

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES AUGUST 13, 2008**

Board trustee members present: Ross Hoyt, Fred Nelson, Alison Meslin, Jim Manley, and Dave Ottun
Board trustee member absent: None
Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild
Guests: Lester Johnson, Steve Lozar, Volunteer Firemen Paul Bishop, Kraig Rubel, Ronnie Swope, Jane Clapp, Steve Doll, and Jeff Meslin.

Meeting called to order at Big Arm Fire Hall Meeting Room by Chairman Hoyt at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes July 8, 2008 Rural Fire Board Meeting: Trustee Meslin requested the following change Page 2 Workers' Compensation Coverage last sentence correction: *Trustee Meslin suggested the city provide an acknowledgment for insurance coverage when the boat is on the lake which is not in the rural district.*
Motion Trustee Ottun, seconded Trustee Meslin to approve minutes of July 8, 2008 as corrected.
Motion carried unanimously.

Treasury Report:

Operating Fund Balance	\$ 58,722.26
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$ 98,804.08
Voted Levy	\$ 1,020.55

Paid bills in the amount of \$ 8,358.54

Check numbers 3741 - 3753 , both inclusive
(paid August 13, 2008)

Additional treasury items: 1). Interim audit bill from Ronald Paul Foltz, CPA \$5,000.00 with 10% retention; current payment request \$4,500. 2). Prepay propane contract October 2008 to April 2009 with Energy Partners 350 gallons at \$2.42 total contract \$847; contract last year 450 gallons at \$1.69 with usage of 323 gallons. Current credit balance \$289.06 last fill March 2008. The contract was not available. The deadline to submit the contract is mid September. Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun to table Energy Partners contract and review the contract at the September 2008 meeting. Motion carried unanimously. 3). Rural fire assistance grant with Lake County Office of Emergency Management to be submitted by October 15, 2008 with invoices to include \$2,970 which includes a 10 percent match with reimbursement of \$2,700. Fire Chief John Fairchild reported the grant is submitted annually for wildland fire equipment. 4). Correspondence from Western States Insurance regarding a policy modification *deleting the 19' Rapid Craft Boat and Adding a 1991 17' Action Craft Boat.* The letter represents the first policy modification the second policy modification will address delete the 1991 17' Action Craft Boat and a refund will be issued. A letter from Fire Chief Fairchild indicating the fire boat, boat trailer and rescue vehicle have been donated to the City of Polson. Additionally a copy of a letter to MMIA – Property Insurance Coverage from the City of Polson requesting the boat and trailer added to the city policy. 5). Consider refinance package on the fire equipment note at 1st Interstate Bank \$382,712.26 at 4.88% interest rate with five years remaining on the note. 6) Trustee Meslin mentioned approximately \$15,000 of FY '08 budget remains in the operating fund. A portion of the remaining funds is to pay for the audit; therefore, \$10,000 should be moved to the capital reserve fund. Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Nelson to move \$10,000 to the capital reserve fund. Motion carried unanimously. 7). Trustee Meslin and Bonnie are reviewing the financial expenditures report compared to budget report and would like to streamline the posting to account number and make the groupings a little easier for the board to understand. Trustee Meslin requested board 's approval to continue and include Fire Chief Fairchild in the process. The board's consensus is to continue the process.

Bills: Discussion of following bills: 1). L.N. Curtis & Sons \$429.00 is for six buckets of class "A" foam. 2) Interim billing for the audit in the amount of \$4,500. The total audit fee per bid is \$6,500. 3). Mission Valley Power \$86.28. During the summer months, the bill is generally approximately \$45.00. The excess usage may be due to additional freezers, etc. for the hamburger social. Fire Chief Fairchild noted the lights are left on in the fire hall and requested the lights turned off. G & M Auto Tech \$403.19 service on Engine 327 and Engine 318. **Motion Chairman Hoyt, seconded Trustee Nelson to pay bills. Motion carried unanimously.**

Staff Report: Fire Chief Fairchild reported the right side Engine 328 was damaged during a fueling at the Jette Store. The firefighter got too close to the fuel island. 1994 Chevy 314 responded to the Garceau 2 fire and two tires need to be replaced. Engine 327 also responded to the Garceau 2 fire. Engine 326 responded to the Deep Draw fire. Trustee Meslin noted the fire boat calls are listed in the rural response column on the runs report and felt the boat calls should be listed as mutual aid.

Old Business:

AUDIT FY '06-'07 – Trustee Meslin reported the audit is complete and the auditors would like to schedule an exit conference with the board chairman, secretary-treasurer and clerk. Chairman Hoyt suggested Trustee Meslin contact the auditors to schedule the exit conference.

