

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PLACER HILLS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
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Alex Harvey  
Peter Hills  
Gary Johnson  
Stephanie Stuart  
Bret Tresidder

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## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING; January 9, 2013

### 1. Call to order; Flag salute; Roll call:

Director Hills convened the regular meeting at 7 p.m.

Directors in attendance: Harvey, Hills, Lofrano, Stuart and Tresidder; Johnson absent.

Staff in attendance: Chief Gow, District Manager Lofrano and Captain Nelson.

Guests: There were approximately 35 members of the public/staff.

### 2. Agenda approval:

Homeowners filed a claim against the district for damage to their driveway caused by the fire engine responding to an incident at their home. The claim was filed on December 14, 2012. The Board must hear and deny the claim within 45 days of it being filed. Motion made and approved to add this item to the agenda. (Tresidder/Lofrano). The amended agenda was then approved. (Tresidder/Lofrano).

### 3. Approval of the minutes:

The minutes of the regular meeting on December 5, 2012 were approved as written. (Lofrano/Tresidder). Director Lofrano stepped down from the Board.

### 7. Discussion and Action Items

#### a. *Oath of Office for Alex Harvey and Stephanie Stuart:*

Mr. Harvey and Ms. Stuart were sworn in by Director Hills. (Mr. Johnson was sworn in by the County Elections department).

### 4. Public Comment:

Apprentice Engineer Nick Paskey had previously addressed the Board on behalf of the Apprentices requesting not to re-test for their positions. Engineer Paskey is the only apprentice left – the district has lost three quality apprentices. The apprentices and part-time employees make up the backbone of this department. They make a fraction of what the full-time staff makes. He urged the Board to take a close look at the payroll and make it right.

Mr. Mike Mora joined the department in 1998 and worked as an apprentice. He asked the Board to look at the overall budget picture especially the health benefits. "We need to come together and have a plan".

Mr. Bob Jeffries felt that the 2-tier system was a slap in the face for Apprentice Paskey and that the Chief and Office Manager are overpaid. "This is a rural community and we don't need city type firemen". Mr. Jeffries was on the department for 27 years and got it to a good place.

Captain Pat Nelson started as a career firefighter in the 1980's. The paid staff was originally brought on to augment the volunteers. Currently we have no volunteers.

Mr. Fred Lofrano felt that the consensus from last month's meeting was that the community wanted to have 2 fire stations staffed 24-7 with paramedics at both ends of the district.

Mr. JB Stevens believed that there would be more volunteers if they were allowed to respond to calls. The volunteers need to be treated better.

Ms. Laurie Paskey moved to Combie Road, Meadow Vista because of the close proximity of the fire department. She stated that the healthcare benefits need to be reduced and some employees need to take a pay cut. Director Hills noted that the healthcare benefits are on the agenda and have been a long-standing issue that the district has been dealing with.

Mr. Bob Detwiler believes that the community does want paid staff but not necessarily at any cost. He encouraged the Board to make sure that all possible cuts have been made.

There was concern that station closures would be on future agendas.

5. Correspondence (not covered in Agenda items below): Director Hills will forward an interesting article about new laws pertaining to California public employers. It was authored by the district's counsel.

6. Information items:

a. *Fire Chief Ian Gow's report*

- Crews shut off a leaking propane tank that had rolled over due to the wet weather. Crews saved a critically ill man who drove to the fire station. He would not have survived if the station had been closed. There were 3 significant structure fires; an attic fire was held to its origin; there was a delay in raising the alarm to a fully involved house fire in Clipper Gap. Crews also saved a sheep from the canal.
- Chief Gow is reviewing more building plans, construction is picking up. Captain Nelson has completed the pre-plans for the Weimar Institute.
- Chiefs Gow and Paulus have drafted an evacuation plan for mass casualties in the schools.
- The generator was installed at the Applegate station to assist the elders in that community during power outages.
- The district is the only DMV drive test station in the County. Captains Fulfer and McKinney are the examiners. There is a \$160 fee for the test.
- There is a good chance that the State will reimburse the \$73,000 owed to the district in June.

d. *PHFSEA (Local 3800) report by Captain Nelson*

- No report.

7. Discussion and Action Items:

b. *Presentation by Caldwell, Flores, Winters Inc. a public finance company:*

Caldwell, Flores, Winters Inc. develops strategies to assist agencies with parcel tax measures. Mr. Guillen presented an overview of the district's demographics and outlined the procedure if the Board of Directors was interested in his company's services. A preliminary phone poll would cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

c. *Nomination and election of Board Officers and assignment of committee responsibilities:*  
President: Peter Hills was nominated and elected (Harvey/Tresidder)

Vice-President: Stephanie Stuart was nominated and elected (Tresidder/Harvey)  
 Secretary/Treasurer: Gary Johnson was nominated and elected (Harvey/Stuart)  
 Committee assignments as follows:

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>MEMBER</b>
BUILDING/LONG RANGE PLANNING	HILLS	JOHNSON
FIRE PREVENTION/EDUCATION	STUART	TRESIDDER
FINANCE/INSURANCE	TRESIDDER	HILLS
PERSONNEL/NEGOTIATIONS	JOHNSON	HARVEY
SPECIAL DISTRICT/LEGISLATIVE	TRESIDDER	HILLS

*d. 2012 Budget Revision and related facilities impacts, including potential closure of a fire station:*

