

NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT



Our Mission is to Save Lives, Protect Property, and Care for Our Community

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NWFDaz.gov



Governing Board Study Session Minutes June 11, 2024

1. Call to Order / Roll Call / Affirmation of Quorum

Present: Peg Green, Clerk
Bruce Kaplan, Board Member

Excused: George Carter, Chairman
Cyndell West, Vice Chair
Dave Talas, Board Member

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Clerk Green led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Public Forum

Speakers are limited to a three-minute oral presentation and may submit written comments of any length for Governing Board files. Those wishing to address the Governing Board should complete a Citizen Information Card prior to the meeting being called to order. The Governing Board is required under law to accept any materials presented. At the conclusion of the public forum, individual Board Members may respond to criticism made by those individuals who have addressed the Governing Board and may ask staff to review a matter and place it on a future agenda. However, Board Members may not discuss or take action on a matter raised during a call to the public, that is not already on the agenda, and are not obligated to comment upon materials or presentations made by the public.

No members of the public requested to speak.

4. Business

- A. Discussion and Study Regarding the Development of the Northwest Fire District 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. Discussion Might Include All of the Following Planning Topics: the Strategic Planning Process, District Goals, Self Assessment, Resources and Resource Allocation

Assistant Chief of Administration Services, Scott Hamblen, greeted the Board and stated that the intent behind the Study Session was to review the work that had been done towards the development of the Northwest Fire District 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. Hamblen explained that the previous Strategic Plan covered four years whereas the new Strategic Plan covered only three years which would allow the District to adapt quickly given the ever-changing needs of the District and the community it served. Hamblen noted that the 2024-2027 differed from previous plans in that it would contain goals, objectives, and critical tasks. He explained that the critical tasks attached to each objective would be measurable and ensure that each objective was met to its completion.

Hamblen began the presentation by reviewing how the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan was developed including previous meetings that were conducted with internal and external stakeholders. Hamblen stated that prior to the Study Session, members of the District had participated in a strengths, weakness, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) analysis and developed proposed

objectives for the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. He explained that the External Stakeholder Meeting conducted on June 3, 2024, allowed members from the community to provide feedback on the development of the plan. Hamblen noted that the District had purchased new software for Strategic Plan tracking and reporting and that the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan would likely not be ready for adoption by the Board in July.

Hamblen reviewed the outcomes of an effective Strategic Plan which included the following:

- It provided a road map to show where the District was going and how it would get there.
- It facilitated a process that resulted in the best allocation of resources that provided the most benefit for taxpayers.
- It proved an opportunity to question the status quo.
- It identified the District's potential through the identification of its strengths and weaknesses.
- It built a shared, mission-based, vision that was accountable to the community.
- It ensured that employees and other stakeholders were working toward common goals, intended outcomes, and results.
- It created a frame of reference for annual budget development.

Hamblen stated that the Strategic Plan was also a requirement of accreditation. He reviewed several accreditation measures which included performance indicators and core competencies that the District had to consider and/or implement year-over-year to maintain its accredited status. Hamblen noted that the main tenant of accreditation was that of continuous improvement, something that the District modeled daily. He stated the accreditation process, along with continuous improvement, resulted in increased performance transparency, knowledge sharing, and employee involvement.

Hamblen reviewed the District's mission to "save lives, protect property, and care for our community" and stated that he had asked for feedback from District members and community members on how the mission resonated with them. He stated that there was resounding support from both internal and external stakeholders, and all felt that it was meaningful and succinct.

Hamblen reviewed the Vision of the District, "exemplary leadership and performance in our community", and stated that although there had been discussion on the verbiage and effectiveness of the Vision, it was still impactful to the members and external stakeholders. Chief Bradley noted that the main confusion lied with the word "exemplary". Hamblen then reviewed the District's core values and stated that the values were critical to every aspect of the organization. He stated that the members upheld the core values daily and that the external stakeholders were impressed by the values and how the District lived up to them.

Hamblen reviewed each aspect of the social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, and ethical (STEEPLE) analysis and how it impacted the organization and the Strategic Plan. Hamblen stated that through the STEEPLE and SWOC analyses, goals and objectives for the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan were created.

Hamblen reviewed Goal One and its objectives in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. He explained that Goal One in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan was administratively based whereas Goal One in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan reflected both administrative and operational aspects of the District.

Goal 1: Innovate to provide the highest quality services to meet our mission.

