



MEETING MINUTES A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FOREST LAKES FIRE DISTRICT SEPTEMBER 15, 2018



- 1) The meeting was called to order by STRAP Chairman John Nelson at 11:42 am in the main equipment bay of the fire station. Also in attendance were Board Members John Hennessey, Quentin Tolby, Tom Cummiskey and Dennis Massion; Chief Rodriguez; Admin Assistant Roxie Allen; Joe Ruet; Dick Zimmerman; Judy Nelson; and Jan Cummiskey.
- 2) Chief's "State of the District".

As we look forward to the challenges facing our small rural fire district, let's look back at the past year's significant accomplishments:

- New fire station.
- Fund raising efforts - \$400,000.
- Increased transport rate.
- Purchase of a used replacement rescue.
- Grant for new rescue.
- SCBA Grant.
- Power Load Grant.
- Extended Hazardous Fuels Grant.
- Community support.
- Financial stability.
- High level of service.

We continue to operate in a fiscally responsible and professional manner. This translates into strong community support and confidence in the Leadership Team. Our goal is to remain supportive of the Mission, Vision and Values of the District and of each other. Predictions are that we will see more change in the Fire and EMS industry in the next 10 years than we have seen in the last 50.

- 3) Top Priorities - Board and Chief
 - a) Increase staffing model. Our current model is to staff one Paramedic/Firefighter and one EMT/Engineer, 24/365. Holidays we hire 1 to 3 additional staff. The number of personnel added for the holiday weekends is dependent on POC availability. This past summer showed a trend of less POC availability and an increase in Fire Danger/Red Flag conditions. This forced us to hire additional staff above the 2 budgeted for. Call volume continues to remain steady and we are starting to experience a slight increase in transports creating a void in coverage. We need to realize the impact call volume and transports are having on district coverage and prepare the budget for an additional Paramedic. By doing so, our Staffing Model would be 2 Paramedics and 1 Firefighter on shift. Holiday coverage and incentive pay will need to be explored as well.
 - b) Attract & Retain Paid On Call Resident Members. Recruitment of residents to become certified in emergency response for fire and medical calls continues. Our resident members who serve today remain committed to providing a high level of service for those in need. We currently have 2 Emergency Medical Technicians and 3 First Responders that are active. One First Responder is planning to attend EMT school in the fall. A discussion regarding reality of this segment of our department becoming robust is needed.
 - c) Refurbishment of Annex and continued maintenance of Apparatus and Equipment. We have to keep what we have in good working order. The new station is relatively



