

**PINE/STRAWBERRY FUEL REDUCTION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2018**

CALL TO ORDER:

President Mike Brandt called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.
The meeting was held at the Pine Cultural Hall
Mike led the Pledge of Allegiance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Brandt (President), Melvin Palmer (Vice-President), Jack Malloy (Secretary), Janet Brandt, Katie Calderon, Ron Calderon,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Hubbs (Treasurer)

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

Janet moved to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2018 meeting as presented. Mel seconded.

Motion Passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Reinstate Brush Pick-Up: Mike presented an overview of what he did to start the Brush Pickup Program with the cooperation of the agencies that work in this community, Game and Fish, APS, US Forest Service, BLM, Insurance Agencies, etc., to create a CD, Simple Ways to Protect Your Home from Wildfire. Then a childhood education CD was produced, Billy Brushwacker, along with a workbook that can corresponds to the program. This CD has been used in 11 states. Grants were being written to thin properties. The Brush Pickup Program was then developed to help those who wanted to thin their own property get rid of their thinned brush. With State Forestry grants to pay for the Brush Pickup Program it lasted for 7 years operated by the Pine-Strawberry Fire Department and using grants P/SFR wrote for them.

After the 7th year, the State said by then all should have been cleared the first time and they would not support further grants just for "maintenance". The Brush Pickup Program was halted for one year. P/SFR decided to try to fund another Brush Pickup Program themselves with no grants and leasing the PSFD's equipment for \$1 plus insurance and repairs. In 2014 1,000 tons of brush was picked up in Pine and Strawberry at a cost of \$46,459 from donation drives that collected \$54,086. In 2015 440 tons of brush was picked up at a cost of \$55,777 from donations of only \$39,334. In 2016 P/SFR had another fund drive for the Brush Pickup Program whose estimated cost of pick up and dump fees (Gila County would no longer waive the dump fees) was \$63,500. Not enough funding was collected to support a third year and PSFD then sold the now aging and unreliable truck, along with trailer and bobcat. With no equipment and not enough funds to support another year of Brush Pickup, P/SFR held onto the funds that were collected for a possible future brush mitigation project. Those funds are now going to support the Pine Brush Pit that is no longer being funded by Gila County.

Mike further explained the cost of using contractors to re-start the brush pick up which range from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per day. The two previous P/SFR brush pick-up years each took around 100 days to complete one trip around Pine and Strawberry.

Mike then took questions.

ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION – COMMUNITY QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS

Q – Does P/SFR have what could cost \$100,000 in the budget? No.

Q – Can neighbors help neighbors pick up brush piles? Yes, and it's encouraged.

Q – Can bags be left on the side of the road? No. The property owner is now responsible to remove their brush piles and bags.

Q – What about brush piles that have been there for many months? PS Fire Department has been going around and notifying the responsible owner the piles need to be removed.

Q – Can Bags be taken to the brush pits? Yes, but the contents must be emptied and bags removed or taken up to another section of the landfill.

S – Easier to use a pitch fork and load truck/trailer than using bags.

Q – New Fire Danger signs? On order by PSFD and waiting for them to arrive. P/SFR paid for the new signs.

S – Lower rate at County landfill to take brush to their green burn pit than taking it up to the landfill.

S – Little by little put bagged brush or small brush in your trash bins.

S – Organize those with trucks/trailers to help those with no means to remove their brush.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Janet presented the Treasurers report.

Beginning March 30, 2018: Fuel Reduction had \$38,802.29; Deposits of 4,310.00 (county, AMEX); Expenses \$1,042.53 (phone bill, Firewise Day, post office); Ending balance of \$42,069.786 as of April 20, 2018.

Beginning March 30, 2018: Fire On The Rim had \$58,695.98; Deposits of \$1,100 (sponsor, visor sales); Expenses \$148.23 (trail race supplies); Ending balance of \$59,647.75 as of April 20, 2018.

Janet explained the differences between the Fuel Reduction account and the Fire on the Rim Account. Fuel Reduction funds have been used recently for such things as, street entrance firewise signs with firewise tips; paid for the Fire Danger signs PS Fire Department will erect; burnings of slash piles on large properties that had been thinned. The Fire On The Rim Account received money from the Bike and Trail Run races and is used for building and maintaining trails in the fuel break around Pine and Strawberry. The premise being if our little piece of the 3 million-acre Tonto National Forest is special, different and more valuable to the Forest Service than other areas of the Tonto, the Forest Service and other agencies will funnel their money to our area. Janet said that's where the big bucks can come in to our fuel break. The FOTR money is used for the Trails in the Fuel Break Project building trail and thinning the areas around the trails. Also, FOTR money is being used to create an ADA mile long trail around the parking lot at the Pine Trail Head that will be wheelchair accessible with interpretive signage dealing with the history of how fire plays a role in a healthy forest, how fuel reduction works and signage for native plants in the area.

Mike further explained that partnering with the Forest Service on this project it will be the only such example in the State, possibly the Southwest, of forest management through fire. With the Forest Service, broadcast burning will take place around the Trail Head with photos showing the results over the years.

Mel moved to accept Treasurer's Report as presented. Katie seconded.

Motion Passed.

