

INDIAN HILLS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

The Minutes are intended to reflect the discussions that occurred and decisions that were made by the members; they are not intended to be a transcription of the meeting.

MEETING ATTENDED BY:

Fire Protection District Board Members: Paul Pettit — President; Bret Roller — Treasurer; Marc Rosenberg — Secretary; Ron Walton

Fire Department Members: Don Schoenbein — Chief; Emery Carson — Assistant Chief

Non-Members: Karen Nelson — Recording Secretary

Absent: Richard Westerlage (unexcused)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT: 19:34 Hrs.

MINUTES:

Mr. Rosenberg made a *motion* to waive the reading of the October Minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Walton and passed unanimously.

Discussion followed and the following change was made. Page 6, third paragraph, first sentence to read: “Mr. Roller asked if the Department was up to date on *wildland* shelters.”

Mr. Rosenberg made a *motion* to accept the October Minutes as amended, which was seconded by Mr. Walton and passed unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Monthly Reports

Mr. Pettit began by saying that Ms. Fritz was not present that evening because of a personnel conflict. Mr. Rosenberg spoke up to say that he thought Ms. Fritz did an excellent job. Mr. Pettit said the issue would be discussed later. He added that he had the checks and agreed that Ms. Fritz did an excellent job. Mr. Pettit then asked Mr. Roller if he approved of Ms. Fritz’s job performance. “Absolutely,” Mr. Roller answered.

Discussion moved to the financial reports. Mr. Pettit said that the Executive Summary looked fine. Regarding account #7000 (Capital Expenses), Mr. Pettit pointed out that money had been rolling forward for a number of years.

Conversation moved to Checks. Mr. Pettit asked about an expense for \$59.54 for box light batteries. Mr. Carson explained that it was for the orange hand-held models for apparatus 341 and 349. Mr. Pettit then inquired about a \$364.50 expense for 20 adaptors. Mr. Schoenbein said that it was for hose adaptors and explained that the connections are not always the same.

Regarding check #11354 to Base Camp for \$267, it was noted that the expense was for sandwiches for volunteers fighting the Messiah Mountain fire, not for an officers' meeting as designated. Mr. Pettit asked about check #11355 to Casco Industries for \$4,391. Mr. Schoenbein said it was for two sets of bunker gear. The costs would be down significantly the following year, he added. Mr. Roller inquired about check #11357 to Custom Flag Company for \$400. Mr. Carson said that he was able to get a price break by ordering three flags. Mr. Rosenberg advised that the flag be replaced about every six months.

Ms. Nelson spoke up to say that Ms. Fritz had instructed her to announce that check #11359 to Evergreen Automotive Repair for \$328.29 had been voided. A new check, #11378, had been written for the same amount to Evergreen Fire/Rescue.

Mr. Rosenberg made a *motion* to approve checks #11351-11378, plus automatic payments and bank fees. Mr. Walton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion returned to check #11370 to Xerox for \$140.23. Mr. Pettit asked if the Department's copy machine had been purchased or was a lease agreement. "A lease," responded Mr. Schoenbein. Mr. Pettit shared that he had spent 3½ hours that day trying to get a toner cartridge. He had finally connected with a representative, Mr. Kohl, in Colorado Springs. Mr. Schoenbein said that Mr. Kohl was not the same person that Ms. Corsaut worked with. Mr. Rosenberg suggested buying a copy machine. Mr. Pettit said that Lewan had flagged the Department's account because of past experiences.

Mr. Pettit continued expressing his frustration by saying that he couldn't get in contact with a local Xerox rep. The company had sent a smart drum three times instead of the requested toner cartridge. Mr. Roller asked if they were two different things. Mr. Pettit explained that the drum and cartridge sit side by side and clarified the role of each. Ms. Corsaut had a service technician in the previous Monday, Mr. Pettit continued. And there were no toner cartridges in town. A new cartridge and a spare should be delivered that Friday, he said.

Mr. Rosenberg expressed that the Department pays a lot of money for the copy machine service contract. And the Department's account information with Xerox still shows Ms. Cross as the contact even though Ms. Corsaut has filled out the updated paperwork, Mr. Pettit said. After insisting on speaking with a local person, the company had put him in touch with a local service manager, Mr. Pettit recounted. The Department is paying \$140 a month and not getting good service, he continued. Mr. Pettit said he had contacted both Staples and Office Depot and been told that the cartridge had to be ordered online.

