

PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA
NOVEMBER 21, 2006

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2006, in the Prescott Municipal Building, 201 S. Cortez Street, Prescott, Arizona.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Pro Tem Roecker opened the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Roecker
Councilman Blair
Councilman Lamerson
Councilman Luzius
Councilman Roecker
Councilwoman Suttles

Absent:

Mayor Simmons (excused)

Mayor Pro Tem Roecker announced the Special Meeting was to hold a Fire Department honor ceremony and turned the meeting over to Firefighter Dan Bates.

Mr. Bates announced the ceremony was being held to celebrate a retirement and a new addition to the department and the opportunity to honor one of the firefighters for a courageous effort at an incident that happened in June.

The Fire Department wanted to honor Fire Inspector Sharon Nordyke for 30 years of service to fire service, to welcome Kristi Gagnon to the position of Fire Inspector and to award Firefighter Ryan Murphy with the Medal of Courage for his role in rescue efforts at Watson Lake.

Mr. Bates recognized special attendees at this ceremony – Judy Willis, Chief Willis' wife, Manager Steve Norwood, Mayor Pro Tem Roecker and Councilmembers, and all the men and women of the fire department.

Mr. Bates explained Fire Prevention was an area that was overlooked but had a very important role in saving lives and preventing tragedy. Sharon Nordyke had been in fire service for 30 years and spent 24 of those years with the Prescott Fire Department. She was always very helpful and willing to share the knowledge she had. While she was in Fire Investigation she

was very thorough and left no ash pile unsifted and every possible cause examined no matter how little evidence was left for her to work with or what time of night it was. Her contribution to the fire department and the city was immeasurable and he thanked her for all she had given to the community. She left a high mark for others to strive for and then Mr. Bates welcomed Kristi and encouraged her to strive for excellence in service, to learn from those senior to her while challenging herself to find new and better ways each day.

Mr. Bates Introduced Chief Willis who thanked the staff for putting this ceremony together. The department wanted to honor Sharon today for the 24 years of service she had given to the Prescott Fire Department. Chief Willis remarked she left about a month ago and he thought she would be sad, but she still had a smile on her face. He thanked her for her professionalism and for all the innovations that came out of Fire Prevention, specifically in public education; thousands of kids had changed behaviors related to fire through her life safety education programs and said she had made a mark on the community and the fire department was very grateful for that and her innovations had put the department on the cutting edge. Chief Willis presented Sharon with a large ax mounted on wood.

Dan Bates asked Kristi Gagnon to come forward and she was officially named to the position of Fire Inspector, effective July 1. Chief Willis administered the Oath of Office to Kristi and her husband helped pin a badge on her.

Mr. Bates continued saying firefighters took an oath to protect and save lives with the understanding they were willing to put their lives at risk in order to achieve that. They were given training and tools to do their jobs safely in order to protect and save others lives; however, the training was in a controlled and safe environment and it was very different than being in a real rescue situation. At those times it was revealed whether an individual had done his training properly, was truly willing to set aside his own fears and reservations to react, to perform his duties without hesitation and not allow the environment to inhibit his performance and on June 14, 2006, Firefighter Ryan Murphy did that.

Chief Willis explained awards within the Fire Department were for different acts of service. The award today was a “third level” award. The first level was the Medal of Valor where a firefighter died in the line of duty and was awarded the medal posthumously; the second level was the Medal of Gallantry and was awarded to a firefighter who, at great personal risk, was instrumental in saving another from possible death. The third level award was given to a firefighter who was involved in an act of bravery and showed initiative and capability, however, the victim would not survive.

Chief Willis gave the following description of events from Sunday, June 14, 2006:

A report of a possible drowning at Watson Lake was received at the dispatching center; a Technical Rescue Crew was located at the Smoke Tree Fire Station and

they got their boat and equipment and headed to the lake to see what they could do; a Battalion Chief and Engine Company were also dispatched. When they arrived at the lake there was a large crowd of people; the firefighters put the boat in the water and as some firefighters were putting on their protective suits, Ryan took a mask and dove in the water where the bystanders said the person had gone under water. He found the victim on his first dive and pulled him out of the water and firefighters started CPR. However, the victim could not be revived. It all happened very quickly and Ryan put his personal safety aside and that was why he was receiving this award. Mrs. Murphy pinned the medal on him.

Ryan Murphy gave credit to the rest of the firefighters who were there that day, saying it was a group effort; he was very proud of the medal and the other firefighters on the scene that day.

Dan Bates thanked everyone for coming and added Firefighter Tom Pleitgen would be honored during today's Council meeting for his service overseas in the U.S. Marine Corp, having served in Iraq.

Councilman Luzius thanked the firefighters for all they did to keep the City safe.

Manager Steve Norwood remarked it was no secret he was a Number One fan of the Prescott Fire Department; they did a great job for everyone and mentioned there were members of the Prescott Police Department attending the ceremony today which showed the great relationship between Public Safety personnel and the community should be proud of all of them.

The Ceremony concluded at 2:45 P.M.

ROWLE P. SIMMONS, Mayor

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk