



ARIZONA FIRE & MEDICAL AUTHORITY GOVERNANCE AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS / AFFIRMATION OF QUORUM

Committee Chairman Becker called the meeting to order on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at 3:14 p.m. at the **Arizona Fire & Medical Authority Administrative Office, 18818 N. Spanish Garden Drive, Sun City West, Arizona 85375**. The meeting was held virtually.

Members Present: Committee Chairman Bill Becker, Committee Vice Chairman Tony Sambol and Committee Member John Crawford

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Fire Chief Rob Biscoe, Assistant Chief Mary Dalton, Assistant Chief Chris DeChant, Acting Finance Director Coaleen Poland, and Authority Clerk Dusty Christopherson

Legal Counsel: Legal & Intergovernmental Affairs Director Lee Miller

Public Comment: None

Media Present: None

Guests Present: North County Fire & Medical District Board Members Richard Bookie, Dawn Miller, and James Young

2. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Elect Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Governance and Legislative Committee.

Committee Member Crawford nominated Bill Becker to serve as Chairman of the Governance and Legislative Committee.

Mr. Becker accepted the nomination.

There were no further nominations.

Committee Member Becker nominated Tony Sambol to serve as Vice Chairman of the Governance and Legislative Committee.

Mr. Sambol accepted the nomination.

There were no further nominations.

Vote conducted. **MOTION CARRIED.**

AYES: Becker, Crawford, Sambol
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

B. Approve Governance & Legislative Committee Minutes – November 12, 2019.

Committee Member Crawford moved that the November 12, 2019 meeting minutes be approved. Committee Chairman Becker seconded the motion.

Vote conducted. **MOTION CARRIED.**

AYES: Becker, Crawford
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: Sambol

C. Receive updates on current Legislative Session.

Mary Dalton, Assistant Chief, provided the Committee with an update on the legislative bills in process for the current Legislative Session. Those bills include:

1. House Bill (HB)2381 and Senate Bill (SB1214) – relating to PSPRS, local board consolidation.
2. House Bill (HB)2440 and Senate Bill (SB1442) – relating to hazardous vegetation removal.
3. House Bill (HB)2455 and Senate Bill (SB1298) – relating to fire districts pension liability.
4. House Bill (HB)2506 – relating to workers compensation rates and cancer presumptions.
5. House Bill (HB) 2802 – relating to ambulance services and service areas.
6. Senate Bill (SB) 1334 – relating to fireworks and aerial devices.
7. Senate Bill (SB) 1351 – relating to fire district administrative and governance statutes.
8. Senate Bill (SB) 1373 – relating to health facilities and duty of care.
9. Senate Bill (SB) 1450 – relating to workers compensation special fund to create a fund to reimburse cities for best practices in firefighter cancer prevention.
10. Senate Bill (SB) 1605 – relating to workers compensation, physicians, public safety.
11. Senate Bill (SB) 1659 – relating to fire district annual budget summaries.

D. Discuss proposed Certificate of Participation legislation.

Lee Miller, Legal & Intergovernmental Affairs Director explained Senate Bill (SB) 1298 and House Bill (HB) 2455 to the Committee stating that these mirror bills both have a singular purpose, to authorize fire districts to refinance their existing Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) unfunded liabilities (debt). If passed, the bills would authorize the Authority to utilize existing statutory lease-purchase authorization for unfunded pension liability purposes. They do not authorize the Authority to exceed or override current tax levy limits, spending limits or the tax rate cap. Pension debt refinancing is repaid through the Authority's maintenance and operating budget. The bills would provide for fixed rate debt repayment at an interest rate lower than the rate at which unfunded liabilities accrue at PSPRS (currently 7.3% annually).

Under current interest rate conditions, the Authority could refinance their unfunded liabilities at an interest rate of less than 3%. This provides for substantial tax savings over the term of the repayment period.

An emergency clause is proposed for both bills for all fire districts to take advantage of the current low interest rate environment.

E. Discuss CARES ACT/COVID funding opportunities.

Mr. Miller stated that as the Federal government takes up consideration of a new wave of CARES Act funding it is important for special districts to lobby their representatives to write in the bill's language that special districts are to be provided funding directly. The current legislation provides this funding to the County level, and then the County has the responsibility of distributing this funding appropriately throughout their jurisdictions. This leaves special districts, and mostly fire districts, at the mercy of the County Board of Supervisors for relief funding.

Staff is seeking the Governance and Legislative Committee's support for letters of advocacy to be sent by the AFMA Governing Board to the elected leaders at the House and Senate level to urge them to name special districts as funding recipients directly in this next CARES Act funding round.

Committee Member Crawford moved that the Governance and Legislative Committee recommend the Arizona Fire & Medical Authority Governing Board send letters of advocacy to local elected leaders at the House and Senate level in support of CARES Act funding being made directly to special districts. Committee Chairman Becker seconded the motion.

Vote conducted. **MOTION CARRIED.**

AYES: Becker, Crawford, Sambol
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None

F. Discuss potential Tonopah area incorporation

Fire Chief Robert Biscoe informed the Committee that a group in the Tonopah area has formed to explore options of incorporating the Tonopah area. At this point, Assistant Fire Marshal John Teixeira (former Tonopah Valley Fire District Fire Chief) is serving on the Committee in an advisory role only. This will allow AFMA to stay abreast of the situation as events unfold. The feasibility of such a proposal is still unknown.

3. **SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR FUTURE GOVERNANCE AND LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDAS**

There were no items suggested.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.



Bill Becker, Chairman
AFMA Governance and Legislative Committee