Mr. Rosenberg suggested reviewing the contract and perhaps updating the copy machine. Mr. Pettit said that the Department had a better machine than in the past. Discussion followed about possible vendors that could be used moving forward. Mr. Pettit proposed talking to Lewan again. Mr. Rosenberg then asked who had a copy of the current contract. Perhaps Ms. Fritz, answered Mr. Pettit. Mr. Schoenbein noted that it had been at least two years since the contract had been signed since it was before he came on staff.

Mr. Roller asked how many copies a month are stipulated in the contract. Mr. Roller said that he was pretty sure that the machine has a counter. After reviewing the monthly bill, Mr. Pettit shared that there's a monthly allowance of 1,500 copies. Only 430 had been used in the last month. The meter usage to date is 12,865, he said. Mr. Pettit said that Xerox must remotely query the counter each month. Mr. Schoenbein agreed since no one comes in to get a reading.

DEPARTMENT/OFFICERS' REPORTS:

Fire Marshal — Randy Rudloff

Not present; no report submitted.

Chief's Report — Don Schoenbein

A report was distributed and various items were discussed. Mr. Schoenbein began with item #1 regarding the Darley update. A signed contract and deposit had been received by Fire Trucks Plus from a department in Oregon. As an aside, Mr. Schoenbein shared that the Oregon department had failed to abide with a seven-day posting for bids as specified by its legal counsel and was trying to resolve that issue. Regardless, all indicators are that the deal will close, said Mr. Schoenbein. As such, space will be needed in the bay by the beginning of the year.

Mr. Pettit asked if Mr. Schoenbein planned to provide an outline for the Board to review of the specs of the apparatus he proposed to obtain as trade for the Darley. "Yes," answered Mr. Schoenbein, who proceeded to list the apparatus he hoped to obtain. He said that there may be money left over after the trade that could be used for extrication equipment like a Hearst tool and anticipated having specs for the tanker the following Tuesday.

Discussion moved to item #2 regarding the radio system. Mr. Schoenbein explained that there is a small issue with the voter at the Critchell site. A new part is needed to fix programming issues. In addition, paging issues need to be resolved with Inter-Canyon. Reprogramming that was done the previous Tuesday night was incorrect, Mr. Schoenbein continued, and will need to be redone.

Conversation moved to the generator requirements. It was noted that there are 440 amp hours on the batteries, which should power a generator for 48 hours. Discussion then followed about portable generator needs and available options. Mr. Carson questioned why a new generator was needed since the Department already has one. Mr. Pettit responded that it was part of the overall project budget. Mr. Rosenberg recommended getting one with a 120-volt dual system. Mr. Roller said that no battery charger at the site will run more than 1,000 watts.

Mr. Rosenberg suggested directing generator questions to Mr. Frappaolo. Mr. Roller responded that Mr. Hall knows the situation as well. Mr. Pettit interjected that 48 hours of generator power was okay, although he'd like to see 72 hours. Mr. Roller suggested that Mr. Carson get the specs from Mr. Hall, including such details as minimum requirements.

Mr. Schoenbein turned conversation to item #3 regarding mitigating space around the Mt. Lindo communications equipment. He stated that he had received three bids and would award the work that Friday. Work would begin the following week. The two additional bids, he continued, were for \$5,750 and \$5,500. Dana Roe Firewood would clear cut a 100-foot arc-shaped area and stack the wood. Slash would be chipped and removed. Anyone would be welcome to the stacked wood, Mr. Schoenbein added.

Mr. Schoenbein concluded his report by summarizing the calls for the month, which totaled 8. The Department had responded to 98 or 99 calls so far that year, he added.

Assistant Chief's Report — Emery Carson

Present; no report submitted. Mr. Carson noted that Mr. Schoenbein had already covered the communications system. In an apparatus update, Mr. Carson said that apparatus 341 had gone in for maintenance. He was hoping there was no fuel in the oil. Work was done on apparatus 358, Mr. Carson continued. And someone hit the fuel tank and dislodged the fuel sending unit on apparatus 359, Mr. Carson shared. As such, the whole thing had to be replaced. Mr. Pettit explained that the sensor could be negatively affected by such an incident. Finally, Mr. Carson said that new tires had been put on apparatus 383. Mr. Carson then reminded about the awards ceremony to be held December 4.

