

SEELEY LAKE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING 6:00PM FIRE HALL
MEETING DATE: December 14, 2021
MINUTES FOR: November 9, 2021

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

PRESENT

Scott Kennedy, Chair
Jon Kimble
Connie Clark

ABSENT

Rita Rossi Secretary

Gary Lewis, Vice Chair

Dave Lane, Fire Chief
Lakaya Lemons, District Administrator

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. Two trustees were present along with the Fire Chief and District Administrator.

In attendance were John Baker, Shirley Goudzwaard; John Homen; Kristy Pohlman, Michael Triplett, Alysa & Jeff McClain. Also present was Andi Bourne with the *Pathfinder*.

III. MINUTES:

Connie Clark made a motion to approve the October, 2021 minutes with corrections; John Kimble seconded the motion.

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

Shirley Goudzwaard stated "I was bothered last month with the board meeting, I never been to a board meeting with the responsibilities in this department that our board meeting is only lasting maybe three mins, I think last month was two mins I'm not understanding why there's not more discussions being made, so I have some questions that I expect to be answered next month when I come.

1. What is the criteria for not allowing people on the fire department? A past member asked to come back but he was denied, he had done something wrong in the past so apparently he'll be punished for life, interestingly I thought people were given second chances.

2. Per a Fire Chief that's supposed to be an open board, I saw a board member look right at this person and had a surprise look when told someone was being denied, so to the board there's only two people here tonight I'm asking and I understand that you guys are immediately in charge of the money and that was a question to when do you get your packet, do you get your packet enough in advance? So when you found out that a person has been denied did you all pursue it to find out why this person is being denied, and then I heard that there are other people that have been denied whether or not that's true I don't know, but I heard from a pretty reliable source. So do you all follow through to find out why this has happened, I look at you guys and you are supposed to be our representative in our town and we depend upon you to be there for us because that's why you have been reelected on to the board. I personally feel that Scott and Dave sorry basically run the show, and Dave gets to do his thing and maybe he comes to you I'm assuming. But then who do you answer to? Do you go to the board and say hey we have this problem somebody was denied what should we do about this? Do you all do this? Do you communicate with each other? Because I don't know if you do I don't see this when I come to these meetings.

The other thing that bothered me was that I won't mention who, but anyways, the person who came here and also said somebody wanted to be on the fire department and this texting thing. I agree with what you said Scott if this person and that person had an issue then they should be here to represent themselves. But when Dave said we'll bring it and we will discuss it in the office. "That's not appropriate if there's an issue it should be in my opinion that's not how it should have been handled but I'm not on the board. So I think the other thing that bothered me that was in the paper in the last fire, the trailer fire, and it said it was put out and everything and then you said it was suspicious when it started back up again. If it was suspicious then why it wasn't not further investigated if there was suspicion when the fire started back up again.

These are my questions and I would like to have responses next month, because I know I have to wait a month but these are the things that are bothering me. And I have been coming to these meeting a long time and it's to the point that sometimes I feel like it's a joke, I mean we sit here and we are like here for like three minutes and then that's it wam bam thank you and goodbye, and so I just have those questions that's it."

Scott: "I am going to respond briefly to Shirley's questions, the board does not have anything to do with operations. The chief has the right to hire fire and run operations, I would recommend you sit down with the chief since you seem to have a lot of questions on how personnel are hired terminated. Otherwise that's not our role here as a board."

Shirley: "Then whose role is it, I mean ok"

Scott: "We hired the chief"

Shirley: "Right but then is everyone aware with what's going on"

Scott: "We have the same information as you do, and yes I do communicate with the chief extensively. We can't communicate as a board outside because then we would be convening a meeting and we can't do that."

Shirley: "Right so don't you ever have a meeting, don't you ever get together?"

Scott: "We are having a meeting right now"

Shirley: "So this is your meeting"

Scott: "This is our meeting for what our roll is"

Shirley: "That's crazy"

Scott: "You can come to any one of us at any time to get a lot of questions answered and hopefully it'll resolve your questions. But to come and throw it on the board that's not how it always works."

Shirley: "I'm not throwing it at the board I'm throwing it on everybody."

Scott: "If you have a questions that's specific on something and he can ascertain and respond to you without getting into personnel issues and not violating that then he can do that."

Shirley: "I understand that"

Scott: "All your questions can be answered real quickly if you just go straight to the chief."

