

MORONGO VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
11207 OCOTILLO STREET. MORONGO VALLEY, CA 92256

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

6:00 p.m. Regular Business

DECEMBER 3, 2021

Conference via "Zoom"

Call: 1 (669) 900-6833 Meeting ID: 876 2605 4238 Password: 819434

<https://morongocsd.specialdistrict.org/>

Public input/questions will be conducted through Microsoft Forms which can be found on our website under the "Board Meetings" tab. The Morongo Valley CSD is in alignment with the Order of the Health Officer of the County of San Bernardino for the Control of COVID-19 dated April 23, 2020, and still in effect.

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A. CALL TO ORDER

The Special Board Meeting of December 3, 2021 was called to order at 6:02 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

1. Gayl Swarat, President, **Present**
2. Kristina Brook, Vice President, **Present**
3. Laurie Klimowicz, Director, **Present**
4. Johnny Tolbert, Director, **Present**
5. Christina Gorke, Director, **Present**

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Tolbert.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Board of Directors now takes time to consider your comments on items which are on the agenda. The President will recognize you at the appropriate time to assist in the orderly and timely conduct of the meeting. When called upon to speak, please state your name and residence. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes or less. If you wish to comment on an agenda item or non-agenda items during Public Comment, fill out the form on our website, or raise your hand. There will also be a one (1) minute Public Comment period before each agenda item.

Matthew Campos – I have been a resident for 18 years. I've had the privilege of serving on the board. In my opinion we're at a position where the question is where do we go from here and I think it's a pretty simple suggestion that since we have Mr. Yearsley already retiring and we have a couple of people that are willing to step in and pick up on the position of interim Fire Chief an interim general manager. I think these two people are extremely capable they've been doing the job in Jim's case hundreds of years and Brittany has definitely been working in the office with the CSD for several years now I think a very nice solution would be to thank Mr. Yearsley

for his service, congratulate him on his retirement then pay him out for the month of December and let Mr. brakebill and Ms. Chavez take over and start hiring, start building back better.

Jacob Samu – hi my name is Jacob Samu. I've been attending these meetings pretty much ever since your guy's possible closure of the fire department. I want to bring up the fact Chief Yearsley retiring patch on December 31st. So, I'll am the one to ask why a Fire Chief job is there not posted you have less than now a month to find someone. I'm just curious why that is. So that tells me right off the bat that he has no intention of leaving because you can pull a retirement that's easy to do. So, I have a feeling that this whole thing, saying he's going to retire, is not going to happen and that this temporary closure is just another way for him to stay. If he's retiring, why not leave now there's perfectly capable people who can take the positions right now and yet there's not even a Fire Chief job posted yet and on top of that closing the fire department and accepting county's proposal you guys are willing to wait 15 to 20 minutes more of a response time. Every minute counts. I'm also curious why Cal Fire was never contacted. I asked this during the last meeting and Gary did not want to answer thank you Director Tolbert for having him answer that question because he did not want to answer it. I just don't see why he's still here. You have people who's willing to take a position hand it over to them. There have been four people applying for these positions and I am one of those people. I've applied, I am certified, but somehow up there he's not getting the applications or he's just saying and deeming everyone unqualified there seems to be something else going on behind the scenes and it needs to be addressed

Karen Lowe – hi everybody I'm Karen Lowe I've been a Morongo Valley resident for 20 years and I just found out that we're having a lot of issues and it's always an issue in our small town that information doesn't tend to get out completely until everything kind of blows up. So, I just would like to say that if there's something so serious going on that we're looking at possible closure of the fire department even on a temporary basis that you know we should make an attempt to pull the community in and get all the correct information out so that we can all participate in this process so that's my comment. I have heard a lot of things in the last couple of days that a lot of unhappiness is going on in the fire department, which I think is a concern to all of us. Thank you.

Vanessa – hi I'm sorry I got in a little late I was struggling to find the zoom link I'm wondering if it would be helpful for everyone here especially the people who just joined to get a two-minute summation of the entire issue at hand starting from the beginning and going to the end so that we can get all starting from the same context because I think we're all joining this conversation at different points. Thank you.

