk of the Board**

SA/lbn