Mr. Carson continued by saying that the new communications system radios should be online by that Saturday. As soon as the minotaurs are programmed, the system at Mt. Falcon would be shut down. Also, Mr. Carson added, the batteries have arrived. He then asked if the County had made the switch. Mr. Schoenbein responded that it wouldn't happen until that Friday at the earliest. Mr. Carson said that the truck radios had been done that day. Except apparatus 358, interjected Mr. Schoenbein, because the door had appeared to be locked. Mr. Pettit noted that the passenger side appeared to be okay. Discussion followed about the door issue on apparatus 358.

Mr. Schoenbein said that he had a source on six refurbished radios for half price. The radios could be paid for out of funds in the budget, he added. Mr. Carson added that lighting in the shed had been updated. Mr. Frappaolo wouldn't charge much, he noted. Mr. Pettit agreed that new lighting was necessary. Mr. Frappaolo had only charged \$325 for the Mt. Lindo project in comparison with the \$1,000 estimate from Sturgeon Electric, Mr. Carson said.

Fire Captain's Report — Steve Bruns

Not present; no report submitted.

Rescue Captain's Report — Bob Fager

Not present; no report submitted.

Personnel Issue

Mr. Pettit turned conversation to the personnel issue between Mr. Westerlage and Ms. Fritz. Mr. Pettit recounted that Mr. Westerlage had sent an email earlier that day expressing his dissatisfaction with the fact that the financial reports were not yet completed. Mr. Roller said that he had responded to Mr. Westerlage's email and said that he wasn't sure what Mr. Westerlage's goal was but that he would probably succeed at driving Ms. Fritz away. Mr. Pettit said that Ms. Fritz had come to his house earlier in the day to bring him the checks. Mr. Rosenberg had notified him earlier about Mr. Westerlage's email. Mr. Rosenberg noted that the email had been sent at 5:45 am.

Mr. Pettit explained that Ms. Fritz believes it's important that the reports be as current as possible. Mr. Pettit expressed that, in his opinion, it was okay to receive the reports the day before the meeting even though the cutoff date for bills was supposed to be the Friday before the meeting. The tone of Mr. Westerlage's email was bad, Mr. Pettit said, and Ms. Fritz had been in tears as a result. Ms. Fritz had expressed that if the Board believed that it was best to replace her, she would understand. Mr. Pettit said that he'd rather replace Mr. Westerlage than Ms. Fritz. Both Mr. Roller and Mr. Rosenberg said that it almost sounded like Mr. Westerlage was resigning in his email.

Ms. Fritz does a good job, Mr. Pettit continued, explaining that she is the main worker in her family. He said that he had no problem with her work. Mr. Rosenberg said it would be crazy to lose Ms. Fritz with what she charges the Department for her work. It's half of what she charges her other clients, he said.

Mr. Roller then read Mr. Westerlage's email, which had been addressed to all Board members as well as Ms. Fritz. Mr. Roller said that Mr. Westerlage had been expressing concern about the situation for awhile. Mr. Pettit admitted that the tone of the email had taken him by surprise. He said that he had tried to calm Ms. Fritz down and reiterated that he didn't want her to quit. She keeps everyone in line, Mr. Pettit said, and she's done a really good job in the last six years. Mr. Pettit then asked if anyone wanted to replace Ms. Fritz. Everyone responded "no."

Mr. Schoenbein reminded that Ms. Fritz had knowledge about the Department's operations and history that couldn't be replaced. She's invaluable and almost irreplaceable, he added. Mr. Pettit shared that Ms. Fritz had announced that she wasn't coming to that evening's meeting when she came to his house. She wants the issue resolved, he continued.

Mr. Roller spoke up in Mr. Westerlage's defense to say that Mr. Westerlage had been bringing up the issue for months. The Board had never addressed his concerns. Mr. Westerlage is frustrated, Mr. Roller continued. He perceives the timeliness of the financial reports as an issue. Mr. Roller expressed that it wasn't personally an issue for him and admitted that he reviewed the reports 20 minutes before each meeting. Regardless, the issue should have been addressed before this point, Mr. Roller concluded.

Mr. Roller said that he had also spoken with Ms. Fritz earlier that day. Ms. Fritz was paid to do a job, one that was low on her priority list. If timeliness is a concern, Mr. Roller continued, the Department needs to increase her pay to move up the priority list. He expressed that he didn't see a reason to change things and didn't think a suitable replacement

could be found for what Ms. Fritz is paid. Mr. Roller concluded by saying that wanted to keep Ms. Fritz.

