

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES MAY 12, 2010**

Board trustee members present: R. Jack Clapp, Fred Nelson, Beth Hoel, Steve Stanley

Board trustee member absent: Jim Manley.

Staff: Fire Chief John Fairchild; Board Clerk Bonnie M. Manicke.

Guests: Berl Tiskus, Valley Journal Reporter; Ali Bronsdon, Lake County Leader Reporter; Elsa Duford, City of Polson Commissioner; Bill Barron, Lake County Commissioner; Volunteer Fire Personnel, Devin Phillips; Karen Sargeant; Grant Clapp; Terry Gembala, President Volunteer Firefighters; Gregg Perkins; Drew Hoel; Jane Clapp; Residents Sid Rundell, Lee Manicke, Paul Bishop, Dean Sams.

Meeting called to order 7:00 p.m. Fairgrounds Fire Station by Trustee Jack Clapp.

Oath of Office: Trustee Clapp advised the oath of office was administered by the Lake County Elections Office for the newly elected Trustees Steve Stanley and Beth Hoel.

Elect Officers: **Motion Trustee Stanley, second Trustee Hoel to nominate Fred Nelson as chairman.** Nominations ceased. **Motion carried unanimously.** Chairman Nelson proceeded with the meeting. **Motion Trustee Stanley, second Trustee Hoel to nominate Jack Clapp as vice chairman,** Nominations ceased. **Motion carried unanimously.** **Motion Trustee Stanley, second Trustee Clapp to nominate Beth Hoel as secretary-treasurer.** Nominations ceased. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes April 14, 2010 Rural Fire Board Meeting; **Motion Trustee Clapp to approve minutes of April 14, 2010, second Trustee Stanley. Motion carried unanimously.**

Claims: **Motion Trustee Stanley to approve claims, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.** Trustee Clapp commented Rody Construction re-installed the overhead bay doors at the Fairgrounds Fire Station. The installation was completed at one door per day for a total cost of \$2,102.60. Trustee Clapp requested a thank you letter sent to Rody Construction in appreciation of a good job and completed in a timely manner. Trustee Stanley requested the letter express the board will offer a letter of recommendation upon request. Trustee Hoel will draft the letter.

Communications: None.

Treasury Report for month ending April 2010:

Fund #7243 Voted Levy/Operating Fund Balance	\$ 34,989.17
Fund #7245 Operating Fund Balance	\$ <u>79,908.57</u>
Total Operating Balance:	\$ 114,897.74
Fund #7244 Voted Levy {Fire Apparatus}	\$ 7,977.94
Fund #7246 Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$ 51,752.33

Paid bills in the amount of	\$ 6,494.56
Check numbers 4198 - 4216 (paid May 12, 2010)	

The 2009 Energy Partners propane prepaid cap contract reflects a \$159.00 credit balance. The 2009 contract was at \$1.59 per gallon. In July, the 2010 contract will be reviewed with consideration of the current remaining balance.

Chief's Report: Trustee Stanley requested the "staff report" changed to "chief's report". Trustee Clapp informed the chief a Plum Creek Grant in the amount of \$2,500 was received for structural turnout gear for new recruits at the Fairgrounds Station. Trustee Stanley requested Fire Chief Fairchild proceed with the guidelines outlined in the grant award. Structural response is from the Polson station, therefore Plum Creek should be contracted regarding physical location. Fire Chief Fairchild reported 10 runs in March and 14 runs

in April. Normal runs in March are 25 to 30 and April are 30 to 40. Perhaps the department is doing a great job with fire prevention education. Engine #323 passed DOT inspection and is in service. A new radio is being installed. The old radio will be serviced and used as a spare. Engine #327 passed the DOT inspection and is in service. He is attending wildland arson investigation training this week and will be out of town June 15-22. A state grant provided an AED and is in place at the Fairgrounds Station. Requested the board send a thank you letter to the city of patching the road in front of the Fairgrounds Station. Trustee Stanley indicated the spare radio is available to the city and rural. Trustee Clapp appreciates the chief's efforts to secure an AED. Chief has no fire company reports.

