

NEWS FLASH



CDO ASKS FIRE DISTRICT BOARD TO EXPLAIN BEFORE TOMORROW'S VOTE HOW DISTRICT WILL UTILIZE 5-YR PLAN

On Monday, June 1st, Mescal J-6 Fire District Board will consider adopting a 5-year plan.

At first read of the draft, it became apparent that our CDO Board did not understand how the document describing construction of new fire station buildings, additional new trucks, etc. would be utilized by the District. One recurring line was troublesome: Adjust tax-rate as necessary.

In a letter to the Fire District Board, CDO included the following:

“It is clear that we do not have an understanding how the 5-year Plan will be utilized by the Fire District and how significant it might be in driving tax-rate adjustments. An explanation before the vote for adoption would be greatly appreciated. We are all aware that Firefighters have had to do so much for so long with so little - but with our tax bills hitting very soon in a depressed economy, we all need to have a better idea how the pieces fit together.

We are aware this is new territory for you, the Fire District, as well as us, the community. As we learn more about how tax rates are reviewed, restructured, and assessed - how public is involved, we will be more comfortable with the process. This is a learning curve for us all - but be assured, we all have the same goal to provide and protect the vital service that you provide for the community.

Sincerely,

Mary McCool, Chair for the
J-6/Mescal CDO Board”

Chair Terri Jo Neff , speaking for herself, responded that no discussion has happened between the Board Members to raise the fire district tax that is based upon property owners' home valuations. She also stated that she believes the language of the proposal that will be presented to the Board on Monday will have some changes from the draft version of the operational plan.

Although Chair Neff expressed her opinion, we would like to know specifically how the F.D. Board, collectively, will utilize this plan.

Board discussion and adoption is tentatively scheduled for the June 1st meeting, 6:30 at Fire Station 1 on Warren Street in Mescal. CDO encourages the public to hear the information first hand. A written summary will be provided in our next issue.

Excerpts from the Draft Plan are included on page 2.

Chair Neff's response referred to the .7% rate posted in the original Impact Statement:

“The first year tax rate for the Mescal-J6 Fire District will be 0.7% or \$0.70 per \$100 of the total full-cash net assessed value. It is also the intent of the Organizing Board that the tax rate not be increased by more the .5% per year for each of the next three fiscal years.”

The Assessor uses 10% of the Full Cash Value for assessment purposes.

Also, at the Monday Fire District Meeting, the process for adopting the 2009 Annual Budget will be clarified and the date announced for the Public Hearing. The hearing date will be legally posted and a copy of the budget made available upon request.

PAGE 2 NEWS FLASH UPDATE: EXCERPTS FROM DRAFT FIRE DISTRICT 5-YEAR PLAN

2009

- 1) Purchase a new 3500 gallon tender to replace tender 4 and satisfy ISO)
- 2) Purchase new Rescue Truck or Rescue Pumper to replace old Rescue 1
- 3) Purchase structure gear to replace aging gear
- 4) Research location for future Station 1
- 5) Get multi gas detector
- 6) Apply for equipment and communications grant through FEMA
- 7) Research how Arizona Tax Research Association HB1421 & HB1422 will affect the District's ability to proceed with future projects and personnel employment

2010

- 1) Purchase structure gear to outfit all remaining firefighters
- 2) Look into plans, building codes, financing for future station 1
- 3) Budget for Thermal imaging camera for structure engine
- 4) Put new digital repeater for dispatching purposes and to improve comms
- 5) Repave asphalt at Station 2
- 6) Pour concrete at helipad
- 7) Replace barn at Station 2 with new metal building
- 8) Have a minimum of two inspectors on the district roster
- 9) Adjust tax rate as necessary

2011

- 1) Start Construction on new Station 1
- 2) Purchase new brush truck to replace brush 5
- 3) 15-20 new SCBA's (grant, or purchase)
- 4) Put full-time (4-6) personnel on Monday-Friday with pension and health Insurance
- 5) Research cost of full-time personnel 24/7
- 6) Apply for SAFER grant for full-time personnel 24/7
- 7) New roof for Station 1. Insulate the building provide heat and AC
- 8) Adjust tax rate as necessary

2012

- 1) Put on full-time personnel 24 hrs a day (12 personnel)
- 2) Research grant opportunities for a possible Heavy Rescue truck with Benson FD for Rescue team
- 3) Move into new fire Station #1
- 4) Adjust tax rate as necessary

2013

- 1) New Brush truck to replace Brush 3
- 2) Research getting a Fire Chief's vehicle (grant, donation, purchase)
- 3) Adjust tax rate as necessary