

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 08, 2010**

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

Board trustee member absent: None.

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

Guests: Sasha Goldstein, Lake County Leader Reporter; Berl Tiskus Valley Journal Reporter, Volunteer Fire Personnel Drew Hoel, Jessie Nelson, Kevin Straub, Debbie Croft; Residents Sid Rundell, Lee Manicke.

Meeting called to order 7:00 p.m. Fairgrounds Fire Station by Chairman Nelson.
Chairman Nelson introduced Trustee Dean Sams, appointed by Lake County Commissioners to fill vacated position to May 2011.

Minutes August 11, 2010 Rural Fire Board Meeting; Motion Trustee Clapp to approve August 11, 2010 minutes, second Trustee Sams. Motion carried unanimously.

Communications: Fire Chief Fairchild presented the Conoco Phillips fuel card renewal application. The card is a duplication of Wright Express fuel card, therefore there is no need to renew with Conoco Phillips. Communication from Alison Meslin reporting damage to the screen door and handrail knocked off at the Big Arm Fire Station. John repaired the screen door and handrail. Big Arm Association September schedule use of fire hall. Wednesdays Community exercise class 10:00 a.m.; Saturday, September 11th 9:00 a.m. biannual highway clean up. Trustee Clapp reviewed the Montana Department of Transportation letter regarding fire station warning signing. The letter states the MDT has reviewed the request to install fire station warning signs on US 93 for the Big Arm Fire Station access and determined the signs are not warranted. There is sufficient sight distance available both south and north of the Big Arm Station access based on the posted speed limit of 45 mph. Signs installed earlier this year were reviewed. Both the Regatta Road location and the downtown First Street location do not warrant warning signs. The MDT requested the warning signs removed. With regard to ISO regulations, John contacted MDT to reconsider and will seek a second opinion.

Claims: Trustee Stanley reviewed the \$395.00 firewise conference registration for Karen Sargeant. The training will provide certification to perform assessments on homes in a wildland situation. Noted fuel purchases are spread to suppliers. Trace Analytics, Inc. \$346.00 purchase four SCBA test kits. Fire Apparatus Repair \$613.58 Engine #318 ignition switch repair. **Motion Trustee Stanley to approve August, 2010 claims, second Trustee Hoel. Motion carried unanimously. Motion Trustee Stanley request a quote to change the security lighting at the Big Arm Station from pole lighting to metered lighting attached to the building, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

Treasury Report for month ending August 2010:

Fund #7243 Voted Levy/Operating Fund Balance	\$ 59,937.81
Fund #7245 Operating Fund Balance	\$ 8,454.26
Total Operating Balance:	\$ 68,392.07
Fund #7244 Voted Levy {Fire Apparatus}	\$ 223.82
Fund #7246 Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$ 87,413.81
Total Operating Fund Expenditures	\$ 8,524.25
Check numbers 4331-4352 (paid September 8, 2010)	

Lake County Treasurer reports received following meeting with above fund balances updated to include August 2010 revenue.

Bonnie reported it may be necessary to submit a letter to Lake County accounting department to transfer funds from the Voted Levy Operating Fund to the General Operating Fund for September and October expenditures. In prior years, the voted levy revenue was receipted in the General Operating Fund. A new fund #7243 was established with 2009 revenue collections. Chairman Nelson acknowledged the transfer may be necessary to facilitate expenditures in the General Operating Fund. Estimated 2010 tax collections by Lake County at 97 percent. **Motion Trustee Stanley to approve treasury report, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chief's Report: Fire Chief Fairchild thanked the board for the generosity to complete additional improvements at the Fairgrounds Station. Reported 29 runs in August. Currently processing six applications and two applications handed out in the Big Arm area. Processing six applications at one time is a history event. Purchased supplies for Fire Prevention promotion. Engine #314 repair eliminated the sag and will provide extended use. Pagers, boots and helmets purchases for new members. Received three proposals for Fairgrounds Station light installation 1) Foothills Electric \$3,490; 2) Morelli Electric, Inc. \$4,940; 3) Whiting Electric \$3,785. Trustee Clapp suggested contacting Jim Brandenberg for a lighting proposal and add exhaust and ceiling fans to the proposals. Proposals for apron at Big Arm Station 1) Knife River \$9,916.39; 2) LHC paving base option directly in front of fire hall \$9,900.00 ; alternate option entire area \$18,400.00. Trustee Stanley prefers a concrete apron and expressed the aprons at the Fairgrounds Station completed by Fairchild Concrete are superior. Trustee Stanley volunteered to check the thickness of the concrete pad at the Big Arm Station. **Motion Trustee Stanley to table the electrical proposals and request fans added to quotes; apron proposals contact Whealon Construction for proposal; review proposals at the October meeting, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.** Fairgrounds Station doors are repaired and operable.

