

SEELEY LAKE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING 6:00 P.M. FIRE HALL
MEETING DATE: April 17, 2018
MINUTES FOR: March 29, 2018

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

PRESENT

Scott Kennedy, Board Chair

Connie Clark
Rita Rossi

Michael Greer, Fire Chief
Lynn Richards, District Administrator

ABSENT

Gary Lewis, Vice Chair
Rachel Jennings, Secretary

I. SPECIAL MEETING CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

Chair Scott Kennedy called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Three trustees were present along with the Fire Chief and District Administrator.

II. VISIT WITH GUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENT FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA/CORRESPONDENCE:

Present were community members Al Rogers; Doug Waldron arrived at approximately 5:02 p.m.; and Andi Bourne with the *Pathfinder*. Special guest present was Jim DeTienne, Supervisor EMS & Trauma Systems Montana DPHHS.

Public comment included comments from Doug Waldron and Al Rogers. Doug stated he was an employee of the district for eight or nine months and during that time period, Doug was being undermined by a few members in what he was doing and some of the trucks were being messed with which made him disgusted and he took that to the Missoula County Sheriff in case something happened to one of the firemen with one of trucks that may have been tampered with. In speaking with Scott earlier, Doug stated he really liked this weeks' article to the *Pathfinder* that Scott had written. Doug stated as a retired Department Chief with his hometown fire department and being a retired Police Chief, he understands what it takes to run a fire department and commended Scott and others in what they're trying to do with this (Seeley's) department and it's a shame that there's a few people in this town who are trying to undermine what good is being done here and trying to sink this department. Doug is unsure what can be done with them as it needs to stop but assured the board there's a lot of community support and encouraged everyone to continue with what is being done as this department can go a long way and the town needs this department. The board members, chief & DA thanked Doug for voicing his opinion and appreciation. Scott stated we're not giving up. Chief Greer stated that what Doug has said is true, that comradery is critical to growth and positive movement and to working well to do what we do. One can't do what we do well and safely if everyone is at each other's throats. A lot of comradery is back; there's a lot of participation in trainings; its fun and has gotten much better.

Al Rogers stated he's here for the department and will support it in any way he can.



III. ACTION ITEMS:

No action items were reported on.

IV. AGENDA:

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Policy 540.00 – Workplace Discrimination & Harassment Approval – Chief Greer stated in regard to recent events we have reviewed the VFIS Sexual/Workplace Harassment Prevention course. 540.00 is the current existing policy on avoiding workplace harassment so the handout is a supplement to the existing policy which states, in the interest of being able to adequately support this policy, each member of the district board will complete the supervisor level of harassment training each year to be familiar how the laws and regulations work. If someone has completed a harassment course through their current job training that is equivalent and was given a certificate that will work as well. Rita made a motion to approve the Board of Trustee Harassment Training Policy. Connie seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried.

2. Auxiliary Member Application Approval – Chief Greer stated the auxiliary application is based on the regular application. Lizza Kelley, wife of Kody Kelley, has agreed to be the head of the organization. Apparently she already has six applicants and is working very hard to get it organized. The auxiliary will function under the foundation but will also be district members so they will be covered under the district's insurance. Lizza has also been given Facebook privileges and has been posting pictures of training etc.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. State EMS Supervisor of Licensing & Regulations

A) SLRFD Progress

B) Professional Standards & Conduct of Licensees

C) License, Public Display & Social Media

D) MCA Annotated Codes Electronic Privacy in Communication

Scott stated in an effort for transparency, Scott invited Jim DeTienne who for the State of Montana, is the Supervisor of EMS & Trauma Systems, to speak on the progress of our department and to also address and seek his advice on some issues we're experiencing. Scott stated someone reported to the state that the department was double dipping on EMS hours which is false. Andi Bourne questioned what double dipping meant. Chief Greer explained this is referring to the EMS Refresher Course which the department held. The state requires that every two years an EMT completes a 24 hour refresher course along with additional continuing education hours. There were some people that attended the refresher who had already attended one, so they counted those hours as continuing education hours where others needed the refresher. The refresher hours need to be counted as one or the other. The accusation was, that people were counting the hours twice, as both refresher and continuing education hours in the same amount of time which is considered double dipping.

