**SEELEY LAKE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING 6:00PM FIRE HALL**

**MEETING DATE:** June 21, 2022

**MINUTES FOR:** May 17, 2022

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

**PRESENT ABSENT**

Jon Kimble

Gary Lewis, Vice Chair

Connie Clark

Rita Rossi Secretary

Scott Kennedy, Chair

Dave Lane, Fire Chief

Lakaya Lemons, Administrative Assistant

**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. Five trustees were present along with the Fire Chief and Administrative Assistant.

In attendance were John & Michelle Baker; Shirley Goudzwaard; John Homen; Kristy Pohlman; Jeff & Alysa Mclean; Alvis (A.J) Miller; Steve & Melanie Larmour; Darlene Les; Frank Maradeo; Dave Lewis; Shawn Ellinghouse; Eric Aby; Jason Rawlings. Also present was Andi Borne with the *Pathfinder.*

**III. MINUTES:**

Scott Kennedy starts off by thanking the firefighters and EMT’s for their service.

Gary Lewis made a motion to approve the March 2022 minutes; Connie Clark seconded the motion.

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

Alyssa Mclean- So I just have a couple questions regarding your response to my last public statement in the paper, it’s really concerning to me that you said in that statement that you sent both ambulances to town that night for that incident, that just makes me even more frustrated that I could have been transferred to someone, Advanced Life Support and not leaving our town without any ambulance for two hours or however long it takes. I am not totally sure or if it was prudent for you guys to discuss what I said or my call at all, anything outside the scope out of my exact words or my exact information that has been shared probably shouldn’t have been discussed in groups in this room after I left this building, I had to hear about that from a member of the public afterwards. I’m not sure if it was prudent for you to even print my name as your patient in your report and I’m just wondering for the rest of the board is he consulting you when he’s making public statements on your behalf, so I’d just like to know. How often are we sending both our ambulances to Missoula and leaving town without one and are there any communication still happening with the board regarding these public interactions, was there communication when you called me on my personal cellphone a couple days after the crash, Its just very confusing to me those are my questions and as a member of the public I guess I would just caution you guys before you vote him chairman of the board again maybe make some pause and think about it.

Kirsty Pohlman- I do not apologies for bringing things to light first I want to name a few. First Mr. Lewis for a well-run board while Mr. Kennedy was absent, as someone who sits through the meetings and gets to watch from the outside it was nice to see a chairman that does not make a board member feel uncomfortable and must vote a certain way so again thank you, your voice was defiantly missed the last meeting. Now I guess I would like to say to the board I’m very disappointed, you doubled our ambulance rates without doing the proper research this is not the first-time rates have been raised as it was claimed, they were raised by Chief VandeHuevel to cover an increase PCOC incentive for members. I’m sadden in your lack in research I hope in the future you do your diligence to the community. It was also stated that you were doing five to ten calls a day in the summer and that the personnel are exhausted, shall I do the math for you five calls a day thirty days a month is 150 calls now that makes it 450 calls in three months ten calls a day would be close to 900 calls, now with those numbers we would be like Frenchtown Fire who has both paid and volunteer staff for your information only charges $775.00 for a BLS call and $875.00 for a ALS call with no designation for ALS1 and ALS2 and there mileage is $16.50 a mile. They run on a constant average of 750 calls Frenchtown is funded by their tax base there’s no levy’s. They feel their ambulance fees should be reasonable be able to recover the ambulance cost for those said calls. They have seven paid firefighters four which are Lieutenants and a fire chief as well as full time paid administrative assistant. It still just blows my mind that you so easily accept the information as presented without doing your own research. I really feel you guys didn’t do you diligence for the community. I guess another thing I’m a little confused that you know the dates of the board meetings that’s set by your by-laws as the third Tuesday of every month, since last March you have cancelled four regular board meetings for lack of corium I’m not going to lie it irks me as a paying tax payer at your lack of dedication, Lastly it was requested last board meeting during public comment that two items be placed on your agenda sadly I don’t see Mrs. Mclean’s request nor do I see mine. These are the things that make me further question this department and board.

