



**OFFICE OF THE COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES**

**Tuesday, June 14, 2022**

**6:00 p.m. – Special Session for Community Outreach Meeting  
regarding the Pipeline and Haywire Fires**

**Held at Sinagua Middle School, 3950 E. Butler Ave., Flagstaff, AZ 86004**

**Present:** Chair Patrice Horstman, Vice Chair Jeronimo Vasquez, Supervisor Judy Begay and Supervisor Lena Fowler were present.

**Absent/Excused:** Supervisor Matt Ryan.

**Also Present:** County Manager Steve Peru, Deputy County Manager Sue Brown, Public Affairs Director Trey Williams, County Engineer Christopher Tressler, Health and Human Services Director Kim Musselman, Chief Deputy Sheriff Bret Axlund and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Lindsay Daley were present.

Chair Horstman called the Special Session to order at 6:04 p.m.

**Discussion Item:**

1. Presentation and update to the community regarding the Pipeline and Haywire fires in the Greater Flagstaff area; including updates from different agencies involved regarding fire conditions and evacuation status. **Emergency Management**

Chair Horstman provided welcome remarks, had the Supervisors introduce themselves and explained they will have several people from various agencies present. She acknowledged the hardship of those impacted by the fires, thanked first responders, and welcomed the incident teams that will be helping fight the fire. She also thanked agencies that have been assisting in this time of the crisis. She spoke about the heartbreak of watching the fire go across the peaks and for those who have been affected now for the second time.

Vice Chair Vasquez spoke about the community being exhausted, but how they need to stick together as a community and that there will be a long-term recovery effort with damage that may be done to watersheds. He thanked the first responders who have been working on the fire to protect the public's safety and thanked residents for their patience during the evacuations. He

provided the call center number. He explained that the County and District 2 have been through a lot in the last year and will continue to prepare for monsoons and long-term recovery.

Steven Filmore, Incident Commander for California Team 15, spoke about it being a challenging fire season with the Tunnel fire six weeks ago already and that he appreciates patience with what they are trying to do. He spoke about the challenges they faced yesterday with 50 mile per hour winds and not being able to use aircraft; however today was a different day as they were able to get people in to fight the fire. He explained that there is a combined effort between the Department of Forestry, local fire department and California Incident Management Team 15. He stated that the Type I Team will be here tomorrow and that they have made some good progress.

Scott Grassmuck, Primary Operation Chief for California Team 15, spoke about the cooperative effort and went over a map showing the location of the fire and explained the work they have done regarding the Pipeline fire. He explained their work doing hot spot patrol, getting embers out and then spoke about the Haywire fire and the work done on that fire.

Nick Glen, Interim District Director for Flagstaff Ranger District with the Forest Service, extended his sympathy to the community. He spoke about the Forest being in Stage 2 fire restrictions when the fire started and how now the area is closed. He explained that they are working on going to Stage III restrictions. He explained that the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team will be working with the City and County and plan on starting the process as soon as they can.

James Pettit, Fire Staff Officer with the Coconino Forest, explained that decisions regarding fire restrictions and closures of the forest are a collaborative process with many partners. He spoke about the criteria they consider, anchoring their decisions off science, looking at how close they are to monsoon season, considering endeavor to close the forest, weather, resources available, where they are at in the stages, provided timelines of stages the area has been in. He explained that with the wind they cannot keep up. Lastly, he spoke about a request they have sent to the regional office that will go to the Washington Office for stage III forest closures.

Chair Horstman recognized Navajo Nation President Nex, Representative Tom O'Halleran, Representative Kyrsten Sinema, Senator Mark Kelly and the Twin Arrows Casino for their support.

Brian Klimowski, Meteorologist-in-Charge with the National Weather Service Flagstaff Office, spoke about the weather conditions expected for the next week. He explained the conditions that caused the extreme fire behavior and how there may be thunderstorms this weekend. He spoke about the monsoons being early this year and to stay tuned to weather changes.

