



CITY OF MESA, ARIZONA
ARIZONA PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL RETIREMENT SYSTEM
LOCAL FIRE AND POLICE PENSION BOARDS MEETING
MARCH 10, 2026

A meeting of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards of Mesa, Arizona, was held in the Study Session Room, 20 E. Main Street on March 10, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Table with 3 columns: MEMBERS PRESENT, MEMBERS ABSENT, STAFF PRESENT. Lists names and roles of attendees and absentees.

Chairperson Mickelsen conducted a roll call.

1. Approval of the minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards meeting of January 13, 2026.

It was moved by Boardmember Heirshberg, seconded by Boardmember Lien, that the minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Boards meeting of January 13, 2026, be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

- AYES – Butler-Castaneda-Fifield-Heirshberg-Lien-Mickelsen-Russell
NAYS – None
ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

At the request of Chairperson Mickelsen, the Local Police Pension Board convened prior to the Local Fire Pension Board, but for purposes of clarity items will remain as listed on the agenda.

**FIRE PENSION BOARD**

Chairperson Mickelsen called to order the Local Fire Pension Board at 2:07 p.m.

**2. Certification of full-time Firefighters pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-842.24(B), 38-842.27, 38-842.31 and 38-847(D)1.**

Subsequent to a review of all medical records, Local Boardmembers requested the record reflect that applicant Bryson Moore had a pre-existing medical condition.

It was moved by Boardmember Castaneda, seconded by Boardmember Fifield, that Firefighter applicant Bryson Moore will be certified subject to the pre-existing conditions as noted.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler-Castaneda-Fifield-Heirshberg-Mickelsen

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

It was moved by Boardmember Castaneda, seconded by Boardmember Butler, that the Board enter into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (4).

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler-Castaneda-Fifield-Heirshberg-Mickelsen

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

(The Local Fire Board recessed at 2:07 p.m. in order to convene an Executive Session and reconvened the meeting at 2:35 p.m.)

**3. Discuss and take possible action on the continued consideration of the rehearing application regarding the Line of Duty Death benefit determination for Firefighter Mark Keller.**

Chairperson Mickelsen welcomed Stacie Tidwell, surviving spouse of Firefighter Mark Keller, and thanked her for her husband’s service to the city. She briefly recapped the first actions taken by the Board in August 2025 to approve the Line of Duty Death (LODD) benefit based on the limited information provided at that time. The Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) returned the original Board approval for further clarification on meeting the statutory requirement of A.R.S. § 38-846, which defines killed in the line of duty as “a death directly and proximately resulting from the performance of the decedent’s public safety duties.”

After further discovery of information, the Board took additional action in October 2025 to reverse the decision to approve the LODD.

Stacie Tidwell requested a rehearing. The Board reconvened in November 2025, at which time a post-mortem Independent Medical Evaluation (IME) was requested. Firefighter Keller’s information was subsequently forwarded to Dr. Jason Aldred for review.

Chairperson Mickelsen summarized the IME report, noting that it evaluated the relationship between the decedent's occupational history and contributing factors associated with his death.

The report concluded that the decedent's more than 30 years of firefighting service more likely than not contributed to underlying risk factors relevant to the cause of death.

Chairperson Mickelsen asked if any Board members had questions or additional comments.

Boardmember Castaneda shared remarks regarding his experience working with Firefighter Keller and acknowledged the impact of his passing. He mentioned that the Board faced many challenges, including limited information, which hindered its ability to meet the Board's statutory requirements. Now that the IME is available, it provides more information that allows the Board to make a decision that pertains to the statute.

He noted that Dr. Aldred was selected to conduct this IME based on his area of expertise.

Boardmember Castaneda stated that Dr. Aldred's report provided valuable education regarding the long-term effects experienced by firefighters with careers exceeding 20 years.

He referenced findings from the IME, noting that Dr. Aldred's report indicated that firefighters with 20 or more years of service would be expected to have an increased risk of coronary heart disease and blood vessel disease, more than 7 times that of those with fewer than 10 years of service; chronic inflammation and its association with hypertension are more likely than not present among career firefighters, substantially increasing their risk of developing hypertension through persistent inflammation and making them more at risk for chronic inflammatory diseases such as stroke; and it is more probable than not that firefighters are at an increased risk for developing hypertension, atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, and brain aneurysms compared to the general population.