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- maintenance free. The Annex will need attention. Annual maintenance costs and repairs of rolling stock may appear to be on the high end but they are reflective of our response area terrain which takes its toll on equipment.
- d) Alternative revenue streams. Continue efforts with Grant submissions to replace aging equipment like Firehose, Rolling stock, Turnouts, Medical equipment and devices. Explore Subscription services for Fire and Medical coverage, Master Contract with Banner Health or American Medical Response. Expanding our Wildland Firefighting capabilities also has the potential to generate revenue.
 - e) Technology advancement/enhancements. Keeping up with today's fast changing Information Technology will become more of a challenge for small rural fire districts like ours. We are in a fast-changing technology world that will force us to look at advancements in Pre-Hospital health care processes, procedures and equipment. Office computers are being replaced in 2 and 3-year increments instead of the 5 to 8-year replacement cycle we are accustomed to.
- 4) 2017 Goals, updates for 2018
- a) Goal: Repurpose our old fire station (Annex) by July 2019 per Building Committee recommendations.
 - b) Goal: Upgrade our rolling stock as planned in our latest STRAP (Strategic Plan).
 - c) Goal: Improve non-tax revenues each year by identifying new revenue sources, and by leveraging community resources via the Auxiliary, grants, on-going donations and corporate/other.
 - d) Goal: Decrease our Mil rate by \$.25 by the 2020/2021 fiscal year to \$3.00.
 - e) Goal: Identify and develop the FLFD Leadership Team for the future, including qualified candidates for the 2018 Board of Directors election.
- Chairman Nelson commented we have made significant progress on items b), c) and e). The remaining items will be addressed as part of our STRAP update process.
- 5) Planning approach for repurposing of Annex. Chairman Nelson volunteered to be part of a new committee to address the repurposing of the Annex. Approval of the committee will be on the October board meeting agenda. He will coordinate with others and announce committee member candidates at our next board meeting. It was noted we have a placeholder in our five-year financial plan for \$40K to cover the related expenses. It was suggested Joe Ruet and John Walstrom be members. The committee will need to identify what we want to do, develop goals and requirements and structure our approach. Using the FLOA approach to building-out the community center, we will use volunteer labor to the maximum extent possible. The committee will need to address priorities for both external repair and interior modifications. It was noted there are structural issues with the annex that need to be investigated (crumbling walls, antenna tower, ...) A Master Plan approach is recommended that will encompass not only the Annex but the remainder of the property, including structures and the back lot. The plan will necessarily need to be time phased for affordability based on our 5-year financial plan. The efforts of the committee will initially be iterative in nature: generate a preliminary plan with associated cost, assess affordability; revise plan and cost, assess affordability; repeat until an acceptable approach is identified. Committee recommendations will be time phased and feed into the 5-year financial plan.
- 6) HR issues: health care benefits, minimum wage, sick and vacation time as related to our staffing model. Our combination staffing model offers significant financial benefits to the



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district. For the ODS we offer no retirement other than our 457 plan, we do not participate in the state retirement system, we capture their training and certification, and we offer no vacation or sick leave. Dave stated we are in compliance with all applicable regulations. He took an action to provide a written compliance statement.

- 7) Plan for remaining meetings and finalization of new 5-Year Plan. Chairman Nelson stated that per past practice the publication of the STRAP session meeting minutes and the STRAP update document have been the responsibility of the Board Chairman. This year is different in that he will no longer be a board member after November 30th. The December meeting and the document publication will occur after he has left the board. Because of his past experience with these tasks, Clerk Hennessey volunteered to publish meeting minutes and create the draft updated document. Treasurer Cummiskey offered to assist in editing the final document. Chairman Nelson will lead the STRAP sessions for October and November. Approval to publish the document will be an agenda item for January 2019, with expected publication by the end of January, including the five-year financial plan. This will segue nicely with the FY2019-2020 budget planning process, which begins in February.
- 8) Chairman Nelson will coordinate a joint Auxiliary/Fire Board meeting for October 20th from 9:30 to 10:00 am for the purpose of discussing potential Auxiliary financial support for next year.
- 9) Tentative agenda for the next meeting, October 20th (noon to 3 pm)
 - a) Financial planning kick-off (Finance Committee Chairman Cummiskey)
 - i) Model
 - ii) Assumptions
 - iii) Updates
 - b) Staffing level and wages; succession planning (Chief et. al.)
 - c) Rolling stock assessment (Chief)
 - i) Sell E1211 (with or without replacement)?
 - d) IT updates (Chairman Nelson)
 - i) Scott Moody recommendations
 - e) Grant outlook and strategy (Chairman Nelson, Chief)
 - f) Capital expenditure plan (Chief et. al.)
 - g) Revenue enhancement (Chief et. al.)
- 10) Other discussion points:
 - a) Our transport rates are #2 in the state.
 - b) Our grant awards have been huge this year. Everything just came together. These awards free up future capital expense dollars to be used elsewhere.
 - c) Community support has been outstanding, including the Auxiliary, FLOA, community church, the Library, ...
 - d) POC support is crucial to our future financial success. We currently have five POC support personnel, and we continue to use them to the maximum extent possible. However, the level of POC support continues to be a concern. There were several periods this past summer when we had no POC support due to planned vacations, family matters, ... We need to ramp up our recruitment efforts, a task easier said than done.



