

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES
GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA**

Date: August 31, 2009

SHIRLEY L. DAWSON
Chairman

STEVEN L. BESICH
Clerk of the Board

TOMMIE C. MARTIN
Vice-Chairman

By: Marilyn Brewer
Deputy Clerk

MICHAEL A. PASTOR
Member

Gila County Courthouse
Globe, Arizona

PRESENT: Shirley L. Dawson, Chairman; Tommie C. Martin, Vice-Chairman (via telephone conference call); Michael A. Pastor, Member; Jacque Griffin, Assistant County Manager/County Librarian; Marilyn Brewer, Deputy Clerk; and, Bryan Chambers, Chief Deputy County Attorney.

Item 1 – Call to Order

The Gila County Board of Supervisors met in Emergency Session at 2:00 p.m. this date. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dawson.

Item 2 - Information/Discussion/Action to adopt Resolution No. 09-08-06 declaring a state of emergency in Gila County as a result of the Water Wheel fire, which began on August 30, 2009.

Chairman Dawson stated that this meeting was called and Resolution No. 09-08-06 was prepared to declare a state of emergency in Gila County as a result of the Water Wheel fire, which began on Sunday, August 30, 2009.

Chairman Dawson called on Matthew Bolinger, Director of Emergency Management and Health Preparedness, to give the Board an update on the fire. Mr. Bolinger stated that as of 9:00 a.m. this morning the fire has covered 750 acres according to the U. S. Forest Service; however, it has died down considerably due to some light rain, humidity and cooler temperatures and will probably not cover any more acreage. It was a very hot fire and at one point in the course of an hour it burned 400 acres. He noted that photos of the fire were e-mailed to Board members. Vice-Chairman Martin provided additional details as to the specific areas that burned with resulting damage. Mr. Bolinger stated that Beaver Valley and Whispering Pines residents were evacuated and a close watch was kept on Geronimo Estates. A total of 338 structures were evacuated. Many residents went to stay with family and friends and there were 140 registered at the Red Cross shelter, while others

remained in the parking lot because they had animals with them. This morning 60-70 people showed up at the Red Cross Shelter for breakfast. Steve Stratton, Public Works Division Director, noted that the local motels gave a huge discount to the dislocated families. Mr. Bolinger stated that Beaver Valley residents will probably be able to return to their homes tonight; however, it is unknown at this time when the Whispering Pines residents will be able to return. Mr. Stratton stated that now one of the main threats besides the fire is the possibility of a rainstorm coming in this weekend out of the south. If there are torrential rains, the water would flow straight into Beaver Valley, Flowing Springs and East Verde and cause as much or more damage than the fire because there is nothing there to hold the water back. On behalf of the Board, Chairman Dawson complimented and thanked the Emergency Services, Public Works & Sheriff's Office staff for their quick response. Vice-Chairman Martin stated that when the fire first began, the fire chiefs were in a big quandary because all the fire-fighting resources at the present time are dedicated to the raging fires in California; however, 2 bombers and one small helicopter were located somewhere in Arizona and were dispatched to the fire. Chairman Dawson requested of Mr. Bolinger that after this fire is put out, he should coordinate a needs assessment study on how the process can be improved for fighting these small fires so they don't grow into catastrophic ones. She wasn't sure whether the County should contact the Arizona National Guard or some other entity to assure that certain helicopters are always made available. Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Vice-Chairman Martin, the Board unanimously adopted Resolution No. 09-08-06 declaring a state of emergency in Gila County. **(A copy of the Resolution is permanently on file in the Board of Supervisors' Office.)**

There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, Chairman Dawson adjourned the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

APPROVED:

Shirley L. Dawson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Steven L. Besich, County Manager/Clerk