Chief Deputy Sheriff Bret Axlund spoke about the timeline of the Pipeline fire and the arrest of the suspect who started the fire and the charges against the suspect. He explained when deputies can provide escorts for emergency temporary access to homes. He went over the lifting of the evacuation notices as of today and the areas on go status and set status and the number of households on set status and go status as a result of the Pipeline fire. He explained that they are watching over the communities 24 hours with assistance from various agencies. He stated that they will continue to work with the Forest Service to determine a re-entry time

and will communicate information as soon as possible. He thanked various agencies for their assistance and everyone for their patience.

Kim Musselman, County Health and Human Services Director spoke about the call center hours, impact to physical and mental health and smoke being an issue on the Navajo Nation. She explained where one can find updates from Arizona Department of Environmental Quality for worst times of smoke in certain areas. She recommended closing windows and that information will go out about smoke hazards. She spoke about resources available for mental and emotional health, red cross shelter services, animal shelter services, volunteer and donation opportunities with United Way. She also stated that residents can pick up their mail at the post office and that FedEx is holding packages at the airport location She showed how residents can get to the County website with a QR code for a list of services and encouraged people to call the center and can leave a message to get a return call.

Christopher Tressler, County Engineer, spoke about work done to assist the Sheriff's Office and strategizing for the flood response to the monsoon season, which is evolving as the fire changes and grows. He thanked everyone for their patience, resilience and strength. He explained that the Tunnel and Pipeline fires have burned through the Schultz burn area from years ago and that there is a high likelihood Pipeline fire has not burned the Museum fire burn area, so the mitigation efforts for that area are still occurring. He explained that engineering consultants are working to analyze data as soon as they get it and will run models to help people understand the flood threat. He stated that that there will be a need for help making sandbags to help people disabled. He encouraged property owners to purchase flood insurance and sign up for emergency notifications and to call the call center and provide contact information so that they can communicate with property owners.

County Public Affairs Director Trey Williams asked the following questions that were received via paper forms and on the online streaming chat:

Q1: How does wind get considered for closure decisions? James Pettit answered that it is very difficult to factor in because it shows up and goes away and it is difficult to setup closures for a 1-3 day event. He stated they do factor it in with how fast it dries the fuels, but it is difficult to predict.

Q2: When will they place a permanent ban on campfires? James Pettit answered that it is public land, and they don't take it lightly to close public lands to general public because they want people to have the opportunity to recreate; that they try to leave opportunities but also have to take in consideration the risk and public safety. He stated that they have people that want closures and people who don't, and their job is to balance that and use the criteria to help determine that.

Q3: Does the Forest Service bare responsibility for damage to communities? James Pettit answered that wildfires are wildfires and there is a risk and all they can do is try to stop them when they start whether manmade or lightning caused, and they are going to continue to happen in the southwest.

Q4: Can I take my renters with me when escorted back to my house? Bret Axlund answered that escort services are for life and safety issues and need people to help them do their job to protect people.

Q5: Are we able to return to home daily to feed animals that could not be evacuated? Bret Axlund answered yes, but that he recommends transporting them out of the area.

Q6: What is stage 3 restrictions? James Pettit answered full forest closures where it is problematic to suppress a fire.

Q7: When do you expect to go to “Set” status north of Campbell? Bret Axlund answered that the decision is made in consultation with the Forest Service and that north of Campbell is where the fire came into the community, and they need to make sure those areas are mitigated.

Q8: Can an individual do a citizen arrest, and can they have physical barriers for forest closures? Nick Glen answered how the forests are closed and the lookout station and fire personnel are patrolling and have employees in the field. He stated that they use gates and signs as physical barriers. Bret Axlund answered that Arizona allows for citizen’s arrest for disturbing the peace but encourages people call 911 to report a crime before making that decision and to use common sense.