Old Business:

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL AND COST FROM CONSULTANT TO STUDY

FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION -

Motion Trustee Clapp not to pursue an outside consultant for the use of the building at this time due to the cost involved, second Trustee Stanley. Motion carried unanimously.

STAKEHOLDERS GROUP REPORT – Trustee Clapp reported the group has been meeting once a month and invited Trustee Stanley and Hoel to attend. The group will meet one more month and issues are being resolved .

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT – Trustee Clapp reported the board had discussed striking a paragraph in the interlocal agreement. The continuation of the interlocal agreement is in the best interest for the rural community for fire protection and understands the city has reviewed the agreement from their perspective and plan to review as is **Motion Trustee Clapp to withdraw any objection that we may have had and renew interlocal agreement as is context July 2008, second Trustee Stanley. Motion carried unanimously.**

CONSIDER CLOSING FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION LOAN – Trustee Clapp requested an update on the status of the construction loan with Valley Bank Ronan. Bonnie reported the loan has a \$200,000 ceiling, although budget projections indicate revenues will not be sufficient to service the annual debt on a \$200,000 loan. The board capped the loan at \$175,000. Currently the balance on the loan is \$171,510. Trustee Hoel indicated the building is not finished and would like additional items considered to finish the building. Trustee Stanley would like to leave the loan open for another month and review the status during the FY '10-'11 preliminary budget. Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron reminded the board a chain link fence needs to be installed. During a prior board meeting it was appropriated if the operating budget was not sufficient, capital improvement funds were allocated for the fence installation. Lake County Search and Rescue is also interested in constructing a building at the Fairgrounds site. **Motion Trustee Stanley to leave the construction loan open for one month, second Trustee Hoel. Motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUILDING UPDATE – Trustee Stanley would like to challenge the volunteer firefighters to provide the board with a list of items to complete the Fairgrounds Station. He suggested the volunteers come to the board within two weeks with suggestions. Trustee Stanley volunteered to serve as liaison between the volunteer firefighters and the board to review the final components for the station.

New Business:

DISCUSS OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY – Trustee Clapp stated over the course of the past year there has been some confusion from time to time that the board did not put our faith in the fire chief to make operational decisions. Perhaps we stepped in places we shouldn't have. I think there should be a clear demarcation. Trustee Clapp presented Resolution Number 15 Whereas the Polson Rural Fire District wishes to clarify operational responsibility within the Polson Rural Fire District. It is therefore Resolved: That decisions regarding operational matters shall be the sole responsibility of the Fire Chief, or those person(s) he/she designates, and said decisions shall be made in conformity with Board policy and procedures. **Motion Trustee Clapp to adopt Resolution Number 15 to Clarify Operational Responsibility, second Trustee Stanley.** Trustee Stanley stated John you understand that by doing this we are putting all our faith in

you. We fully expect you to work with us and do the best possible job you can. It is your ball game now.
Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSS ROLE OF COMPANIES – Trustee Clapp stated over the past year there has been a lot of discussion regarding how things are organized in the rural district, the role of companies and what takes precedence.. Trustee Clapp presented Resolution Number 16 Whereas, the Polson Rural Fire District wishes to clarify the role of the Fire Companies within the Polson Rural Fire District. It is therefore Resolved: That the primary reason for the creation and existence of Fire Companies in the Polson Rural Fire District is for retirement purposes only. **Motion Trustee Clapp to adopt Resolution Number 16 to Clarify the role of the Fire Companies within the Polson Rural Fire District, second Trustee Stanley. Motion carried unanimously.**

CONSIDER ADOPTING ONE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER APPLICATION – Trustee Stanley requested the department use one application whether the volunteer is city or rural. The application is reviewed by the membership committee who is elected by the firefighters. The only area we need to massage would be the Big Arm rural and Polson rural. I personally think that a member of the fire department should be selected by the fire department that they will be working with. **Motion Trustee Stanley to go back to one membership application between Polson City and Polson Rural and fire chief advise the board when a new member is voted in by the membership, second Trustee Clapp.** Chairman Nelson questioned the application title Polson City and Polson Rural Fire District. Trustee Stanley suggested Polson Fire Department noting both Polson City and Rural. Fire Chief Fairchild suggested Polson Volunteer Fire Department. Trustee Stanley clarified they are joining Polson Volunteer Fire Department which is Polson Rural and Polson City Fire. The application is submitted as Polson Fire Department. **Motion carried unanimously.**

