

# NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT



Governing Board

Program Appraisal

for the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year

In partial or complete fulfillment of the following CFAI Criterion and Performance Indicators (core competencies identified in **bold**): **1A.1**, **1A.2**, 1A.3, 1A.4, 1A.5, 1A.6, 1A.7, **9C.3**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Governing Board of the Northwest Fire District is legally established to provide governance and oversight of the District specifically as it relates to policy, approved programs and services, and appropriated financial resources. The Board achieves this through resolution or via the budget process. The Governing Board is comprised of five non-partisan members who are elected by registered voters who reside within the District. The five-member Board complies with Arizona Revised Statute § 48-803, which provides for a Governing Board to manage a fire District, and Arizona Revised Statutes § 48-805 and 48-805.02 which require the Governing Board to meet monthly and as part of its duties to prepare an annual budget.

## **DIVISION PURPOSE**

The Governing Board serves the District's mission to "save lives, protect property, and care for our community" by providing sound, ethical, and legal governance and oversight of programs and financial resources in support of a sustainable future for the District.

## **DIVISION ADMINISTRATION**

The Governing Board is comprised of five Northwest Fire District residents who are elected or appointed pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes § 48-802, 48-803, and 48-805. Board members are elected for a term of four years. Governing Board officers must include a Chairman and a Clerk and may include a Vice-Chairman. Current Board members include Chairman George Carter, Vice-Chair Cyndell West, Clerk Peg Green, Member David Talas, and Member Bruce Kaplan. Administrative support is provided to the Governing Board by the Executive Management Administrator.

## **COMPLIANCE STATUS WITH FEDERAL/STATE/LOCAL REGULATIONS AND CODES**

The Governing Board strives to maintain compliance with legal requirements in local, state, and the federal government. To ensure compliance with Open meeting laws, legal counsel is present at every Governing Board meeting. Open meeting law training is provided to the Governing Board, Executive Staff (Fire Chief, Assistant Chiefs, and Business Services Director), and select Administration Services staff members to ensure compliance.

## **INTERNAL PROGRAMS**

The Governing Board periodically reviews and approves programs and services at regularly scheduled monthly Governing Board meetings. At these meetings, staff may present items for review, discussion, and possible approval of new or updated policies and programs. The Governing Board generally indicates its endorsement of programs by approving a resolution affirming their acceptance of the program and/or

by providing funding to the programs. This oversight is continuous and appropriate for reviewing programs and ensuring compliance with District policies.

## **CURRENT AND NEEDED MEASURES**

### **CURRENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

N/A

### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN DEVELOPMENT:**

N/A

## **CURRENT DIVISION GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND STATUS**

N/A

## **STRATEGIC PLAN CRITICAL TASKS DISCUSSION**

The Governing Board is kept apprised of the status of the Strategic Plan through quarterly written reports and an annual presentation. The Board participates in Strategic Plan development, is responsible for formally adopting the plan, and provides input throughout the life of the plan.

## **CURRENT ISSUES**

N/A

## **UPCOMING FISCAL YEAR GOALS/OBJECTIVES – INCLUDE RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS/OBJECTIVES AS APPROPRIATE**

There is no Board election scheduled for FY25/26.

Should a bond election be necessary, the costs associated with the election would be charged to this division's budget.

## **TRAINING**

### **CURRENT YEAR TRAINING ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR DIVISION STAFF**

Board Members Carter, West, and Green were re-elected in 2024 and therefore required by Arizona Revised Statute § 48-803 to complete at least six (6) hours of specific professional development training within one year after the date of election or appointment. Carter, West, and Green are scheduled to complete the training in FY25/26.

## UPCOMING FISCAL YEAR COMPLIANCE RELATED TRAINING NEEDS

The three Governing Board members who were re-elected in 2024 will be required by Arizona Revised Statute § 48-803 to complete at least six (6) hours of specific professional development training within one year after the date of election or appointment. The training must include education on open meeting laws, finance and budget matters, laws relating to fire District governance, and other matters that are reasonably necessary for the effective administration of a fire district. The training must be compliant with Arizona Revised Statute § 48-803(I). This training is offered by the Arizona Fire District Association. Training funds are included in the FY25/26 budget to comply with this requirement.