Mel added that when Al (the barber) Christianson first promoted the idea of a bike race it was because a community in Colorado, and elsewhere around the Country, improved their businesses due to starting a bike race. As Al said to have a strong community you need also have a strong business community. The bike race and now the trail run and the trails themselves make Pine and Strawberry a destination community.

BILLS/CORRISONDENCE:

Janet reported that Nancy received a letter from Mazatzal Hotel and Casino indicating P/SFR met their eligibility requirement for the Casino's charity contribution program. Should funds become available from the Casino's forfeited jackpot funds P/SFR will be entered into a random drawing.

Also, the Pine Brush Pit program received the last of County money, \$4,230.60, to run the brush pit. During all of the years of operation, the County has provided funding to run the Pine Pit. From this point on the operation of the Pine Brush Pit will be totally in the hands of Pine/Strawberry Fuel Reduction.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Present Fire Situation, Getting the Word Out: Mike reported the fire situation is at Stage 2. He recommended that the info received from Gary Roberts, North Zone Fire Prevention Officer, U.S. Forest Service, regarding Fire Danger be sent to the P/SFR contacts and also to Brenda Darling for inclusion in her Nextdoor site.

Mike also said that the Firewise Day flyer would be coming to people's email and asked that it be forwarded to all their friends, so more people would come the event and be able to get up to date fire information.

Mike also recommended that those who ride quads take some extra water with them and if they find an abandoned camp fire that is not out, use the water to put it out or slow it down. Then report it to 911.

Mike informed that the number one fire starter are humans. The fuel breaks around Pine & Strawberry are meant to save the forest from fire started inside the communities. All need to be vigilant to reduce the risk of fire. To that end Mike recommended a community banner be placed across highway 87 in Pine with something along the lines of "It Could Happen Here" to get people coming to our communities to take a moment to think.

Finally, Mike suggested having plastic tabletop menu holders display Firewise information that could be placed on all the Pine-Strawberry restaurant tables and the information taped to pizza boxes.

Firewise Day Event: Katie reported Firewise Day will be May 19th. Duane Ridl is donating and preparing the lunch food which will be free to those attending. Attendees will be able to learn about how to keep their properties clear and fire safe. She said, "It's an education event." Katie had posters for anyone who wanted one and to help put them in businesses in the towns. Speakers are ready, if not needed on a fire. There will also be booths with information and educational demonstrations from the Herpetology Society with snakes; Fallen Feathers who work with bird rescue, rehab and education; Search and Rescue with their drone; Sheriffs Dept. will have their dogs among others. Katie thanked her partner, Sara Gerlach, in helping to organize this event. She than showed other

donations from Home Depot for the raffle, a fire proof safe, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and a fire extinguisher. Also raffled off will be two 5 hours worth of property thinning from two professional companies. To enter the raffle, one needs \$5 or 5 cans of food for the Pine-Strawberry food bank.

Pine Trail Run: Scott Kehl reported the online registration closed midnight last Friday. There were 96 entries plus one mail in entry for 97 registered runners, 50 male and 47 female. There are several couples and some parent/child entries. Others have contacted Scott and his guess is that there may be close to 120 entries at race time. The Fire Department action plan is being developed. Volunteers are being verified. One position still needs a volunteer. The run is on May 5th. Scott estimated profit could be around \$2,000. Scot outlined the race route for a questioner and said info can be found at pinetrailrun.com.

Yard Sale: Janet reported that P/SFR is holding a yard sale of almost a whole house of furniture donated by a gentleman that specifically said profits were to go towards trails. It will take place at the barn on the corner of Bradshaw and Old County Road on Friday, Saturday and Sunday May 11-13. She solicited for volunteers to help on the days of the sale.

Pine Brush Pit: Mike reported that the insufficient funds collected two years ago for the brush pick up are being invested in keeping the Pine Brush Pit open since the County will no longer fund it. Mike gave an over view on the history of the brush pits. The two main pits, Pine and Blatter (located east of Star Valley) were selected to be open on weekends so people would have a place to take their weekend brush for free. Pine was selected as the Sunday pit and Blattner the Saturday pit. Opening the pits on other days is not recommended by the operators to encourage large companies to use the landfill brush pit during the week instead of filling up, in a short period of time, the much smaller Pine and Blattner pits. Mike also noted that anyone in Northern Gila County can use two facilities and that people from Payson do go to the Pine pit on Sunday. The operators are keeping track of where people are coming from at the Pine pit and Mike plans a future fund raiser in Payson, in conjunction with the Blattner pit, to harness donations from the Payson people. Mike informed that operation expenses are estimated to be around \$10,000 per year. To date \$13,500 has been spent enlarging the Pine pit 3 times the former size and fixing the road from the Control road to the pit. At this time less then ¼ of the pit is filled.

Janet moved to set the next meeting on Wednesday, May 30, 2018; 6:00 pm; Pine Senior Dining Room and to adjourn. Katie seconded.

Motion Passed.

SET DATE, TIME, PLACE OF NEXT P/SFR, INC. MEETING:

Wednesday, May 30, 2018; 6:00 pm; Pine Senior Dining Room
All meetings are set for the last Wednesday of each month.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Jack Malloy, P/SFR Secretary