Old Business:

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT – Fire Chief Fairchild presented a work in progress with a brief outline for a five and ten year plan. Strengths of the department include volunteers, equipment, high level of professionalism, fair to adequate funding, response time, community support and tribal support and communication with tribal lands. Concerns include a large district with shortage of volunteers in Irvine Flats and Valley View. The goal is to promote volunteer involvement in the areas. The department needs to pursue a replacement schedule with adequate funding. The current voted mill levy for equipment debt service sunsets in 2013. The board should actively pursue to maintain the voted mill levy for additional equipment replacement. Manning stations with a paid staff during the summer season may be necessary. Response time, adequate equipment and water supply in the outlying areas are essential. Access structures in wildland areas with adequate equipment, noting in some areas a large fire apparatus is not compatible for quick response. Response for mutual aid is an important factor. Additional concerns include uncertain equipment funding resources, possibility of Kerr Dam transferring to non-fee status in 2015 which currently represents 25 percent of the district's tax revenue at \$34,000. Other funding sources need to be explored such as promoting a mill levy, adopting a equipment replacement schedule, ISO compliance, source of water supply. The time line of important issues changes in the composition of the board may create a different opinion, sunset of mill levy, and loss of tax revenue. The committee is looking at current issues and ways to generate additional funds and explore new means for volunteer retention and recruitment. The committee is gathering additional information for the board to review. The equipment replacement schedule is a priority for board review and planning. Trustee Clapp indicated the board will review an alternate funding sources later in the meeting. Sid Rundell reported the equipment replacement schedule is a key issue to begin accumulating funds. Chairman Nelson expressed the committee analyzed the needs and the replacement schedule is a priority. He thanked the committee Fire Chief Fairchild, Trustee Clapp and resident Sid Rundell for their time. The board needs to look at the issues seriously while the committee is a

work in progress with additional reports in the future. Trustee Clapp suggested the committee plans to provide an abbreviated version of the presentation with a diagram. Trustee Stanley commented what does the ISO rating provide for the taxpayer? Analyze the offset by raising property taxes for equipment purchases to provide a decrease in property insurance costs. Chief Fairchild replied the comparison of the property tax increase compared to insurance cost reduction will be available following an ISO rating.