In 2021, legislation was adopted requiring newly elected or appointed Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) Local Pension Board members complete local board training as prescribed by the board of trustees, including open meeting laws, ethics, legal review and fiduciary responsibilities and duties within 180 days after appointment or election [Arizona Revised Statute § 38-847(C)]. Training funds are included in the FY25/26 budget to comply with this requirement.

## UPCOMING FISCAL YEAR JOB TASK RELATED TRAINING NEEDS

Governing Board members may elect to attend semi-annual conferences hosted by the Arizona Fire District Association which provide professional development opportunities that align with Governing Board member roles and responsibilities. Local Pension Board members may elect to participate in various online and in-person training opportunities offered by PSPRS.

## PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT

THE PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT CONSISTS OF THE CURRENT ACCREDITATION CORE COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS THAT DESCRIBE, APPRAISE, AND LIST A PLAN FOR YOUR DIVISION. THESE CORE COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ALONG WITH THE CURRENT ISSUES IDENTIFIED, ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING UPCOMING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

## CFAI STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS: N/A

### **Category 1: Governance and Administration**

*For purposes of this category, governance is defined as the recognition of the authority that allows an organization or agency to legally form and operate. In fulfilling this responsibility, the legal entity that oversees this formation process reflects the public interest, protects the agency from undesirable external interference, determines basic policies for providing services, and interprets the*

*agency's activities to its constituency. Administration is defined as the activities that carry out the implementation of the policies established by the authority having jurisdiction. In fulfilling this responsibility, the agency or organization carries out the day-to-day operations.*

*The legal entity and governing authority define the duties and responsibilities of the agency in an official policy statement. An organization's charter or local or state/province general statutes likely contain an agency's official policy statement.*

*The chief executive or chief fire officer should provide staff leadership in developing policy proposals for the legal civil authority having jurisdiction so those officials can take action to implement public policy based upon knowledgeable input from public safety leadership. Keeping an elected Governing Board and/or high-ranking individual informed on all matters affecting the agency and delivery of emergency services is the primary responsibility of agency leadership.*

*It must be recognized that other organizations participate in the governance of the agency, such as the state/provincial and federal governments through legislation, regulations, and funding procedures, and other organizations through associations and bargaining units. The Governing Board coordinates all of these diverse interests to set the direction of the agency.*

*The agency administration exercises responsibility for the quality of the agency through an organized system of planning, staffing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating. The agency administration is entrusted with the assets and is charged to uphold its mission and*

*programs, to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, and to provide stability and continuity.*

*For many volunteer fire service organizations, the Governing Board is within the municipal or county government and is the executive/legislative body for municipal or county governance, some elected directly by the public, such as special Districts. In the absence of a municipally appointed Fire Chief or chief executive officer, for purposes of accreditation, the duly elected or appointed volunteer Fire Chief shall be the individual responsible for the criteria and performance indicators.*

*In many city or county municipal organizations a separation of powers exists that give the governing body legislative responsibility while giving administrative responsibility to a strong mayor or city manager. The chief fire officer/chief executive officer in such organizations generally reports directly to the mayor, manager, or designee. It is vital that the leadership of every agency understands who sets the*

*policy for the government structure they are working in and their role in implementing that policy.*

### **Criterion 1A: Governing Body**

*The governing body and/or agency manager is legally established to provide general policies to guide the agency, approved programs and services, and appropriated financial resources.*

#### Summary

On October 18, 1983, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 1983-244, which recognized the five members who made up the Northwest Fire District's original Governing Board. Arizona Revised Statute § 48-803 provides for a Governing Board to manage a fire District. Arizona Revised Statutes § 48-805 and 48-805.02 require the Governing Board to meet monthly and as part of its duties to prepare an annual budget. The Governing Board, through resolution or via the budget process, reviews and approves policies or services provided by the District.

