

## **To the residents of the Sherwood Forest Estates Fire District –**

### **The Last 30 Days**

In the last 30 days we have seen the arrival and spread of a deadly pandemic disease, significant changes for the Fire District, the hiring of our new Fire Chief, and changes in the way the Fire Board shall publicly operate.

### **New Fire Chief Selected**

On March 17<sup>th</sup> the Fire Board interviewed two candidates for the position of Fire Chief. The decision as to which candidate was not easy as the board found both professional firefighters very qualified and had to weigh several factors. The unanimous decision, made in the best interest of the District, was to hire John Moede. John is an extremely experienced professional firefighter with extensive management experience and training. John joined the District on April 1<sup>st</sup> and began his duties as Interim Fire Chief working alongside Chief Marx. With John as Chief and then his teaming with Assistant Chiefs Matthew McDowell and Deirdre McLaughlin puts us in a great position as we meet the demands of today and as we progress into the future and its growing challenges. Like Fire Agencies nationwide our service demands have changed over the years and this will require improvements, new methods, and updated equipment to keep our fire, rescue, and emergency medical services capable of meeting our evolving public safety missions.

Chief Moede has prepared an introductory greeting which will be posted here and also distributed to the residents of the Fire District. He has also provided his resume for review.

Finally, we would be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the many years of service provided by Chief Marx to the Fire District during our most formative years. On May 16<sup>th</sup> Chief Marx will revert to an advisory capacity to Chief Moede. We wish him well on his retirement which begins July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic, SFEFD Response, Funding**

On March 25<sup>th</sup> the Fire Board took several actions. First, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the fire board acted to enable the SFEFD to meet its increased public safety obligations, institute additional procedures to keep our firefighters and EMS personnel safe, and acquire the necessary supplies and equipment to

address the COVID-19 Pandemic National Emergency as it confronts our communities.

Next, to support this effort we are hereby advising the residents of the SFE Fire District that we have withdrawn our much discussed and prior stated intent to freeze and rollover \$17,000 in funding as a remedy for an error in the FY 2019/2020 budget calculations. This action not only is permitted but is directly in response to the National Emergency Declaration. Further the potential of this action was known and came with the oft stated forewarning that we would not proceed with this action ‘in the case of emergency or other unusual circumstances’ - that today being the COVID-19 Pandemic. In reality the “budget calculation error” has proven to be a most fortuitous albeit unintended benefit as it will now fulfill a critical life safety benefit to the communities.

Lastly, Fire Board approved the following directives –

1. The \$17,000 in frozen funding is now released and specifically allocated for the Fire Chief to acquire appropriate supplies and equipment for the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency,
2. The Fire Chief shall create appropriate COVID-19 procedures to keep our personnel safe and the communities protected,
3. The Fire Chief shall institute a public information campaign to keep our Fire District’s residents informed,
4. The Fire Chief shall identify and reach out to those residents of our Fire District considered the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic and institute an appropriate monitoring and assistance effort.

**Official Mandates change the way SFEFD operates**

On March 31<sup>st</sup> the Fire Board approved SFEFD Resolution 2020-2 which mandates the SFEFD follow Governor Doug Ducey Executive Orders 2020-18 and 2020-12 effective March 31, 2020 which is essence state -

*Arizonans shall limit their time away from their place of residence or property, except*

- *To conduct or participate in essential activities, and/or;*
- *For employment, to volunteer or participate in essential functions.*

*The Executive order mandates –*

*The SFEFD via resolution 2020-2 shall limit gatherings to 10 persons or less - Page 1 per CDC and AZHS*

*The SFEFD via resolution 2020-2 shall institute a policy for social distancing (6' separation) - Page 2 Section 1*

*The SFEFD shall continue to meet Page 4 Section 11 B “Essential Functions conducted by governmental entities shall remain open.”*

On April 14<sup>th</sup> the Fire Board enacted the following procedure in regard to public meetings and the establishment of alternative methods to receive comments from the public.

### **Public Notice of Public Meeting Changes–**

*The Sherwood Forest Estates Fire Board, during this time of Nation Emergency due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Arizona Governor’s Executive Orders 2020-12 & 2020-18 effective March 31, 2020, is under official mandate to enact social distancing and restrict attendance at public meetings.*

*As a consequence, public attendance at all meetings is restricted to just 3 members of the general public, first come first serve at the door, no reservations.*

*In the interest of open government and to maximize public participation via alternative methods in the governance of the District the following procedure has been approved by the Fire Board.*

*The public may comment on any agenda item or topic via email. For the comment to be accepted the public is required to openly identify themselves by name and address. The email will be received as “Correspondence” and then read into the official SFEFD Fire Board meeting minutes during the “Public Comments” session. The Fire Board may, as appropriate, respond to the comment or direct Staff to do so. The Fire Boards’ / Staffs’ response, if any, will become part of the official SFEFD Fire Board meeting minutes available for public review via the SFEFD website. The public is requested to write in the Subject box “Public Comment for SFEFD Agenda Meeting date \_\_\_\_\_”. This process will remain in effect until the Arizona Governor’s Executive Orders 2020-12 & 2020-18, effective March 31,*

*2020, have been rescinded and that no other public gathering restrictions have subsequently been enacted and are concurrently in effect.*

*Comments may be submitted via*  
[SFEFDBoard@sherwoodforeststatesfiredistrict.com](mailto:SFEFDBoard@sherwoodforeststatesfiredistrict.com)

### **For your Safety**

Our Fire Department personnel have been provided personal protective equipment to deal with the potential for COVID-19 exposure when responding to emergency calls for service. The Fire Board and Fire Staff encourage everyone to shelter in place and follow the government guidelines for social distancing and hygiene. If at any time you have questions or concerns, we encourage you to visit the Sherwood Forest Estates Fire District Website for access to excellent information on the current status of the pandemic and self and family care.

Respectfully,

Bruce Speirs, Chair

Sue Hamilton, Treasurer

Pamela Weir, Secretary (pro tem)