In summary, Mr. Castaneda noted that Dr. Aldred provided medical evidence to support that Mark Keller's 30-plus-year career as a Firefighter involved continuous occupational exposures and multiple stressors that cumulatively had a direct impact on his health and subsequent death.

Boardmember Butler thanked Stacie Tidwell and family for their patience during this process. He stated that this Board has fiduciary responsibility to all members of PSPRS who have dedicated their lives to public service. He emphasized the importance of following A.R.S. § 38-846, which establishes the direct and proximate result of the individual's public safety duties. He stated that the IME report presents a strong case linking Mark's firefighting career to the events leading up to and culminating in his death. He also thanked Boardmembers Castaneda and Fifield for their professionalism and diligence throughout this difficult task.

It was moved by Boardmember Fifield, seconded by Boardmember Castaneda, to reverse the Board's prior denial and approve the Line of Duty Death benefit for Mark Keller based on the Independent Medical Evaluation report that supports it was the "direct and proximate result of the decedent's public safety duties" per A.R.S. § 38-846.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler-Castaneda-Fifield-Heirshberg-Mickelsen  
NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

Without objection, the meeting of the Local Fire Pension Board adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

### **POLICE PENSION BOARD**

Chairperson Mickelsen called to order the Local Police Pension Board at 2:01 p.m.

**4. Approval of the minutes of the Public Safety Local Police Pension Board meeting of February 10, 2026.**

It was moved by Boardmember Heirshberg seconded by Boardmember Lien, that the minutes of the Public Safety Local Police Pension Board meeting of February 10, 2026, be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler- Heirshberg-Lien-Mickelsen-Russell

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

**5. Certification of full-time Law Enforcement Officers pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-842.24(A), 38-842.27,38-842.31 and 38-847(D)1.**

Subsequent to a review of all medical records, Local Boardmembers requested the record reflect that the applicants Chevy Bates, Sydni Burton, Roman Delgado, Shawn Hagan, Alec Muller, Mathew Rapier, Hayden Rasmussen, Daniel Sandoval, JB Smith, and Bryce Van Easton have pre-existing medical conditions.

It was moved by Boardmember Russell, seconded by Boardmember Lien, that Police applicants Chevy Bates, Sydni Burton, Roman Delgado, Shawn Hagan, Alec Muller, Mathew Rapier, Hayden Rasmussen, Daniel Sandoval, JB Smith, and Bryce Van Easton be certified subject to the pre-existing conditions as noted.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler-Heirshberg-Lien-Mickelsen-Russell

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

**6. Discuss and take action on the Accidental Disability Retirement application for Police Officer Jose Torres.**

Chairperson Mickelsen welcomed Police Officer Torres to the meeting.

In response to an inquiry made by Chairperson Mickelsen, Officer Torres confirmed that the Veteran Affairs (VA) medical records received were the most recent available and offered clarification on his injuries.

Chairperson Mickelsen asked the Board if they had any questions regarding Officer Torres' application.

Boardmember Russell thanked Officer Torres for returning to the Board and for obtaining the additional VA medical records. He mentioned that after reviewing the medical records, it was not noted that the injuries are permanent and stationary, which is something looked for when referring to an Independent Medical Evaluation (IME). He determined that it is reasonable to refer Officer Torres for an IME.

Chairperson Mickelsen indicated that in view of the absence of further questions from the Board, she would entertain a motion.

It was moved by Boardmember Lien, seconded by Boardmember Russell, that the Accidental Disability Retirement Application of Police Officer Jose Torres, be sent for an Independent Medical Evaluation.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Butler-Heirshberg-Lien-Mickelsen-Russell

NAYS – None

ABSENT – None

Carried unanimously.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting of the Local Fire and Police Pension Boards adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Safety Local Fire and Police Pension Board meeting of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK