

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of The Common Council of The Town of Clarkdale
Held on Tuesday, January 6, 2004, in the
Clark Memorial Clubhouse, Clarkdale, Arizona.**

A Special meeting of the Common Council of the Town of Clarkdale was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in the Clark Memorial Clubhouse, Men's Lounge, 19 N. Ninth Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.

Town Council:

Mayor	Michael Bluff
Vice Mayor	Ellie Bauer
Councilmember	David Leibforth (absent)
	Rex Williams
	Tom Groom

Town Staff:

Town Manager	Gayle Mabery
Town Clerk	Joyce Driscoll
Interim Fire Chief	Don Eberle
Dist. Coordinator	Beth Escobar
Finance Director	Coleen Gilboy
EMT	Chris Vredevelde

Others in Attendance:

Mike Westcott, Fire District Organizing Board, Dan Gurnsey, Fire District Organizing Board, Fred Haymen, Fire District Organizing Board, Doug VonGausig, and Jerry Wylie.

CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Bluff called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and noted that Councilmember Leibforth was absent. Councilmember Groom made a motion to move the meeting to the Ladies Lounge. Vice Mayor Bauer seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting moved to the Ladies Lounge.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

2. **WORKSESSION** - **A worksession to discuss issues related to the formation of a Clarkdale fire district.**

Discussion began with the review of proposed tax rate charts. One chart showed estimated rates and values with the proposed Mountain Gate subdivision being built and the other left out the subdivision figures. The charts also assumed a 5% increase in valuations every year, which is a conservative number as compared to the 7% that the town has seen in the last few years. Discussion followed regarding the use of using the 1.62 tax rate for Fire District to use for the first year. After the first year it will be up to the district board to set the taxes much in the same way as the town does on an annual basis. It was noted that if growth occurs and valuations go up, this rate might be able to sustain revenue for the first few years. If Mountain Gate subdivision does not build the rate would need to be more like 1.80.

Discussion followed regarding how much staff the district should hire in the first year and if the Fire Chief should work a shift in order to reduce the number of positions initially, saving costs. Discussion continued regarding how the personnel wages were estimated in the proposed budget. It was noted that each person budgeted for in the proposed district budget has a specific job and specific training and that it would be a challenge to have a position with shared jobs.

Town Manager Mabery noted that the fire department is not currently in the Public Safety Retirement System like the police department is. She suggested that the fire department join this, and if a district is not formed, this will be something the town will be looking into.

Interim Fire Chief Eberle stated that he feels that the 1.63 number is "doable".

Councilmember Groom expressed his concern that there will be a large jump in taxes the second year the district is in existence if the rate is not adequate. It was noted that the fire district would need to make that decision in the future.

Discussion continued regarding staffing needs for the district vs. the tax rate and salability of the district to the public.

The Clarkdale Fire District Organization Board members stated that the two-persons-per-shift allowed in the proposed district budget was the absolute minimum and that NFPA currently recommends four-man crews. With two personnel on duty per shift volunteers must still be depended on for working a fire. The consensus was however, that in any major event assistance is going to be needed through the mutual aid agreements with other departments.

Discussion continued regarding staffing and the proposed tax rate. Staggering the hiring of captains, with the last one being hired in November 2005, was discussed. Interim Fire Chief Eberle stated that he felt this phasing and the 1.62 rate will work.

Discussion followed regarding the fire department assets. It was discussed that the citizens have already paid for the assets once and that it would not make sense for the district, therefore the citizens in the district, to purchase the equipment from the town.

It was noted that the district will be formed in July, but will not have revenue until October. In the interim the board may need to contract with the town to operate the department until October. Another suggestion was for the district to obtain financing until October.

The consensus of the council was to use the 1.64 tax rate, with the understanding that the hiring of the captains will be phased. This enables the district to have adequate funding in the event that the Mountain Gate subdivision does not get built.

The towns current tax rate was discussed. This rate is currently 1.13. Staff listed three priorities, which need funding, but for which funding has not been available. These are: The hiring of a police detective; the funding of police cars (2 per year); and going back to having a full 1% of sales tax going to the streets fund. To keep enough taxes to fund these items a tax rate of .71 would need to be retained.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of each of these three items. It was noted that the .71 rate did not include Mountain Gate property tax revenues. It was noted that the town could only increase its property tax rate 2% per year so it is important to not estimate too low.

The time line for the formation of the fire district was presented.

3. ADJOURNMENT - With no further business before the Council, and without objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

APPROVED:

Michael Bluff, Mayor

SUBMITTED:

Joyce Driscoll, Town Clerk