Mr. Schoenbein shared that Ms. Fritz does a lot of work for the Department that she doesn't charge for. Mr. Rosenberg said that he agreed with Mr. Roller and tended to review reports the day of the meeting. The issue needed to be cleared up with Mr. Westerlage, Mr. Rosenberg said. He then asked Mr. Walton what his opinion was on the issue. Mr. Walton asked what the policy was. Mr. Pettit recounted the history of moving the meeting in order to pay the bills on time. The cutoff date, he explained, was supposed to be the Friday before the meeting. Consequently, Ms. Fritz is often working on Sunday when she should be with her family. She often finishes very late at night in order to get the reports out by Monday, Mr. Pettit continued. He then expressed that he likes to have the reports the day before the meeting in order to have time to review them.

Mr. Pettit then explained that Mr. Schoenbein had submitted \$4,000 in invoices, including Xcel Energy bill, just yesterday. Ms. Fritz is trying to be diligent in doing her job, Mr. Pettit expressed. Mr. Walton said that he thought it came down to priorities: Was it more important to pay the bills or get the reports early? Both Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Roller agreed that Mr. Walton had stated the issue perfectly.

Mr. Rosenberg made a *motion* to set a deadline for receiving the financial reports the day before the monthly Board meeting. Mr. Roller seconded the motion.

Discussion followed whereby it was expressed that no one wanted to hold Ms. Fritz to a deadline. Mr. Schoenbein noted that Ms. Fritz will pay bills after the deadline because of her diligence. Mr. Roller said that he didn't want to give a specific deadline because then she could be cited for a violation of the policy. Mr. Carson recalled that when he was chief, the cutoff was the Sunday before the meeting, with an addendum at the meeting if necessary.

Mr. Pettit asked Mr. Schoenbein when the most recent bills had been received. "Friday or Saturday," he answered. Mr. Walton asked if Ms. Fritz did the work on Sunday because she chose to do so. Bills have to be given to her in a reasonable fashion, he added. Mr. Roller expressed that he wasn't in favor of holding Ms. Fritz to a strict deadline or he feared losing her. Mr. Roller asked if anyone really needs the reports on Monday. He again admitted to always reading them the day of the meeting. Mr. Walton suggested a cutoff day for the bills. Mr. Roller asked why a cutoff should be forced if the reports aren't really needed early.

Mr. Schoenbein noted that the process was working well with only one exception. Why change the process for one exception? Ms. Fritz does an informal addendum at the meeting anyway, he added. Mr. Pettit noted that addendum items are not reflected in the reports. Mr. Roller said that most expenses are preapproved. And, added Mr. Schoenbein, they appear in the following month's reports. Mr. Pettit reiterated that he had no problem with the current process.

Mr. Rosenberg withdrew his motion.

Mr. Walton asked how research could be done if the financial reports aren't received a reasonable amount of time ahead of the meeting. Mr. Rosenberg said that most research

involves asking Ms. Fritz questions at the meeting. Mr. Roller reminded that the Board can decide to not pay a check at the monthly meeting. Mr. Rosenberg said that it takes him about a half hour to review the reports. Mr. Walton said that he was personally happy with the current process but would need to receive the reports the day before the meeting to ensure he would have time to review them. Mr. Pettit reminded that Ms. Fritz has the reports out by Monday or Tuesday most of the time.

Mr. Rosenberg said that he thought Mr. Westerlage had overreacted. Mr. Roller said that it had been building. Mr. Pettit expressed that he likes to receive the Minutes ahead of time. He'd even like them sooner after the meeting. But, he added, Ms. Nelson does get them out earlier than Ms. Hutchins had. Mr. Rosenberg said that he thought the process wasn't broken and didn't need to be fixed. Mr. Walton agreed that the process should be left status quo. Mr. Roller suggested that Mr. Westerlage should have attended that evening's meeting if he wanted to debate the issue.

Mr. Schoenbein asked if Mr. Westerlage should be instructed not to contact Ms. Fritz. Mr. Roller responded that he thought Ms. Fritz's use of the word "harass" was an overstatement. "Snipe" would be a better word, he said. The bottom line is that Mr. Westerlage and Ms. Fritz don't work well together, Mr. Roller continued, adding that he works very well with Ms. Fritz. Mr. Pettit interjected that Ms. Fritz works well with everyone except Mr. Westerlage. Mr. Roller suggested that the two have different working styles.

