

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES APRIL 14, 2010**

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

**Board trustee members absent:** None

**Staff:** Fire Chief Fairchild absent.

**Guests:** Berl Tiskus, Valley Journal Reporter; Sasha Goldstein, Lake County Leader Reporter, Todd Crossett, Polson City Manager; Beth Hoel, Lee Manicke, Lester Johnson, Steve Stanley; Volunteer Fire Personnel Jeff Meslin, Drew Hoel, Gregg Perkins, Chris McGuinness, Kraig Rubel, Devin Phillips, Keith Paul, Jane Clapp.

Meeting called to order Fairgrounds Fire Station by Chair Alison Meslin at 7:00 p.m.

**Minutes March 10, 2010 Rural Fire Board Meeting:** Trustee Clapp further explained the on site management of Junior Firefighters. Junior Firefighters are identified by a name tag on the back of a different colored helmet. They are immediately assigned to an officer or a senior firefighter. Trustee Laisy supports the program with emphasis on safety. The program is ongoing and it is not clear if the program is the responsibility of the rural fire district or the city. **Motion Trustee Manley to approve minutes of March 10, 2010 with addition to minutes regarding Junior Firefighters Program, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Claims:** Chair Meslin questioned check #4197 payable to Western States Insurance \$6,338.66 which indicates an increase in the liability insurance. The increase in the value of the Big Arm Fire Station may have increased the premium. She will review the charges and policy with Fire Chief Fairchild. The total increase compared to the previous year is approximately \$500. Check #4196 payable to Western Building Center \$612.79 for work benches, upstairs shelving, flooring in bathrooms and office at the Fairgrounds Fire Station. **Motion Trustee Manley to approve claims, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.** During the February 2010 meeting, Chair Meslin noted the payment to Montana State Fund for workers compensation is based on run hours and training hours. She completed an analysis worksheet to compare hours. Trustee Clapp explained the new recruits generally exceed hours outside of the regular scheduled training sessions. Chair Meslin suggested the firefighters should be compensated for the additional training sessions. In the past the compensation was measured by scheduled training. The reports should be fairly uniform; while workers compensation has provisions to complete an audit. The hours reported to workers compensation should be accurate to reflect the proper insurance premium payments. Chair Meslin will review workers compensation with Fire Chief Fairchild.

**Communications:** Chair Meslin reviewed a letter from Fire Chief Fairchild regarding the Fairgrounds Fire Station building construction issues and concerns. Trustee Laisy indicated the building is under warranty. Fire Chief Fairchild, Trustee Laisy and contractor Paul Iverson reviewed the items on the list with the exception of the last two items. Contractor Iverson plans to complete the punch list to the board's satisfaction. In the meantime, Mr. Iverson would like the building used and report any additional concerns, therefore completing all the items at once. The last items involve the bolts on the garage door openers, fixtures on the main beams and upright columns. The bay doors also need to be repaired. Trustee Nelson contacted Rody Construction to reinstall the bay doors. The total cost estimate to reinstall the five bay doors by Rody Construction is \$2,100 to \$2,400. Trustee Clapp reported the bay door in the Lake County Office of Emergency Management operate smoothly. Trustee Nelson suggested the doors repaired. Chair Meslin indicated contractor Iverson is responsible for the bay doors and he has agreed to address the issue. **Motion Trustee Nelson to contract with Rody Construction to reinstall the five bay doors at an estimated cost of \$2,100 to \$2,400 with the amount added to the construction loan at Valley Bank Ronan, second Trustee Clapp.** Trustee Laisy is reluctant to expend the additional money and feels Paul Iverson is responsible for the repair. Additionally the cost of the re-installation should be expended from the construction budget. Chair Meslin suggested contractor Iverson reinstall the doors with specific instructions and Rody Construction inspect the project. Trustee Nelson expressed the cost of the inspection by Rody Construction is unknown, therefore, suggested the doors should be installed properly. The additional

expense would increase the construction loan to \$171,000. Mr. Rody indicated the doors are good commercial doors and need to be reinstalled to function properly. **Motion carried unanimously.** Chair Meslin and Trustee Laisy submitted a grant request to Plum Creek Foundation for \$10,000. The Polson Rural Fire District was awarded \$2,500 to purchase structure turnout gear for the new recruits at the Fairgrounds Station. A letter indicating receipt and thank you will be sent to Plum Creek Foundation. The grantee is required to submit a report when funds are expended and comply with intended use of grant funds. The board expressed thanks to Alison and Paul.

The FEMA grant application is still being considered. The Safer Grant has issued \$55,000,000 for hiring personnel; while the recruitment portion of the grant applications continue to be reviewed.