Michael Triplett: "In relation to her question you don't have any control over operational, if he doesn't answer to you then who does he answer to?"

Jon: "He has to answer to the board"

Michael: "But you have no operational control on what he does"

Scott: "We evaluate anything that happens to the department for merit yes, but we are not going to tell him how to run his operation"

Michael: "So if we have a complaint then who do we come to?"

Scott: "You can file a complaint with the board but I recommend you go to the chief first follow the chain of command."

Michael: "So to get approval to be on the agenda at one of these meetings I'm just trying to clarify this, I have to go to him to get approval to get on a board meeting."

Scott: "You can ask in the meeting and if you don't get satisfaction that way then you can come to me the Chairman, if I believe it warrants it we will put it on the agenda but if its questions that can be answered outside."

Michael: "I don't feel like he would give me any answers"

Scott: "Have you tried"

Michael: "No"

Kristy: "Can I ask a question because I am a little confused, when everything went down with the intern chief were rules different about he didn't have hiring or firing power? because it was all the board's decision at that point in time so I'm just, has it changed since then?"

Scott: "I'm not going to comment on those past issues because it was a lot to it and the board did have to intervene on certain things."

Kristy: "I will speak from my personal experience. I didn't get anything from him I got an email directly from the chairman of the board saying I was supposed to go in front of the board. So I respectfully disagree because I mean I hope things have changed I really do I think it should be more on an individual and then if there's a problem then it should go to the board but it's just confusing on when it changed."

Scott: "Well it has changed a little bit. He's been writing policies and has got the book."

Kristy: "Was that that policy that last one."

Chief Lane: "The one where we added the paragraph that was to clean up all of that, yes so I can't say what happened before I got here but I know now that I'm here. That's the way things are going to be, that policy on who does what that's part of the whole big picture."

Kristy: "Perfect it makes much more sense that's why I was like wait a minute just clear it for my brain I apologies I was a little confused thank you for clearing that up that's huge."

Chief Lane reads four thank you cards from the community.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT AND APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

Jon Kimble made a motion to approve the October 2021 financial report in the amount of \$19,098.23; Connie Clark Second the motion.

VI. REPORTS:

1. Call Volume – Chief Lane reported there were 33 calls in October 2020, compared to 32 calls in October 2021. Total calls for 2021 are 325 compared to 265 in 2020.

2. Recruitment –Chief Lane reported currently on boarding two new members, we are still pursuing filing the position there's been some communications and I've been told people were going to apply. Yet nothing has been received as of now. So I'm still advertising, still calling still looking around, obviously our primary focus would be for a paramedic but if we can't recruit a paramedic then we will have to get some other help as an EMT.

Kristy: "I have a question on that I thought you weren't actually recruiting yet you were just putting feelers out there that was the board meeting when Scott was gone."

Chief Lane: "I am recruiting to establish a list."

Kristy: "Ok"

Chief Lane: "That's it the position has not yet been approved."

3. Grants – Chief Lane reported last month we received our portion on the RFC Grant that money has been spent, we are still waiting on some additional wildland equipment PPE type of stuff to be received but that grant has been completed.

4. Updates /Actions – Chief Lane reported that they did their annual pancake breakfast for the elementary school. The younger kids come in we give them a pancake breakfast we give them a tour of our apparatus. If there's any questions from the parents or teachers we address all of that on that time and hopefully we can get some more people out of it. In the tour we do a little training with smoke detectors and what our fire fighter look like in our full PPE so they don't get afraid and it'll set people at ease for that.

5. Membership Report – Chief Lane reported that they have really good training by Rick Paulson from the state, he said he's been coming out to do their fire training to get people more up to speed on things they do.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