Scott stated it appears that this accusation ties in with other district concerns where professionally licensed medical providers that are no longer on the department or past members, are continuing to try to discredit and undermine the district's efforts in moving forward by discrediting the board, the volunteers, the staff and even recently questioning the Chief's credentials to which the board is dealing with. Gossip, false statements and the use of social media inappropriately in those attacks on individuals is unprofessional conduct and unethical against other professional licensees, perhaps violating Montana statute privacy in communications which prohibit such actions.

Jim DeTienne stated their office regulates and licenses ambulance services across the state. He's often asked what kind of complaints he deals with ambulance services and what kind of troubles he has to work with; are they related to patient care. Jim stated very few complaints are due to patient care but what he does have to routinely deal with is community engagement problems like what is happening here. Jim stated he's been watching the newspaper to what has been going on here in the last few months and has visited with Scott as Scott has asked for advice on how to deal with the goofiness that has been going on. Jim stated he came to Seeley today specifically to start doing some fact finding so he could give good advice and for two reasons; are we headed in the right direction and are we doing the right things as a department. In looking at the documentation in accomplishments for the last few months, these are more than some departments do in a whole year as in upgrading the policies; improving comradery; engaging the members in training and the recruitment of new members. Jim stated if he could see this in every EMS department



in the state, he would really be pleased as many are really struggling. Jim stated his advice for this department is to keep doing what we're doing, keep moving it forward as it is good work, a good foundation for the new Chief coming in. People like to join organizations like Seeley's who are professional and who has policies; he has no recommendations to do anything different.

As for the social media statements, Jim stated it is unprofessional conduct and inappropriate for anyone to act but especially if they're licensed professionals who are licensed by the State Medical Board of Examiners to take care of patients. This is the hard and sad part of being a public official and a public entity is to have to deal with these kinds of issues; it's hard to stop them short of potentially making a case for unprofessional misconduct in front of the Board of Medical Examiners or using legal representation. It's very frustrating but hopefully people won't listen to them. Jim's recommendation is to keep doing what we're doing; keep letting the public know that the department is doing well and moving forward; your core mission is taking the high road and taking care of patients. Jim is willing and available to listen to all sides and be the neutral party and try to come to some reason.

2. Exposure Control Plan – Chief Greer stated the SOGs are guidelines which the Chief signs off on, doesn't require a vote by the trustees but any change to a SOG should be reviewed by officers, chief of the membership for a period of comment within the department and is bringing it to the trustees for review. This exposure control plan is very technical on how to protect ourselves from exposures and the reporting process if someone gets exposed as there was no written protocol if somebody got a dirty needle stick.

3. Member Organization SOG – Because of the separation between the Fire Company/Foundation and the District, there were some concerns by the members that they may not have a voice that they felt they had before. So the members came together and formed a membership organization and appointed two representatives who will attend the board meetings and voice the wishes, thoughts, complaints, concerns or issues they want to request to the board. This SOG as it is written is how the membership will function and has been approved by the membership as a whole.

4. Harassment Free Workplace – This SOG has been written to reflect the laws and rules based on the VFIS training that we completed and pulling from other policies from other departments and making it applicable to our department.

Any feedback is welcomed on all three of these SOGs and Chief Greer would like to get these signed and put in the operations manual as soon as possible and will be available on the web-site.

Rita Rossi questioned if a leave of absence policy will be written. Chief Greer stated there are 38 pending SOGs that need to be completed and will wait for Dave to come on board as it will take a lot of membership discussion, especially the membership attendance and participation minimums.

IV. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:

Upon motion duly seconded, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:44 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

Approved:



Vice Chair of the Board

5-15-18

Clerk
