

~APPROVED~
POLSON RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Big Arm Station No. 2

October 12, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Notice: All meetings for the Polson Rural Fire District Board of Trustees are recorded.

Board Trustees present: Fred Nelson, John Doty, Dick Wunderlich, Ron Roberts.

Board Trustees present via media source:

Board Trustee absent: R. Jack Clapp

Staff: Fire Chief Gordon R. Gieser, Administrative Manager Kelley Druyvestein.

Guests/Visitors: Jeff Meslin , Alison Meslin, Leanna Fillman, Cynthia Waterman, David Waterman & Lee Engbretson.

Call to Order – Chair Trustee Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes – September 14, 2022 monthly meeting minutes. **Trustee Roberts motion to approve September 14, 2022 monthly meeting minutes. Trustee Wunderlich seconded.**

Board comment: None. Public comment: None. All in favor, no opposed.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Communications/Correspondence – Administrator Kelley worked with Glenda regarding the website. Glenda has requested payment for work completed (claim received) and what her company's function will be going forward. Kelley stated that the website now has been updated, agendas are available on the website and meeting minutes will be added as they are approved.

Kelley requested that the website maintenance be discussed further and add to the November agenda. Kelley spoke with personnel at the County about what is mandatory and what is not regarding transferring of reporting and public information. She has also been working on removing individual emails attached to the accounts.

Claims – Kelley showed on the Treasurer's report the last check number written for June claims, all the checks written for the July, August and September claims. This shows what checks were written prior to her start and when Bonnie left. Trustee Wunderlich asked what FNBO was for. Kelley replied that it was the credit card company. He also asked what North Ridge Fire was for. Chief Gordon stated that it was where the firefighters got their safety gear. Kelley went in and talked with Robin at the County about the accounting report for reconciling not being sent. Robin stated that the report was not ready to be sent due to an unbalanced account on their side. Kelley will update the report when the information is made available to her. She did not want to put inaccurate numbers on the report before the accounts could be reconciled.

The A101 deposits for the Elmo2 Fire were forwarded to the email address from the County as they came in, so an amount was verified as \$37,217.66. Kelley went over the reports with Chief Gordon. Kelley made an appointment with Lisa at the CPA office to cut the checks to the firefighter members on November 1st.

Kelley did do a spot audit on the accounts as she is updating the postings. She did not find any money

irregularities. Trustee Wunderlich asked if the balances would be emailed to the Board once it was available. Kelley stated yes and that they could write the balances on their sheets or she would pdf a new sheet to them. Trustee Wunderlich ask how the public would get these balances. Kelley will post to the meeting minutes that go onto the website. Chief Gordon answered a question asked about the reimbursement for fuel charges during the fires.

[Public Question – Will a list of the claims be available to the public?] Kelley stated that in talking with the County, it is not mandatory for a list to be provided, but a list was available if requested.

Chair Trustee Nelson asked for a motion to pay the claims. Trustee Roberts made a motion to pay the claims. Trustee Nelson asked if there were any further comments or questions.

Hearing none, he addressed the motion on the floor to approve the September claims as presented.

Trustee Doty seconded. Board comment: None. Public comment: None.

All in favor, no opposed. **Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

TREASURY REPORT FOR MONTH ENDING - September 30, 2022

No report as the balances were not received from the Lake County Treasurer and balances could not be verified.

CASH ON HAND as of SEPT 30, 2022	
FUND # 7243 Voted Levy Operating Fund	\$ 4,111.90
FUND # 7245 Operating Fund	\$ <u>91,067.19</u>
TOTAL Fund #7243, #7245 Operating Cash	\$ 95,179.09

FUND # 7244 Voted Levy (5 mills with sunset) \$ 126,909.83

FUND # 7246 Capital Improvement Fund \$ 15,708.20

Trustee Wunderlich stated that in the past when this happened with the County reports, Bonnie would transfer the numbers over and reduce the claims. Kelley stated that she would rather report accurate numbers instead of not verified numbers. Trustee Wunderlich also stated that he would rather have accurate numbers. Treasurer’s report will be tabled until next meeting.

CHIEF'S REPORT –

Chief Gieser referred to the hard copy reporting 15 calls.