Shirley Goudzwaard- This is for a follow up that I have for about a couple months now first I’m not here to attach anyone, but I do have some concerns. I was very bothered about what Alyssa’s ordeal that she shared with us about a couple months ago. I was shocked that she said no C- Collar was applied she was allowed to walk to the stretcher with three broken limbs plus obviously she was in shock, we all make mistakes in our line of work and learn from our mistakes. My questions are, simulated accidents done for the EMT’S monthly or every couple month if so, why not, this is a prime example of why they should be done, why was she allowed to walk to the stretcher, why wasn’t a C-Collar been placed on her. Isn’t this automatically done in any kind of collision or any accidents, why wasn’t Life Flight called or MESI called how would you like it if you were her and you had no medication for four hours. I’m very disappointed in how she was treated. She should have never been transported by our ambulance in my opinion and one thing to remember is that the care of the patient comes before anything. I’m a retired nurse so I’m not ignorant here and this simulated things when we use to have to do crash car checks in emergency things we did that every couple months, and I do not understand if this is not done you need to practice continuously and why practices are not done for the EMT’s, also I would like to have follow ups for my questions next month and I think it’s important to have it done in public not in private.

Andi Borne- So, for a matter to let the public know Alyssa made the comment in March then she spoken with the chief which is the chain of command. She was not happy with the response she brought it to the board she requested to be on the agenda. She waived her rights of privacy in that meeting but she’s not on the agenda, so my question for the public is how do they air their concerns? I do understand this board is an administrative board I understand. The chief has the power of operations. I get that however, you guys are elected officials you are the people that represent the community and you are the supervisor of the chief so if there are operation concerns I do feel like that if people are going to waive there rights of privacy they should be addressed in board meetings and so the chain of command was identified go to the chief first, sounds like she did that. I haven’t heard of any rebuttal that she hasn’t, and then she brought it to the board and there was no resolution other than a response in the paper. But the board hasn’t discussed it so if you could let the community know how they air those concerns then.

Jeff Mclean- I also like to say that I have a concern over a conflict of interest with volunteers on the board. You are the supervisor the overseer of the operation of the person you put in charge of operations. You are a subordinate of that person as well. I would just question any whether if you feel like there’s potential of conflict of interest in that aspect, of you are supposed to be looking at stuff above the chief and your also involved with it at another level to where of course when there is any criticism the department takes you take personally. I know when you’re on the working level and here is a criticism with an organization you take It very personally because you know how much blood sweat and tears you poured into it. I just feel like there is a potential for a conflict of interest with volunteers being on the board as well.

John Baker- I have one concern the comparison between this department Seeley Lake and Condon or Frenchtown needs to stop. They’re completely different animals. They run different they have got different tax bases. So, this type of attacks we need to find a common ground and get this department the way the public wants it. As far as personal I do take these attacks personally. I spend a lot of time in this department and as for Shirley’s comments it’s not fair when someone from the public attacks the department and we can’t provide a rebuttal because of HIPPA laws. There is a lot of stuff that just can’t be brought up so that’s irritating, that’s all I pretty much have to say if we are just going to attack the board and fire department none of us are going to get anywhere. I’m personally pissed off, but I keep doing what I got to do.

Scott Kennedy- I’m going to give the last public comment which I have never done before, the following statement was submitted from Scott Kennedy.

In listening and re-reading Alysa Mclean’s comments in previous papers, including past fire board meetings minutes, Alyssa is obviously not well informed as Seeley Lake Fire District as to Fire/EMT/Paramedic medical practices or procedures, which have further changed over the years, also protocols, rules, or guidelines of the state or of fire district, or the fact this is a governing board.

Alyssa’s refers to (and shown) real life scars she alludes to which are apparently from the vehicle accident she has noted. This is not from the care provided or from of the fault of the fire district.

I missed the February board meeting. Alyssa referred to 24-hour notice for agenda and notice of board meetings. This reference is incorrect. The district gives at least 48 hours’ notice for agenda items to be actionable items discussed or adopted, though ministerial approvals are acceptable.

