

SEELEY LAKE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING 6:00PM FIRE HALL
MEETING DATE: May 18, 2021
MINUTES FOR: April 20, 2021

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

PRESENT

Scott Kennedy, Chair
Gary Lewis, Vice Chair
Rita Rossi, Secretary
Connie Clark

Dave Lane, Fire Chief
Lynn Richards, District Administrator

ABSENT

Jon Kimble

I. PLEDGE OF ALEGIANCE:

Chief Lane led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REGULAR MEETING CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

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

Scott thanked all the volunteers, members and staff for their continued service.

In attendance were Nathan & Tabitha Bailey, John Baker, Shirley Goudzwaard; John & Beth Homen; Cristine Matheny; Alyssa McLean; Kristy Pohlman and Michael Richards. Also present was Andi Bourne with the *Pathfinder*.

III. MINUTES:

Gary Lewis made a motion to approve the March 16, 2021 board minutes. Connie Clark 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:

There was no correspondence nor public comment made at this time.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT AND APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Rita Rossi made a motion to approve the March 2021 financial report in the amount of \$30,494.60. Connie Clark seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposing or abstaining

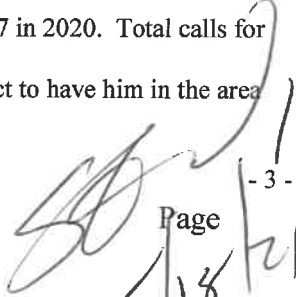
Kristy Pohlman questioned the \$12,000 budgeted for the medical director when the past director wasn't paid and why it changed. Chief Lane stated the district have paid past medical directors and this director was chosen for his qualifications for what he does for us and how he fits into our department different than others who were interviewed.

VI. REPORTS:

1. Call Volume – Chief Lane reported there were 18 calls in March 2021 compared to 17 in 2020. Total calls for 2021 are 65 compared to 60 in 2020.

2. Recruitment – Chief Lane reported we handed out an application last week and expect to have him in the area sometime in June.

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3. Grants – Chief Lane reported he applied for the RFC Grant which should be around \$3,500 less our portion and maybe more as it depends on how it's dispersed throughout the county. Still waiting to hear from the Town Pump grant which will be coming into another cycle shortly; assuming we weren't chosen but haven't been notified either way. There's other opportunities coming up which will be discussed later.

4. Updates /Actions – Chief Lane reported our Type II engine is 26 years old and per NFPA regulations, we should be looking at new engines after 20 years. Chief Lane found another department who will be surplus a 2003 Type I engine shortly which is still old but doesn't meet the NFPA retirement schedule, plus with our use and the maintenance schedule it has had, it could be a good opportunity for us. In the past they have sold two engines not too long ago for a total of \$40,000 so if we can pick it up for \$20,000, it will be significantly less than a new one which can run \$350,000 up to one million dollars. As the time gets closer, Chief Lane will be able to inspect it and bring information back to the board to decide what will be the best option; to purchase this one or look for a different used one or finance a new one; things to talk about in the next six months.

The department was proud to again volunteer at the last Covid 19 vaccination clinic where over 900 people in the community received their second vaccine. Things went real well and was able to visit with the community. There was a lot of praise and thanks for our service.

5. Membership Report – Nothing new was reported on.

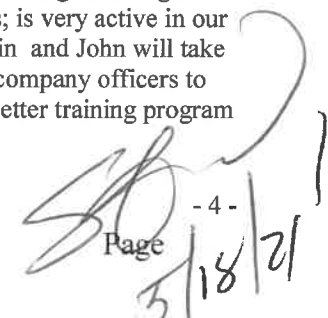
VII. OLD BUSINESS:

1. District Operations Manual/SOPs Approval – ADMIN for Public Information Requests. Gary Lewis made a motion to approve as written. Rita Rossi seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposed or abstaining. Andi Bourne stated that most government agencies defines the cost for printing and emailing documents and this procedure doesn't define those costs. Chief Lane stated there's another policy which addresses the administrative costs as far as printing. Tonight's approved policy references the older policy.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Administrative Assistant Job Description Review/Approval - Gary Lewis questioned whether a non-EMT person could be hired as a secretary. Chief Lane stated the position name has changed to Administrative Assistant and the duties that are entailed are very similar to what happens now without the title to basically do his job, so just cleaning things up. The duties are more secretarial but it's incorrect to say "secretary." Gary thought if a person was hired to do the all the accounting, including what is sent to Terry Sheppard and not be an EMT, to keep them in the office, would it be beneficial or not? Chief Lane stated that the current employee handles all the books but is checked by Terry along with himself, the board and county but Terry does prepare quarterly and annual reports. Chief Lane would like to keep the current structure as there are layers of accountability with checks and balances. Hopefully, in the near future, the budget will be large enough to have an annual audit. Kristy Pohlman questioned if a CPA could be hired fulltime and eliminate the EMS qualification. Scott Kennedy stated a CPA will be paid either here or somewhere else. Connie Clark stated if there's a daytime emergency, then both, Chief & Assistant, would respond immediately rather than waiting for other responders. Chief Lane stated where we're at today may change within six months to a year or to two years but we need to keep things in place right now as it's easier to remove things from a job description than add to it later; there may be the potential to remove the EMT qualification from the job description for this position but will talk more about that later. Scott Kennedy stated it's easier to find an accountant and hire out that work than finding an EMT and having an EMT here, now, is critical. Rita Rossi made a motion to approve the job description. Connie Clark seconded the motion. Voting by voice, motion carried with none opposing or abstaining.

