

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES MARCH 11, 2009**

Board trustee members present: Dave Ottun, Alison Meslin, Jim Manley.

Board trustee members absent: Fred Nelson excused; Steve Bundy.

Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild

Guests: Paul Laisy, Lester Johnson, Lee Manicke, Paul Mauer, Jack Clapp, Jane Clapp, Jeff Meslin, Ron Friez, Frank Jones, Berl Tiskus – Valley Journal Newspaper Reporter.

**Meeting called to order at Station #2 in Big Arm by Vice Chairman Ottun at 7:00 p.m.**

**Minutes February 12, 2009 Rural Fire Board Meeting:** Fire Chief John Fairchild reviewed page 2 regarding the city code stating volunteer personnel age requirement being 21 to 55. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated there is no city code regarding age requirement. Trustee Meslin referred to a copy of the municipal code 2.01 which was adopted to comply with the charter form of government regarding the city fire department. Trustee Meslin indicated perhaps the fire department has not updated their records to comply with the recently adopted codes. Vice Chairman Ottun suggested with board discussion the minutes remain as presented. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to approve minutes of February 12, 2009 as written. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Communications:** A letter dated February 24, 2009 from Fire Chief John Fairchild to Big Arm Fire Company with a copy to Rural Fire Board Members is a follow-up to earlier memo dated February 18, 2009 regarding prospective new members and training. (Copy of letter attached to file minutes). Trustee Manley indicated the letter is addressed to the Big Arm Fire Company; while Fire Chief Fairchild wanted the board to be aware of what has transpired and provided a copy for the board to review.

**Bills:** **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Manley to pay bills. Motion carried unanimously.** Trustee Meslin presented a bill in the amount of \$14.57 for an advertisement to sell the used propane heater at Station 2 in Big Arm. Two inquiries were received. One person declined since the heater was not large enough for his shop. The other person plans to make an offer. **Motion amended to include additional bill in the amount of \$14.57. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Treasury Report:**

Operating Fund Balance	\$	85,354.55
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$	85,540.92
Voted Levy	\$	1,057.74
Paid bills in the amount of	\$	6,279.11

Check numbers 3884 - 3892 , both inclusive  
(paid March 11, 2009)

Note: Revenue from Lake County Treasurer added to fund balances following meeting.

**Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to accept treasury report. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Staff Report:** Fire Chief Fairchild requested all volunteers attend the March 17 training on standards of survival; and the March 24 mass competence. DPX contract agreement of \$1,500 for the mask fit test will be split with the city. Scheduled annual vehicle inspection on Engine #326 Three applications are being reviewed for membership. Plans to set up county training exercise for urban interface in April. Recently incorrect information regarding open burning season was released. Public announcements regarding fire wise information needs to be reviewed by the fire chief for correct information prior to release.

Additionally Fire Chief Fairchild commented to his letter dated February 24, 2009 regarding training at Station #2 in Big Arm. He needs to be aware of training schedule and training activity; while it should be standard operating procedure to inform the chief of activities. Trustee Manley reviewed the letter and stated discussion at the last three meetings indicate growing pains between the creation of the new Big Arm Fire Company and the Chief. Discussion during the board meetings could be counterproductive, therefore it is suggested the chief meet with the Big Arm Fire Company to iron out the differences. To better understand the issues, he met with Ron Friez, President and Jeff Meslin, Secretary-Treasurer of the Big Arm Fire Company. He concluded there is miscommunication on both sides and suggests a sit down meeting between Big Arm Fire Company and the chief before issues come before the board. The members of the Big Arm Fire Company are reasonable people in good faith and would like to resolve the issues. Trustee Manley suggested a committee from the board meet with the chief and then hopefully the chief would meet with the Big Arm Fire Company to iron out the differences. Fire Chief Fairchild has no problem with the suggested meetings. He requests a simple courtesy call regarding activity at the Big Arm Fire Station. He requests the training run through his office including training activity/material, who is training, time of training; worker's compensation and liability insurance are additional issues. Trustee Manley suggested Polson and Big Arm training and business meeting schedules reviewed at the beginning of each month to improve communication. In conclusion, Fire Chief Fairchild stated I could care less what they are doing as long as I'm kept in the loop and I may be able to assist with training activities. Fire Chief Fairchild stated he does not take his position lightly and the department is making great steps, although everyone needs to be on the same page. Trustees Manley and Meslin will meet with Fire Chief Fairchild on March 12 at 11:00 a.m. to facilitate communications. Trustee Manley has some suggestions regarding communications and coordination with the Big Arm Fire Company. Fire Chief Fairchild requested to purchase six Minitor V pagers to replace the Minitor III pagers. Trustee Meslin indicated the rural recently purchased ten Minitor V pagers. The chief indicated all pagers are currently assigned and additional pagers are needed for new volunteers. Trustee Manley indicated to be technically correct the pagers are to be rural property. The request is to purchase six Minitor V pagers and two radios. The cost of the pagers are approximately \$544 each and radios are approximately \$800 each. The Minitor III pagers may have a trade in value to reduce the cost of the Minitor V pagers. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to purchase six Minitor V pagers and two radios at a cost of approximately \$5,000. Motion carried unanimously.**