Alyssa referenced the posting agenda timely in that meeting, which was an oversight by the district assistant and this error was clearly acknowledged by V. Chairman Lewis. After brief public comments at that meeting, the Vice Chair allowed discussion without opposition. This is allowable discussion, and no vote was taken, and the items of discussion were tabled. Another incorrect statement by Alyssa Mclean was posting of district board meetings. The Fire District Board meetings are reoccurring regular scheduled for decades. They are further publicly posted in the local Pathfinder prior to meetings under COMMUNITY INFORMATION under LOCAL GOVERMENT. They are also continually posted on the Fire District website.  Regarding the Chairman comments in the March Pathfinder, the information provided to the Pathfinder was also reviewed by Chief Lane for accuracy and Vice Chairman Lewis, then submitted comments to Pathfinder.

Alyssa makes statements to topics are not reviewed or well thought out, is just another example of her criticism of the district, and now Kristy. There is extensive time and review as necessary of all ideas, proposals in the advancement of the fire and ambulance services and properly noticed and discussed at board meetings and included in the local Pathfinder. There is a plethora of information on the fire district website as well and available at the fire station. Alyssa fails to research or solicit the other side of the issues for her concerns formulating her own opinion, misguided, that has been derogatory, critical, demeaning, disrespectful, insulting to the district and individuals. Dramatizing and embellishing the facts, wanting people to resign, get fired and so forth. Alyssa points fingers at the board members again, and at VOLUNTEERs in her statements, and staff. This negativism has been on going ever since she started attending meetings and running for the board. Now we are in search for a new district administrative assistant due to this ongoing derogatory behavior effecting the district.

In concluding, I encourage the Fire District Board, staff, volunteer medical and fire service providers to move forward in light of these type of distractions. As a citizen, I appreciate everyone involved with the district for their extensive time responding and training and what they offer at whatever level! I appreciate the positive community response and support over the years as well. Sincere THANK YOU! Our district operations are running smoothly considering the challenges. Though we have the same challenges as any other department across the country and a few challenges with a handful of misguided individuals.

I am going to continue to represent this district to the best of my ability.

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

Connie Clark made a motion to approve the March 2022 financial report in the amount of $19,306.96: Rita Rossi Second the motion.

Jon Kimble made a motion to approve the April 2022 financial report in the amount of $11,408.16: Gary Lewis Second the motion.

**VI. REPORTS:**

1. **Call Volume** – March 2021 we had 18 Calls, March 2022 we had 24 calls, April 2021 we had 16 Calls, April 2022 we had 15 calls. Volume of 2021 March ended at 65, Volume of 2021 April ended at 81, Volume of 2022 March we had 59 Calls, Volume of 2022 April we had 74 Calls.
2. **Recruitment –**

Chief Lane- We have two new Auxiliary members, The Firefighter Paramedic position we have not received any applicants in two months of very broad advertising its costing us about $460.00 a month in advertising and for those reasons I’ve got something to talk about a little later. So, no applicants for firefighter paramedic position that was posted in the Missoulian, ZipRecruiter, Google jobs, a few other places that are advertising together, and like I said we are not getting anything. The Administrative Assistant position has been posted, as I said so we are actively looking for an Administrative Assistant its posted on our website for the department. We are already receiving interest so I’m feeling positive about that, see how it goes in the next few days.

1. **Grants –**

Chief Lane- We have applied for the RFC Grant this year it is 80/20 Grant so we will have to spend around 3,000.00 to get our money out of the Grant. It’s designed to fund Wildland projects so we will be buying some Wildland equipment so during the season is when we will make that purchase and then next year, we will receive our reimbursement for that.

1. **Updates /Actions** –

Scott Kennedy- I’ve been working with Dick Seal for quite some time, and he gave a substantial donation to the district, he’s donated to us a Snow Cat That’ll be delivered here probably this week and he is also committed to some other items that I won’t get into yet but there good we appreciate that from him.

Chief Lane- So we did have some damage to our utility trailer this past winter, the roof collapsed. The insurance company has stated it’s a total loss so moving. With that I’ll be back next month to talk about purchasing another trailer.

