

MINUTES OF TONTO BASIN FIRE DISTRICT
JOINT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING BETWEEN
TONTO BASIN FIRE DISTRICT & PINE-STRAWBERRY FIRE DISTRICT
Special Session
February 11, 2026

Call to Order: This special session joint Board Meeting held between Tonto Basin Fire District (TBFD) and Pine-Strawberry Fire District (PSFD) was called to order at 1300 hours by TBFD Chairman John France at Payson Fire Station #11, 400 W. Main St., Payson, AZ.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by John France.

Roll Call of Board Members: The following TBFD Board Members were present: Chairman John France, Clerk Brian Nail, Secretary/Treasurer Robert Cooper, Board Member Ilene Hailey, and Board Member Clifford “Cliff” Metz.

The following PSFD Board Members were present: Chairman Robert (Bob) Papke, Clerk David Burkhart, Board Member Bob Bennett, and Board Member Melvin Palmer.

Also Present: Chief James Stoltenberg.
Interim PSFD Chief Paul Voakes.
Marylin Bennett
David Bolla, Payson Roundup
Jarrett Cline via Zoom

New Business Discussion/Information: Proceeded regarding a potential contract for a 6-Month Interim Intergovernmental Shared Services Agreement for the Fire Chief’s Services between Tonto Basin Fire District (TBFD) and the Pine-Strawberry Fire District (PSFD) as presented by Chief Stoltenberg. The Chief reviewed the proposed contract changes that were made following the Special Joint Meeting on February 4, 2025. These changes included:

- Added line items 5 and 6 to Section 2 under the PSFD’s Responsibilities and Obligations on page 2. These line items were specific to the PSFD vehicle usage and maintenance. Line item 6 was also removed from Exhibit A.
- Replaced verbiage on page 3 under Section 2 to ensure consistency with the PSFD Board by-laws.
- Removed the word “solely” under Section 5, Duties, page and cleaned up the language to ensure that the Chief works under the guidance of the Boards.
- Added the mailing address, P.O. Boxes, for both TBFD and PSFD under Section 9, Termination on page 5.
- Inserted language for a “Pause of Contract” mechanism under Section 9, Termination on page 5. There was a request to add “incapacitated” to this verbiage in order to cover both Boards. Chief Stoltenberg and Attorney Matura will modify the verbiage.

At this time both the TBFD and PSFD Boards agreed that the contract language was satisfactory once the “Pause of Contract” language was edited. Both Boards also agreed that they would take the contract back to their respective Regular Board Meetings later in February for action.

Chief Stoltenberg then started a review of the different financial options that were prepared by Chief Stoltenberg and JVG. The review included the costs that TBFD would have to absorb to ensure it covered for the Chief’s absence given that he is a working Chief in TBFD and sometimes has to cover on an ambulance or fire truck. The review also included an updated cost breakdown of fuel costs based on the IRS fuel rate of 72.5 cents per mile.

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TBFD Board Members highlighted the fact that there would be additional costs for TBFD of ~\$11,626 to backfill with “On Call Captains” when the Chief was in PSFD and \$5,011 in additional fuel costs for using the TBFD vehicle to travel back and forth from TBFD to PSFD.

One of the requests from TBFD was to split the fuel costs with each fire district absorbing ~\$400 in monthly fuel costs.

Following discussions on the costs and potential savings for both districts TBFD requested that the Chief’s salary costs be split 70/30 with PSFD paying 70% and TBFD paying 30%. This would result in a savings of ~\$43,600 for PSFD and ~\$21,769 for TBFD for the 6-month interim contract period.

At 1347 hours a motion was made by PSFD Board Member David Burkhardt for the PSFD Board to go into Executive Session in order to discuss Personnel, Financial, and Contractual options/concerns that were presented. The motion to go into Executive Session was seconded by PSFD Board Member Melvin Palmer. The motion for PSFD to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel, Financial and Contractual options/concerns was unanimously approved by all PSFD Board Members. The TBFD Board and all other public attendees left the meeting room to allow the PSFD to continue with the Executive Session.

New Business Discussion/Information (continued): At 1410 hours the Joint Board of Directors Meeting between TBFD and PSFD was called back to order by TBFD Chairman John France.

PSFD Board Member David Burkhardt made a motion to accept the 70/30 split for the Chief’s salary with 70% paid by PSFD and 30% paid by TBFD as presented by Chief Stoltenberg and the TBFD Board with all future discussions/negotiations to be held between both Board Chairmen. The motion was seconded by PSFD Board Member Melvin Palmer. The motion to accept the 70/30 split for the Chief’s salary and allow any future discussions/negotiations to be held between both Board Chairmen was unanimously approved by all PSFD Board Members.

TBFD Board Member John France made a motion to accept the 70/30 split for the Chief’s salary with 70% paid by PSFD and 30% paid by TBFD as presented by Chief Stoltenberg and the TBFD Board with all future discussions/negotiations to be held between both Board Chairmen. The motion was seconded by TBFD Board Member Brian Nail. The motion to accept the 70/30 split for the Chief’s salary and allow any future discussions/negotiations to be held between both Board Chairmen was unanimously approved by all TBFD Board Members.

A discussion was held on the timing for the contract to begin and it was agreed that the contract would begin on March 1, 2026 and go through the interim 6-month period until September 1, 2026.

The Chief did state that Attorney Jeff Matura had worked on the contract during the meeting and the “Pause of Contract” language had been modified to include incapacitated.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Boards a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by TBFD Board Member Brian Nail and seconded by TBFD Board Member Cliff Metz. The vote to adjourn was unanimously adopted and the meeting adjourned at 1425 hours.