ANNEXED RURAL PROPERTY BY CITY – Trustee Meslin reported 18 letters were sent to property owners of annexed property requesting payment for the rural debt service obligation. To date five payments were received. Bonnie offered to telephone the remaining property owners and request prompt payment. The Board's opinion remains the burden of payment is the responsibility of the city. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Nelson to write a letter to the city to collect and transfer the money to the rural fire debt service fund. Motion carried unanimously.**

TENDER 319 BIDS – Fire Chief Fairchild presented five bids for the sale of the 1975 Peterbuilt water tender. The list of repairs were available to the bidders. The following bids were received 1). Boyd Vandenberg \$5,100; 2). Todd Morigeau \$3,500; 3). John King 2,500; 4). Robert D. Thornburg \$2,075; 5). Jack's Repair \$1,572. **Motion Trustee Nelson, seconded Trustee Ottun accept high bid of \$5,100 for the 1975 Peterbuilt Eng. 319 water tender. Motion carried unanimously.** Trustee Nelson advised the tender was moved to the county shop at the request of Lake County Commissioner Paddy Trusler.

PERS RETIREMENT ANNUAL STATEMENTS – Trustees Meslin and Manley reported on a conference call with Diann Levandowski, Assistant Fiscal Services Bureau Chief regarding the Volunteer Firefighters' Compensation Act and the 2008 annual certificate turnaround documents. A copy of correspondence authorizing the creation of the Big Arm Fire Company in 1979 was sent to PERS.

LAND AND BUILDING ACQUISITION - Trustee Meslin provided a copy of a handout that was presented at the volunteer fire membership meeting last evening. She is mentioned in the handout and would like to clarify to context. I (assuming Paul Bishop) invited Alison Meslin to make a presentation with us at the Polson City Council meeting assuming that she would be in support of any idea that will foster unity that is described in the new interlocal agreement, however she is very disinterested and

declined to be involved. The conversation that Alison had with Paul on July 31st when he called and he asked if I would be interested and go with the fire department's presentation to the city council to basically support building a joint city-rural station. I told him the board had not made that decision and the only decision made was to obtain the fairground and look into the feasibility of building a new rural station and then a couple of workshops to hear what the fire department's opinion was and I couldn't speak on behalf of the board. He then asked my opinion and Alison's personal opinion is a rural station north of the bridge makes sense, although Alison is still doing research and continues to listen. He then indicated membership thinks Alison is hell bent on separation on a station and I will do anything to get it. Further stated as a trustee, it is my duty to listen to the membership and represent them. Discussed consultants and if the rural board hires their own consultant it will only reflect the board's opinions. I suggested the fire department should suggested the city build a fire station east of the town and the rural build one north of the bridge. He thought the locations were good and it would only work if ownership was shared. I told him an interlocal agreement is in place which allows us to share buildings, equipment and volunteer firefighters and the rural district should not be put in the position of being held for ransom when a city manager doesn't want to make changes. Paul acknowledged the interlocal agreement is in place until 2012 and we don't need to build. He then said the membership was insulted when I wanted to build a cheap building and they deserve better. Then Paul noted a local contractor said the estimate for a building \$130,000 to \$150,000 is incorrect. The information in the update is wrong, it is not true to form, and not a true representation of our board to form and I would personal like an apology. Paul Bishop indicated he contacted Trustee Meslin to participate in the city council presentation and she declined.

Trustee Manley indicated the presentation by Paul Bishop to the Rural Fire Board was appreciated with the cooperative tone and was surprised of the different tone to the city council being critical of what the rural board was doing. The presentation to the city noted the station was a rural only station. The rural public discussions never suggested a rural only station. It was always discussed the departments have an interlocal agreement, mutual aid agreement and everyone on the board was open to the working out location of equipment and an attempt to remain as a joint fire department. The purpose is to try to listen to each other and try to work together. Steve Lozar former member of rural fire board acknowledged the trustees precise reporting and analyzed expenditures regarding the tax dollar. Although Steve noted desension regarding buildings and placement of equipment. He noted in his opinion a rural station across the bridge is not a good idea. The best counsel for the board is to sit down in a meeting with the firefighters. The firefighters moral is at an all time high. Trustee Meslin responded by readings from the July 8, 2008 meeting: Trustee Meslin would like to meet with the volunteers in an open forum to discuss proposals before committing to the feasibility study. **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun to schedule open workshop meetings. Motion carried unanimously** First meeting 7:00 p.m. July 17th at Station 2 Big Arm and second meeting 7:00 p.m. July 24th Polson city council chambers. Steve Lozar indicated the best time for a meeting is during the volunteers training sessions. Trustee Manley noted at the last meeting there was recitation of the times a new station was discussed across the bridge and the discussion went back to 2000. It was an unanimous decision of the board that there was a need and until the resolution was passed never in eight years was there opposition to the station. The current station at city hall is running out of room to house all the equipment. The department is also anticipating applying for grants to securing additional equipment, therefore, in need of additional space. Lozar indicated his concern are from a taxpayer standpoint and the discord between the board and firefighters. Trustee Meslin indicated the tension has saddened everyone. The board continues to do research regarding density, population, road system, runs, tax base, conversation with fire chiefs, state marshals, and many logistic people. Noting in July the majority of the runs were north of the bridge. Three pieces of property were offered to the board Jette Meadows, Tower Road and the fairgrounds property. A Jette Meadows property owner threatened a lawsuit if a station was placed in the subdivision; the water line

