

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES JULY 8, 2009**

Board trustee members present: Alison Meslin, Paul Laisy, R. Jack Clapp, Fred Nelson.

Board trustee member absent: Jim Manley, excused.

Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild.

Guests: Roger Rogers, Leader news reporter Jenna Cederberg, Volunteer Fire personnel Ron Friez, Jeff Meslin, Joe Cope.

Meeting called to order at Polson City Commission Chambers by Chairperson Alison Meslin at 7:00 p.m.

**Minutes June 10, 2009 Rural Fire Board Meeting; Motion Trustee Nelson to approve minutes of June 10, 2009 as presented, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Claims:** Review check #4003 to L.N. Curtis \$167.33 is a coupler adapter for draft hoses on Engine #318. Fire Chief Fairchild reported the payment to Mercer Welding and Repair for Tender #327 included a coating on the inside of the tank and a cushion in some areas to prevent wear between the steel tank and steel frame along with repair to the leaks in the water tank. The tender should be operational for a few more years. Trustee Laisy noted the various amounts for the clothing allowance. The clothing allowance represents attendance at meetings at \$5.00 per meeting. **Motion Trustee Laisy to approve claims, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Communications:** Fire Chief Fairchild reported Steve Stirm with Automatic Fire System Service, Inc. proposes to donate a portion of the sprinkler system costs for the fairgrounds station. The proposal for the board's consideration is a donation for engineering, labor and waive overhead costs to protect the equipment. The cost of materials would be \$7,628. A 4-inch water line is necessary for the sprinkler system. In another matter, the department responded to a motor vehicle fire on Albert Lane July 2, 2009. Leaving the scene Engine #318 pulled into the next residence to turn around. The right rear wheel of the engine sank into a septic tank. The engine was not damaged, however the septic tank was damaged. The property owners, Richard A. and Derinda May Peterson are upset. Lake County Environmental Health reviewed the property records and noted no wastewater treatment system permit is of record for the property. Polson Rural Fire District expressed interest in repairing the damaged tank, however, Lake County Wastewater Treatment System Regulations do not allow for repair of an unpermitted and/or pre-existing system. Trustee Clapp suggested the insurance company deal with the issue. Western States Insurance has been contacted and an adjuster will visit the site. Chairperson Meslin forwarded a letter to Lake County Elections Office stating the Board of Trustees on June 10, 2009 resolved to give a written confirmation for each District election to specify whether it will be a mail-in ballot or a polling site walk-in election. Groundbreaking for the Polson Fairgrounds Fire Station was on June 18, 2009. Press coverage was provided by Valley Journal, Lake County Leader, KPAX webpage, and KERR Radio.

**Treasury Report:**

Operating Fund Balance	\$ 77,394.75
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$ 35,914.97
Voted Levy	\$ .00
Paid bills in the amount of	\$ 23,660.98

Check numbers 3956 – 4013, both inclusive.  
(paid July 08, 2009)

Additionally Loan payment #1 was made to 1<sup>st</sup> Citizens Bank June 15, 2009. Real property taxes outstanding June 30, 2009 operating fund \$4,253.55, voted levy fund \$2,632.15 which is consistent with June 30, 2008.

Chairperson Meslin reported during the 2008 audit the auditor advised the balance left in the operating fund should be transferred to a reserve line item account in the operating fund. At the recommendation of the auditor, the proposal is to transfer the operating fund balance to a line item building and recruitment reserve fund. Last year the funds were transferred to the capital improvement fund. The funds in the capital reserve fund can only be used for expenditures over \$5,000. The line item building and recruitment reserve fund permits use of funds as needed. Trustee Clapp suggested the funds transferred into a generic reserve account to allow for operating expenses. **Motion Chairperson Meslin to transfer the operating fund balance to a line item building and recruitment reserve in the operating fund, second Trustee Laisy. Tie vote. Motion Trustee Clapp to transfer the operating fund balance to the capital improvement fund, second Trustee Nelson. Tie vote. Motion Chairperson Meslin to transfer \$10,000 from the operating fund to the capital improvement fund and balance to line item building and recruitment reserve account which can be accessed only by board approval, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chairperson Meslin presented a \$50.00 donation from Ann Murphy to the Big Arm Fire Company. The donor is grateful for the response efforts.

