

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

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

Board trustee member absent: None

Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild

Guests: Roger Rogers; Lee Manicke; Lester Johnson; Paul Mauer; Bill Barron Lake County Commissioner; Steve Stanley Lake County Office of Emergency Management; Bill Koberg, Mission Valley Security; Volunteer fire personnel Jeff Meslin, Jane Clapp, Ron Friez, Ronnie & Carol Swope.

Meeting called to order at Big Arm Fire Hall upstairs meeting room by Chairperson Alison Meslin at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes October 7, 2009 Rural Fire Board Meeting: Motion Trustee Nelson to approve minutes of October 7, 2009 as presented, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims: Chairperson Meslin questioned the discount on red fuel. Fire Chief Fairchild replied the red fuel is discounted at the pump for Cenex purchases; while the purchases with Comdata are shown on the monthly billing statement. Motion Trustee Laisy to approve claims, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously. An additional claim from Fisher Painting, LLC in the amount of \$1,580.50 is for painting the interior of the new fire station presented for payment. **Motion Trustee Nelson to approve additional claim, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

Communications: Chairperson Meslin provided a copy of a letter sent to Jamie Buhr, Valley Bank authorizing a \$50,000 payment to contractor Paul Iverson for Phase III of the fire station at 25 Regatta Road. Payment was authorized following inspection by the building committee.

Treasury Report:

Operating Fund Balance	\$ 52,365.39
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$ 48,497.30
Voted Levy	\$ 2,105.55

October 2009 paid bills	\$ 3,643.45
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Check numbers 4061 – 4075, both inclusive.
(paid November 12, 2009)

The above fund balances include the October revenue collections by Lake County Treasurer.

An approved FY '09-'10 budget was received from Ruth Hodges Lake County Clerk and Recorder. The taxable value in the Polson Rural Fire District increased.. Although due to the large number of property taxpayers filing protested tax appeals, it may be prudent to maintain the expenditure budget passed by the board in the amount of \$123,600 prior to the taxable value increase. Chairperson Meslin noted 2,350 tax appeals were filed in Lake County. Trustee Nelson reported the protested tax is held by the county in a protested tax fund for 90 days. Trustee Nelson asked if the properties annexed by the City of Polson are paying the voted debt service levy to the Polson Rural Fire District. The properties are billed with payment received. An exception three properties located in the northeast corner of Hillcrest have not paid the debt service due. The process allows for the debt service amount to be added to the second half of real estate taxes.

Staff Report: Fire Chief Fairchild reported 24 runs in October. Devin Phillips is a new member. Chad McDowell left the department due to relocation. Scott Stuart has not responded to maintaining membership in the department. John contacted Volunteers Ron Friez and Tom Sadecki regarding the Big Arm Station training and updates. Trustee Laisy indicated Missoula Rural Fire may have surplus fire sticks. Missoula

Rural has not responded, therefore John plans to order the fire sticks. Training November 17th involved communications. Volunteers also trained with Finley Point Fire Department during a field day Saturday, November 7th. Jack Clapp and Ronnie Swope repaired the air line on Engine Number 319. Two piercing fire nozzles designed to reach and fight fires in closed or hidden places were purchased with Big Arm paying for one and the rural fire and volunteers paying for one. Currently reviewing subdivision plans regarding water system and fire hydrants for Jette Lake area. Volunteers Jack and Jane Clapp, Grant Clapp and Ronnie & Carol Swope assisted with a planning zone to air lift a person bucked off a horse on Green Mountain Road. John commends the volunteers for a job well done.

Old Business:

CLARIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POLSON RURAL FIRE

DISTRICT FIREFIGHTING COMPANIES - The organizational structure has led to controversy and conflict. Trustee Manley introduced a draft of two alternative resolutions for a motion 1) The board choose to transfer its authority to the Polson Volunteer Fire Department as the City of Polson did -or- 2) Make a clear statement that it has not transferred its authority to the Polson Volunteer Fire Department. Trustee Clapp has an issue with Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of the Polson Rural Fire District structure or organization. Is there a plan to create some organization that is a part of the Polson Rural Fire District? Trustee Manley indicated his understanding is the board has been trying to create separate companies that are coordinated under one fire chief as in Frenchtown, Missoula, Florence and other places. The structure has been created but it is obvious some clarification is needed. Fire Chief Fairchild asked why a resolution is not adopted to create a Polson Rural Fire Company in Polson. Trustee Manley indicated the resolution was passed in August, 2009. Trustee Clapp asked if the second resolution passes who will handle operational command structure? Chairperson Meslin observed information from a 2003 FEMA grant application submitted by former Fire Chief Tom Maloney. The grant application stated "this is a combined grant application for the City of Polson and the Polson Rural Fire District. These two agencies with separate service areas governing and funding structures have joined operationally to provide protection for both geographic areas". Trustee Clapp agrees with the statement provided in the grant. He suggests striking Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of Polson Rural Fire District. Authority should not be ceded. The disagreement is the complete aggregation Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a department for the rural fire district, which is a direct contradiction to the FEMA grant statement. Chairperson Meslin suggested Polson Volunteer Fire Department should be recognized as Polson Volunteer Fire Company since they have their own by-laws and organization. The rural companies working together with the Polson Company work under the banner of a department with the department comprised of all the companies whether the companies are rural or city. The Polson Fire Department carries the banner for operational. Under the Interlocal Agreement it is agreed all companies come together under the banner of a Polson Volunteer Fire Department which incorporates all the companies. Trustee Clapp expressed in an organization structure Polson Volunteer Fire Department as the lead with companies under the department. The fire chief is the command officer at a fire incident. Trustee Manley indicated he is not proposing anything new the resolution states the present situation. In the past, Polson Volunteer Fire Department has not been designated to be part of the Polson Rural and no authority has been delegated. The Polson Volunteer Fire Department believe it is the opposite and defends the power they do not have. Trustee Clapp has no problem with the power, board ability to set policy and guidelines. He has an issue with a statement in the resolution stating Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of Polson Rural Fire District structure or organization. Trustee Nelson asked for the question. Resident Roger Rogers asked residency requirement for city and rural volunteer personnel. The city volunteers have a twenty minute response time; while the rural volunteers have no guidelines. All Polson firefighters are considered city and rural firefighters. The company designation, by-laws, and guidelines is a questionable issue. Trustee Manley indicated the series of changes in the by-laws which the board was not aware effectively discontinued the Big Arm Fire Company and removed all authority from the board for everything. Trustee Clapp asked to consider making the fire department not aggregating responsibility but a fire department with operational ability in the rural area. Trustee Manley indicated Polson Volunteer Fire Department is a separate entity and considers itself a separate entity and obviously from the by-laws are operating completely independently from the rural district and passing by-law changes that perfunctory to assume all authority and duties of the board. Trustee Clapp

does not have an issue with the statement the board has not ceded or transferred its authority or duties to Polson Volunteer Fire Department.. Trustee Clapp has an issue with the statement Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of the Polson Rural Fire District. Trustee Manley indicated it is a matter of legal fact Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of the rural organization because this board has never made it so. Motion Trustee Manley to vote on a resolution to clarification of organizational structure, second Trustee Laisy. Trustee Laisy clarified a signed Interlocal Agreement exists that establishes a relationship with the Polson City Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried. Trustee Clapp opposed. Trustee Laisy expressed the board has a responsibility to the property owners in the district. The board should not relinquish any authority to operate the rural fire department. Trustee Clapp agrees no authority should be relinquished although what is this fire department. Trustee Laisy suggested a clarification to fire district. Trustee Clapp's issue remains Polson Volunteer Fire Department is not a part of Polson Rural Fire Department. Trustee Manley researched past resolutions and agreements between Polson Rural and Polson City, Polson Rural and in one case the Polson Volunteer Fire Department. The 2002 Interlocal Agreement states separate identity. Motion Trustee Manley to adopt resolution number 12 which is a correct legal statement of the present status for clarification of organizational structure, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried. Trustee Clapp opposed. Resolution Number 12 further clarified as a Resolution of the Polson Rural Fire District Board of Trustees for Clarification of Organizational Structure of the Polson Rural Fire District Firefighting Companies. (Copy of Resolution Number 12 attached to file minutes).

UPDATE ON FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION BUILDING PROGRESS - Chairperson Meslin reported the fire station is near completion. Contractor Paul Iverson will meet with the building committee to review change orders. The board and fire chief should visit the station prior to Phase IV final payment. The final payment with change orders will be reviewed at the December 9, 2009 board meeting. Trustee Nelson requested a list of change orders. Anticipated change orders are cable for phone line, drop down lights, compressor line, apron on front of building, electrical upgrade. **Motion Chairperson Meslin the board meet at the fire station for a final walk through and review the change orders prior to the December 9th meeting, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.** Volunteer fireman Scott Kiser pointed out telephone lines were not installed that were in the original plans. The phone lines were an oversight by the contractor. The estimated bill per month is \$76.45. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated the phone charge at the Big Arm Station is approximately \$52.00, therefore the monthly charge should be verified. Bill Koberg of Mission Valley Security provided a proposal for security/door access for the fire station. The building walls are enclosed which complicates the installation. Door access is limited and fire alarms will be wireless. **Motion Trustee Nelson to modify the system and provide the best system possible, second Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.** Fire Chief Fairchild indicated an exhaust fan system is costly. He suggested opening the doors for ventilation and review the issue later. Building contractor Paul Iverson will compare the cost of a 110 electrical line to a 220 electrical line. The 220 electrical line is preferred. The board authorized Trustee Laisy to purchase the appliances at a reasonable price. **Motion Trustee Manley to purchase appliances, second Trustee Nelson. Motion carried unanimously.** Chairperson Meslin suggested ordering 40 chairs and 8 tables for the training room at WalMart \$11.00 per chair and \$34.00 per table with a 10% discount. **Motion Trustee Meslin to purchase tables and chairs, second Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.** Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron suggested the board consider purchasing the appliances locally. Chairperson Meslin suggested an open house for the general public. The open house will be reviewed at the December meeting.