APPARATUS POSSIBILITIES – Fire Chief Fairchild presented bid specifications for a wildland quick attack type 3 unit. Specs include government pricing #671; 550 extended cab and chassis; automatic transmission; 4-wheel drive; 40/60 split bench with console that will flip up; color white or red; meet or exceed 19,000 total GVWR; quote both a diesel and gas engine additional specs for a gas engine include horsepower and torque; vehicle use as a fire truck with a flat bed with a 500-gallon water tank, and several equipment boxes. Quotes received: 1) Don Aadsen Ford F550 4X4 6.7L V-8 diesel \$42,496.96; 550 4X4 6.8L EFI V-10 horsepower 362 torque 457 lb ft gas engine \$36,124.10; 2) Ronan Dodge basic quote 2011 Dodge 5500 5-7L diesel \$43,278. Trustee Stanley indicated the low range \$36,000 would provide \$6,000 for the loose equipment. The loose equipment is approximately \$15,000 in addition to the price of the vehicle. A 2008 DNRC comparison for the additional components was approximately \$12,000. John's preference is a 550 diesel stating in the long run it will pay for itself. Trustee Clapp provided a fuel and vehicle maintenance analysis indicating the diesel engine is cost effective and additionally suggested to delete cruise control and add power windows. **Motion Trustee Stanley purchase 550 gas and add power windows and delete cruise control, second Chairman Nelson.** Trustee Clapp suggested a loan with State of Montana InterCap Financing. **Trustees Stanley and Nelson for motion; Trustees Clapp, Hoel and Sams against motion. Motion fails.** Trustee Stanley indicated funds to build the truck with flat bed and additional components will be limited and is not favorable to borrow money since the district has a lot of debt on the 2007 Pierce truck and the Fairground Station. The capital reserve fund has \$87,000; while the balance in the fund balance should remain at \$40,000. In light of the fund balance and vehicle purchase the amount remaining for the loose equipment is \$5,000. **Motion Trustee Clapp purchase V-8 diesel, with power windows and delete cruise control, second Trustee Sams. Trustees Clapp, Sams and Hoel for motion; Trustees Stanley and Nelson against motion. Motion carried to purchase F-8 diesel at Don Aadsen Ford \$42,496.96 delivered.** Chairman Nelson is favorable to a working vehicle to service the taxpayers. John would like to see an additional vehicle on the road.

APPRECIATION PICNIC SEPTEMBER 23 – Trustee Hoel reported the picnic is at Boettcher Park September 23rd 6:00 p.m. Chairman Nelson will be out of town due to personal obligations.

New Business:

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES:

Bill for vehicle crashes - Fire Chief Fairchild presented information to recover the cost of response for vehicle crashes. Fire Recovery USA is a billing service for fire departments to collect a fee from insurance companies. The firm completes the billing and charges a 25 to 30 percent administration fee of the amount collected. Currently Ronan Volunteer Fire Department is utilizing the service for crashes only with a 92 percent collection rate and in one and one-half years collected \$24,000. Collections would be added to the capital reserve and training fund. Currently taxpayer only pays for wildland fire protection and not vehicle crashes. John requested the board review the material and act on the proposal next month. Trustee Stanley suggested to review the contract for crashes only. The city also needs to be in agreement with the proposal. The rescue apparatus is an asset of the membership, therefore, would the membership request a portion of the fee charged. Volunteer Drew Hoel indicated the funds collected by the district will facilitate additional equipment and training for the membership. Resident Lee Manicke indicated the insurance billing to recover the fee is long overdue and objects to the taxpayer paying for services provided by the fire department at the crash scene. John will provide a public announcement prior to implementing the recovery service.

Revise plan review impact fees - Fire Chief Fairchild requested the board review the current plan review fees charged for subdivisions. The current fee is \$100 per lot. The city charges \$750. Trustee Clapp

suggested support from county wide fire departments to meet with the Lake County Commissions in January. Chairman Nelson advised the issue was reviewed a few years ago by the commissioners. The proposed fee \$400 to \$500 per lot was denied.

PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS - Chairman Nelson advised the fire chief should be informed of public speaking engagements by volunteer personnel.

FY 10-11 BUDGET INFORMATION - Clerk Bonnie Manicke thanked Trustees Hoel and Stanley for developing the FY 10-11 budget at \$125,875. The district's total assets at year end June 30, 2010 are \$831,951; current liabilities debt service on fire truck and Fairgrounds Fire Station total \$396,878.98. The budget included a \$29,100 capital expenditure for the aprons and bollards at the Fairgrounds Station and an estimated expenditure for the apron at the Big Arm Station.

FAIRGROUNDS MEETING ROOM FURNISHINGS – Tables and chairs purchased from Mike Larson, Business One included 4 tables and 45 chairs.

NEW VOLUNTEERS INTRODUCED - Fire Chief Fairchild introduced Debbie Croft Big Arm resident and Kevin Straub Polson.

Public Input on Non Agenda Items: – None.

**Motion Trustee Hoel to adjourn, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned 8:26 p.m.**

Fred J. Nelson, Chairman

Beth Hoel, Secretary-Treasurer