- A. Integrate and invest in community risk reduction programs, recognizing our community's crucial role in ensuring appropriate support and engagement to prevent emergency response.**
- B. Review, analyze, and define the scope of Emergency Medical Services to meet present and future needs, including providing for BLS transport.**
- C. Collaborate through automatic aid to enhance a region-wide response system while reducing redundancies.**
- D. Document and standardize the data analysis processes incorporated into every division, assuring our commitment to thoroughness and accuracy, emphasizing accreditation, ISO, and annual reporting requirements.**

E. Evaluate emergency management functions to ensure collaboration, partnerships, and critical redundancies are all accounted for.

Hamblen noted that Objective A addressed a recommendation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) Peer Team and that the objective aimed to capture the impact of community risk reduction programs already in place by the District. Hamblen explained that Objective B drove the District forward to prepare for potential changes in how the District provided emergency medical care. He stated that Objective C addressed automatic aid which, although already in place, could always be improved upon. Hamblen stated that Objective D's intent was to standardize the data analysis processes across the organization.

Hamblen reviewed Goal Two and its objectives in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 2: Enhance and promote the organization's mental, physical, and occupational health, wellness, and safety.

- A. Identify and implement processes and procedures to demonstrate compliance with OSHA 1910.156 – Emergency Services proposed rule.**
- B. Research, develop, support and promote programs, initiatives, and opportunities for mental health support to all team members.**

Member Kaplan asked how the proposed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rule would affect reaccreditation. Hamblen stated that once the rule was finalized between OSHA and Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH), the Health and Safety Division would ensure that the District was in compliance, but those measures were still unknown. Chief Bradley noted that the proposed OSHA rule mirrored many accreditation standards that were already in place by the District. He added that the proposed rule encompassed many different parts of the organization, but that the District was in a good place. Hamblen explained that the intent of Objective B was to provide additional mental health support to District members.

Hamblen reviewed Goal 3 and its objectives in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 3: Demonstrate responsible and transparent stewardship of organizational resources.

- A. Achieve the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.**
- B. Evaluate and identify opportunities for revenue diversification.**
- C. Evaluate current systems and processes to ensure that inventories and asset management are current, relevant, and accurate.**
- D. Provide technology infrastructure that is reliable, interoperable, secure, and relevant.**
- E. Evaluate and identify opportunities to streamline efficiencies in all areas of the organization.**

Hamblen noted that Objective A was in support of an additional award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and was also beneficial for accreditation. He stated that Objective B entailed additional revenue sources such as bonds, grants, and other revenue aside from normal tax collection. Hamblen explained that Objective C aimed to evaluate current inventory processes across each Division to find efficiencies and/or gain a better understanding of each process in place. He stated that Objective D was similar to a goal in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and was included as an objective in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan to enable the Technical Services Division to continue keeping the network secure and reliable. Hamblen explained that Objective E allowed the District to continuously find new and innovative ways to gain efficiencies across the organization.

Hamblen reviewed Goal 4 and its objectives in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 4: Strengthen recruitment, development, and retention of an engaged workforce reflective of the organization's community and core values.

- A. Elevate our recruitment processes to attract, engage, and retain professionals who embody our values and contribute to our organizational goals.**
- B. Enhance the professional development framework that fosters continuous learning, growth, and skill enhancement for all employees across the organization focusing on cultivating leadership capabilities, technical expertise, and soft skills essential for success in their current roles and future career aspirations.**
- C. Sustain an environment where employees feel deeply engaged, valued, and fulfilled, leading to high satisfaction levels and long-term commitment to the organization.**
- D. Ensure the organization's benefits package remains competitive while also reflecting our workforce's unique values and preferences.**

Hamblen noted that the entire goal aimed to address the current challenges with recruitment and retention for new and current members of the District. He stated that Objectives A and B were related to professional development for members of the District and that the District was continuing its effort to provide equal professional development opportunities for suppression and civilian personnel. Hamblen explained that Objective C addressed the retention efforts of the District so that members continued to feel valued. He stated that Objective D was also aimed at retention efforts by providing the highest quality benefits and compensation package to members of the District.

Hamblen reviewed Goal 5 and its objectives in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Goal 5: Develop and execute strategies for overseeing the organization's future growth by leveraging partnerships and engagement with community collaborators and stakeholders.

- A. Establish a Benefits Trust to provide transparency and oversight of the organization's self-insured benefit plan.**
- B. Establish a Bond Committee to provide informed recommendations to the District for future bond elections.**
- C. Evaluate the potential for mergers and consolidations at any point where the community and agencies involved benefit.**
- D. Evaluate community growth from annexations and development to forecast the need for additional stations and apparatus to maintain exceptional service delivery throughout the District.**

Hamblen explained that when Goal 5 was presented to the external stakeholders, the initial opinion of the external stakeholders was that it was a goal strictly aimed towards District benefits with no relation to the community. Hamblen further explained that through subsequent discussion, there was a mutual understanding that the goal was created with the community at its center.

Member Kaplan asked for Hamblen to elaborate on the Benefits Trust from Objective A. Hamblen stated that a Benefits Trust may be statutorily required due to the District's self-insured benefit plan and would provide oversight for the benefit plan. Member Kaplan clarified that it was an internal monitoring source rather than an external source. Hamblen directed the question to Business Services Director, Kim Sotomayor, who stated that the Benefits Trust would be comprised of a group of individuals who would have oversight of the self-insured plan and may be statutorily required based off the size of the county that the District resided in. Member Kaplan asked whether each member of the Benefits Trust would be internal, or if there would be external members of the Trust like that of the Pension Board. Sotomayor explained that the Benefits Trust would be comprised of internal and external members and that there were several requirements for setting up a Benefits Trust which the District's benefits broker would assist with.

Hamblen reviewed that last slide of the presentation which displayed the names of the community members that were present for the external stakeholder meeting and the results of the question, "when you think of NWFD, what descriptive words come to mind?" which showed that the most common word provided was "professionalism". Hamblen stated that community members provided great feedback and had nothing negative to say about the District.

Board Clerk Green asked how the external stakeholder members were selected. Hamblen stated that the District sought to have a diverse group of community members present at the meeting ranging from business owners to community partners to residents so that it could gain different perspectives. Clerk Green asked if the community members were invited by the District or if they asked to join the meeting. Hamblen stated that each community member was invited by the District.

Hamblen asked for feedback from the Board regarding the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. Clerk Green asked if there was a grace period for fulfillment of the changes associated with the proposed OSHA rule since it could be costly. Hamblen directed the question to Chief Bradley who stated that historically, if a change couldn't be implemented immediately, OSHA required that a plan be submitted for how the standard would be met over time. Clerk Green asked if the changes were specific to the fire service and/or emergency medical services only. Chief Bradley answered in the affirmative.

Member Kaplan stated that he had nothing critical to add and that the process of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan was laid out in a much more succinct way than previous years. Kaplan stated that he felt the Plan was very achievable and understandable and that it would provide the public with a better understanding of who the District was and what it did in the community. He stated that he appreciated the efforts of the staff and liked how it tied into other facets of the organization. Clerk Green agreed with Member Kaplan and stated that she understood it more than prior Strategic Plans. Chief Bradley noted that the only things left to add to the 2024-2027 plan were the critical tasks associated with each objective which would make it slightly less succinct, but very granular and would better enable the District to link the Strategic Plan to the budget. He added that the critical tasks allowed the organization to be even more transparent and better performing.

Member Kaplan stated that the easy part was developing the plan, and the hard part was executing it. Chief Bradley agreed and added that since the Strategic Plan was a living document, it could be adapted as needed. Hamblen noted that the critical tasks would largely be for internal members and may not be as well understood by community members. Member Kaplan asked if the Strategic Plan document would still be printed. Hamblen stated that in the past it was printed, but the District hoped to utilize the new strategic planning software so that it could be accessed on the website and be the most up-to-date version of the Strategic Plan available. Chief Bradley added that it could be printed as needed for presentations and/or meetings.

Clerk Green and Member Kaplan thanked staff for their efforts and stated that the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan was very good. Chief Bradley asked that the Board continue to provide feedback and guidance on the Strategic Plan throughout the entirety of the Plan should they feel goals or objectives needed modified or added to.

5. **Future Agenda Items**

A Governing Board Member May Bring Forth General Topics for a Future Meeting Agenda. The Governing Board May Not Discuss, Deliberate or Take Any Action on the Topics Presented, Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02 (H).

6. **Adjournment**

MOVE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:50AM

Motioned by Clerk Peg Green, seconded by Board Member Bruce Kaplan

Vote: 2 – 0

Peg Green
Board Clerk

Two Board Briefing Books containing material related to the Board Meeting are available for public review the day before and the day of the Board Meeting during office hours at the Administration/Prevention and Safety Office located at 13535 N. Marana Main Street, Marana, Arizona 85653 – (520) 887-1010. The two Board Briefing Books are also available for public review at the Board Meetings.

The Northwest Fire District Board may vote to go into Executive Session on any agenda item pursuant to ARS §38-431.03 (A)(3) for discussion and consultation for legal advice with the Fire District Attorney on the matter(s) as set forth in the agenda item. Pursuant to Board Policy, from time to time, it might be necessary for a Board Member to attend a Board meeting via speakerphone.

The Northwest Fire District Training Facility is accessible to persons with disabilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), those persons with special needs, such as large-type face print or other reasonable accommodations, may request those through Heather Robey, by calling 887-1010, ext. 2929, before the meeting.

Posted _____