

RESOLUTION NO. 24 - 04

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MORONGO VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT IN APPRECIATION OF THE EXEMPLARY SERVICE OF JAMES A. BRAKEBILL

WHEREAS, the Morongo Valley Community Services (“District”) is a public agency organized and operating under the Community Services District Law, California Government Code Section 61000 et seq.;

WHEREAS, James A. Brakebill began his distinguished career of service with the District in 2015;

WHEREAS, the said James A. Brakebill contributed 6,750 hours of volunteer service to the District from 2015–2021, which included interim Fire Chief, special projects, Fire Chief vacation relief, Duty Officer coverage on all weekends and holidays, and serving as the agency representative for Morono Valley Fire Department during the following major fires:

- Thomas Fire (2017) - Although not in the immediate vicinity of Morongo Valley, the Thomas Fire was one of the largest fires in California’s history and affected large parts of Southern California. It began in December 2017 and burned approximately 281,893 acres.
- Apple Fire (2020) - Starting in late July 2020, the Apple Fire burned in Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including areas near the San Bernardino National Forest, which is relatively close to Morongo Valley. It burned over 33,000 acres.
- El Dorado Fire (2020) - The El Dorado Fire, ignited in early September 2020 by a pyrotechnic device used at a gender reveal party, burned through parts of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. This fire scorched 22,680 acres before being contained.
- South Fire (2021) - Starting in late August 2021, the South Fire burned near Lytle Creek, not far from the Morongo Valley area. It consumed thousands of acres and prompted evacuations.
- Fairview Fire (2022) – Occurring in September 2022, the Fairview Fire affected areas near Hemet, which is in Riverside County and within the broader region that includes Morongo Valley. It burned several thousand acres.

WHEREAS, throughout his years of service with the District, and in each capacity in which he has served, the said James A. Brakebill has consistently and faithfully performed his duties and functions for the District with respect, integrity, collegiality, enthusiasm, professionalism, sense of humor, hard work, and unimpeachable trust and character, including but not limited to all of the following accomplishments:

- Ensured that the Morongo Valley Fire Department was fully staffed during the above major fires to protect the District and deploying personnel under the county and statewide mutual aid agreements.
- District Manager and Fire Chief from January 2022 until March 2024.
- Successfully mitigated potential litigation regarding employment practices.
- Reestablished employee performance reviews.
- Successfully negotiated an agreement with Morongo Basin Ambulance to manage EMS supplies, drugs, and medical director resulting in a significant savings to the District.
- Established procedures to bring the Fire Department up to NFPA Standards to include a preventive maintenance process for all fire equipment.
- Initiated cost recovery through FEMA for District expenses because of the 2023/2024 winter storms.
- Overall responsibility for the AFG grants for new self-contained breathing apparatus and new radios.

- Effective leadership by building and leading a cohesive team of firefighters and emergency responders, fostering a positive work culture, and promoting professional development within the Fire Department.
- Implemented Public Safety Initiatives aimed at reducing fire hazards, preventing emergencies, and educating the community on fire safety practices, such as smoke alarm installation campaigns, fire prevention workshops, and school education programs.
- Developed comprehensive emergency response plans, conducting regular drills, and training exercises, and ensuring that firefighters are adequately equipped and trained to respond effectively to various emergencies, including wildfires, structure fires, medical emergencies, and hazardous material incidents.
- Established strong partnerships with local government agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders to enhance emergency preparedness, coordinate response efforts, and address District needs effectively.
- Managed the Fire Department's budget and resources, secured funding for necessary equipment, facilities, and personnel, and implemented cost-saving measures without compromising public safety standards.
- Performed thorough risk assessments, at the beginning of each fire season, of the District to identify potential hazards, vulnerabilities, and areas of concern, and developed strategies to mitigate risks and enhance resilience against natural disasters, fires, traffic accidents, and other emergencies.
- Prioritized continuous learning and professional development for our firefighters and Fire Department personnel, providing opportunities for advanced training, certifications, and career advancement, and fostering a culture of excellence and innovation within the District.
- Maintained open communication with the public, media, and stakeholders, promptly addressing inquiries and concerns, and effectively communicating important safety information, emergency updates, and departmental achievements to build trust and confidence in the Fire Department.
- Lead the Fire Department's response efforts during major disasters, such as wildfires, structure fires, earthquakes, and flooding caused by severe weather, coordinating multi-agency response operations, and facilitating recovery efforts to restore normalcy and rebuild our District areas affected by these emergencies.
- Developed an employee recognition program for exemplary leadership, innovation, and outstanding contributions to the District and the Fire Department.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the District's Board of Directors that it takes great pleasure in recognizing, celebrating, and honoring the said James A. Brakebill for his commitment and dedication to the District on the occasion of his retirement, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions he has made to the District and the health, safety, and welfare of the constituents served thereby.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the District's Board of Directors that this Resolution be entered into the record of its permanent minutes and that a copy thereof be suitably framed for presentation to the said James A. Brakebill.

ADOPTED this 21st day of August, 2024.

Christina Gorke, President

Lynn Watts, Vice-President

Johnny Tolbert, Director

Lance Fisher, Director

Steve Hayden, Director