**INVENTORY** – Trustee Meslin noted components on old engine #319 were removed. Some of the components were put on the new engine #319. Fire Chief Fairchild will provide information to update the inventory list of fixed assets.

**Old Business:**

**UPDATE FROM BIG ARM FIRE COMPANY** – None.

**UPDATE FROM IRVINE FLATS FIRE COMPANY** – Trustee Meslin provided copies of the MCA codes regarding the retirement guidelines for the company. A certificate of formation should be filed with the State of Montana. The retirement records will be retroactive to July 1, 2008.

**AGREEMENT FOR HOUSING RURAL DISTRICT VEHICLES AT CLAPP RANCH** – Trustee Manley reported the average heating cost is approximately \$200 per month. Jack Clapp indicated the insurance cost is \$700 annually. The propane is metered by a separate tank; while other costs associated with housing the vehicles are incidental. Trustee Manley indicated Mr. Clapp has not requested compensation; while the board agrees to cover the out of pocket costs to house the vehicles. The vehicles occupy two-thirds of the building. Trustee Manley indicated a fair measure is to pay the heating cost and additional insurance costs incurred. Vice Chairman Ottun suggested an amount of \$3,000 per year to

house the vehicles. Currently the vehicles housed at the Clapp Ranch in Irvine Flats are Engine #319 a 1982 Pierce Fire Truck VIN #1WBKCCUFOCN055041 and brush truck #323 a 1987 Chevrolet crew cab w/slide-in component VIN #1GCHV33K0HS133361. Mr. Clapp discussed the ISO rating complimented by a fire station in the area and the reduced property insurance rate to residents. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to lease building space to house rural fire district's vehicles at Clapp Ranch in Irvine Flats at \$3,000 per year retroactive to July 1, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.**

**FIREFIGHTER'S INCENTIVES** - Fire Chief Fairchild requested the board review the proposed firefighters incentive program. The proposal suggests firefighters would receive an amount for attending meetings, training, and runs; while runs would count twice. The additional cost will be approximately \$1,793 annually. Trustee Meslin requested Fire Chief Fairchild submit the proposal for consideration during the budget process.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INSURANCE** - Fire Chief Fairchild reported a supplemental accident insurance policy which pays for loss of wages in the event a volunteer is injured on a fire response is in effect. The policy coverage is through September 2009 at a cost of \$3,047 per year. Trustee Manley will evaluate the policy.

**NEW FIRE STATION** – Trustee Manley will review the legal publication for the bid documents. Trustee Ottun will prepare floor and electrical plans for the bid package. **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Manley to reform the building committee, establish building specifications, and request bids for the proposed fire station at the Polson Fairgrounds. Motion carried unanimously.**

**New Business:**

**STIMULUS LETTER** – Trustee Meslin reported a letter was sent to Representative Jana Taylor and Senator John Brueggeman regarding stimulus funds for the new fire station. The request is for \$250,000 to \$400,000.

**FEMA GRANT WORKSHOP** – Trustee Meslin reported grants are available for firefighters recruit, retention, training, safety and operations. She recently attended a workshop and noted grant funds available exceed applicants. The deadline for application is in the spring and encourages a committee formed to assist with the application process.

**Comments from public:** None

April 8, 2009 Rural Fire Board will held at Polson City Commission Chambers at 7:00 p.m.

**Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned 8:35 p.m.

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Dave Ottun, Vice-Chairman

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Alison W. Meslin Secretary-Treasurer