Q9: Are you using reclaimed water to fight fires? Steven Filmore answered that they are not using reclaimed wastewater.

Q10: When and how were the Haywire and Double fires discovered? James Pettit answered that the Double fires were initially located by air attack and the Haywire fire was found after it was reported by a citizen.

Q11: What can people off N. Copeland see with enhanced flooding as a result of the fire? Christopher Tressler answered that they need burn severity information to put in the model to determine that. He explained that it is a compromised watershed back to the Schultz fire and he expects to see an increase response to rain with the watershed.

Q12: How many structures were lost or burned as a result of the Pipeline fire? Bret Axlund answered that one residential structure, and one outgoing structure were lost- so 2 total structures.

Q13: How severe is the watershed damage and how big is flooding a concern and what is going to be done to prevent flooding? Christopher Tressler answered that he does not know how severe it is, but it is a big concern and that they will analyze the watersheds and help develop flood mitigation strategies. He stated that they can’t stop the rain but can lessen the impact by using sandbags and concrete barriers and work on drainages to decrease sediment and magnitude of flooding.

Q14: What mental health services are available for people with PTSD? Kim Musselman answered that CWren can give information and direct people to services and can always call the 1-800 number and they will work with you in the moment with setting up other services for longer-term counseling.

Q15: Would you comment on flood insurance and how to access information on that? Christopher Tressler answered that property owners should talk to their insurance provider or call the flood insurance program.

Q16: What were the two structures burnt, what does this new burn do to this? Christopher Tressler answered that the burn is upstream from the Tunnel fire and increasing impact and will increase flood risk and there is increased flood risk from the Pipeline fire as well.

Q17: What are the red, orange and yellow tabs on mailboxes? Bret Axlund answered that the colors are used to indicate whether a house has been contacted and if people are in the house or evacuated.

Q18: Is there a list somewhere of who the decisionmakers are for forest closures and a list of criteria for each stage of restrictions? James Pettit answered that a lot of different people are in the decision-making process with many agencies that they don’t have a list and yes, they can let you know what the list of criteria and he explained the criteria for decisions making on restrictions.

Q19: What drainages have been affected? Christopher Tressler answered Paintbrush, Copeland, Lennox, Glodia, Rope Arabian, Campbell, and Government Tank watershed.

Q20: Status update on the inner basin and locket meadows? Scott Grassmuck answered that is the focus for the next few days and nights and requested many hotshot crews due to that terrain because it is steep and rocky.

Chair Horstman stated that people will be here to answer questions after the meeting if needed. Supervisor Fowler stated that she can feel how everyone is tired today and that there is a lot of stress and fear that has rippled through the county and that expert knowledge is working on this fire who care about the community. She thanked Navajo Nation President Nez and spoke about the effects on the Navajo Nation due to smoke. She explained that the Navajo Nation emergency management is part of team as well as social services and Twin Arrows Casino is also helping individuals impacted by smoke. She spoke about the impact of Highway 89 being closed. She spoke about the opportunity for residents to meet with the Navajo Nation President. She also spoke about how the Arizona Public Service powerlines and power going out in the Tuba City region and that there may be more power outages. She encouraged people to check on each other. She thanked the congressional delegates and Navajo Nation President for their support and how it is a multi-jurisdictional area and they come together and support each other. She thanked first responders and their families as they have been away from their families to work for citizens' safety.

Supervisor Judy Begay thanked everyone for attending and thanked the Flagstaff Unified School District and Sinagua Middle School, the Superintendent, for the use of the facility and thanked presenters and support staff as well as Representative O'Halleran and Sinema staff for being there. She spoke about the effort to protect lives, homes and businesses and that the protection of the sacred land is important for regional, cultural and spiritual identity. She encouraged people to scan the QR code for county resources and the helpline.

Chair Horstman adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

**COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

(SEAL)

  
Patrice Horstman, Chair

**ATTEST:**

  
Lindsay Daley, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