1. District Operations Manual/SOPs Approval – Nothing discussed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

Chief Lane: "So as we always said we try to help our community I've done a lot of things to collect revenue the best we can without trying to cause hardship to our community, for different type of incidents we bill different type of insurance we do as much as we can because we have to maintain our function as well as improve our service. We transported a patient who did not have health insurance, and I tell everybody that we transport that appears to me like they may have problems in paying their bill and I try not to be judgmental and I don't disrespect people, but I do tell them if you have problems with this I realize you don't have insurance come talk to me let me talk to the board and I will try and make a solution that works for you and for us. It's not reasonable to me for us to provide a service and not recoup any of the cost, and there is cost we still have to pay for fuel, my wages, the insurance on the vehicles, the repairs all that stuff cost money so I try to make some recuperation after that. We do have a person who came to me saying that we are having a hardship and they've demonstrated that to me and rather than try to put this extra burden on this person I feel like they need to be responsible because they did use our service, they need to be an adult and pay their fair share, so what I'd like to do I have plans to remedy this issue but I would like the board's approval to do that, we have had one other person since I have been here that actually came to me and asked for help with their bill and we created a plan that plan was followed and the bill was paid in full. So I'm not sure if this person is able to pay in full however I do have a plan that I would like to implement with your approval."

Connie: "Can you give any detail on that plan?"

Chief Lane: "I can give you all the detail if you like because I'm not going to identify who the person is so there no violations, my plan in this scenery is to have them make monthly payments for a year if all the monthly payment were made on time without deviation then we can reduce their fee by fifty percent if there late or if they miss a payment then we will send them to collections for the full amount, so I think that gives them the opportunity to make good on their debt to us and the community, and if they follow the plan then there in a better place and I feel better about not sending them to collections for the full amount when they don't have the ability to pay the full amount."

Jon: "What would otherwise be the case?"

Chief Lane: "Otherwise we send them to collections."

Jon: "Immediately"

Chief Lane: "Within 90 days they will go to collections and at that point it's out of our hands and it does us no good because we will probably would not collect as much as that if any, we have quite a few accounts in collections,"

Jon: "For this set up it'll be no interest principle only."

Chief Lane: "Correct, like I said we are not trying to make money off of it, it's just we have to keep our operations going and it's not fair to people to think they can use our service free of cost, we don't have the ability to do that today maybe in the future we can do something different but today we cannot do it for free."

Jon: "So in the outs based on experience you would expect to collect 10 percent of the debt."

Chief Lane: "Its less then ten percent if we didn't help the person as I described then the collection rate would be in between seven or eight percent typically it's a very low collection rate."

Jon: "Seven to eight is typically what is realized with those kind of activities, two parties to the agreement us and the patient what do they say."

Chief Lane: "I told them I will bring it up to the board, I have not discussed a plan."

Jon: "Are they willing to work with us?"

Chief Lane: "Yes that's why they sent me a letter, they have asked for some relief and she didn't say or he didn't say what kind of relief they just said they needed relief."

Connie: "So are you saying if we accept these payments for one year and then reduce it by fifty percent that we are still going to be at that seven or eight percent?"

Chief Lane: "No we will be much higher especially with this person we will be at fifty percent collection but because of our agreement that collection is paid in full so it's not an issue for us, the seven to eight percent is for the people that don't typically pay their bills they go to collection the collection agency get a small percentage for what they can but a lot of them we have to write off."

Jon: "Will they be interested in working out a payment schedule for the entire amount?"

Chief Lane: "I can ask them"

Jon: "I think you should start there and then see if you can modify if necessary."

Chief Lane: "I need the board's permission to discuss anything to do with payment."

Kristy: "What percentage would you recoup one hundred percent of all of your expenses for, let say is fifty percent going to recoup all of your expenses for your call."

Chief Lane: "Yes"

Kristy: "So let say you start at one hundred percent you negotiate back and forth as long as you negotiate no less than fifty percent you've recouped everything you need to cover the cost of the call."

Jon: "Maybe I misunderstood something, I thought that the bill as it stands is just those cost as you described like fuel."

Chief Lane: "We have our base fee, we have other fee so we can collect that revenue and do other things to buy equipment to do training to replace vehicles that goes into our fund our EMS revenue. So this one call for this particular incident is somewhere around sixteen to seventeen hundred with our base rate plus mileage is somewhere around sixteen to seventeen hundred, I don't have an exact number for our expense per call."

Scott: "I think we can give them some latitude to not be less than fifty percent without further board review of it."

Jon: "Yea and my recommendation is to start at the whole amount and see what they can do with you."

Jon stated that he had no objections and he made a motion to approve the proposal, Connie second the motion

IX. NEXT MONTH AGENDA ITEMS:

November Financial Report

X. ADJOURNMENT/NEXT MEETING:

Upon motion Clark seconded, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:26 p.m. The next regularly scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021.

Approved:

Chair of the Board

Clerk of the Board