

Fountain Lake Fire Protection District  
Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting  
March 20, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**6:30 pm**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: QUORUM PRESENT**

Jerry Vaughn (Chairperson)

John Brandt (Secretary/Treasurer)

Joe Turner

Lee Coatney

Rachel Peters

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

OTHER ATTENDEES: Layne Ragsdale (Interim Chief), Jeff Hayes (Interim Captain), Brian Shannon (Interim Captain), Mike Rigsby, Johnny Arnold, Mark Oliver, Glen Johnson, Oliver Walker, Leo Runnels, Scott Greene, Scott Foster, Harry Baker, Representative Richard McGrew, Senator Matt McKee, Judge Darryl Mahoney, Traci Hill, Keith Hill, Karl Lowry, Destyn Fields, Mason Fields, Mayor Jack Fields, Jeanne Fields, Martha Coatney, Adaleigh Blackmon, Bo Robertson, Rebecca Talbert, Kate Oliver, Susan Hayes, April Kesterson, Kaye Kesterson, Crystal Langston, Brittany Dees, Darrell Tigue, Constable John McCaleb, Jason Lawrence, Adam Gardner, Joseph Repici, Mackenzie Repici, Duke Briley, John Howard, Debra Shannon, Zack Thomas, Krista Breshears, Lenny Breshears, Jarred Owens, Casey Clark, Ben Ronje, Darrell Dunn, Austin Lambert, Helena Newsome, Jessica Treat, Jesse Treat, David Griffin, Steven Burroughs, and Melissa Campbell

**MINUTES FROM MEETING**

Prior meeting minutes:

Minutes from the February 20, 2023 meeting were reviewed.

The February Minutes are accepted by consensus.

**Financial Report:**

John presented the P&L, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and P&L Actual vs Budget reports for the month of February.

## Bank Accounts

General Account: \$22,933.47

Restricted Account: \$11,590.83

Financial reports are accepted by consensus.

## Chief's Report (AJ):

Layne introduced himself and said that he wants to bring the fire department and the community back together. He is going to do the best he can be for the community.

Chief's report is accepted by consensus.

## Publicity Report (John):

John reported on posting about our board meeting as well as posting about highways being closed due to accidents.

Publicity report accepted by consensus.

## Maintenance Report (Brian):

- Engine 1
  - Fittings for hose connectors for drop tanks; back ordered and we may not need them
  - Waiting for battery charger
  - Old Engine #1:  
Status on sale of Engine. Negotiating what company through which we sell it.
- Engine 2
- Tanker 1
- Tanker 2
  - Drivers side pump is waiting on gasket to be installed.
  - Tank motor got damaged and is throwing oil. Part came in. Status on installation
  - Fire pump is no longer working
- Rescue 1
  - Alternator shorted out and burned wiring. There was a head gasket leak which caused the alternator to short out and a fire that burned the wiring. Brian Shannon estimates that it may cost \$5,000 for parts and another \$5,000 for labor to repair Rescue #1. Because of the cost to repair, Brian suggests that we retire Rescue #1 and replace it with another vehicle. Steven reported that there are Humvees available in Little Rock at Federal Surplus for \$2,500. John will check with the insurance company about coverage due to the fire.
- Rescue 2
  - Needs a 4" water control valve. It costs about \$1,500. Steven said it is not a need right now and suggested we table this until next month.

- Sensor for digital foam system – The sensor is on order.
- Brush 1 (Forestry)
- Station 1
  - Dirt work on office side of building tabled until we can identify the location of the septic tank. Tabled until weather clears up
  - Back door to training room the door frame is rotted out along with the door to the office and the side door to the bay on the office side of the building needs to be replaced.. Waiting on bid from Jason to replace the frames and doors along with the side door on the East side of the building.
- Station 2
  - Office and bathroom are being worked on. It was presented that a shower enclosure was available through Federal Surplus for \$75.00. Joe Turner said that was a good price and we should get one.
  - Complete the walls. Tabled until next meeting.
  - The board told Joe to get more Citypit to put it back to just past the side door. He is authorized to get 2 or 3 more loads as needed.
  - The lower door panel to the first bay is damaged and needs to be replaced. Brian reported that it will cost \$900.

