

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES JANUARY 14, 2009**

Board trustee members present: Fred Nelson, Alison Meslin, and Dave Ottun

Board trustee member absent: Jim Manley

Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild

Guests: Paul Lacey, Lester Johnson, Lee Manicke, Berl Tiskus – Valley Journal Newspaper, Polson City Commissioner Elsa Duford, Dean M. Sams, Volunteer Fire personnel Carol Swope, Ronnie Swope, R. Jack Clapp, Jane Clapp, Jeff Meslin, Tony Porrazzo, Paul Bishop, Joe Cope, Martin Glasson, Scott Kiser.

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

Minutes December 10, 2008 Rural Fire Board Meeting: Trustee Meslin requested minutes addition to page 3 building fire station at fairgrounds committee of six members to include members from the general public. **Motion Trustee Ottun, seconded Trustee Meslin to approve minutes of December 10, 2008 with addition. Motion carried unanimously.**

Communications: Fire Chief Fairchild informed the board Energy Partners checked the heating system at Station #2 in Big Arm. The 1400 square foot station is heated with a propane heater and an electric heater. The propane heater is overworked and too small for the area. The electric heat will continue to be used in addition to the new propane heater. Energy Partners suggested a 75,000 BTU propane unit at a cost of \$799.00 installed. **Motion Trustee Ottun, seconded Trustee Meslin to purchase a 75,000 BTU propane heater from Energy Partners for Station #2 at Big Arm at a cost of \$799.00 installed and advertise the used propane heater for sale. Motion carried unanimously.**

Fire Chief Fairchild presented a draft proposal to provide incentives for the volunteer firefighters. The proposal is to reward firefighters who respond to calls in addition to attending training meetings. The increase will average approximately \$6,700 per year. The average increase per volunteer firefighter will be approximately \$126. The request is for consideration in the FY 2010 budget. The Polson City Commission is reviewing the same draft proposal. Vice Chairman Nelson recommended the board take the proposal under advisement and requested Fire Chief Fairchild present a cost analysis for budget consideration.

Treasury Report:

Operating Fund Balance	\$	90,580.73
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$	84,597.28
Voted Levy	\$.00

(Voted Levy funds transferred to operating fund)

Paid bills in the amount of \$ 7,996.97

Check numbers 3817 - 3874 , both inclusive
(Paid January 14, 2009)

Voted levy real property tax collections to date December 31, 2008 is 53.66% of anticipated revenue. Second half real property tax collections due May 31, 2009 is \$35, 100.75. Fire truck payment due June 15, 2009 is \$41,798.46. A portion of the funds budgeted in the operating fund will be used for the June 2009 payment. Operating fund real property tax collections to date December 31, 2008 is also 53.66% of anticipated revenue. Second half of real property tax collections due May 31, 2009 is \$56,722.76. November 2008 protested taxes include Verizon Wireless \$169.35; while Northwestern Energy protested

tax release for tax years 2005, 2006, 2007 plus interest in the amount of \$454.31. **Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun to approve treasury report. Motion carried unanimously.**

Staff Report:

Fire Chief Fairchild plans to schedule pump tests to comply with ISO regulations. Annual inspections will be scheduled with Fire Apparatus Repair of Missoula. No annual report is submitted to ISO. ISO contacts the department and certifies the equipment.

Old Business:

RESOLUTION FORMING IRVINE FLATS FIRE COMPANY AND AGREEMENT FOR HOUSING DISTRICT'S VEHICLES AT CLAPP RANCH - Trustee Manley has not completed the resolution. Trustee Meslin requested to table the agenda item. Jack Clapp requested to speak to the agenda item. Jack indicated six of the volunteers were disenfranchised from the volunteer pension by virtue of actions taken. Jack suggested to not limit the company by name to a geographical area, but simply name the company Polson Rural Fire Company #2; and then if someone comes in during the year they won't feel the geographical area exclusion. Trustee Meslin indicated Trustee Manley was researching the pension issue to make the pension retroactive. Currently Polson Fire #1 has 28 members; Big Arm Fire Company is established by Big Arm resident firefighters. Therefore Polson Rural Fire Company #2 would be generic rather than identified as a geographic area. Vice Chairman Nelson suggested the agenda item tabled for Trustee Manley's report.

UPDATE OF FIREFIGHTER'S QUESTIONNAIRE – Tabled.