**Treasury Report:**

Fund #7243 Voted Levy/Operating Fund Balance	\$	34,175.31
Fund #7245 Operating Fund Balance	\$	<u>81,429.15</u>
Total Operating Balance:	\$	115,604.46
Fund #7244 Voted Levy {Fire Apparatus}	\$	6,426.08
Fund #7246 Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$	50,104.61

Paid bills in the amount of \$ 8,548.94

Check numbers 4180- 4197  
(paid April 14, 2010)

Clerk Bonnie Manicke introduced State of Montana Intercap Financing Program with reference to the equipment loan. Outstanding loan balance \$270,516.72 at 4.00% fixed interest rate with final payment June 15, 2013. The current Intercap variable interest rate is 1.95%. Comparing past rate history with Intercap financing 2004 2.70% and 2005 the rate rose 1.10% to 3.80% during a one year window. The board should consider the variable rate comparison to the current fixed rate of 4.00% for the remaining 3.5 years. Additionally Intercap should be contacted to verify existing loans qualify for refinancing. **Motion Trustee Laisy Clerk contact Intercap Financing Program to verify the current loan qualifies for financing program, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Staff Report:** Fire Chief Fairchild absent. No report.

Fire Department Lieutenant Chris McGuinness, reported the Polson Volunteer Fire Company membership adopted the generic by-laws provided by the Polson Rural District. **Motion Trustee Manley to approve the generic by-laws adopted by the Polson Volunteer Fire Company, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.**

Big Arm Fire Company President Jeff Meslin reported Fire Chief Fairchild attended the business meeting in Big Arm. Discussion included procedures for responding with changes, responding to all calls, concern leaving Big Arm unmanned if all calls are responded to, and what is proper response to all calls. Big Arm Fire Company plans to write a letter to Fire Chief Fairchild confirming the items discussed and carbon copy to the rural fire board for board recommendation. Big Arm Fire Company has five members ice rescue certified and requested two ice rescue suits. Fire Chief Fairchild noted the suits belong to the membership and the suits will stay on the rescue vehicle. In order for Big Arm Fire Company to serve the community, they may request the board to fund the purchase of two ice rescue suits in the next budget. Irvine Flats Fire Company no report.

**Old Business:**

**REPAIRS TO ENGINE #323 BRUSH TRUCK OR REPLACEMENT** – Trustee Clapp reported Fire Chief Fairchild provided an analysis for a minimum vehicle to replace engine #323 and a wish list analysis. During past wildland fire seasons, contract revenue was approximately \$25,000 per year. Chair Meslin suggested a down payment of \$10,000 and finance the remainder for two years. **Motion Trustee Laisy repair #323 per quote from G & M Auto Tech and committee consider purchase a replacement at approximately \$25,000, second Trustee Nelson.** Big Arm Volunteer Fireman Jeff Meslin offered to assist the committee. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSIDER AND DISCUSS HIRING A CONSULTANT TO STUDY FAIRGROUNDS STATION –** Trustee Manley reported consultant Scott Waldron met with Fire Chief Fairchild at the Fairgrounds and Chair Meslin at the Big Arm Station. The consultant plans to provide a cost estimate and outline of services to be provided.

**STAKEHOLDERS GROUP REPORT –** Chair Meslin reported the group participated in honest discourse. She thanked City Manager Todd Crossett for moderating the session. Trustee Manley commented Todd is an excellent facilitator and anticipates the sessions to be productive. Trustee Laisy would like to see the sessions continue and considers the sessions beneficial to the community. Trustee Clapp is in favor of the sessions.

**INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT –** Trustee Manley sent a letter to the City of Polson stating the board voted to renew the interlocal agreement, with one change. The change to delete the following paragraph.

*WHEREAS, the fire needs of the City and District are currently met by a single unified structure of volunteers in the Polson Volunteer Fire Department pursuant to a Mutual Aid Agreement which the parties hereto desire to retain intact together with the equipment thereof.*

The statement in the paragraph is not accurate (the Mutual Aid Agreement does not say that). Also this paragraph is inconsistent with a resolution the Board passed last year, in an attempt to clear up any confusion about this. (Copy of letter attached to file minutes). Todd will review the request with city attorney James Raymond and reply to the board.