**Rachel moved to purchase the lower door panel for \$900 installed.  
 Seconded by John  
 Passed unanimously**

Maintenance report is accepted by consensus.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Smoke Detectors – (John)**  
 No one else has requested a smoke detector. John reported that we still have 98 available. We will keep this on the agenda to know if anything happens.
- **Turnouts – (Steven & AJ)**  
 Turnouts that were authorized to be purchased at the last meeting have been cancelled until needed.
- **Masks for SCBAs (Brian)**  
 Brian said they are negotiating for prices. Too late for a grant, but we can apply for a grant with Firehouse Subs.
- **Apparatus Headsets (Brian)**  
 Not needed.
- **Land – John**

John spoke to the gentleman who owns the land. He told John that his only concern is whether he can get a tax write off. John told him that our attorney thinks it is likely he can get a tax write-off, but he should talk to his tax accountant. John texted him the information we had as to the IRS Code Section that addresses donations to government entities.

- **Delinquent Assessments – John**

John reported that he has not yet completed inputting the data into the database. As soon as that is completed he will then have to create invoices to mail with the letters.

- **Firehouse Subs Publicity Event (John)**

The event scheduled for March 28<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled by the owner of the local FireHouse Subs restaurant. He will reschedule at a future date.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Emergency Fund – John**

John raised the issue of the need for an emergency fund that can be utilized by the chief without having to request an approval by the board. John recommended that we establish an amount that is pre-authorized by the board to only be used in the case of emergencies. Lee suggested \$1,500. All board members thought that sounded like a reasonable amount.

**Lee moves that we authorize \$1,500 to be spent for emergencies on vehicles**

**Joe seconded the motion.**

**It was passed unanimously**

- **Audit - John**

John said that it is time for us to conduct an audit of the books. Joe has a contact and he will forward it to John. John will contact the company about doing an audit. We will discuss it next month

### **Comments/Questions:**

Karl Lowery – Thanked the fire fighters future, past, and present. He has a question that was presented to him. He wanted to know why board members are not elected officials. Jerry answered by stating that all commissioners are elected. Judge Mahoney responded by saying that all commissioners are elected and it is a shame that we only get people to show up when there is controversy. There were not but 20 people at the last election he attended and the last board meeting he attended, there were only about 9 people present.

Jack Fields – appreciates the board and everyone here. We should all come together as a community.

Joe Copenhaver – Joe is one of the administrators of the Fountain Lake Community Page. He was concerned about people who were worried about what might happen if they have an emergency.

Katrina – Katrina is in the medical field. She cannot walk out on a patient. If she does she can be brought before the medical board. She is questioning what the issue was with the pagers. She also asked about how the fire fighters are paid and how many calls they respond to during the day or the evening. Joe Turner answered the question by stating that he took the initiative to look into pagers. He stated he thought it was right for the commissioners to know what was going on for the benefit of the community. He also mentioned that we found that some fire fighters were calling in on standby and receiving pay for not actually responding. There was much discussion about what it meant to be on standby and how many calls were responded to last year and how much we paid for people for a quarter which was \$7,800 the last quarter of 2022.

Several people stated their opinions about what it means to be on standby. One former firefighter told how he spend 40 or more hours each week standing by at one of the stations in the event there was a call. One gentleman stated that he used to work as an EMT on an ambulance. He felt there is concern about first responders being on standby and waiting to hear if they are needed as opposed to being on the scene. He felt they should be on the scene in case they are needed and not waiting to be called. They had already been called and should go to the scene.

There was also much discussion about the board approving the purchase of the pagers.