Gary Lewis- How big is our trailer

Chief Lane- 18 Foot but I am thinking we can do a 16 foot and do just fine. The use of the trailer has changed over the years, and we are going to make it more of an Incident/ Event support. We do have a new EMT Steve Larmour has completed his class, passed the national registry and is now state certified. We are currently going through orientation with the department just to make sure we don’t throw him to the wolves and abandon us. So, we will keep his training going and hopefully we will get some more going as well. Another update is the drafting of the budget which I believe it’s going to be under New Business #2 so we will talk about that later. Another thing I want to bring up in this part is because the paramedic position is not receiving any interest, I think our wage we are offering is fair. The work that I have been doing in conjunction with other departments, we are in a very similar situation as the other departments, housing is a big issue in the southern part of the state. In Missoula and Missoula rural they are seeing a change in the applications they are receiving. I talked to Chief Newman last week he said they are hiring four positions. As with Missoula rural he normally has a stack of applications, he only has a handful. So, things are just not going well in that spectrum I do have a potential solution that I cannot do without board approval. Remember this position was never approved so I do have interests in an EMT, Firefighter EMT that has some experience that I can’t approach an interview or do much more than take an application without approval. So tonight, I would like the board to listen to what I have to say about this because I hope we can get this position approved and then make some other changes in the next year or so. So, my plan is to potentially hire another EMT, get them through probation. Once there through probation, remember the paramedic position wage was offered $50,700.00 in that range. The EMT position would be 39,000.00 something I think it’ll be a little less than that like 38,000.00 something so that’s going to leave us roughly 12 to 13 thousand dollars that we are not paying in Paramedic wage and because we are paying an EMT wage. That extra money, what I’m hoping after they complete their probation and there a good employee all that stuff, we can offer to pay for them to go to Paramedic school. It’s going to be pretty much a wash as far as the budget is concerned. I don’t have the exact numbers for what’s it going to cost for school. So, I will have that information by the time the board comes together to vote if you’re going to do this or not. So, remember I’m just putting this in your head because these are some things I’ve been thinking about, John Baker has started his process of going to Paramedic school. He won’t be done until probably spring of 2024 so it’s about 16 to 18 months. So, if I can find a program that’s faster maybe closer then maybe we can get a prospected employee through a program that might get us on board just a little bit quicker. If we were getting Paramedic applications, this wouldn’t be an issue but I’m trying to come up with a solution to get us more ALS coverage in the district.

Gary Lewis- Is the EMT you’re looking at is he based here

Chief Lane- Close enough to say local, so I feel very fortunate with this person actually put in an application. They actually see the position on our website so I would hate to keep putting money into advertise when we are not going to get any applications. If we can continue advertising with the look at not just this person any person that applicants, we may get and in the future. If we can approve an EMT position, then I can start the interviewing process the vetting process I can make a job offer after all of that, but I can’t do anything unless we have a position.

Connie Clark- Are the majority of the calls during the day or after hours?

Chief Lane- It’s hard to figure that out, I would have to run a report lately there has not been any incident during the day its real hard to predict.

Rita Rossi- So what you are asking is approval for

Chief Lane- Right now I just want the board to listen, it’s not agenized so we cannot vote on it

Rita Rossi- I think it’s a good idea that we start out with an extra EMT and turn them into a Paramedic that would be great

Jon Kimble- A few months ago we approved the rate increases for the new position and this funding we are talking about if there are 15 to 18 delays in that should we delay or rethink those increases rates because we can make it in the budget we already have

Chief Lane- The increases has already started, also we are still going to have to pay for school, it would need to be in there for the paramedic wage on top of education. Our budget cannot support providing education for someone as it stands

Scott Kennedy- Does it cost roughly around 15,000.00

Chief Lane- Right around 15,000.00, like I said I haven’t, I talked to the University of Montana, so they haven’t got back to me, yet. I couldn’t get anyone on the phones, so I sent an email trying to get some information on the tuition

Connie Clark- Are we funding John’s education

Chief Lane- A portion of it, and in the budget when you get to that part it’s in the budget for next fiscal year

Scott Kennedy- So we just need some direction for the chief we can call a special meeting to vote on it we don’t want to lose that opportunity if that’s the person it may not be but expressed interest is there

Chief Lane- They put their application in a few months ago December of last year

Scott Kennedy- So we will have a board meeting probably first part of next week and we will discuss it further and see where it goes, and we will get it posted out there is that good with the group