at the Tower Road property will not be available until the first phase of the property is developed and sold. The city manager was not open to changes in the interlocal agreement therefore creating a need for a building to house the rural fire equipment. Chairman Hoyt asked the board to comment on the consultants presentation. Trustee Meslin reported the consultant will review fire station locations which should correlate to where fires are: During her research for July 2008, 25 runs were made with 16 of the runs north of the bridge. Analyze how fast the emergency vehicle can travel on the roads: There are only a few roads with a bad intersection from the city fire station and highway 93 and the bridge is slow traffic and noted during summer events the bridge traffic is at a standstill. Analyze service demand and where it will be in the future: Over 20 subdivisions are north of the bridge. Rural growth is north of the bridge, with the city growth east and south of the city. The city recently annexed 20 rural parcels, indicating the rural district is losing property east and south of the city and gaining property to the north. Former Fire Chief Tom Maloney's strategic plan provided for a station across the bridge and the board had been discussing it for the past eight years. With this information available to the consultant, Paul suggested the fee could be reduced. Trustee Ottun questioned the city's response. Paul Bishop reported Councilman Jones raised the issue of title of the station. Assistant Fire Chief Pete Bishop reported at a firefighters meeting yesterday during a rural fire board meeting approximately a year or two ago the board indicated the station will house rural equipment. The firefighters are reflecting confusion with the status of the station. Following the city presentation Acting Mayor Bruce Agrella suggested a committee from the city council, rural fire board and firefighters meet to work toward a common goal. The firefighters are completely in support of a new station. In view of operations, gear, and equipment, it should be a joint station. Trustee Nelson indicated the current station is a joint station, therefore why is the rural paying rent. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated the rent is a provision in the interlocal agreement. Trustee Nelson replied the rent provision was included with the alternative to move out. Trustee Manley indicated the concern of the firefighters is to remain as a joint city-rural station. Paul Bishop indicated city and rural equipment can be housed in both stations. Paul additionally requested the rural board consider paying a third of the consultant fee. **Motion Trustee Nelson, seconded Trustee Ottun to send a letter to the City of Polson to schedule a meeting with the Rural Fire Board and firefighters regarding the possibility of a new station. Motion carried unanimously.**

SUBDIVISION REVIEW FEES – Trustee Meslin questioned the process. Fire Chief Fairchild replied Lake County Planning Department processes the rural subdivision applications. Prior to final plat the property owner is required to pay the subdivision review fee directly to Bonnie. The payment is deposited with Lake County Treasurer to Capital Reserve Fund #7246. The slow down in rural construction indicates few payments in FY 2008.

INCENTIVE FOR FIREFIGHTERS – Trustee Meslin discussed incentive to recruit and keep firefighters. As previously discussed perhaps there is some way to reimburse firefighters for use of their vehicle to respond to the station. Perhaps a six month analysis of runs would be helpful to estimate cost. Fire Chief Fairchild replied an average of 30 calls per month times 42 firefighters with the exception of July and August. Ronan pays \$2.00 per call with no payment for clothing allowance. Polson established a clothing allowance to replace clothes prior to turnouts. The clothing allowance is based on attendance at training meetings. Volunteers can attend training meetings and only respond to minimal fire calls, therefore, receiving an incentive for attendance at meetings. Trustee Meslin would like to do the calculation on average miles to respond to the station. The average miles is 3 miles times 30 calls per month. Currently the average response is 17 firefighters per call. The other incentive previously discussed was health insurance for firefighters. The Rollins fire chief plans to research a plan on a state wide level.

REFINANCE LOAN – Trustee Nelson suggested Bonnie research current interest rates and report findings to the board.

EVACUATION LIST – Trustee Meslin received an email inquiry if an evacuation list is in place to contact residents. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated the Lake County Sheriff's office, search & rescue, and firefighters generally assist by telephone. In remote, hard to access areas, it is not feasible to send emergency equipment.

Comments from public: None

Meeting adjourned 8:35 p.m.

Ross Hoyt, Chairman

Alison W. Meslin Secretary-Treasurer