John McCaleb – Asked about the cost of the Rover app. He then explained how the Rover app works to show calls and who is responding. He wanted to know why the board felt the need for a pager when there is information on Rover. After some discussion about whose job it is to oversee the operations of the fire dept. Mr. McCaleb stated that in his opinion there is no need for the board to have the pagers. He felt that is money that could have been spent on equipment for the firefighters as the board should have access to Rover. He felt that the funds for purchasing the pagers was misappropriation for fire dept. funds. He then asked if any of the board are members of the fire dept. Lee Coatney stated that he has stepped in the help out. Mr. McCaleb stated that he needs to either be a firefighter or a board member and that he cannot be both. Being on the board and being a fire fighter is in direct violation of our by-laws according to Mr. McCaleb. Jerry Vaughn stated that no where in our by-laws does it state a firefighter cannot be on the board. Mr. McCaleb also asked whether any of the board members take the \$50 that is allowed by our by-laws for being on the board. He was told that we do not. He then asked if any previous chiefs have been awarded a stipend. John Brandt told him that several years ago the chief and assistant chief both received a monthly stipend.

This was followed up with much discussion and questioning about the pagers and the holding of executive sessions.

Joe Repici – He said it is appalling what he is witnessing.

McKenzie Repici – Asked why we did not communicate to the public better after the fire fighters left and let the community know from the board’s standpoint what was happening. John told her that he has limited ways to convey information to the public and we probably need to better communicate through our Facebook page.

AJ Sturgill – Asked Jerry about why he was after he, Ben Ronje, and Melissa Campbell. Jerry responded about knowing a meeting took place at Steven’s house to get someone to disrupt our meeting. AJ and Ben both stated they did not know Lyn Price until recently. One gentleman stated that he lives on Fox Pass and has gotten to know several of the firefighters and he needs them. He does not need to anyone on the board.

At this point, one of the sheriff’s deputies stepped in and stated that nothing is being resolved in that we are just talking in circles. He suggested that maybe this cannot be resolved in just one meeting.

Ben Ronje – Asked what plans Layne has to move forward. Layne said that he wants to bring the department and community back together. Layne said that he wants to continue training and even doing some cross-training with other departments in case of mutual aid calls and try to get more fire fighters involved.

Tracy – Asked what steps the board is now taking to make sure that no more money is spent outside of a public meeting. Rachel answered by stating that we took a step to give the fire dept. officers authorization during emergencies to make purchases up to \$1,500.

Brittany Dees – Expressed concern about how many medical calls were made in 2022 She said according to the minutes the department responded to 881 calls. And that a board member stated something about a board member making a statement that someone who committed suicide got what they deserved. She stated that she is concerned about someone making a comment like that and still being on the board.

Helena Newsome – Asked Layne how we can expect him to respond to calls when he only responded to 22 calls in the last 5 years. How can we expect you to lead our firefighters when you are not here. Layne responded by stating that he was in school during much of that time and was out of state. He was asked about what time he was willing to commit to looking and applying for grants. Layne stated that he will give all the time necessary.

David Griffin – Asked Jerry how he conducted a vendetta on Social Media. He asked the firefighters how many of them would come back if Jerry resigned. All of them raised their hands. He then asked if Jerry thought he was more important than those fire fighters. Jerry stated that they resigned. Darrell Dunn stated that when a call comes out it is the firefighters who respond, not the board. It was the firefighters who all resigned.

Tracy Hill – Asked is we go a new security system installed. John Brandt answered that the cameras work, but the recorder is not recording. John McCaleb stated that he will be happy to help with that. She then asked if we have received a complete inventory list. John said we have not, but we are

working on it. She then recommended that we adopt a purchase order system whereby two board members or a board member and the chief have to sign off to purchase something. John Brandt stated that any equipment or items purchased for the fire dept other than normal monthly expenses are all approved during a regular board meeting. She then asked if we have changed the locks which she was told we have.

Lynn Price – Asked how many properties Jerry Vaughn has. Jerry said that is not relevant and he was not going to answer that question.

**ADJOURNED:**

8:55 pm

Motion to adjourn John moved that we adjourn: / Second: Lee / No opposition.

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Meeting minutes submitted by:

John Brandt, Secretary/Treasurer