President Swarat – Okay, thank you Vanessa. So, one last chance at this point you will also have a chance after the whole session when we start talking about the old business which is the fire department staffing concerns and options. So, is there anybody else who would like to speak?

Ryan Barrier – hi my name is Ryan I'm a Battalion Chief for Palm Springs fire department, so I've got an extensive history in the fire department. I'm actively involved in leadership and management within the fire service, before you guys go to closed session, I would urge you guys not to make a drastic decision today. I just found out about all the meetings as well as found out about the fact that we are even addressing staffing options and other concerns of that nature. The problem that I see right now is that the community at large is really just now finding out about it certainly there is a myriad of options that we have, and I would highly encourage you guys not to make a harsh or drastic decision at any point in time and certainly not today so for now that's all I have.

Doug Nichols – 461 is my team I know they struggle with pay and hours they are good guys. I would hope to preserve that.

E. CLOSED SESSION – 6:20 PM

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

[Government Code Section 54957(b)(1)]

Title: Director of Operations

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT/APPOINTMENT

[Government Code Section 54957(b)(1)]

Title: Director of Operations / General Manager / Fire Chief

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Significant Exposure to Litigation [Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)}

One potential case

F. ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPORTABLE CLOSED SESSION ACTIONS – 8:46 PM

Steve Kennedy – During the Board meeting closed session the following was decided:

- Item #1 – the staff is to provide the number of applications received during the month. No other reportable action.
- Item #2 – an ad hoc committee composed of Director Klimowicz and Director Tolbert to help find a Director of Operations. Chief Brakebill will step in as interim Director of Operations while Yearsley retires.
- Item #3 – the board has instructed legal counsel to be further described by Director Brook to create a contract with county without layoffs. This agreement would be run through the Union.

Director Brook – our goal has always been to have our own Fire Department none of us have ever wanted to close the Fire station that why the motion to close it was not seconded. We need to have the time to hire. We heard your concerns and wanted to come up with other options. We will meet with the Union to get their opinions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jacob Samu – I have a question, so will the county contract to respond cost the CSD any money? *Director Brook – that will be negotiated. Okay, but it will cost something, correct? Director Brook – in all likelihood yes. We probably will not be getting absolutely free services for having them here and then another question is for people who have already applied, should we reapply?*

Matthey Campos – will the Director of Operations be divided into two positions back to the General Manger and Fire Chief? *President Swarat – not at this time, we are going to see what applications we get for Director of Operations.*

Vanessa – thank you I just wanted to let you guys know what was going on while you guys were in closed, session. About 55 of us were on here talking about the issues and our concerns. We are united in our goals for the department. I volunteer Bryan to break them down for everyone.

Bryan – hi everyone, you know we had some good chats the last two hours while you guys were discussing and deliberating your decisions. I don't know if I can surmise everything that we talked about other than we as a community certainly are more involved now than it seems like we have been in the past. I appreciate your allowing us to have these conversations and keep you guys up late the last two nights we've had these meetings. But I think we've heard it all before we hashed it out today but what we wanna know from you is what's the long-term solution? What are you guys going forward doing? who's reviewing the applications coming in. *President Swarat - that will be Mr. Brakebill.*

G. OLD BUSINESS

1. FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING CONCERNS AND OPTIONS

This was discussed between the Board of Directors and the community.

H. INDIVIDUAL DIRECTOR REPORTS

1. President Swarat - Thank the firefighters working tirelessly. Thank you to Kennedy and Mr. Yearsley.
2. Vice President Brook - I appreciate everyone. This is not easy.
3. Director Klimowicz - Nothing at this time.
4. Director Tolbert - Thanks everyone. We have another ad hoc meeting this coming Sunday. Thank you to the Fire Department and Brittany.
5. Director Gorke - Thanks everyone.

I. ADJOURNMENT - 10:12 PM

Moved: Director Brook Second: Director Tolbert Vote: 5-0