



NEWS



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Zoom meeting maxes out as Morongo Valley discusses closing fire station

Crystal Harrell, HI-DESERT STAR

Posted: December 15, 2021 at 11:47 a.m.



MORONGO VALLEY — Community Services District directors held a special meeting online Dec. 10 to discuss the leadership and fate of the Morongo Valley fire department.

The Zoom meeting maxed out at 100 participants, with many more members of the public trying to join the board meeting to voice their concerns. department during an online meeting Nov. 30.

Fire Chief Gary Yearsley last month proposed closing the department for 30-90 days, saying there is not enough staffing. The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department would take over emergency response if the department closes.

Public comments in the Dec. 10 meeting centered on appreciation for the Morongo Valley fire department. Several residents who spoke were nurses and talked about the importance of first responders. They echoed the fears of delayed arrival times if county were to take over calls for Morongo Valley.

Speakers also said Fire Chief James Brakebill should begin hiring staff for the fire station. The importance of this was highlighted due to the fact that the fire department has only three leads and complaints of low employee morale.

Outlined in the agenda was the board of directors considering approval of an employment agreement with Brakebill for interim director of operations due to Yearsley's impending retirement as fire chief and director of operations.

Although Yearsley's retirement is effective Dec. 31, there was fear amid the public who spoke that he would pull out of his announced retirement or still act as a consultant for the fire department.

"The board refuses to deal with issues as they arise and allows things to get worse instead of better. General manager and fire chief need to be separate positions," said meeting participant Matthew Campos.

"Yearsley's retirement needs to be effective immediately. Brakebill needs to hire more staff to get the station up and running. Consider how you are putting each citizen and property in jeopardy with that delayed response."

Comments circled back to claims that multiple applications were submitted for positions at the fire department; Yearsley has said that he hasn't received applications from qualified people to boost staffing. Attendees voiced that they did not see the sense in paying extra money for county assistance when in-house local fire operations could be used at less cost.

The board members then announced they would go into closed session and attendees could wait to see if they made a decision. Attendees continued to talk among themselves and brought up a petition on change.org regarding the situation with over 400 signatures.

The petition states that if the board members refuse to perform the will of the constituents who put them into office, they must demand their immediate resignation.

"When our family members suffer a medical emergency and seconds count, we cannot be dependent on neighboring agencies to respond. It is quite frankly a matter of life and death. Please join me in demanding that the board members either fulfill their duty to our community or step aside immediately," reads the change.org petition.

Nearly an hour later and shortly after the attendees united in singing Christmas carols over Zoom to lift their spirits, the board of directors returned. President Gayl Swarat announced that no reportable action was taken during the closed session.

It was revealed that the draft employment agreement for director of operations was intended to be brought to the board's attention on Dec. 15.

A request for input from the union regarding possible future action was needed as well. This is to enter into agreement for the emergency provision of services on a temporary basis associated with response to emergency calls for fire rescue and advanced life support services with **San Bernardino County Fire** Protection District.

The union agreed to meet with two board members, Vice President Kristina Brook and Director Christina Gorke, on Monday to discuss the matter.

Brakebill also raised the cap to 500 people for future online meetings, as many people were not able to join due to the 100-participant limit.

"My concern will always be your safety, my safety and the safety of firefighters. We are working as hard as we can to make sure that you have a local fire department. Please give us the chance to do it," said Director Johnny Tolbert.

The next board meeting will be held on Dec. 15 to discuss new developments regarding leadership and status of the fire department.

For links to the meeting, visit <https://morongocsd.specialdistrict.org>.

<https://hidesertstar.com/news/181548/zoom-meeting-maxes-out-as-morongo-valley-discusses-closing-fire-station/>

Nine people and two dogs are rescued from Santa Ana River after storm left them stranded

THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Posted: December 15, 2021 at 2:14 p.m.



Nine people and two dogs were rescued from the Santa Ana River in Colton after a strong rainstorm left them stranded on Dec. 14, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

At 1:40 p.m., **San Bernardino County Fire** Dispatch requested assistance from the Sheriff's Aviation Unit regarding subjects stranded in the river near Riverside Avenue and Agua Mansa Road. The rainfall had flooded the normally dry river and trapped the transients, all of whom were between the ages of 24 and 62, on small pockets of land.

The crew of Air Rescue 307 responded from **San Bernardino** in adverse weather conditions, battling rain and wind during the flight.