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- There is a general trend nationwide towards reduced voluntarism, and that is reflected here at Forest Lakes.
- e) Every additional PM we add creates an \$80K problem. Due in part to lack of POC availability this past summer our staffing cost stands at 31% of budget versus our plan of 16%.
 - f) Lack of POC availability creates concerns re: currency for training and certifications.
 - g) Every transport creates a minimum of a three-hour window when the staff is unavailable for call response.
 - h) We have new transport rates that will be a boost to our revenue stream. A question was raised about how soon we can apply for new rates. Roxie took an action to investigate.
 - i) Regarding transport rates, it was noted we have an automatic annual incremental rate adjustment, usually about 2% to 3%.
 - j) Regarding technology enhancements, it was noted we may be forced by the hospitals to use new technologies to keep up with advancements they incorporate. We need to decide if we will be at the leading edge, bleeding edge or be reluctant followers for such advancements. It's all about patient care.
 - k) Technology life cycles are becoming increasingly shorter.
 - l) We will be doing a deep dive into our five-year financial plan spreadsheet at our next meeting.
 - m) The next FEMA grant cycle opens soon. We may be in position for some microgrants, perhaps for turnouts and hoses. The new mini-pumper will probably have to wait until the next year.
 - n) We need to be proactive for succession planning for our leadership team, including Roxie. One of the best ways to recruit is to get candidates involved in fire district activities, such as committees.
 - o) Temporary COO is not an issue. Chief spoke to Lee Davis and they are not concerned as to when the final COO is issued. We understand what needs to be done. It is just a matter of getting the county on-board.
 - p) There are near term communication issues to be resolved: cell phone coverage, calls being answered at either the annex or the station, repeater and radio quality, signal degradations, 911 response delays and overall worsening coverage.
 - q) Chief stated our staffing model is the best one available for a small rural fire district such as ours.
 - r) Chief to explore what-if scenarios related to the staffing model adjustments proposed in item 3a). He will use our five-year financial plan spreadsheet to assess cost impacts, and be prepared to provide detailed input into the financial planning kick-off agenda item in our next STRAP session (October 20th). Scenarios need to address partial implementation versus full implementation of an additional PM, coverage in February versus July, holidays, red flag days, ...
 - s) Board needs to reaffirm our service delivery/service level model.
 - t) Treasurer Cummiskey recommended we identify specific projects with associated funding level requests for consideration by the Auxiliary. These requests would be made in writing by the Board Chairman to the Auxiliary Chair. It was felt that Auxiliary fund-



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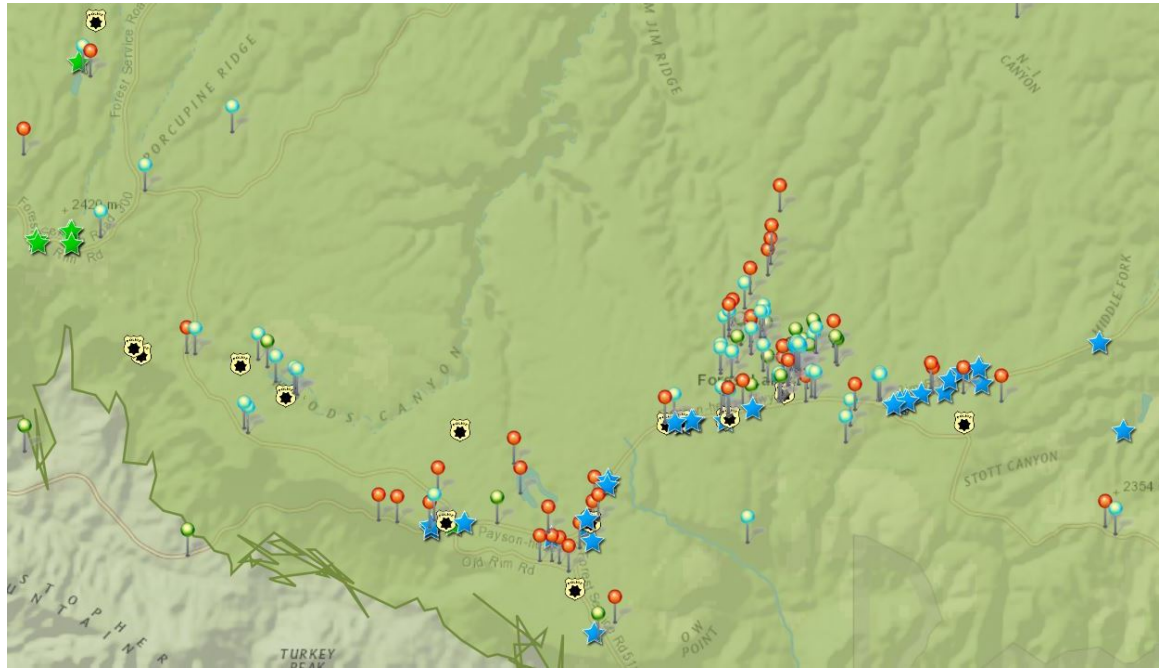