#### **CC 1A.1 The agency is legally established.**

##### Description:

On August 23, 1983, an election pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute § 48-261 was held for the purpose of creating the Northwest Fire District (NWFD). On October 18, 1983, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 1983-244, which declared that a majority of the votes cast in the election were in favor of forming the Northwest Fire District; and that the Northwest Fire District was duly organized and legally established; and furthermore, recognizing the boundary as described in the resolution.

##### Appraisal:

ARS § 48-261 provides the requirements for the legal formation of a fire District in the State of Arizona and charges the Board of Supervisors of the County with the responsibility to verify compliance with this statute, which they did, in the affirmative, with Pima County Resolution No. 1983-244.

##### Plan:

Based on the action taken by the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the Northwest Fire District's plan is to continue exercising the District's authority to exist and operate.

## References:

Arizona Revised Statute § 48-261

Pima County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 1983-244

**CC 1A.2 The agency has a methodology in place for recognizing and reacting to changes in legal requirements of local, state/provincial and federal governments (i.e., inspection reports, regulatory references, meeting minutes and legal opinions).**

## Description:

The District's methodology for recognition and compliance with the ever-changing legal requirements of local, state, and federal government includes education, utilization of subject matter experts and industry-specific associations, and internal monitoring of legislation that impact District operations and policies. Locally, the District is partnered with various organizations such as the Pima County Fire Chiefs Association (PCFCA) which allows state and county officials to address fire districts and relay changes in county requirements or state law requirements and the Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA), which provides weekly legal and legislative updates applicable to the District. These legislative updates are reviewed and discussed weekly by Executive Staff and archived in the office of the Fire Chief. The District also retains the services of legal counsel whose scope of work includes staying abreast and informing the Fire Chief and Executive Staff of legislative issues that may affect the District. In FY22/23, the District onboarded Lexipol and completed a new policy manual, thereby formalizing the inclusion of current legal requirements in all District policies in the Lexipol platform which allows for tracking and versioning.

## Appraisal:

The District's methodology for recognizing and reacting to changes in legal requirements included a multi-pronged approach. The District partnered with various subject matter experts and industry-specific associations to maintain awareness regarding impactful changes in legal requirements. All members of Executive Staff receive a weekly fire service bill tracking list from AFDA. The list of pending legislation is discussed at least weekly in formal scheduled Executive Staff meetings, action items regarding the pending legislation are assigned by the Fire Chief as needed and documented on a follow-up list to be reviewed at each subsequent meeting, and a hard copy of the list is archived in the Fire Chief's office. The Fire Chief attended monthly meetings of the PCFCA during which impactful



legislation and rule changes were presented and discussed. He then conveyed pertinent information from those meetings in the weekly Executive Staff meetings.

To ensure the District complied with open meeting laws, legal counsel reviewed all Governing Board and Pension Board agenda packets prior to publication and was present at every Governing Board and Pension Board meeting. Open meeting law training was provided to the Governing Board and Pension Board members, Executive Staff (Fire Chief, Assistant Chiefs, and Directors), and select administration services staff members to ensure compliance with meeting minutes and other legal requirements. AFDA tracks education compliance by elected Governing Board members and Fire Chiefs and provides the District with confirmation of educational requirement satisfaction.

The District onboarded Lexipol and completed a new policy manual. These policies are being approved and implemented incrementally each month. One of the most attractive features of the Lexipol product is that state and federal legal requirements are monitored by their legal team and District policies are updated as these changes occur. The system is version controlled and tracked through audit logs, reducing the chance that the organization could miss a legislative change, fail to revise a policy, or fall short notifying all employees within the organization of a change.