Response:

1. Vehicle vs deer MM 68 Highway 93
2. Debris fire 34060 Whitetail Street
3. Fire alarm Valley View School
4. Vehicle accident 40612 Skyline Drive
5. Vehicle accident 35949 Memory Lane
6. Ambulance assist 39605 Peregrine Lane
7. Mutual aid to Chief Cliff fire for a vehicle accident
8. Vehicle vs deer Highway 93 & Flathead View Drive
9. Unauthorized burning 28964 White Swan Road
10. Debris in the roadway Highway 93 & Caffery Road
11. Vehicle vs deer Highway 35 & South Shore Lane
12. Vehicle vs bear 34204 Highway 93
13. Tree blocking road 41639 Forman Road
14. Authorized burning 39353 Ingram Lane
15. Authorized burning Gingras Spring’s Lane

Administrative:

Second revision Kenton Ranch Estates
Complete fire risk rating form for Johnson subdivision

Repair and Maintenance:

Wt-312 install front supply electric valve, replace vhf radio, repair windshield washer system
E-313 repair siren control system
Wt-308 service engine and transmission
E-328 replace p/s headlight

Chief Gieser's report completed and he asked if there were any questions regarding the report. [Public Question – Further information requested on the vehicle vs bear accident?] Chief Gieser gather further details. Chair Nelson asked if there were any further questions. No further questions.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – No report. No Members present.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Rocky Point project:

Chair Trustee Nelson recapped the meeting with the Masumola Club that he and Chief Gieser attended back in September. There are @ 632 property owners in that area. Not counting any of the Tribal property there is @ 575 property owners. The questions of how to acquire land either by donation or purchase on which to build a station were looked at. During that meeting, a question regarding creating a Special Improvement District was mentioned, but Chair Nelson & Chief Gieser did not discuss it further due to some items needing to be clearly stated by County definitions of a SID designation.

After the meeting, it was decided that the property currently being looked at Dixon Park, which is County owned, would not be big enough for a station. However, the property across from it, 0.93 acers with a well, might be available. Chair Nelson will get in contact with the owner to see if it can be acquired and what options are available. He also spoke with the County regarding purchasing by the County and then leasing back to the PRFD. There are currently 2 stations using this option. Chair Nelson feels that a station at the Rocky Point and Kings Point intersecting area will give the best coverage for all the property owners.

Chair Nelson asked if there were any questions.

Trustee Doty wanted to clarify that the person Chair Nelson was going to contact is the owner of the property with the well and is it across from the Dixon Park. Chair Nelson stated yes and gave a description of the land. Trustee Doty asked about the County's involvement with the road for creating entrance and exit points. Chair Nelson stated that there would need to be some hill work, but that the roads around it are paved, plus the County maintains and plows them.

Chair Nelson stated he also received a phone call from one of the property owners stating that there is a piece of property across from Pinewood Drive that is 8.1 acers for sale for \$299,000. It is a flat piece of property and maybe the owner would sell 1 acre instead of the whole piece to the District. This will be looked into further by Chair Nelson. He will also check with the Tribe about some of the tribal land in the Kings Point and Rocky area to possibly purchase.

Chair Nelson asked if there were any other questions. No further questions.

NEW BUSINESS:

Executive Meeting Notes: Chair Nelson stated that the Executive Board conducted a Chief's review. Everything is going well, no complaints.

Chief Gieser will be putting in the order for the new hybrid F550 chassis from Don Aadsen Ford. There is no guarantee when the truck will arrive but when it does arrive, it will be housed at the Big Arm Station. Truck #323 will go to Station #1. Truck #326 and #313 would then be moved to the future Rocky Point Station. Thus, there will be enough pieces of equipment to have at each station.

Chair Nelson stated that Chief Gieser will unfortunately only be with the District until June 30, 2024. Chief Gieser has accomplished remarkable improvements and growth for the District in the 5 years that he has been here. He will be hard to replace. Chair Nelson and Trustee Doty will work with Chief Gieser to write up a job description for an Assistant Chief/Operation Officer. The position will oversee the Assistant Chief as that person works into moving into the Chief position. This will create a more streamlined transition for the new Chief.

Chair Nelson asked if there were any questions. Chief Gieser stated that he will stay on until a very good candidate is hired, trained and a smooth transition before he officially leaves.