raising efforts might be more successful with a targeted goal in mind. Our highly successful Legacy Program was highlighted as a model for such an effort. Dick Zimmerman related that at the Labor Day Ice Cream Social he staffed a membership table and was asked by residents how the Auxiliary supported the fire district and if the Auxiliary had any specific projects in mind. Chief mentioned the replacement fire truck project as a future candidate. Repurposing the Annex was discussed as well. They could be treated like grant requests for financial planning purposes. If we are successful in capturing donations, we do the project. Otherwise we don't. We were all cautioned to be aware of donor fatigue.

- u) Additional priorities were discussed: communication issues (Verizon, 911 system and degraded coverage.) Not discussed at the meeting, but included because they were part of the email traffic related to priorities prior to the meeting: selling unneeded vehicles to eliminate related costs, including the blue garage in our renovation efforts and grading and drainage plans for the back lot.
- v) Treasurer Cummiskey noted there is new legislation being considered in Washington DC that would make it easier for organizations like ours to acquire group medical coverage and achieve cost savings. Current legislation discourages such practice.
- w) Member Massion stated that in general he tends to be fiscally conservative. He mentioned concern about the impacts to our plans if we experience a downturn in the economy. We have spent a lot of money on the new fire station and need to take that into account as we build our new five-year financial plan. This subject came up in the context of repurposing the Annex. Finance Committee Chairman Cummiskey acknowledged his concern, and advised the current plan allocated \$40K for the repurposing; the current plan accounts for all debt service/manpower costs; and real estate property values have a two-year lag before they are reflected in tax revenues, mitigating near term concerns.
- x) Chief Rodriquez noted that his takeaway from a recent Chief's Conference is that fire districts will be challenged in three specific areas in the coming years: personnel, finance and assimilating new technology.
- y) Chairman Nelson related that he finds the One Page Summary of the STRAP Update document to be extremely helpful.
- z) Chief presented an incident summary map for YTD responses:



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Note: there are several incidents outside area shown. They were omitted for clarity. The complete picture can be obtained from Roxie.

Blue Pushpin	Medical Calls
Red Pushpin	Fire Calls
Green Pushpin	Service Calls
Blue Star	MVAs
Green Star	ATVs/UTVs
Badge	Law Enforcement Assist

aa) Chief also presented a detailed YTD incident summary:

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	*SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	2018 TOTAL
Number of Calls	15	6	8	23	47	42	45	34	29	0	0	0	249
EMS/Medical/MVA/ATV=	7	4	2	8	22	25	23	19	22				132
FIRE/ Ck Smoke / Forest Fire=	3	0	2	10	12	11	16	6	2				62
OTHER=	5	2	4	5	13	6	6	9	5				55
Refusals=	3	0	1	1	8	14	14	4	8				53
Transports via Ground=	5	1	0	5	11	9	9	8	9				57
Transports via Air=	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	3	3				12
Deceased=	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0				4

11) The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.