BIG ARM FIRE COMPANY – Jeff Meslin Secretary-Treasurer of the Big Arm Fire Company reported the Big Arm Fire Company met and approved two new firefighters Martin E. Sago and Matt J. Sisler with a copy of their driver's license attached to the application. The interview questions with the applicants consisted of experience, checked four or five references on each applicant, both applicants are businessmen and work in the community, client references were also checked. Their references came back impeccable. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated the approval poses many questions including the application process, review of the application, background checks, qualifications, physical requirement, and equipment tracking. The current application process is quite lengthy with 11 pages. The fire chief should be included in the approval process as curator of the personnel files and reports to the state. Additionally a schedule of meetings at the Big Arm Station should be forwarded to the fire chief for property liability insurance issues. By virtue of the titled application Polson Rural Fire District, the applications need to be submitted to the fire chief's office. The entire Polson Rural Fire District needs to be incorporated in the process. Trustee Meslin reported the Big Arm by-laws indicate they can form their own membership and appoint their own members. A driver's license check is recommended. Trustee Ottun acknowledges the issue and the fire chief should be part of the application and interview process. Trustee Meslin advised the by-laws need to be followed along with the MCA codes and keep the fire chief and board informed. The Big Arm Fire Company officers are Ron Friez President, Steve Doll Vice President, Jeff Meslin Secretary-Treasurer, and Lieutenant Tom Sadecki. Vice Chairman Nelson requested the agenda item tabled. Perhaps call a special meeting to review the process and legal aspects. Volunteer fireman Paul Bishop indicated the review process include the experienced people from the department.

FLOOR PLAN COMMITTEE - Trustee Ottun reported the committee is comprised of Trustees Meslin and Ottun, Fire Chief John Fairchild, Volunteer Firemen Chris McGuinnes, Paul Bishop, general public Dean Sams, Paul Lacey, Chuck Jarecki, Jerry Peterson, and John Stene which represents a good cross section of people that live in the area, businessmen, airport hanger owners, fire chief, firefighters, and past firefighters. The meeting was very informative with a number of useful suggestions. Phase 1 is a proposed steel building 70'x66' with three drive through bays with 14'x14' doors for six vehicles facing north and south. One bay would be used for a temporary training room, bathroom, shower and storage. The sketch blocks off one back bay with a floor above the bay to provide storage. The wing on the west side of the building will have a 70' area for training and bathrooms. Proposal is for five bays with a later addition of the sixth bay. It is evident the project will need to be phased to be affordable. The meeting was very positive with many cumulative ideas. City Utility Superintendent Tony Porrazzo advised the route of the sanitary sewer lines needs to be analyzed. Building plans also needs to be submitted to DEQ for approval which could be a lengthy process. Trustee Ottun indicated open discussion suggests the station is available to the city per the interlocal agreement. Currently the city is not contributing money for the construction of the new station. Volunteer Fireman Paul Bishop asked if the current firefighters will respond the station or is the station for an additional group of firefighters. Vice Chairman Fred Nelson indicated while the process is in the early formation stages Fire Chief Fairchild said he will work with the process to make it workable. The membership also discussed the state of the economy and the need for a new station. They firmly believe there is no rush to build a new station. Trustee Ottun indicated with the current state of the economy it is a good time to build a new station with material costs down and contractors eager to construct. Trustee Meslin indicated the board has been discussing a station across the bridge since 2000. The project is doable in the current state of the economy. Phase 1 estimated cost should not exceed \$250,000 to stay within the current revenue budget. An environmental consultant/civil engineer is needed for ground preparation. The water main is 12" on the north side of the property; the sewer line goes through the fairgrounds. Motion Trustee Meslin the building committee meet to come up with a bid and next step to analyze if the project is affordable. Trustee Ottun indicated it is all encompassing where does the committee start with DEQ or compiling all the bids for turn key.

Motion Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun for the building committee to meet and pursue bids.

Motion carried unanimously. Volunteer Fireman Scott Kiser questioned the need for the building to house vehicles, plans to pay for the building, and advising the rural property owners of the project. Vice Chairman Nelson replied the plan is to move some of the rural vehicles to the new site. Furthermore the board does not plan to request a mill levy increase.

New Business:

BOARD CHAIRMAN VACANCY – Trustee Ottun nominated Fred Nelson as chairman. Fred declined the nomination. The Lake County Commissioners decline to make an appointment due to the short time period before the May 2009 election. Fred will contact the commissioners for reconsideration. The agenda item was tabled to the February 2009 meeting.

BUDGET CONCERNS – Fire chief Fairchild noted the budget line item 00115 structural turnouts/wildland gear has a negative available balance of \$209.96. A DNRC grant in the amount of \$2,700 was provided to purchase wildland gear while the expenditure was added to the line item. Trustee Meslin requested the \$2,700 grant increase the budget line item to \$9,500 with a remaining available balance of \$2,490.04.

APPRECIATION LETTER – Motion Trustee Meslin, seconded Trustee Ottun to send an appreciation letter to Ross Hoyt for his many faithful years of service as a firefighter and service to the Polson Rural Fire Board. Motion carried unanimously. Fire Chief Fairchild informed the board the department is planning to host a party for Ross at station #2 at a later date.

SUPPLEMENTARY INSURANCE – Fire Chief Fairchild reported the city provides a supplemental accident insurance policy which pays for loss of wages in the event a volunteer is injured on a fire response. The board should consider a similar policy to cover firefighters when responding to a rural fire. The premium is approximately \$3,200 per year. Vice Chairman Nelson instructed the fire chief to meet with Trustee Manley to review the policy.

Motion Trustee Ottun, seconded Vice Chairman Nelson to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:12 p.m.

Fred J. Nelson, Vice Chairman

Alison W. Meslin Secretary-Treasurer