**Staff Report:** Fire Chief Fairchild reported 32 runs for June. Engine #327 is back in service. Training this month is pumping water and setting up port-a-tanks. Engine #314 is on the sixth set of air bags due too much weight on the truck. The board should consider an update of engine #314 and engine #323. During the wildland fire season, the type 6 engines are in demand. **Motion Trustee Nelson to replace air bags and look into updates for engine #314 and engine #323, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.** Finley Point Fire Department is very appreciative of the 1995 Chevrolet Blazer donated by the Polson Fire Department. Fire Chief Fairchild requested clarification on the investigation regarding the controversy of the fire station construction at the fairgrounds. Chairperson Meslin indicated the board will have final discussion this evening in executive session. The Volunteer Firefighters Compensation Act (VFCA) annual certification – FY 2009-2010 item was not on the agenda and the board opted to table. Fire Chief Fairchild explained the document certifies the membership, training hours, and the board should be aware of the certification before he signs it. **Motion Chairperson Meslin to table Volunteer Firefighters Compensation Act (VFCA) annual certification – FY 2009-2010, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Old Business**

**FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION BUILDING PROGRESS** – Chairperson Meslin reported the contractor received the engineer stamped plans for the building and concrete foundation. The permit will be issued by city building inspector Ron Melvin. The frame for the foundation commenced today. The contractor plans to complete the pillars, stem wall, and floor in the next two to three weeks. He estimates the building should arrive in approximately 30 days. In conversation today with Commissioner Bill Barron the Lake County Commissioners are keen on the additions of two 28' to 32' width by 70' length wings on either sides of the fire station building. In view of the additions, the commissioners acknowledge the 200' width of the site is not large enough to accommodate the fire station building and additions. Therefore, the site was expanded 30' to the west. The rodeo stock entrance gate to the fairgrounds was then moved with the approval of the commissioners. The county provided gravel for the new entrance. Prior to the rodeo, Lynch Fencing constructed a three wire temporary fence on two sides of the site so stock would not escape. The electricians are in the process of obtaining a state electrical permit. When the permit is received Mission Valley Power will remove the temporary pole for placement on Regatta Road. The Mission Valley Power fee to move the pole is \$2,254.10. A photograph of participants in the groundbreaking ceremony held on June 18<sup>th</sup> was provided for the permanent files. The electrician will provide some options for an exhaust system. Trustee Laisy reported the road right-of-way is 32' therefore the station was moved back. Ample space remains for parking the trucks in front of the building..

When the bid was let another dealer thought the bid was for residential doors. The contractor was concerned with the issue and upgraded the doors above the original order out of his pocket. The doors are commercial type doors and the overhead operators are also commercial. The overhead operators define the difference between residential and commercial doors. Trustees Laisy and Meslin discussed a first team response for the station comprised of volunteers north of the bridge. **Motion Chairperson Meslin Trustees Laisy and Meslin create a subcommittee of the building committee to work with Fire Chief Fairchild to begin a recruitment plan for the fairgrounds station, second Trustee Laisy.** Trustee Clapp indicated it is a good idea, although the recruitment should be on a broader scale to accommodate all stations. September would be the appropriate time to begin the recruitment, due to the wildland fire season. Volunteer Fireman Cope indicated summer is a difficult time to train new members. Fire Chief Fairchild noted no classes are available during the summer months. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**FIRE RECOVERY USA BILLING SERVICES** - Trustee Laisy contacted Montana Healthcare Consultants, Inc. a Missoula firm that provides billing services for fire departments for extraction, scene containment, and fire suppression, Many auto insurances cover these charges with proper documentation. Common rates are extraction \$200-\$250, scene containment \$200-\$250, and vehicle fire suppression \$250-\$300. The fees are 8 percent of total monthly cash credits or \$25.00 per call processed. The service previously discussed, Fire Recovery USA, a California private billing service had a fee of 20 or 25 percent of the fee collected. A list of clients was provided and if the board wishes he will contact the clients to review services. Chairperson Meslin indicated previously the board suggested billing for negligence such as DUI, drug substance, or non-controlled burns which creates a burden on the residents; while accidents happen to everyone. The operational fund had a surplus the past two years and perhaps the option should be reserved and reviewed in the next two years when expenses increase and the tax levy doesn't increase. The fee is not a double taxation to non-residents and it is assumed most the cost of the emergency response team will be passed on to at fault drivers in a form of higher premiums. Due to the recent increased mill levy, she is very reluctant to bill residents unless the billing is for negligent issues. Trustee Laisy suggested a method to isolate those who don't pay local taxes then the billing may be a reasonable charge. Also keep in mind a number of residents have out of state vehicle plates. He agrees not billing local residents for services the local fire department provides. Accidents and arson caused fires should be given consideration for billing. Fire Chief Fairchild noted intentional fires are sited by the county attorney's office and any fees collected go into the county coffers. The method to collect fees for the fire district is to contract with a billing service. Trustee Clapp indicated a risk factor that people will be reluctant to call knowing a fee will be incurred. **Motion Trustee Nelson to table billing service, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.** Trustee Laisy volunteered to do additional research on the billing services.

