

**POLSON RURAL FIRE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES MAY 13, 2009**

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

Board trustee member absent: None

Staff Present: Fire Chief John Fairchild.

Guests: Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron, Troy Truman, Lee Manicke, Jeff Meslin, Joe Cope, Berl Tiskus – Valley Journal News Reporter.

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

Oath of Office: Chairman Nelson administered the oath of office to newly elected Trustee Jack Clapp. Also elected at the May 5th election was incumbent Trustee Fred Nelson. Lake County Commissioners appointed Paul Laisy to complete the unexpired term of Trustee Dave Ottun to May 2011. Trustees Nelson and Laisy received the oath of office at Lake County Courthouse. Chairman Nelson welcomed the new trustees to the board.

Election of Officers: Trustee Manley asked Chairman Nelson if is interested to continue as chairman. Chairman Nelson decline to continue as chairman. Trustee Manley nominated Trustee Meslin for Chairperson. Trustee Manley noted Trustee Meslin is the longest standing member on the board. No other nominations for chairman. Trustee Clapp seconded nomination. **Trustee Meslin elected chairperson by acclamation.** Chairman Nelson nominated Trustee Laisy for Vice-Chairman. No other nominations for vice-chairman. Trustee Meslin seconded nomination. **Trustee Laisy elected vice-chairman by acclamation.** Trustee Manley nominated Trustee Clapp for Secretary-Treasurer. No other nominations for secretary-treasurer. Trustee Meslin seconded nomination. **Trustee Clapp elected secretary-treasurer by acclamation.** Trustee Meslin requested Trustee Nelson continue as chairman during the May 2009 meeting. Chairman Nelson congratulated the newly elected officers.

Minutes April 8, 2009 Rural Fire Board Meeting; Special Meeting April 22, 2009 Rural Fire Board; and Special Meeting April 28, 2009 Rural Fire Board: Fire Chief John Fairchild requested an addition to the April 8, 2009 minutes to clarify the monitory trade-in at \$40 per Minitor III pager. Stine Electronics noted the trade-in provision expired, although honored the trade-in value for the current transaction. **Motion Trustee Meslin to approve minutes of April 8, 2009 with the addition; April 22, 2009, and April 28, 2009 approved as presented, seconded Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

Bills: Chairman Nelson requested information regarding the radio frequency maintenance change due to the current bridge construction. A charge to change the frequency on engine #318, #314, and #327 plus two portable radios was \$150.00 which is a portion of check #3933 to Western Electronics, Inc. The frequency will remain in effect until the bridge construction is complete this fall. The frequency change was not required although it was done as a convenience and safety factor. No reimbursement from the Montana Department of Transportation is anticipated. Trustee Meslin requested information regarding the bill in the amount of \$4,395.89 from the Lake County Elections Office for the May 5, 2009 Polson Rural Fire Election. Trustee Meslin noted the district was charged for a mail ballot election and questioned who authorized the mail ballot election. Chairman Nelson stated the board did not make a request for a mail ballot. Trustee Meslin noted the school election was held at the polls. Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron stated the Lake County Elections Office is participating in a mail ballot pilot program. Trustee Meslin will contact the elections office regarding clarification of the charges. **Motion Trustee Meslin to hold the check payable to Lake County Elections Office, seconded Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.** Fire Chief Fairchild requested a correction in the memo on check #3914 payable to Fire Apparatus Repair the maintenance is for Engine #326. **Motion Trustee Meslin to pay the bills, seconded Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.**

Correspondence : Trustee Meslin informed the board of an open invitation to attend a demonstration on fire fighting chemicals presented by Stan Baines for Chief Cliff and Rollins Fire Departments. The district trustees are invited to attend the demonstration. Fire Chief Fairchild presented a proposal from Fire Recovery USA, a California private billing service, which would bill the cost of response calls for structure fires and vehicle accidents to the insurance company involved. He reported Ronan Fire Department is currently using the billing service with great success. The city commission is currently reviewing the proposal. The board requested copies of the proposal and plans to review the proposal at the June board meeting.

Treasury Report:

Operating Fund Balance	\$	76,591.68
Capital Improvement Fund Balance	\$	85,841.75
Voted Levy	\$	3,712.09
Paid bills in the amount of	\$	8,197.35

Note: Check #3917 in the amount of \$4,385.89 to Lake County Elections Office held for clarification.

Check numbers 3911- 3917; 3921-3933

Voided check numbers 3918-3920 {Checks out of number sequence}

(paid May 13, 2009)

Staff Report: Fire Chief John Fairchild reported 29 runs for April 2009. Two new members were approved; and two applications are being reviewed. Maintenance on Engine #326 rear axle seal leaking. The board is invited to the Lake County fire exercise at the Division of Fire June 6th beginning at 8:00 a.m. The exercise will include fire behavior past and present; discussion on the anticipated wildfire season; mutual aid communications; and DNRC helicopter air to ground and safety. The current bridge construction presented no issues with fire engine response traffic. Air pacs have been flow tested to pass inspection with the cost for the test split with the city. The contract for the mask fit test is \$55 per person. May 19th VFIS will conduct training for vehicle roll overs and engine tender exercises. The burn box will be in the parking lot. Basic wildland training is June 15th - 19th at the Ronan Community Center. Annual truck inspections are being conducted. Chairman Nelson noted engine #326 is no longer under warranty and the same rear axle seal leaked in the past. Sean Garner, Fire Apparatus Repair suggest the axle may have overheated. Chairman Nelson thanked Fire Chief Fairchild for the informative report.

