

**SEELEY LAKE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING 6:00PM FIRE HALL**  
**MEETING DATE:** May 21, 2019  
**MINUTES FOR:** April 16, 2019

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

**PRESENT**

Scott Kennedy, Chair  
Gary Lewis, Vice Chair

Rita Rossi  
Dave Lane, Fire Chief  
Lynn Richards, District Administrator

**ABSENT**

Rachel Jennings, Secretary  
Connie Clark

**I. PLEDGE OF ALEGIANCE:**

Chief Lane led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. REGULAR MEETING CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Scott Kennedy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Three trustees were present along with the Fire Chief and District Administrator.

Also in attendance were community members: Shad & Barbara Beery, Shirley Goundzwaard, Sheree Hill and Linsey Rude; Swan Valley Fire Dept. members: Dan Maloughney, John Papst and Randy Williams; Don Whalen with Missoula Emergency Services; SLRFD members: Caitlyn Hutchens, Kody Kelley, Shelley McGraves and Michael Richards; and Andi Bourne with the *Pathfinder*.

**III. MINUTES:**

Gary Lewis made a motion to approve the March 19, 2019 board minutes. Rita Rossi seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposing or abstaining.

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

Barbara Beery read aloud her and her family's letter of concern (see attached). There was no other public comment made nor any correspondence to report on.

**V. FINANCIAL REPORT AND APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

Gary Lewis made a motion to approve the March 2019 financial report in the amount of \$20,871.74. Rita Rossi seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposing or abstaining.

**VI. REPORTS:**

- 1. Call Volume** – Chief Lane reported there were 12 calls in March 2019 compared to 19 in March 2018. Total calls for 2019 is 63 compared to 53 in 2018.
- 2. Recruitment** – Chief Lane stated one new firefighter came off of probation; one member just completed their EMT course and has become certified; another will be testing this weekend and another will be starting the course on April 22.
- 3. Grants** – Chief Lane reported he's currently working on the VFA Grant to stock and update supplies and equipment on the brush truck as most of the PPE (personal protective equipment) is in place already. Still waiting for results on the AFG Grant.

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**4. Updates /Actions** – The Wildland RT130 Refresher course was completed this last week and Active Shooter/Assailant Training will be held next week to learn how to deal with these kinds of mass casualties safely as tactics have changed over the years. Scott Kennedy told Mrs. Berry that he would look into her concerns and on behalf of the board conveyed condolence.

**5. Membership Report** – Volunteer member Michael Richards stated all is going well but the department needs more volunteers.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. District Operations Manual/SOPs** – Chief Lane submitted three new SOPs for the board to review: ADMIN 17 Ambulance Charge Write-Offs; ADMIN 18 Confidential Personnel Files and EMS 7 Safe Administration of Oxygen.

**2. EMS Franchise Agreement** – Chief Lane stated in visiting with the county attorney, no franchise agreement is needed as fire districts are protected under Montana Code Annotated 7-33-2105 which gives powers and duties to fire district boards to create a jurisdiction and make decisions on how to manage and staff the district.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Station 2 Invoices** – Chief Lane stated he's having some difficulties at times with work being done at the annex building as we're receiving invoices to which the Chief has no idea to where the requests are coming from and if possible, would like to be more responsible and proactive for the station 2 annex so he can follow through more easily and make sure repairs needed are budgeted. After further discussion, it was decided that Chief Lane will manage Station 2 Annex.

**2. Facilities Manager – Possible Increase of Hours** – Chief Lane stated currency the facilities manager works 25 hours per week which makes it difficult to complete larger projects when he has to cut his week short so if possible, Chief Lane would like to increase the work week to 32 hours where he would remain a part-time employee with no benefits. The county requires 40 hours to be a full-time employee where benefits would be included. The increase in hours would also help in EMS coverage when Chief Lane is not available. Gary Lewis made a motion to approve the increase in hours from 25 to 32 per week to see how it works and can adjust it from there. Rita Rossi seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposing or abstaining.

**3. Michael Richards – Recognition** – Chief Lane stated he's been with the department for one year and there are a few people within the department who really stand out. Michael Richards has been with the department for over 20 years and an EMT for most of those years. Michael has done a great job in coordinating most of the training so in moving forward, is promoting Michael to Captain. In addition to coordinating training, as a Captain, he will have budgetary authority for the training budget.

