

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2009**

Board trustee members present: Fred Nelson, Alison Meslin, Jim Manley, Dave Ottun, Steve Bundy.

Board trustee member absent: None

Staff Present: None - Fire Chief John Fairchild (Excused ill).

Guests: Paul Laisy, Lester Johnson, Chad Newman, Paul Mauer, Ed Holland, Jack Clapp, Jeff Meslin, Ron Friez, Joe Cope, Kraig Rubel, Terry Gembala.

Meeting called to order in Polson City Commission Chambers by Vice Chairman Nelson at 7:00 p.m.

**Appointment of new trustee:** Lake County Commissioners appointed Steve Bundy to fill the remaining term of Trustee Ross Hoyt. Trustee Hoyt resigned December 10, 2008. The appointment of Trustee Bundy will expire May 13, 2009. A Polson Rural Fire Board Election will be held May 5, 2009 to elect two trustees to serve 2009-2012.

**Elect board chairman:** Trustee Manley nominated Vice Chairman Nelson for board chairman. Trustee Manley noted Fred Nelson has the most experience on the rural fire board. The position of vice chairman would then be open. Trustee Manley indicated Trustee Ottun was born with leadership. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to nominate Fred J. Nelson for board chairman. Motion carried.** Nominations are open for board vice chairman. Trustee Manley nominated Trustee Ottun for vice chairman. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to nominate Dave Ottun for board vice chairman. Motion carried.**

**Minutes January 14, 2009 Rural Fire Board Meeting:** Trustee Meslin requested minutes corrected on page 3 floor plan committee: Proposal is for ~~two~~ five bays with a later addition of the ~~third~~ sixth bay. **Motion Trustee Ottun, seconded Trustee Meslin to approve minutes of January 14, 2009 with correction. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Bills:** **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun to pay bills. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Treasury Report:**

Operating Fund Balance	\$	90,631.32
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$	85,026.39
Voted Levy	\$	779.76
Paid bills in the amount of	\$	1,400.26

Check numbers 3875 - 3883 , both inclusive  
(paid February 12, 2009)

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

**Correspondence:**

Trustee Meslin reported the appreciation letter to Ross Hoyt was sent. Trustee Meslin received a letter from the Montana State Department of Administration regarding the 2007 audit of the Polson Rural Fire Board financial statements. The letter states the audit report and compliance recommendations were reviewed.