Old Business:

FLOOR PLAN OPTIONS FOR PROPOSED NEW FIRE STATION AT FAIRGROUNDS - Lake County Commissioner Bill Barron noted when the bid proposal for the new fire station was submitted the contractor suggested an alternate to the bid to add additional building height creating a second floor. Commissioner Barron asked if the board had an interest in putting a second floor on the fire station to house the Lake County Office of Emergency Management and perhaps a community meeting room. Lake County plans to pay for the additional construction costs. The cost of the building height would be \$15,000, and \$20 per square foot to finish the second floor. Lake County Courthouse is losing space. Currently the meeting room on the second floor is being used for a courtroom. The second story on the fire station would add 4600 square feet of usable space with an outside entrance to the second floor. ADA requirements can be met with a lift in lieu of an elevator. Trustee Manley voiced the proposal is a great idea and would certainly provide for a much need community meeting room facilities. Fire Chief

Fairchild indicated the general public should not have access to the portion of the building housing the fire equipment. Trustee Clapp questioned the heating cost of the building. Lake County is willing to look at building maintenance at a future date. Trustee Manley noted the Big Arm Fire Station is currently used for a number of public meetings and social events. The use of the meeting room at the Big Arm Fire Station provides a positive atmosphere in the community. Fire Chief Fairchild indicated as a public building a sprinkler system is necessary, therefore, the county proposal would assist with the cost of installing a sprinkler system. Trustee Meslin indicated the sprinkler system requires a larger water line and the impact fees would increase dramatically. The board voiced support for the proposal. Mr. Paul Iverson, the contractor for the building is very enthused with the proposal and is willing to work with the board and Lake County Commissioners. Chairman Nelson advised Commissioner Barron to meet with Trustees Meslin and Laisy and Fire Chief Fairchild to work out the details.

FEMA GRANT AVAILABILITY UPDATE – Trustee Meslin reported the FEMA Grant for equipment and protective gear is available with a closing submittal date of May 20, 2009. Trustee Clapp indicated the grant application request can include one piece of apparatus and turnout gear. The application request will be for a type 3 engine to replace engine #323 and slide-in. The type 3 engine is classified as a quick attack, small engine for use in wildland and structural firefighting. The unit is used extensively by California Division of Forestry in protecting structures in wildland/urban interface. Economy of operation, able to get places larger equipment can't and able to travel quicker on back roads. The district increased by one-third when Irvine Flats was annexed in 2007 with a minimal addition of tax revenue. The deployment to wildland fires the past three summers will also add criteria to the application. If awarded the \$325,000 grant for equipment, the district's participation share is 5 percent approximate \$16,500. The age of existing equipment, engine #323 – 1987; engine #319 – 1982; engine #327 – 1978; engine #328 – 1987. Trustee Meslin indicated the Big Arm Station used engine #323 and the DNRC truck last year during the wildland season. Fire Chief Fairchild replied the Big Arm Station would only have the DNRC truck; while Engine #314 could be moved to the Big Arm Station. With the quick attack truck, three personnel could man the truck and be better prepared than the current equipment with one person in engine #323 and two people in the DNRC truck. Trustee Clapp will provide the grant narrative, Trustee Meslin will provide the financial data, Trustee Laisy will proof the document, and Fire Chief Fairchild will provide data for equipment costs. Fireman Jeff Meslin attended FEMA workshops and it was emphasized community support was a large factor on the grant application. Additional weight is generally given in a grant application to communities willing to match more than the required five percent. Since a majority of the information in the equipment grant request can be used for a second grant application, Trustee Meslin suggested a second grant application submitted for protective gear. Additional protective gear will be necessary at the new fire station and for additional fire personnel. Trustee Clapp is comfortable with the data necessary for the equipment; while the data necessary for the protective gear will be a challenge. Chairman Nelson requested Fire Chief Fairchild assist Trustee Clapp to identify costs for turnout gear, etc. for the second grant application. **Motion Trustee Manley to apply for a FEMA Grant for a type 3 engine and if time permits to apply for the FEMA Grant for protective and related gear, seconded Trustee Clapp. Motion carried unanimously.**

New Business:

APPRECIATION OF DISTRICT CLERK – Trustee Meslin reported Clerk Bonnie Manicke has assisted with the recent audit, bid process for the fire station, and prepared the financial data to acquire a loan for the proposed fire station. The hours expended on the additional projects has been phenomenal. Trustee Meslin noted appreciation for the additional duties and consideration during the budget process.

REVIEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF FIRE DEPARTMENT – The subject is currently being reviewed by City Attorney James Raymond. Trustee Meslin suggested a committee formed from the board to review the document as portions are completed or as the entire document is completed. Chairman Nelson suggested the item tabled.

APPROVE RESOLUTION TO FINANCE NEW FIRE STATION – Chairman Nelson introduced Resolution Number 11 authorizing the chairman and secretary-treasurer of the Polson Rural Fire District to obtain a loan in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for the construction of a new fire station. Valley Bank of Ronan offered a fixed interest rate of 4.375 percent for 15 years with semi-annual payments; the first payment January 2010 and the final payment July 2024 or earlier with no prepayment penalty. A letter of commitment from Valley Bank was reviewed. (Copy of Resolution #11 and Valley Bank letter of commitment attached to file copy of minutes). Bonnie advised the board the interest rate offered by other banks in the community was much higher. Banks receive notable commendations for community participation loans during audit review. The board thanked Bonnie for negotiating the terms of the loan and completing the financial package. **Motion Trustee Manley to adopt Resolution Number 11 authorizing signatures and obtain a loan not to exceed \$200,000 for the construction of a new fire station, seconded Trustee Meslin. Motion carried unanimously.**

FORMAL REQUEST DISPATCH INFORMATION - Trustee Manley reported the board received input from people in Big Arm regarding dispatch information that if accurate would indicate it was inappropriate and shortly thereafter information was received from one or more people in Polson or Irvine Flats that the information received from Big Arm was not accurate. A copy of the dispatch tape was requested to resolve the controversy. Trustee Manley submitted a letter to the Lake County Sheriff's Department requesting the dispatch tape. Lake County Sheriff's Department requested a letter signed by a majority of the board in order to obtain the dispatch tape. **Motion Trustee Clapp the board members sign a letter to gain access to dispatch tapes, seconded Trustee Meslin. Motion carried unanimously.**

BIG ARM FIRE COMPANY 30TH ANNIVERSARY – Ron Friez, President of the Big Arm Fire Company reported this is the 30th year of the formation of the Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company. A 30 year anniversary celebration in conjunction with the annual hamburger will be held the last Saturday of June. During a recent meeting, it was suggested to compile a history of the people in the Big Arm area that have participated in the fire company over the years. At the next meeting, a program of activities will be outlined. Trustee Manley commended the Big Arm Fire Company for a good job and creating a lot of interest in the department. Trustee Meslin reported a sign over the building that read Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company was removed Christmas 2006. The sign was taken down without permission of the board and a Polson Station 2 was put up. **Motion Trustee Meslin the board replace the Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company sign.** Trustee Manley asked what happened to the sign. Trustee Meslin replied the sign was taken down and part of it fell apart and then it disappeared. The intention was to repair the sign and then perhaps hang it inside. At the time they weren't allowed to have the Big Arm Fire Company, now with it being reestablished it would be appropriate to have the sign replaced.. Trustee Laisy supports the new sign, with the suggestion the sign also include it is part of the Polson Rural Fire District. Trustee Meslin replied that should be a decision of the Big Arm Fire Company. Trustee Clapp indicated the station is primarily Polson Rural Fire District Station 2. Trustee Manley offered some historical comments, the city fire department changed the by-laws and renamed the Big Arm Station Polson Station 2; which caused some hard feelings and the residents in Big Arm would like to have the historic sign replaced. Trustee Clapp suggested it important to foster the idea Big Arm Fire Company recognize the

equipment is financed by all taxpayers in the district. Trustee Meslin reminded Trustee Clapp the Big Arm Community built the original station and in 2006 the Big Arm Community raised the money to renovate the building. Ron Friez indicated in his opinion a new sign designed with recognition for Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company and Station 2 may be acceptable. The Big Arm Fire Company will discuss the sign at the next meeting. Lake County Commissioner Barron suggested the historic sign reproduced and a second sign noting Station 2. **Motion Trustee Meslin to reproduce the Big Arm Volunteer Fire Company sign and another sign to indicate it is part of the Polson Rural Fire District, seconded Trustee Manley. Motion carried unanimously.** Additionally Ron Friez suggested pictures of the Big Arm Station and sign reviewed prior to the June meeting.

FY 2010 BUDGET PREPARATION – Trustee Meslin will work with Bonnie to establish a preliminary budget for review at the June meeting. Fire Chief Fairchild has concern for budget items regarding the new station. Trustee Laisy replied the new station is a bare bones building with equipment consideration for the station at a later date.

Comments from public: Lee Manicke thanked Fire Chief Fairchild for the research and proposal to bill for fire response services to the insurance companies involved. During a recent candidate forum, Lee suggested the candidates consider a charge for fire response services. Additionally fire districts may consider support for legislation to put a mill levy on vehicles and therefore take some of the burden off the property tax levies. Chairman Nelson replied the fire districts need to be proactive not reactive.

The board recessed to executive session.

Meeting adjourned 8:38 p.m.

Fred J. Nelson, Chairman

Alison W. Meslin, Secretary-Treasurer