**IX. NEXT MONTH AGENDA ITEMS:**

Reports; District Operations Manual/SOPs Approval, Insurance Renewal Review, Budget

**X. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:**

Upon motion duly seconded, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:27 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019.

Approved:

Vice   
Chair of the Board

  
Clerk of the Board



I'm going to read my thoughts as I'm having a really hard time with what has happened. I came into the fire hall on Thursday April 11 before noon & asked to be put on the agenda & I was told I could speak under public comment. I told them that I was told I wouldn't be heard if I spoke under public comment. Again I asked to be put on the agenda. Lynn Richards said ok & wanted to know the subject matter. I really don't know how I replied but I did say something about my husband passing. Lynn asked when the call was & I said Saturday night & now it seems I was conveniently left off of the agenda. My husband & I have always kept to ourselves, but this is something our family really feels needs to be addressed. On Saturday April 6th my husband had a severe COPD flare up. It came on suddenly & with very little warning. I made my first 911 call at about 11:04 pm. We waited. I made 2 more calls to 911. Meanwhile, my husband is gasping for air, fearing that no one was going to come to help. Looking into my eyes & pleading with his eyes, wanting me to do something. Every second, every minute, is like an eternity to him & me. Finally at 11:19 pm I called a QRU member telling her that no one was coming, I needed help & I didn't know what to do. She & 2 others arrived about the same time. None of them were trained for this kind of a call but did everything they could to get the medical attention he desperately needed, for which we are very grateful. Several trips had to be made to the ambulance for equipment.... it was not a smooth transition.

911 had dispatched an ambulance out of Missoula. Life flight was grounded due to weather. As they were taking my husband out the door the Missoula ambulance announced on the radio that they were already at the Clearwater Junction. Seeley staff responded & asked them to continue. It is now somewhere around 11:45 pm. Seeley & Missoula made the transfer somewhere around Salmon Lake. If the 3 responders hadn't shown up the only other option would have been for us to wait for the Missoula ambulance to arrive. After the transfer my husband started to crash & the Missoula crew made the call to take him to St. Pats instead of Community because they didn't think he would make it all the way to Community. I don't know how much treatment he was able to receive in either ambulance. Community is the preferred hospital for my husband anytime he has had emergencies in the past as this is where his Dr.'s, pulmonary team & medical record are. He is known there & they have a treatment plan in place.

Due to the chaotic transfer the vial of life info packet was not handed off to the Missoula ambulance so when he arrived at St. Pats they didn't have his history, name, & other information about him, he was just a man from Seeley Lake.

We don't know what has happened with this department. We called 911 expecting to get the same quick efficient response from trained, dedicated & caring respondents. We have had the ambulance several times before & there was always 4, 5, 6 people responding in a very quick time. They were prepared & trained to help.

*LL 5-21-19*

We do know that there was no medic on call that night & no ALS (Advanced Life Support) medic on call, so it seems to us that members of the Seeley QRU who were available disregarded the page.

We understand you need more volunteers & people with more training but people who sign up for this job know what its about..... saving peoples lives. Its not like volunteering at the soup kitchen or food bank, IT'S ABOUT SAVING PEOPLES LIVES!

It is clear this department didn't have a plan A, B, or C for the night of April 6th. They had no back up plan at all. There should always be someone on call for medical & there should always be someone to take ALS calls. If we as a community can't count on the department, we need to start making backup plans for ourselves & our families. The times can be debated all you want, 25 minutes, 45 minutes, an hour & forty five minutes, we are not talking about response times, we are talking about the time from the first 911 call until getting my husband any kind of treatment or help. None of these times are acceptable when you are struggling for air, can't breath, or find relief. Bottom line is no one was there when we needed them & changes need to be made. We do want to acknowledge & thank the 3 responders who tried to assist, but in the end it wasn't enough, my husband passed away.

My husband was a sick man but the fear, struggle & distress he had to endure didn't help. At this time we are not pointing fingers, but response time, unprepared & inadequately trained responders made the situation more traumatic. Next time a 911 call is made it could be one of your family members or you. We don't want anyone to have to experience what we did. If speaking out will make this department more proactive & save someone else's life in the future, we have succeed.

We don't know if the outcome would have been the same given better circumstances, but, for the rest of my life I will always wonder.

Thank you for allowing me to speak & taking the time to listen.

**The Family of Nick Beery**

  
5-21-19