**Old Business:**

**UPDATE FROM BIG ARM FIRE COMPANY – Motion Trustee Meslin to thank the two Big Arm residents for stepping forward to protect the area and also show a welcome to the volunteers.** The volunteers have been approved by the Big Arm membership committee. Volunteer fireman Jack Clapp noted during the January meeting the applications were to be forwarded to the fire chief and the applicants meet with the fire chief. A formality needs to be established to review the applications. Volunteer fireman and President of the Big Arm Fire Company Ron Friez referred to the minutes of December 10, 2008 which indicates the Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company is recognized as having by-laws and operating within the by-laws. The by-laws indicate the membership is able to select, and the board approve the applications. The fire company also maintains records with the appropriate checks for drivers license. The interlocal agreement refers to management and not for making decisions on membership in the Big Arm Fire Company. Therefore unless the board is considering withdrawing the December 10, 2008 decision the Big Arm Company should be able to submit the applications to the board for acceptance and signature. Volunteer fireman Joe Cope indicated the fire chief should review the applications. The Big Arm Fire Company application is four or five pages. The first page was forwarded to the board. Trustee Meslin indicated the company adhere to the by-laws, the state code and keep the board informed. Terry Genbala President of the volunteer firefighters noted the different applications create a double standard and imply discrimination. Trustee Meslin asked if different applications are used for city and rural applicants noting the city code states volunteer firemen age requirements 21 to 55 years; while the rural code states an age of 18 years with no restrictions. Trustee Manley indicated the state requires membership in the company that a firefighter normally responds to. Resident Paul Laisy indicated generally one fire department is established with each company having the same rules, regulations, etc; while each company is allowed to have their own officers. Trustee Meslin reported Big Arm Fire Company already had existing by-laws which were updated in 1997 or 1998. The Big Arm station became a part of the district in 1979. The major concern is training as one group and teamwork at responses. Trustee Manley read into the minutes a letter from Fire Chief John Fairchild dated February 12, 2009 regarding interaction of members of the Big Arm Company. (Copy attached to file minutes). Trustee Meslin indicated the Big Arm Fire Company is following the legal steps to submit membership to the board for approval. Big Arm fire captain Tom Sadecki answers directly to the fire chief. Trustee Ottun stated all the firefighters need to be on the same page with regard to training and work as a team in the district. Volunteer fireman Jeff Meslin pointed out Polson volunteers respond with Ronan, Finley Point, etc., although they don't train with the departments. A training journal is maintained at the Big Arm station logging more training hours than needed, along with minutes of the meetings. Jeff also noted during recent business meetings the Big Arm volunteers felt uncomfortable with sensitive issues discussed regarding the Big Arm volunteers. Trustee Manley questioned if Fire Chief Fairchild scheduled mandatory training that Big Arm has missed and perhaps training is not an issue. If a training film is used, the film can be used in Big Arm and accomplish the same training goal. The board's purpose for forming separate companies was in part to comply with state statues, the Big Arm Company would have more control over membership; while it have been the board's understanding and desire that the volunteers would function as one group for purposes of necessary training, maintaining vehicles, and fighting fires. The most senior person is the one in charge at the scene. Joint business meetings should not be an issue; although if the Big Arm volunteers perceive they are not being treated well at a business meeting it should be discussed. Big Arm Company consistent with their by-laws can bring new members for the board's approval. Also it would be productive to have the fire chief on the interview team. Then the communication issue would be resolved. **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Nelson to accept the two new applicants, and set a time to meet with the fire chief.** Trustees Manley and Ottun suggested the applicants approved contingent on the fire chief's review. Ron Friez indicated it is not consistent with the Big Arm by-laws for the fire chief to intercept or change the decision. Prior to Tom

Sadecki's leave for vacation, a letter was delivered to the fire chief stating the intent to interview the applications for membership. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**RESOLUTION FORMING IRVINE FLATS FIRE COMPANY AND AGREEMENT FOR HOUSING DISTRICT'S VEHICLES AT CLAPP'S RANCH** – Chairman Nelson suggested a written contract should be signed for housing the vehicles regarding insurance coverage and building heat. Trustee Manley will review the current rural group insurance policy for coverage and report next month. **Motion Trustee Manley, seconded Trustee Meslin to pass resolution number 10 A resolution of the Polson Rural Fire District Board of Trustees for the Creation of the Irvine Flats Rural Fire Company. Motion carried unanimously.**

**UPDATE ON FIREFIGHTER'S QUESTIONNAIRE - Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Manley to table. Motion carried unanimously.**

**FIREFIGHTER'S INCENTIVES – Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Manley to table. Motion carried unanimously.**

**SUPPLEMENTARY INSURANCE** – Trustee Manley will research the supplementary insurance and report next month. Tabled.

**REVIEW FLOOR PLAN SPECS, REQUEST FOR BIDS FOR PROPOSED NEW STATION AT LAKE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS** - Trustees Ottun and Meslin briefly reviewed the following points of discussion – floor plan, legal publication specifications for bids, state codes compliance for bid process, procedure to interview contractors, contract process, and projected budget and financing process. The committee meeting last month reviewed the proposed building plans and offered many useful suggestions. Trustee Ottun will review the construction process and Trustee Manley will review the legal requirements and report at the March 2009 meeting. Trustee Meslin plans to attend a FEMA grant workshop Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>.

**New Business:**

**INVENTORY** – Trustee Meslin updated the inventory list for the past year.

**2009 MONTANA STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION BILL** – Trustee Meslin noted a bill is introduced to change 7-33-105 to allow fire departments to charge fees for certain emergency services.

**Comments from public:** None

March 11, 2009 Rural Fire Board meeting will be held at Station #2 in Big Arm.

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

Meeting adjourned 8:56 p.m.