Trustee Laisy noted the purpose of the interlocal agreement is to develop a relationship between the Rural Fire District and the City of Polson. He supports the relationship, however relationships that are mutual agreeable to the parties involved are most productive. The relationships that one party has to pay are called something else. Trustee Laisy wonders why the rural district is paying \$15,000 per year for the agreement. He confirmed with the chief the payment is not for wages and further the chief is listed as a volunteer in the retirement fund. Therefore, it is confirmed the payment is not for the chief's wages. Perhaps it is rent for the rural equipment in the city fire station; with the construction of the Fairgrounds Station the housing of rural equipment has changed. He believes the funds could be used well to support the fire service operation. Trustee Nelson indicated the interlocal agreement was basically written when former Fire Chief Tom Maloney wanted full-time employment as fire chief and the city didn't have the funds. A portion of the money was used for salary while in the agreement it was stated for rent to house rural equipment in the city fire station. The consensus is the funds are utilized for wages. Trustee Laisy requested the board research the purpose of the \$15,000 annual payment to the city and noted the funds could be utilized for fire service operation. **Motion Trustee Laisy to discuss \$15,000 interlocal agreement payment with city, second Trustee Nelson.** Trustee Clapp expressed the chief provides service to the rural district. Trustee Laisy does not want to eliminate the chief's service, although the agreement needs to be reviewed with respect to current aspects of the department and provide fire service to the taxpayers in the district. Volunteer fireman Drew Hoel noted the activities of the city rescue vehicle and the county jaws vehicle are a large expense. Trustee Laisy noted the newest rural fire truck is in the city station for the city to use. Chair Meslin noted in the past FEMA grant applications were submitted jointly by the city and rural district to purchase equipment. Also the rural district has purchased some of the equipment on the rescue vehicle. City Manager Todd Crossett indicated part of the agreement references the Fire Chief will volunteer his services to the rural fire district. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**REVIEW CONSTRUCTION LOAN –** Chair Meslin presented the status of the Fairgrounds Fire Station construction loan with Valley Bank of Ronan. The loan balance is \$168,510.00. If the loan is closed with the current loan balance, the annual payment would be \$15,340; which is just below the \$16,000 that was originally budgeted. With the \$2,100 approximate amount to repair the bay doors, the loan would increase to

\$171,510. She would like to close the loan after the payment to repair the 5 bay doors to remain within budget. Trustee Nelson indicated the bill for the bay doors will be billed next month. Trustee Nelson requested Clerk Bonnie Manicke comment on the loan status. She indicated the loan is a construction loan, therefore when the final walk through was completed in December it was proper to close the loan. An interest only payment \$788.76 was processed in December. **Motion Trustee Nelson to leave the loan open, second Trustee Clapp. Trustee Laisy suggested to leave the loan open to repair the bay doors and then close the loan. Trustees Nelson, Clapp, Laisy, Manley favor of motion; Chair Meslin opposed to motion. Motion carried. Motion Chair Meslin to leave the loan open for review next month and cap the loan at \$175,000 to maintain the original debt service budget, second Trustee Manley. Trustees Meslin, Manley, Clapp, Laisy favor of motion; Trustee Nelson opposed. Motion carried.**

**REVIEW FY'10-'11 BUDGET** – Chair Meslin presented the current status of the budget with budget line adjustments. Adjust the line item prior year building and recruitment reserve \$9,500

Transfer to:	#900 building & recruitment reserve	\$6,000
	#605 building construction	2,500
	#411 telephone landline Fairgrounds Stn	500
	#135 radios & pager repair	500

Additional transfers:

From #215 vehicle rpr & maint. To #220 insp/service veh \$1,000

From #310 training To #320 travel 500

Category changes #410 Admin phone to #516 Big Arm Stn

Category changes #411 Admin phone to #541 Fairgrounds Stn

If necessary, additional line item transfers will be made at close of expenditures June 30, 2010.

Trustee Clapp suggested using the Plum Creek Foundation Grant funds for the Fairgrounds radio pagers.

Chair Meslin noted the Plum Creek Foundation Grant application specified the funds used for structure turnout gear jackets, pants, boots, gloves for the new recruits at the Fairgrounds Station.

Volunteer Fireman Gregg Perkins indicated volunteers are paying for their own wildland boots. The budget allocated \$5,000 for wildland gear and to date none has been spent. The board advised Gregg to review the request for wildland gear with Fire Chief Fairchild. **Motion Chair Meslin to make the necessary budget line item adjustments, second Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.** The board thanked Chair Meslin for completing the budget analysis.

**RECRUITMENT ARTICLE DISCUSSION** – Chair Meslin asked for general comments on the article, “Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers” authored by Lieutenant Wilson. Trustee Clapp mentioned during the last meeting the retention rate quote needs clarification. Volunteers leaving the immediate area to pursue employment or education should not be included in the retention factor.

**New Business:**

None

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Fire Chief Review. **Motion Trustee Manley to table executive session, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.**

Board adjourned 8:50 p.m.

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Alison W. Meslin Chair

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Jack Clapp Secretary-Treasurer