

**Rio Verde Fire Bond**  
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Rio Verde Fire District Board Chairman George Kattermann is quite pleased with the support the district received for its bond proposal in the Nov. 3 General Election.

The proposal, which authorizes \$5 million in general obligation bonds for the construction and equipment for a second fire station in the district, received 1,703 votes in favor to 365 opposed – nearly 80 percent of the votes in favor of authorizing the bonds.

“It helped that we had the support of all the boards in each of the three communities,” Kattermann said. (Rio Verde, Tonto Verde and Trilogy’s Verde River are within the boundaries of the fire district.)

The long haul to make the new facility a reality is now just beginning, according to Kattermann.

“We have established an ad-hoc committee to help with the design and construction,” he said. The committee includes two RVFD board members, firefighters and a resident who is a civil engineer.

“We are seriously considering a design-build process for the project. A lot of new facilities like this are being built with this process.”

The board has already solicited “requests for qualifications” (RFQs) and received several responses. Committee members recently visited some of the facilities built by the applicants to get a feel for their work, according to Kattermann.

This is the first time the Rio Verde Fire District has gone the bond route to finance a project or equipment and there is a bit of a learning curve, Kattermann said.

“It is an interesting process to work with and we have good, qualified people to help us make a decision,” he added.

Kattermann said he is hopeful that construction can begin late summer of 2021, but there is a lot of work to do once a contractor is selected to work with architects to design the facility that will sit on a two-acre parcel near 176th Street on Rio Verde Drive. That is just east of the entry to Trilogy. The parcel is also part of a larger tract that may be developed in the future and would become part of the district.

The bond includes money for the purchase of equipment to operate from the new station. A new fire engine is usually built from the chassis up and can be quite a lengthy process. In the meantime, Kattermann notes that the district has equipment that can be put in the new station. They are already operating a temporary station across from the new site and can place that engine and a backup ambulance in the new facility temporarily while awaiting new equipment if necessary.

On a parallel track there is also the financial side to selling the bonds that is now being planned out. Kattermann said the district receives legal counsel from Ballard Spahr, a nationwide law firm with a Phoenix office. The firm is also able to provide a bond counsel for the project.

“I know (Ballard Spahr) well,” Kattermann said. “That goes back a long way, when I was in the Philadelphia area.”

Kattermann said he is happy to be past the election process. “I’m delighted to be past the idea of a bond issue,” he said. “That was a big step.”