Chair Nelson stated that he had attended the Montana State Fire Trustee convention in Butte. There were 38 fire districts represented in attendance. There was lots of useful information. The Big Sky area is growing so fast that they can't build fire stations fast enough and money is not being collected correctly. A topic of discussion was the use of Special Improvements Districts. This creates a mill levy specific to an area and its voting property owners, instead of a District wide larger voting area that might get voted down. Chair Nelson thought we should look into this for the Rocky Point area, as it would fit with the usage of an SID. He spoke with the Commissioners. They said they would look into it and get back with him. Chair Nelson received a call back from the Civil County Attorney wanting all the information that Chair Nelson had from the Trustee's Association regarding SID's. Chair Nelson took the information to the County. They will get back to Chair Nelson once they have had a chance to review it.

Chair Nelson acknowledged that our District is really steps ahead of some other Districts as far as policies and procedures. He stated that the By-Laws will be changed to reflect that a Polson Rural Firefighter Member can be on the Board, but will have to become inactive as a firefighter, unless they are a City Firefighter and get elected to the Board. This way, they will not have any authority over the Fire Chief. The MT Fire Trustees Associations Attorney has provided Chair Nelson with information regarding District development of SID's.

It was a productive convention and Chair Nelson would like to see more Trustee's go next year.

No District expenses were incurred, Chair Nelson covered his costs.

Chair Nelson asked if there were any further questions.

[Public Question – How many calls are received from the Rocky Point area?]

Chief Gieser said he can run an address listing report for the area to see how many. He also stated that the property owners pay a higher rate because of the distance from the fire station.

A local SID for the area that it covers really makes sense. Chair Nelson also stated that there are current Firefighter Members that live in that area and perhaps more volunteers would join.

Trustee Doty inquired as to the White Swan area residents and the Tribe receiving a grant for millions to create a fire prevention and fuel reduction program available to property owners.

Chief Gieser stated that yes they had and that it will be contracted out to a private company.

There are project managers and the DNRC is also involved. An urban forester will do all the inquiries. White Swan is a tough area due to the roads being narrow and a “one-way in and one-way out”. This is a positive for helping out the District with homeowners having properties in heavily forested areas.

[Public Question – Is this going through the County like it did a few years ago?]

Chief Gieser stated that it was Western States Grant through the Tribe. The Tribe will oversee this program. Chief Gieser will stay on top of the information available. Shaun Morgan is the local DNRC forester. There will be plenty of oversight on this project. The area that it covers is White Swan Lane and White Swan Road where private property connects to the Tribal Forest area.

[Public Question – Are there any track homes and subdivisions being built in that area?]

The answer was no subdivisions, but lots of individual homes on single owned lots.

[Public Question – Why is it not mandated to have a better road system out there?]

Chief Gieser stated that the type of homes are single home owned lots and so it is not required.

It may also be an older lot that was subdivided years ago. If the homeowner asks for advice on fire hazards on their property, the Chief will give them information. Chair Nelson stated that some of the properties would be tough to get any piece of equipment into because of the road conditions.

Chief Gieser stated that lines would have to be laid to get to some of the properties.

[Public Question – If a fire started in any of these areas, would you lay lines from the lake?]

Chief Gieser stated that some of the homes have no pumping access to the lake. This is why the District has more water tenders available now. Trustee Doty asked if a homeowner wanted to get advice on upgrading their property to make it more accessible, would the District be open to discussing this with them. Chief Gieser stated yes, but most homeowners don’t think of it until they are in the emergency and the situation isn’t optimal for the discussion. The hope is that when the owner is looking to build that they include the District when they are working with the surveyor.

Chair Nelson asked that at the next meeting on Wed., Nov 9th in Polson at Station #1, if everyone could show up for the presentation for Bonnie. The presentation will start at 5:30pm.

Chair Nelson asked if there were any further topics or questions under new business. No further topics or questions.

Chair Nelson asked the public if there were any further questions. No further questions.

The next Board meeting will be at Station 1 in Polson at 5:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Nelson asked if there were any further business. No further business to come before the Board. **Chair Trustee Nelson asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Roberts motioned to adjourn. Trustee Doty second. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

ADJOURN 6:54 p.m.

Fred J. Nelson, Chair

Dick Wunderlich, Secretary-Treasurer

Kelley Druyvestein, Recorder