CalPERS health plan representatives gave a presentation to the Finance Committee. Director Tresidder felt that the window to close a station had passed. Director Hills assumed that the \$73,000 from the State will go back into reserves. District reserves will be able to sustain the district's operations for 3 years. Strike team monies will go towards vehicle replacement. Preliminary numbers suggest that the revenue from property taxes is slightly higher than budgeted. In the independent audit report, the district made a positive \$90,000 compared to last year, mainly due to the 2 unfilled full-time positions. All avenues to reduce costs have been explored. The Board is looking at the fiscal stability of the district. The decision to down staff one position during the winter was not made lightly and was discussed extensively. Chief Gow reported that the distribution of calls is 40% for Meadow Vista, 40% Weimar and 20% Applegate. The average response time for the whole district is between 7 and 9 minutes. Mr. Lofrano stated that the Board ensures the operation of the district for the future. Both fire and medical costs have increased drastically.

Mr. Detwiler was curious why the Board did not accept Chief Gow's offer to reduce his salary. He thought it was important for the Board to look at every option. Another gentleman felt that the Board has lost the support of the community and that the closure was not the right thing to do with the amount of funds in reserves.

Mr. Jeffries stated that the Chief's salary would pay for five employees earning \$30,000. Director Hills countered that district staff is among the lowest paid in the County. It would be difficult to replace this Chief as he is on call 365 days a year.

*e. Potential change of district's health benefits carrier:*

The Finance Committee met with the CalPERS health group. Resolutions are being drafted to implement the changes. The Personnel committee still has to meet with the union. The district will have a future obligation to provide health contributions to retired employees. There is a mechanism in place to prefund these contributions. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the CalPERS health programs.

*f. Staff's request to surplus the 1995 ambulance.*

Mr. Jeffries felt that using the ambulance to respond to medical calls would both improve response times and save money. However this would not be practical as the district routinely runs calls back to back. The ambulance would not be up to standard even if the district was able to transport. Motion made and passed by all present to surplus the ambulance. (Tresidder/Stuart).

- g. Placer County Fire Chiefs request for Board members to complete a survey and send a representative to the Chiefs meeting in February. This is to begin discussions regarding countywide fire department cooperation.*

Chief Gow, as President of the Placer County Fire Chiefs Association, created a sub-committee to look at mergers and countywide cooperation. Supervisors Holmes and Montgomery are very interested in this. Director Hills is available to attend the Fire Chiefs meeting on February 14, 2013. Directors Harvey and Stuart were also interested in attending. All Board members were encouraged to complete the survey. Chief Gow felt that a countywide department was achievable in the next couple of years.

- h. Board consideration of a Resolution to participate in the countywide Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Program.*

The County created this program in 2008 on the eastside of Placer County and implemented it on the west-side a couple of years later. Unimproved parcel owners are encouraged to clear hazardous fuels if they are within 100 feet from an adjacent neighbor's structure. Chief Gow recommended participation in the program. It is complaint driven and there are some reimbursable costs associated with the program. Motion made and approved to move forward with the hazard abatement program. (Tresidder/Stuart).

- i. Board review and approval of the District Audit as prepared by Robert W Johnson, CPA.*

Director Hills noted that the audit demonstrated the efforts to reduce expenses. Motion made and passed to approve the District Audit for fiscal year 2011-2012. (Tresidder/Harvey).

- j. Discussion of the update of the Fire Facility Fee plan and schedule which is due this year with an approximate cost of \$12,000.*

In 2008, the district hired a consultant for \$12,000 to write the plan and fee schedule for the Fire Facility Fees. Legally, this must be completed every 5 years. Board gave permission to staff to solicit bids for this project and move forward with it after July 1, 2013.

- k. Potential change of day for future Board meetings.*

Director Hills will contact Director Johnson to discuss his request to change the day of the Board meetings to the first Thursday of the month. The February meeting will remain on the first Wednesday.

- l. Winchester Loan Payment:*

The district has been paying back a loan from Winchester for the fire engine. Winchester went bankrupt several years ago. Legal opinion is that there is no legal successor. The statute of limitations has run out. The district does not need to go to court.

- m. S-SV EMS Agency and AMR response times:*

No report.

n. *Approval of the expenses of \$95,366.62 for December 2012:*

Chief Gow noted that the maintenance account was over budget. Motion made and approved by all to accept the expenses for December 2012. (Tresidder/Harvey).

p. *Consideration of homeowners claim for damage to driveway caused by the fire engine.*

Motion made and approved by all present to deny the claim. (Tresidder/Stuart).

o. *Adjourn to Closed Session, Government Code 54957.6 (a) Labor Negotiations to discuss Memorandum of Understanding.*

Board adjourned into closed session at 9:23 p.m. The regular meeting was resumed at 10:05 p.m. Director Hills reported that the negotiating team was given direction.

8. Directors' comments:

a. *Report on activities of interest to the District which the Director is engaged in or is considering. No action will be taken on these items at this meeting.*

Director Stuart reported that she is applying for a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. Still waiting to hear about the SAFER grant.

b. *Request items for inclusion in subsequent meetings, or request a special meeting:*

Review of the Auditor's contract for services.

c. *Reminder of next Board meeting:*

Next regular Board meeting: Wednesday, February 6, 2013

9. Adjournment:

Motion made and approved by all to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. (Tresidder/Harvey)

Respectfully submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_



Gillian Lofrano, District Manager

Approved by:

Alex Harvey



Peter Hills



Gary Johnson

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Stephanie Stuart



Bret Tresidder