#### Plan:

The District will continue to ensure compliance with open meeting laws by having legal counsel review all Governing Board and Pension Board agenda packets prior to publication, having legal counsel present at every Governing Board and Pension Board meeting, and providing open meeting law training to Governing Board members, Pension Board members, Executive Staff, and select administration services staff. The Fire Chief will continue his membership and participation in the PCFCA, and the District will continue its membership with AFDA. Executive Staff (including the Fire Chief and Medical Director) will continue to meet weekly to discuss impactful legal changes and develop plans for addressing such changes. The District will maintain its relationship with Lexipol, incorporating legal requirements into policies as they are released.

#### References:

Arizona Revised Statute § 38-431.01

Pima County Fire Chiefs' Association (PCFCA) Invoice

Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) Invoice

Confirmation of Governing Board members' completion of required education

AFDA Fire Service Bill Tracking List Example

**1A.3 The governing body of the agency periodically reviews and approves services and programs.**

Description

In alignment with the District's bylaws, the Northwest Fire District's Governing Board meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. At these meetings, staff may present items for review, discussion, and possible approval of new or updated policies and programs.

If there is a change in federal or state law that affects a District personnel policy or requires a policy to be created, the document is presented to the Governing Board in a timely manner to ensure compliance. The Governing Board generally indicates its endorsement of programs by adopting a resolution affirming their acceptance of the program and/or by providing funding to the program. The Board is provided with ongoing updates of programs in formal presentations to the Board and through monthly reports included in the agenda packet.

Appraisal

The oversight provided by the District's Governing Board was continuous and appropriate for reviewing and approving services and programs and ensuring compliance with agency policies. Legal counsel was present at every meeting and the Governing Board had the option, in certain circumstances, to meet in an executive session to seek legal advice or discuss confidential matters. Regular updates of programs and services were given to the Board in the form of written reports and formal presentations.

Plan

The District has no current plans to change its monthly meeting schedule with its elected officials and will continue to look for best practices to improve Governing Board meetings. District staff will continue to provide regular reports on programs and services to the Board and Board approval for new programs will continue to be required for implementation.

References

2025 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

## Northwest Fire District Bylaws

### Governing Board Agenda Packet example

#### **1A.4 The role and composition of various policymaking, planning and special purpose bodies are defined by the governing body in an organizational chart.**

##### Description

The Governing Board has transferred the authority and responsibility of policy making, planning, and oversight of special purpose bodies to the Fire Chief. The District's organizational chart illustrates direct reports to the Governing Board, which includes legal services, the Fire Chief, and the Bond Committee (when one is in service). An organizational chart depicting the reporting relationship of the Leadership Committee, and all associated work groups is included in the Leadership Committee Procedure.

##### Appraisal

The District's organizational chart represented the various bodies and roles that were defined through contract agreements, job description(s), and the Governing Board bylaws. The organizational chart was updated as changes occurred by the District's Administration Services staff. The organizational chart was reviewed for accuracy by the Fire Chief and direct reports to the Fire Chief at least monthly. Validation of the organizational chart and structure takes place during the strategic planning process with other strategic documents such as the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and Standards of Cover (SOC). During the strategic planning process, updates were made to the organizational chart to represent any changes that had occurred.

##### Plan

The District will continue to revise and maintain the personnel and Leadership Committee organizational charts as updates occur. The Executive Management Administrator will remain responsible for making day-to-day updates and the Fire Chief and his direct reports will review the organizational charts for accuracy at least monthly.

##### References

NWFD Organizational Chart

Northwest Fire District Bylaws

## Leadership Committee Procedure

### **1A.5 The governing body or designated authority approves the organizational structure that carries out the agency's mission.**

#### Description

Under Arizona Revised Statute § 48-805, the District's Governing Board may employ personnel to provide services deemed appropriate by the District. The Board delegates authority to the Fire Chief including the responsibility of managing the organizational structure through the Northwest Fire District's bylaws and the Fire Chief's job description. Hence, reviewing, updating, and staffing to meet the needs of the organizational structure of the District is one of the functional responsibilities of the Fire Chief as stated in the Fire Chief's job description. Approval of structural organizational changes lies with the Fire Chief.