UPDATE ON POLSON CITY WATER AND IMPACT FEES - Trustee Manley reported the impact fee committee agreed to waive all the impact fees in the amount of \$33,450 for the fire station at 25 Regatta Road. The Polson City Commission will vote on the waiver November 16, 2009.

UPDATE ON NEW FEMA GRANT APPLICATION FOR RECRUITMENT & RETENTION - Chairperson Meslin reported the grant application period is November 16 to December 18, 2009. Committee comprised of Trustees Manley, Laisy and Meslin formulated some initial ideas. The committee plans to meet within the next two week to develop a formal plan. Fire Chief Fairchild, a member of the Polson, Big Arm and Irvine Flats Fire Department will assist the committee to finalize the grant application. Trustee Laisy supports the FEMA Grant application.

REVIEW RURAL FIRE CHIEF'S JOB DESCRIPTION AND REVIEW PROCEEDURE - Tabled.

UPDATE ON FIRE DEPARTMENT'S & COMPANY'S REPRESENTATION AT BOARD MEETINGS PROPER PROCEDURES FOR BRINGING CONCERNS TO BOARD - Included in policies and procedures.

COMMITTEE UPDATE TO REVIEW RECRUITMENT AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS

FOR FAIRGROUNDS FIRE STATION - Chairperson Meslin reported new recruits were invited to the fairgrounds fire station Six people expressed an interest in becoming new recruits at the station. Two additional people may be interested but were not able to attend. The initial process provided for Trustees Meslin and Laisy to mail letters to area residents and set up an initial meeting. During the next stage, Fire Chief Fairchild would provide orientation. Trustee Manley indicated a process is necessary to develop an application form for the Rural Fire District. Currently there is confusion who interviews and appoints the new fire fighters. A draft resolution is provided to clarify processing the application for rural firefighters. Chairperson Meslin read the resolution for the audience. Trustee Laisy suggested the application process handled promptly. Fire Chief Fairchild suggested the candidate attend at least three or four meetings to show interest. The meeting attendance requirement provides what is expected of a firefighter. Resolution item number 4 states upon completion of investigation and review, the Chief and the Company shall make recommendations to the Board and the Board shall approve or disapprove the application. Currently there is no process for processing applications. **Motion Trustee Manley to adopt Resolution Number 13 a Resolution of Polson Rural Fire District Board of Trustees for Clarification of Processing Applications for Firefighters, second Trustee Laisy. Motion carried unanimously.** The board reviewed a draft application form for new recruits. The form combines data from Big Arm, Polson, Missoula Rural and other fire companies. **Motion Trustee Meslin to adopt uniform application, second Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously**

New Business:

CLAIM FOR SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE PAYMENT - Fire Chief Fairchild advised the board he is submitting the claim to Montana Public Employees Retirement Administration which is a reimbursement for maintaining supplemental insurance required in accordance with 19-17-103 MCA for Polson Rural Fire Company and Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company. The reimbursement is \$150.00 per company.

PUBLIC INPUT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS - Steve Stanley a retired volunteer city and rural firefighter and former Rural Fire Board Trustee addressed the board. He would be more than happy to provide historical information. Steve has a vested interest in the fire district, is a strong advocate of the new fire station and congratulated the board on the new fire station and indicating it should have been constructed twenty years ago. Recently Chairperson Meslin met with Steve and gained a lot of information along with thought provoking issues. Steve is manager of the Lake County Department of Emergency Management and EOM will be a neighbor to the new fire station. He offered to assist with security, snow removal and is open to assist the fire chief. Trustee Nelson indicated Steve is a good source for information and currently works with a number of fire departments. Trustee Clapp suggested forming a committee of two members from the board to talk informally with Steve to work out some of the issues to come to a better understanding. Chairperson Meslin indicated passing the resolutions this evening has made a big stride in accomplishing identity and basis to communicate. Trustee Laisy expressed communication has been a large issue. A committee that is able to provide information to the board would be helpful to provide the best service for the taxpayers. Trustee Nelson volunteered to represent the rural board along with a representative from the volunteers and city commission in a non-controversial meeting to review issues. A former city commissioner attempted to abolish the interlocal agreement not knowing the full scope of the issues. Trustee Manley indicated City Manager Todd Crossett has background in mediation and dispute resolution. Todd has contact with people who would assist with mediation at no charge. Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron is very supportive of the new fire station. Lake County provided 1200 yard of gravel to the site to accommodate the wings on the building being constructed by Lake County. Commissioner Barron is confident the fire chief and board will move forward in a team effort. He commented the Fire Chief needs to

run the department and he answers to the board. Therefore a chain of command is established. Trustee Laisy indicated the Lake County addition to the complex created a public service project. Chairperson Meslin appointed Trustee Nelson to form a committee to discuss issues. Fire Chief Fairchild requested purchase of a rack system for turnouts.

COMMUNICATION -

Motion Trustee Clapp board write a letter of appreciation to Big Arm Firefighters for purchasing a piercing nozzle for the Big Arm Station and Polson Firefighters for contributing half of the cost toward an additional nozzle for rural engine #318, second Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Trustee Nelson to adjourn, second Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 9:06 p.m.

Alison W. Meslin Chairperson

Jack Clapp Secretary-Treasurer