2. Pinning Ceremony – Chief Lane stated in order to try and improve his work flow and trying to enable the volunteers to perform to the best of their abilities, Rita Rossi is being promoted to EMS Lieutenant. Rita will have oversight of our EMS division on a daily basis. She will make sure training is adequate; make sure the ambulances is equipped properly; make sure the expiration dates are checked etc. John Homen has been working hard to get his firefighter one certification; learning management qualifications and how to apply those things; is very active in our training and as we continue to progress, Michael Richards has stepped down as our Fire Captain and John will take his place which gives us a time of overlap so John can learn more and we can talk together as company officers to try and meet the goals of what the chief has set and also listen to their goals and implement a better training program to make sure we provide the best services possible.

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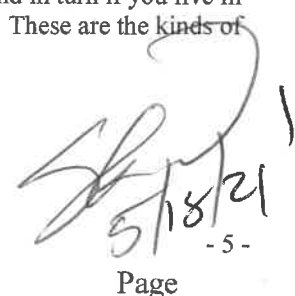
3. Feasibility Study for Possible Personnel Hiring – Chief Lane stated he wants to define a more discussion as to where we are as far as community service. We are past the tipping point to where we need help for providing the service that we do and to maintain the quality of safety and service that the community has been receiving and deserves, we have to look at hiring people. The feasibility study will determine what the community wants. There's three options; does the community want to maintain 100% volunteerism at the level we provide now; does the community want Basic Life Support Service (BLS) where the chief's plan would be to hire six Firefighter EMTs or an Advanced Life Support (ALS) service where three Firefighter Paramedics and three Firefighter EMTs would be hired.

Chief Lane has been gathering information and has had quite a few discussions with cooperating agencies as to what they have done in the past to secure financing to hire these people. Missoula Rural recently passed a 1.8 million dollar levy increase which allowed them to hire 13 people to allow them to provide ALS Service 24/7. We need to study what our community wants and how we're going to get there. We know where we are and we know what will happen in the future if our roster continues to shrink. Right now we have EMTs; have members in EMT classes; we have other members scheduled to take EMT classes so we will continue what we're doing but if we can supplement our volunteers with paid staff, we can continue our service and the Chief's vision is to have ALS coverage from now on as we there's only ALS coverage when the Chief is in town and the volunteers can meet up with an ALS ground or air unit if the Chief isn't available. There are companies who do these studies; they communicate with the community; we also will get out to the community and knock on doors and do a lot of PR, trying to find out what they need and how we're going to do that. This is one of the big projects we're going to take on.

The grant involved with this is the Safer Grant, so increasing the levy will get us the coverage but then there's a lot of other fees and expenses to go along with hiring people as we will be a combination department. There will be the volunteers who we will rely on heavily but they will get a break as there will be paid people that can also respond on calls and will give the Chief a break as well. In order to get all this completed, there will be the initial levy where it may take a budget cycle to receive the revenue increase. Depending on timing, we may have to use our current budget to support three or four months of wages and benefits. The Chief's vision is to project the Safer Grant as it will cover 75% of all the expenses for the first year. It's a three year grant so each year they provide a little less support; on the fourth year we need to be able to sustain this employment. Other departments do things in a different order as they have bigger budgets where they can still provide service if they have to lay people off. If we hire people and have to lay them off because we don't have the financial resources to maintain their employment, then we're back to square one. We want to do things right the first time; we're going to talk to the community, find out what they want as there's a lot of things that goes along with this and proposes in the next couple of weeks to have a board workshop where all the information can be discussed and how to proceed with the next steps as there are costs involved. The Chief has been given a few companies' names who has helped departments in Missoula get levies passed so if we want to use them, what will the costs be. The board workshop will have an agenda and be posted.

Some challenges we face is having a small population base as there's no turn over and if we hire people and expect them to live in Seeley, there's not a lot of available housing and with the schedule the Chief has in mind, people will have to come here and stay a couple of days to work but then they're off for four days. A lot of departments use this schedule as it's very workable.

The Chief realizes that a levy may be a hardship for some in the community and has been researching some ways to fund this levy and give back to the community in a way that they can support the levy. One idea the Chief has is to start an ambulance subscription program but can't find who regulates that kind of a program so instead, if the levy passes, treat everyone in our community like they have one. The levy will get us paid staff and in turn if you live in the community, the insurance company is billed and any outstanding co-pays are written off. These are the kinds of ideas that need to be worked out in the workshops.



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IX. NEXT MONTH AGENDA ITEMS:

Reports; District Operations Manual/SOPs; Budget

X. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:

Upon motion duly seconded, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:42 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

Approved:



Chair of the Board



Clerk of the Board