#### Appraisal

The District's organizational chart reflected the organizational structure of the District. Governing Board approval of the District's organizational structure was manifested in the District's Strategic Plan and annual budget submittal. As positions and needs changed within the District, the Fire Chief had the authority and responsibility to revise the organizational structure. If the change had a significant impact on the budget, the Fire Chief provided the Governing Board with justification for the change and sought their approval for the change and subsequent funding.

#### Plan

The organizational chart will be kept current to reflect the organizational structure of the District. Governing Board approval of the District's organizational structure will continue to be manifested in the District's Strategic Plan and annual budget submittal. As positions and needs change within the District, the Fire Chief will exercise the authority and responsibility to revise the organizational structure. If the change has a significant impact on the budget, the Fire Chief will provide the Governing Board with justification for the change and seek their approval for the change and subsequent funding.

#### References

Arizona Revised Statute § 48-805

Northwest Fire District Bylaws

Fire Chief Job Description

NWFD Organizational Chart

NWFD Strategic Plan 2024-2029

**1A.6 The governing body adheres to an approved conflict of interest policy that is applicable to the Governing Board members and staff.**

Description

Article 8 “Conflict of Interest of Officers & Employees” of the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 38, and the Northwest Fire District policy 7.8 “Conflict of Interest/Outside Employment” both prohibits and defines courses of action for conflict-of-interest concerns. Newly elected Governing Board members are required to attend an orientation meeting during which they are educated on statutes that govern elected officials, including conflict of interest training.

Additionally, legal counsel is present at all Governing Board meetings and can advise Board members of potential conflicts of interest issues. For employees, there is a District personnel policy that covers conflicts of interest. Staff is required to complete a conflict of interest disclosure upon employment and must review and update the form at least annually.

Appraisal

The Northwest Fire District took the steps necessary to educate and provide annual review, as appropriate, of professional activity outside the District for its Governing Board, officers, and employees to prevent engagement in actions that may expose them to any conflict of interest with their public service.

Plan

The Northwest Fire District will continue to monitor changes in state law and, per policy and procedure, will continue to provide direction and evaluate the actions of all elected officials and employees to ensure there are no errant or willful conflicts of interest. Newly elected Board members will continue to receive education pertaining specifically to conflict of interest. Newly hired staff members will continue to be required to complete a conflict of interest disclosure. All District staff will continue to be required to review and update their conflict of interest disclosure at least annually.

References

Arizona Revised Statutes § 38, Conflict of Interest of Officers and Employees

NWFD Policy, Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest Form

**1A.7 A communication process is in place between the governing body and the administrative structure of the agency.**

Description

Article 5, Section 4, of the Northwest Fire District's bylaws requires the Governing Board to meet monthly. If events require, the District's bylaws allow for special or emergency meetings to be called. The purpose of these regularly scheduled monthly meetings is to share information between the elected officials, the District's administration, and the public. Regular contact was made between members of the Governing Board, the Fire Chief, and Executive Staff. Discussions often took place regarding upcoming Board meetings, governance issues, and other items of substantial public interest (i.e., taxation, bond elections, annexations). Communication took place regularly between members of the Governing Board, NWFD administrative staff, and NWFD Labor representatives outside of scheduled Board meetings, as well as regular communications with the public that were fielded by NWFD's Community Relations and Public Education Services Manager.

Appraisal

Each Board meeting followed an agenda, and an agenda packet was prepared and delivered to the Board members at least three days prior to the Board meeting. The Board packets were posted to the District's website and the agenda was posted in four public locations (Station 331, Station 334, the Nanini Library, and Northwest Fire District's Administration Building). Included in the Board packets were reports from the Fire Chief and each of the District's division heads to keep the elected officials abreast of programs, activities, and current projects occurring in the District. All meetings were open to the public and provided opportunities for members of the public to address the Board. Special committees formed by the Governing Board could also communicate activities, progress, or concerns to the Board at this time. Governing Board members were free to contact, by phone or email, the Fire Chief and District staff at any time to ask questions. The Governing Board met 100% of the time. Special meetings were also held when urgent matters arose. Special meetings were often scheduled during the budgeting process.