**FEMA GRANT APPLICATION FOR NEW TRUCK UPDATE** - Trustee Clapp reported the grant is in preliminary review status. Chairperson Meslin requested Fire Chief Fairchild provide a National Fire Incident Reporting System number for the rural district to submit grant applications.

**FEMA GRANT APPLICATION FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION UPDATE** – The committee has not met. Deferred to next meeting.

**DISTRICT'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES UPDATE** – Trustee Clapp reported Fire Chief Fairchild provided a computer disc to review the policies and procedures.

**BIG ARM VOLUNTEER FIRECOMPANY SIGN AND FUND RAISING** - Jeff Meslin, Secretary-Treasurer of the Big Arm Fire Company reported the Big Arm Fire Station was painted prior to putting the

new sign up. Jeff personally thanked Tom Eddy and Alison Meslin for volunteering timeless hours with the painting crew. Paul Iverson general contractor for the new rural station generously offered a platform lift. The building was enhanced and looked very good for the unveiling of the new sign. The cost of the sign was \$735.02, the paint and rollers were \$359.73 for a total of \$1,094.07. The cost of the project was \$94.00 over budget. Alphabet Signs.Com supplied the sign. On the average, including postage Alphabet Signs was \$300 less than local suppliers. The bill was presented to the board for reimbursement to Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company. Ron Friez, President of the Big Arm Fire Company reported on the hamburger fry and activities. It was a excellent day for the event with a large crowd. Fire Chief Fairchild, Polson and Big Arm volunteers, board of trustee members, Big Arm residents and founders of the Big Arm Fire Station assisted and attended the event. The gross was \$5,200.81, expenses \$1,068 with a profit of \$4,100 to \$4,200 which will be used to best serve the Big Arm community. Advanced ticket sales was a good idea and provided an opportunity to visit with residents in the district and spur their interest in the event. Ron invited area residents who were instrumental in the construction of the Big Arm Station. Chairperson Meslin noted during the unveiling of the sign, the group was grateful for the refurbished station and sign. Trustee Laisy commented the event was well attended and the sign is very appropriate.. Trustee Clapp questioned the tax exempt, non profit 501 C 3 status with use of the profit. Chairperson Meslin reported last year during the audit exit conference, the auditor advised the governing body automatically has a 501 C 3 status. Use of donated funds can be specified and the governing entity is required to disburse the way it was requested. The volunteer fire department by selling tickets and providing a service for a hamburger or pancake event can benefit from the profit. If the volunteers purchase equipment for fire service, the equipment needs to be donated to the governing entity to be covered by insurance and liability.

**RURAL FIRE CHIEF'S JOB DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW PROCEEDURE** - Committee members Laisy and Nelson completed a rough draft and plan to review the job description with the fire chief. The committee will report at the next meeting.

**BOARD POLICY ON FIRE DEPARTMENT'S & COMPANY'S REPRESENTATION AT BOARD MEETINGS** - Tabled to August meeting.

**BUDGET 2009/2010** - Chairperson Meslin presented a budget analysis of actual expenditures during FY 2008/2009 and a proposed FY 2009/2010 budget submitted by Fire Chief Fairchild. The goal for FY 2009/2010 is a budget at \$120,000. The 2008/2009 budget was \$121,000 to \$122,000 and there is some concern in the coming year the anticipated revenue may decrease. Trustee Nelson suggested setting a budget for the same amount as the previous year. The State Department of Revenue plans to submit market values to local government entities the later part of August. Therefore, the value of a mill is not available at this time and a budget cannot be formulated. In the past, unanticipated revenue was deposited in the capital reserve fund. Trustee Laisy suggested an unanticipated revenue line item in the operating budget. Chairperson Meslin indicated the building and recruitment reserve line item at \$10,850 will serve the purpose. Trustee Clapp suggested planning for recruitment which will involve outfitting new firefighters. **Motion Trustee Nelson to meet July 20th at 5:00 p.m. to further discuss the budget, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### New Business

**FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE RESPONSE** - Trustee Clapp reported Fire Chief Fairchild provided a list of items need for the fairgrounds station. Chairperson Meslin suggested the building committee meet with Fire Chief Fairchild to review the list of items. Trustee Laisy commented the fire chief's plan to implement response from the fairgrounds station should be assessed.

**ALTERNATE SITES FOR DISTRICT MEETINGS** – Trustee Clapp suggested scheduling meetings in the Valley View and Rocky Point areas. Trustee Clapp will explore the alternate sites.

**PUBLIC INPUT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS** - None.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 p.m.

The board recessed to executive session.

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**Alison W. Meslin Chairperson**

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**Jack Clapp Secretary-Treasurer**