Mr. Roller said that the Board needed to talk to Mr. Westerlage at the following month's meeting. Not that the Board doesn't appreciate where Mr. Westerlage's coming from, added Mr. Walton. The issue could have been short-circuited six months ago if the Board had addressed it then, said Mr. Roller. Mr. Pettit questioned if an Executive Session might be required with Mr. Westerlage. Mr. Roller spoke up to say that Mr. Westerlage was "a heck of a guy" and probably wouldn't want to beat up the subject. Mr. Schoenbein recommended putting the ball in Mr. Westerlage's court.

OLD BUSINESS:

Station Remodel Update

Mr. Carson said that work was still being done on the drawings. He briefly outlined what preliminary work had been done, including measuring the beams. Mr. Schoenbein noted that Ms. Nemer had sent an email saying that the Department could accept whatever donation amount was desired.

Email Regarding Life Insurance from Ms. Nemer

Discussion moved to an email addressing questions regarding life insurance for Department/Board members. In essence, Ms. Nemer advised that the District could purchase life insurance for volunteers but not for Board members. Mr. Roller expressed that he thought Ms. Nemer's email was very thorough and well laid out. Mr. Walton asked how dual members might be affected. Mr. Rosenberg said that in such cases, being a firefighter should qualify the individual for coverage.

Mr. Carson asked about EMTs. A section of the email that specified coverage for "volunteer firefighters" was reviewed several times. Were volunteer EMS personnel eligible for coverage? Mr. Roller asked about members such as Ms. Sears since she's not a Firefighter 1.

Mr. Schoenbein agreed that clarification was needed. Discussion followed about the term “firefighter.” Is it a generic word or not? Mr. Rosenberg asked Mr. Roller if he could email Ms. Nemer for clarification about EMTs as well as dual members. Mr. Roller agreed, adding that it could be discussed at the next month’s meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Election Recap

Mr. Pettit noted that the term limits ballot initiative had not passed. Mr. Schoenbein said that 647 people had voted. Mr. Pettit said that there had been confusion about the ballot issue. An information sheet had been needed. Mr. Carson said he had heard that people thought it applied to the chief position. Mr. Roller agreed that there was confusion with the verbiage. Mr. Schoenbein admitted that even he was confused when he read the ballot language.

Mr. Pettit shared that news of the District losing out on the term limits initiative made the November 11 local supplement to the *Denver Post*. Mr. Pettit read the brief article and noted that the final vote was 328 to 321 against the measure. Mr. Rosenberg said the issue could be pursued again in two years. If an election is needed to fill Board seats, an initiative could be added to the ballot then. Discussion followed about terms. Mr. Roller said that if putting an issue on the ballot only costs \$1,000, it might be worth working with a professional ballot writer. Mr. Rosenberg suggested that information about the issue be included in *Smoke Signals*. Mr. Schoenbein reminded that the Department can’t take an official position. Mr. Pettit clarified that the Board couldn’t. Mr. Schoenbein said that an article wouldn’t have to be biased, just factual.

Next Month’s Board Meeting

Mr. Pettit noted that the next month’s meeting would fall on December 22. Should it be changed? Mr. Schoenbein suggested Monday, December 20. Mr. Walton asked why it should be moved. Mr. Rosenberg said that he would have family in town. Mr. Pettit said that the Fire Boots had a meeting that would conflict with the Board meeting moving back a week. A decision was made to leave the meeting at its regularly scheduled time.

Mr. Rosenberg questioned whether Ms. Nemer’s other email regarding a variety of issues should be discussed. Mr. Pettit recommended tabling it until January.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 21:00

There being no more business to discuss, Mr. Rosenberg made a *motion* to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Walton and passed unanimously.

President:

Secretary:

MOTIONS MADE AND PASSED:

- To waive the reading of the October Minutes. *Motion made by Mr. Rosenberg; seconded by Mr. Walton; unanimous.*

- To accept the October Minutes as amended. *Motion made by Mr. Rosenberg; seconded by Mr. Walton; unanimous.*
- To approve checks #11351-11378, plus automatic payments and bank fees. *Motion made by Mr. Rosenberg; seconded by Mr. Walton; unanimous.*
- To adjourn the meeting. *Motion made by Mr. Rosenberg; seconded by Mr. Walton; unanimous.*

MOTIONS MADE AND NOT PASSED:

- To set a deadline for receiving the financial reports the day before the monthly Board meeting. *Motion made by Mr. Rosenberg; seconded by Mr. Roller; withdrawn by Mr. Rosenberg.*

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