Plan

The Fire Chief will continue to informally check in with each Board member to ensure he/she is receiving sufficient information and communication from him and his staff utilizing the current process. Additionally, District employees will provide feedback and suggestions on the process through their chain of command. Members of the public will continue to be offered an opportunity to provide input at Board meetings or by contacting the Northwest Fire District. If there are any signs the process is not working, internally or externally, the process will be reviewed and modified by legal counsel, District staff, and the Fire Chief with input from the Governing Board.

## References

Northwest Fire District Bylaws

2025 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

Governing Board Agenda Packet example

## **Category 9**

**CC 9C.3 Organizational documents, forms, standard operating procedures or general guidelines, and manuals are reviewed at least every three years and updated as needed for all agency programs.**

## Description

NWFD's organizational documents, specifically District policies (reviewed annually through Lexipol), procedures, standard operating guidelines, and manuals (reviewed at least every three years and updated as needed), are reviewed and up to date. All known "critical" forms essential to the mission of the District are also reviewed at a minimum of a three-year interval. The District's contract with Lexipol was to ensure policy and procedure reviews are completed on the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) models review schedule.

## Appraisal

The District's policy and procedure review methodology using Lexipol is working well to meet the agency's needs. Agency membership worked with Lexipol contractors in 2022 to migrate all NWFD policies and SOGs into the platform. To not inundate the Fire Board, business services staff is bringing batches of policies through the monthly Fire Board meetings for approval. The Knowledge Management System (KMS) by Lexipol was deployed to membership in January 2023 following the 2022 policy review and revamping process. The current SOG manual is being incorporated into the

Lexipol procedure section for rollout once the policy portion is approved and reviewed by members.

The Lexipol service provides data and tracking of policy and procedure employee reviews, legislative compliance, and organizational review/revision reminders to ensure that NWFD has notified the members of all policies and procedures, that NWFD has met federal and state compliance, and that the CPSE review requirements for policies (every year) and procedures/other critical documents (every three years) are met.

#### Plan

The District plans to finish the development of the new organizational documents within Lexipol and will evaluate once the project is complete.

#### References

Sample of Lexipol policy review and revision



## FINANCE BUDGET DEPARTMENT ID:

Department Finance ID #	Department(s)
1215	Governing and Pension Board

## ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

\$172,990

## PROGRAM ECONOMIC EFFICIENCIES IDENTIFIED DURING PREPARATION OF PROPOSED BUDGET

N/A

## CAPITAL ITEM REQUEST DISCUSSION

N/A

## LINE-ITEM DISCUSSION

After several years without an appropriate inflationary increase, budget line 100-1215-52195-000 Election Costs was increased from \$52,000 to \$100,000. This increase is necessary to cover the cost of forming a Bond Committee and beginning work on a possible upcoming bond election.

## PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET

Account	Account Name	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Adopted Budget	2025-26 Proposed Budget	Variance	Comment
<b>1215 - Governing &amp; Pension Board</b>						
52139	Operational Equipment	\$ 1,420	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -	
52140	Operational Supplies	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ -	
52141	Uniforms	\$ -	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ -	
52170	Travel & Per Diem	\$ 818	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ -	
52177	Meals & Entertainment	\$ 571	\$ 440	\$ 440	\$ -	
52180	Training	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,650	\$ -	
52195	Election Costs	\$ 407	\$ 52,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 98,000	Bond Election Expenses
52240	Health Services	\$ 5,900	\$ -	\$ 5,900	\$ 5,900	Medical Retirement IME
52260	Legal	\$ 765	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -	
<b>Total Governing &amp; Pension Board 1215</b>		<b>\$ 10,981</b>	<b>\$ 69,090</b>	<b>\$ 172,990</b>	<b>\$ 103,900</b>	

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, TABLES, CHARTS, ETC

N/A

## REFERENCES

N/A