WORKER'S COMPENSATION ANNUAL REPORT – Fire Chief reviewed former trustee Meslin's notes. I honestly don't know where she got her numbers to compare with the worker's compensation report. A self annual audit is completed and sent to worker's compensation. The report reflects an accumulation of training hours and fire response hours. The City of Polson also pays worker's compensation based on training hours and fire response hours. Trustee Nelson indicated hours didn't match with the fire chief's report submitted to worker's compensation. Trustee Stanley suggested Pete Bishop worker's comp insurance carrier and representative of Bishop Insurance attend the June meeting to clarify the worker's compensation report.

OPERATION DUTIES – Chairman Nelson noted Assistant Fire Chief Pete Bishop is in charge during the absence of Fire Chief Fairchild. He also requested immediate notification if a truck is damaged or personnel injured. Fire Chief Fairchild responded he is diligent to report issues.

NOTIFICATION OF MEETING WITH AGENDA – Trustee Stanley commented concern by a board member the May meeting is an illegal board meeting because the agenda wasn't posted in the Leader. The Leader and Valley Journal noticed the meeting date and time. The agenda items were not printed due to lack of space.

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNITION – Trustee Stanley expressed thank you to the volunteers for what you do and how often you do it. You will never know how much it is appreciated. It is important the volunteers know what the budget is, the operating fund, and the capital equipment fund. Actually it is your money, we (board) manage it, we work with you to spend it.

LONG RANGE PLAN – Trustee Clapp suggested the board discuss five year and ten year long range plans at the June meeting. He proposed a committee of board members and community residents. Sid Rundell commented he was amazed the board proposed an increase in taxes without telling the public how the money was to be spent. That's not casting a dispersion on anybody. It's my fault for not attending the meetings.

ANTICIPATED TAX REVENUES – Chairman Nelson requested Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron provide an overview of the current real property tax collections and what to expect next year. The protested tax appeals are 50 to 55 percent complete. The tax reductions will carry over into the next budget year. Additionally it may be two or three years to get the budget back on track. Currently there is no indication for firm numbers going into the FY '10-'11 budget. Bonnie suggested to plan a work session in June and adopt a preliminary budget in July. She volunteered to assist with the budget preparation. Trustees Stanley and Hoel requested a copy of the current FY '09-'10 budget. Trustee Clapp suggested in past years the budget line items became more delineated into additional categories. Are the additional categories necessary or could some of the categories be combined? Bonnie will analyze the categories and provide suggestions.

Public Input on Non Agenda Items: – Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron reported the Lake County Attorney's office indicated the rural fire district meeting tonight is a legal meeting. It can't be challenged. The notice of the meeting was posted and a posted agenda is not required. Chairman Nelson reported the Leader sent an email indicating the meeting was noticed although the agenda was not printed due to lack of space. Mr. Barron's second concern is there is a Polson Volunteer Fire Department and a Rural Fire Department with an interlocal agreement in place. Trustee Stanley commented in incorporated cities a joint city rural fire department exists. Although they stand alone, they have their own budget. The common place they come together in Polson and Ronan have the same fire chief. Mr. Barron questioned why they would be identified as Polson Fire. Trustee Stanley replied because the whole department is city fire department and there was never a distinction between the city and rural. Fire Chief Fairchild clarified if you look at the contracts drawn up, over the years you had three entities. City of Polson which has agreed to house the equipment. You have the rural agreed to purchase the equipment and you have the volunteers that have agreed to man it. So that really throws a kink in everything when you really try to figure out who's who and who's what. Other entities have the same structure. Chairman Nelson indicated he prefers to conduct hour long meetings. Terry Gembala, President of the Volunteers thanked the board for their cooperation. The volunteers are a third organization, although when the volunteers respond no distinction in made between city or rural.

Motion Trustee Clapp to adjourn, second Trustee Stanley to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned 7:46 p.m.

Fred J. Nelson, Chairman

Beth Hoel, Secretary-Treasurer