Upon arrival, the crew spotted the people waving for help. The crew hoisted a Sheriff's Dive Team member down to them and each victim was individually rescued and transported to awaiting medical personnel.

One victim was rescued from a tree house over water, while another victim was rescued from a vehicle caught in the flood. The remaining victims and the dogs were rescued from land areas surrounded by rushing water.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/inland_empire_news/nine-people-and-two-dogs-are-rescued-from-santa-ana-river-after-storm-left-them/article_d9a70132-5df0-11ec-8988-778dff4dcc04.html

California medics refuse to enter care center to help man in cardiac arrest due to 'some COVID-19 law': police

Paul Best, YAHOO NEWS

Posted: December 15, 2021 at 6:40 p.m.



Paramedics in Southern California refused to enter a post-acute-care facility to treat a man in cardiac arrest last month because of "some COVID-19 law," according to a Rialto Police Department report.

Body camera footage shows an officer arriving at the Rialto Post Acute Care Center on the evening of Nov. 11 and greeting two paramedics from the Rialto Fire Department, who were standing outside with their masks on.

The first 30 seconds of the footage are muted, which is standard for many police body cameras, but the officer wrote in his report that the paramedics were there for an unrelated patient and said the facility was being "problematic."

"After a few moments, an unknown employee of the location yelled out to fire personnel 'Please come help, he's having cardiac arrest,'" the officer wrote.

"Fire personnel responded by insisting the patient had to be brought outside the facility before they could provide any sort of treatment... due to an unspecified COVID-19 law."

After about a minute, the officer went inside himself and was almost immediately greeted by frantic hospital staff.

"They are not going to come in," the officer told the staff as he started to run to the room where the man was in cardiac arrest. "They're saying it's a state law that they cannot come in."

The officer then encountered multiple staff members performing CPR and other life-saving measures on the patient. The bed he was in did not have wheels, so the officer got behind the bed and pushed it.

"You're doing a great job. You're doing a great job. Keep going," the officer told one exhausted staff member as she continued CPR.

As the officer navigated the wheel-less bed through the hallways, they eventually came into view of the paramedics.

"Despite being in their line of sight, fire personnel still insisted on [redacted] being brought to them outside before they began life saving efforts and made no effort to assist me in getting [redacted] outside."

Once they finally got the man outside, several other emergency medical personnel had arrived and started treating the man as one of the original paramedics peppered staff with administrative questions.

The man was transferred to a local hospital and pronounced deceased about 30 minutes later.

The responding officer wrote that after the incident he asked fire personnel about the law and they said it "was 'some COVID-19 law' which had yet to be reversed."

It is unclear what law the paramedics were citing when they refused to enter the facility.

FOX 11 Los Angeles, who originally reported on the incident, said that the **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief's Association sent out a memo in April 2020, informing departments that "all dispatch centers will be requesting the facilities to move patients to the door or outside the location."

However, the memo also said that if the patient cannot be transferred, then "one member of Fire/EMS personnel should initially interact with the patient," according to the local news outlet.

Rialto City Fire Department Acting Chief Brian Park said that multiple members of his department have been placed on leave pending an investigation due to the "troubling video footage."

"Our Fire Department's mission is to provide excellence in responding to medical emergencies through 'compassionate service.' As Acting-Fire Chief, I will ensure the independence of the outside investigation," Park said in a statement on Wednesday.

"I also want to recognize and thank the Rialto Police Department and the Rialto Post-Acute Care Center nurses for their extraordinary efforts and heroism to save the patient's life as our responders failed to act to our Fire Department's expectations."

Rialto Mayor Deborah Robertson also said she fully supports an independent investigation into what happened.

"The investigation will focus on the conduct of the responding **Fire Department** personnel and the reasons those personnel did not enter the acute care facility immediately," Robertson said. "Our prayers are with the patient's family, as well as our police officer and care center staff who had to endure such an unimaginable situation."

https://news.yahoo.com/california-medics-refuse-enter-care-024045792.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xiLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAF4Rrjd1Eu7UGFfX3gLIA0iVSrYxm8q-VjUsWol5YT3x2Hj2lzshv7M_MRwMTrarC3Y6yxxJvx5JWcYr6LUaiifNUbS69u0f4dEJ12ZHRCM8hGbFVMfmYXQjfnVkmvVQutq_nSPUqjXZQ3JUIaCDHrM2csSgbc0JT7N7d_LYofn