



Amended Draft # One
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE TOWN OF CAREFREE
PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, JULY 28th, 2021
WHERE: VIA ZOOM *
TIME: 1:30 P.M.

Members of the Public Safety Advisory Committee participated by technological or methods pursuant to §A.R.S. 38-431(4).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairperson - Leslie Hine
Vice Chairperson - Philip Henn
Sheila Amoroso
Peter Burns
Scott Peterson
Kim Taha
Jerry Wetta

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Anton Wilke

Chairperson Hine opened the meeting at 1:32 pm.

Agenda Item #1: Approval of the minutes of the Public Safety Advisory Committee dated July 28, 2021.

Committee Member Wetta **MOVED TO APPROVE** the July 28, 2021 minutes, as corrected. **SECONDED** by Committee Member Burns. **CARRIED** unanimously.

Agenda Item #2: Approval of the minutes of the Public Safety Advisory Committee dated August 11, 2021.

Committee Taha **MOVED TO APPROVE** the August 11th, 2021 minutes. **SECONDED** by Vice Chairperson Henn. **CARRIED** unanimously.

Chairperson Hine asked the attendees to share their experiences of the Rural Metro tour of the Carefree Fire Station. Committee Members Burns, Peterson, Taha and Wetta toured the local fire station. All participants acknowledged the fire stations had an impressive collection of fire equipment and it was clear to them that the equipment was well maintained and the overall operation of the fire house was well managed.

Committee member Peterson asked those who attended the tour, if they received insight pertaining to the replacement of the fire truck or an indication of a fire truck upgrade.

Town Administrator Neiss explained that Carefree's fire truck was a product of the American La France Company. This company went out of business, making it challenging to locate the necessary parts to repair which is the primary motivation to acquire a new fire truck.

Chairperson Hine asked Mr. Neiss to provide an overview of his recent dialogues with Rural Metro, Daisy Mountain and the City of Scottsdale.

Mr. Neiss began by highlighting his discussions with the Town of Cave Creek. He explained that Cave Creek is interested in joining Automatic Aid. Similar to Carefree, Cave Creek has expressed interest in owning their assets, with the possibility of contracting out the labor. In addition, Cave Creek is in the process of executing a lease/ purchase agreement to acquire the Cave Creek Rural Metro Fire Station.

Mr. Neiss also provided an overview of his encounters with Rural Metro. Rural Metro remains interested in maintaining a fire house on the west side. As a short term solution, Rural Metro will need to relocate their current operations to the Carefree Fire Station. Rural Metro has asked to enter a short term lease with the Town of Carefree to relocate the Cave Creek engine company to the Carefree Fire Station. In general, Rural Metro will pay Carefree a monthly rent in the amount of \$5000.00. Additionally, Rural Metro is also looking to maintain an ambulance on the West side of Black Mountain. An agenda item to authorize the Mayor to enter into a short term lease will be presented in next Town Council meeting.

Mr. Neiss then continued to provide an update on the Request for Proposals (RFP) from the various providers.

- The City of Phoenix explained that they are not interested in entering contract negotiations with either Town of Carefree or Cave Creek.
- Chief Shannon (Scottsdale) and Chief Tobin (Daisy Mountain) explained that they are not interested in responding to a RFP process.

Both entities feel that they have provided Carefree a cost overview, which outlines the startup costs and future costs. They determined, should Carefree enter into an Automatic Aid agreement, Scottsdale and Daisy Mountain may revisit negotiation options.

Mr. Neiss shared results of Carefree's 2020 revenue stream. He explained, due the shutdowns caused by COVID, Mr. Neiss originally projected up to a 20% loss in sales tax revenue. Fortunately, Carefree encountered a nearly 36% increase in sales tax revenue (equating to an approximate, \$4.87 million).

Mr. Neiss also explained, when reviewing potential revenue streams for the Town of Carefree, it is necessary for the committee to take into account the State Shares Revenue (which

amounts to 25% of Carefree's annual revenue). The State Shared Revenue are impacted by constant changes in legislation which may impact reallocation of the state shared revenue. Additionally, state shared revenue are impacted by the per capita statistics (which will reduce over time) resulting in an unreliable source of revenue.

Agenda Item #3: Discussion regarding committee member's thoughts and recommendations on level of service and funding options to offset increasing costs and emergency services.

Chairperson Hine presented a draft of a summary to guide discussion points, organize material and begin structuring a fire solution proposal for Town Council. Committee Chair Hine emphasized that this was a summary draft and it is a work-in-progress. This draft summary will continue to evolve into a final document, which will be presented to the Town Council.

The first item on this draft summary focuses on the positives and negatives Automatic Aid vs. Mutual Aid. The second portion breaks down funding options available to the Town of Carefree to support the fire and emergency service program. Chairperson Hine invited the committee members to discuss the pros and cons of automatic aid vs mutual aid. Collectively the committee members provided feedback and recommendations for the Pros and Cons list of Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid.

Town Administrator Neiss explained if Carefree decides to enter into an Automatic Aid contract with Scottsdale or Daisy Mountain, timing is an element to consider. Currently, there are multiple scenarios at play. For instance, if Daisy Mountain decides to serve the Town of Cave Creek, is there a possibility to Daisy Mountain would consider servicing Carefree? Will Cave Creek build multiple fire stations? If so, how will the locations of the fire houses impact Carefree?

Committee Member Peterson asked Mr. Neiss when the committee will need to present a proposal to the Town Council.

The Committee discussed the timeline needed to implement a potential property tax. It was explained that a potential property tax initiative will need to be on the ballot in May. In order to meet this timeline, the question to consider a property tax would have to be decided by the Town Council by mid-December. Ballot language then would be needed to be presented to the County in early January. Most importantly the Town will need to invest a significant amount of time educating the community on the structural deficit, as well the difference between automatic aid vs mutual aid.

The group discussed PROS and CONS of the sales tax and revenue funding options for the fire program.

Committee member Amoroso provided a high level overview of the options to fund a fire program:

1. Complete funding through a sales tax – has the potential to alter consumer spending habits and adversely impacting businesses.
2. Implementing a property tax will be more complex but benefits and cost are aligned.
3. Combination of a property tax and a sales tax- maybe a more stable option and can enhance the fiscal position of the Town.

Chairperson Hine and the group discussed the table on page six of the draft summary, which depicts a comparative analysis of Rural Metro, Daisy Mountain and the Scottsdale Fire Department. Committee members collectively reviewed the chart and expressed their insights, suggested revisions and recommended criteria.

The Committee concluded by discussing, language, potential motions and recommendations the Committee will want to use in the presentation to Town Council. Based on feedback presented by the Committee, Chairperson Hine suggested that part of the recommendations to the Council can be the option to proceed with a short term solution (anywhere between 1 to 4 years). In the meantime, the committee can review additional options as a long term solution.

Chairperson Hine plans to create a second version of the report. She invited the committee members to reflect on the draft, work-in-progress summary report and weigh in through email of be prepared for a second round and discussion during the September 8th meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