**5. Membership Report –** Nothing new to report

**VII. OLD BUSINESS:**

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Alvis Miller was pinned and now is a volunteer firefighter.
2. 2022-2023 Budget Review

Chief Lane- so looking at our medical income and because of the increase we did I’m not good with a crystal ball, so I did increase the revenue and I’m hoping that its going to be more that what it shows in the budget, I think we are solid on counting on 105,000.00. There will be a couple other, revenue is not going to change a whole bunch the past revenue the actual for the 2021-2022 year we don’t have that information yet we won’t have that information till about July or August because people are still paying their taxes right now so we have got it as current as we can. The building maintenance for the Satellite office you’ll notice has increased a little bit we have a little work to do there, so I just wanted to make sure its covered and there is no surprise. Under insurance under Notary 400.625 I’m not sure what was getting put in that line item built the actual cost for Notary are significantly less then what’s been going into that line item, so reviewing it this year at $500.00 for the next budget cycle it was only $372.00 counting insurance to get her certified as a notary we are going to have to do it again but its significantly less than the first two columns.

Jon Kimble- You mentioned that under this notary line item

Chief Lane- Something was put in there; whatever it was it will go somewhere correct

Jon Kimble- You’ll figure out what that was right

Chief Lane- We have been looking and can’t identify anything right now, so it was something that was miss labeled

Jon Kimble- You’ll have to find that out

Chief Lane- We will, the accounting under actuals under this year we went way over budget but that was a lot of use of our accountant and to correct issues and get training done and make sure everything was up and running during our transition of the Administrative Assistant

Connie Clark- So we are going to start all that over again

Chief Lane- I hope not, we are not in the situation that we were when the other person left so we have more time to find someone, and we will find the correct person that will be easily trained as well so I don’t anticipate the large outcome

Gary Lewis- Don’t you think that’s low because the actual in the 2021 was higher than that

Chief Lane- But that was also part of transitioning

Connie Clark- On the wellness what’s included in that now I know what it used to be

Chief Lane- We used it for gym memberships, we are going to use it for employee physicals. The fuel budget we almost doubled it just cause of rising fuel cost.

Connie Clark- What about the utilities we didn’t raise those at Station #1 or #2

Gary Lewis- And the actuals are up on both of those

Scott Kennedy- Probably should bump those up a little bit

Gary Lewis- I think both of those need bumped up a little

Chief Lane- EMS Training we did put that up quite a bit so we can help John Baker with his school.

EMS Uniforms we have supply on had so we don’t have to do that again.

Gary Lewis- So on your PCOC your actual was 19 and you’re going to go down to 15 do you think we are going to get less calls next year

Chief Lane- So what we are going to do which we started doing is adjusting our schedule for a short time there was some larger incidents and we had a lot of people going to that call so that cost us more, there were a few smaller incidents were a lot of people were going to the calls so there weren’t really any guide lines as far as requirements from different type of calls so like Medical will have less people then what they did this past year. Under EMS supplies there were a couple Grant purchases that were held over, so our actual was a little higher than normal we bought the Lucas, the Life pack Power load system, we had some large purchases, and this was a hold over for that raised our actual a little higher than normal, that grant money is only showing on the revenue portion this year.

Scott Kennedy- So we are good on SCBA’s

Chief Lane- Yes, we have some money just in case we need to have things repaired under fire and maintenance, we have a guy come out every year to test everything and make sure everything’s good, the bottles are good for another eight years.

Connie Clark- What about the professional maintenance

Chief Lane- I don’t have the exact people but professional maintenance is when someone comes in or we send a piece of equipment out to have repaired professional that doesn’t fall under equipment replacement stuff like that. We should probably raise that a little bit.

Gary Lewis- I think so

Andi Bourne- I just really appreciate the community outreach that is going on there is Open House on Saturday from 11-1pm it is being out on by the Department and PHC and I think that’s awesome and there’s also Movie Night coming back which is the 28th both of those were in the paper this week and then the Pancake Breakfast as a community member this is really exciting and it’s exciting to see the Department opening back up to the community and offering this so thank you.

**IX. NEXT MONTH AGENDA ITEMS**:

May Financial Reports

**X. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:**

Upon motion Connie seconded, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2022.

Approved:

Chair of the Board Clerk of the Board