

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PLACER HILLS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
P.O. Box 350, Meadow Vista, CA 95722  
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[www.placerhillsfire.org](http://www.placerhillsfire.org)



Alex Harvey  
Peter Hills  
Stephanie Stuart  
Bret Tresidder  
Mark Wright

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## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING; May 7, 2014

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

Director Hills convened the regular meeting at 6 p.m.

Directors in attendance: Hills, Harvey, Stuart, Tresidder and Wright.

Staff in attendance: Chief Gow, District Manager Lofrano.

Guests: Several guests.

2. Agenda approval:

The agenda was approved. (Wright/Stuart).

### BOARD WORKSHOP

The Board had a workshop to discuss the draft of the District's Bylaws. This was continued to next month. There was a short recess before the regular meeting was reconvened at 7 pm.

Due to the large crowd, approximately 70 people in attendance, the meeting was moved into the engine bays.

3. Approval of the minutes:

The minutes from the regular meeting on April 2, 2014 were approved. (Harvey/Wright).

4. Public Comment: None.

5. Correspondence (not covered in Agenda items below): District Manager Lofrano presented several emails and a list of phone calls received from the public in support of continuing Chief Gow's employment with the district.

6. Information items:

a. *Fire Chief Ian Gow's report*

- Call volume is the same with approximately 80% medical calls.
- Chief Gow thanked the Board members for his evaluation.
- Chief Gow was the Incident Commander at a mass casualty drill set up by Chief Paulus at Colfax High School. 33 patients were extricated in under 2 hours. It was a great cooperative effort by all the agencies involved.
- The Insurance Services Office evaluation is next week. Chief Jeff Armstrong from California City Fire spent a day assisting with the information. There is a chance the rating will improve from a "5" to a "4".
- All commercial inspections are up to date.
- We have completed 120 defensible space inspections. Chief Paulus, Cal Fire, recommended inspecting Placer Hills Road from Colfax to Meadow Vista. The fire break from McElroy Road to the river is almost complete.
- Chief Gow is the President of the Placer County Fire Chiefs for one more year. LAFCO's MSR will look at efficiencies and potential cost savings.
- The Fire Chiefs are heavily involved in the ambulance contract.

- Chief Gow enjoys working with the Foresthill Fire personnel. He is there for several hours 2 to 3 days each week. 2 Lieutenants were hired. District Manager Lofrano is helping with the budget.
- Chief Gow spends many hours on the DMV driver testing program.
- The narcotic safes track and identify the user. They will be installed soon.
- Engineer Slusher is working on a turnout inspection policy.
- Predicting a severe fire season. Captain Drone, Foresthill put on a fireline EMT and Paramedic class. Battalion Chief Kirk, Foresthill is assisting with computerizing the commercial inspections. Captain Nelson is completing the pre-plans for the target hazards.

c. *Colleen Lewis Auxiliary report*

- Auxiliary will be helping with lunch at the Strike Team Leader training this week.

d. *Captain Nelson's report*

- Fire Ops 101 training for Board members has been postponed until November.
- Wildland refresher training next week.

e. *The negotiating team did not meet with the union.*

7 Discussion and Action Items:

a. *Fire Chief's contract:*

Director Stuart, who had placed this item on the agenda, stated that the last couple of years had been difficult when it comes to fiduciary responsibility and fiscal accountability. This large turnout would have meant more when providing the evaluation for the Chief. Director Hills was confused why this item was on the agenda. Upon legal advice, negotiations for an employment contract typically take place in closed session with any action being reported in open session. If the action is to move forward with the agreement, legal counsel would then review the contract for a final time. The contract would then be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting in open session. The negotiations with the Chief have not been completed. Therefore, Director Hills placed the next item on the agenda to extend the Chief's contract by one month as it expires on May 31, 2014. The advice of legal counsel is to take no action on this item. Director Stuart asked how, as a Board, were they to know this is what legal counsel advised when it was not documented. Historically the Board Chair has been tasked with the responsibility to have direct contact with district counsel and disseminate the advice to the Board. Director Hills asked legal counsel to attend the meeting but she is out of town. Director Hills has no reason not to convey truthfully to the Board and the public the advice he was given by district counsel. Director Stuart was also concerned that the action of the Chief's contract was left until the "11<sup>th</sup> hour". Negotiations were delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Director Stuart moved to let the Chief's contract expire on May 31<sup>st</sup> and begin a nationwide search for a Fire Chief. The motion was seconded by Director Wright. It was then opened up for public discussion.

- Mr. Rucker, Applegate was concerned about going into a dangerous fire season without a Fire Chief.
- Ms. Russell, Applegate wondered why the contract could not be extended.

- Mr. Jaul, Meadow Vista, recommended rejecting the motion as it was against due process. Chief Gow is well qualified for the position.
- Mr. Healey, Heather Glen, along with the other 80 families in Heather Glen, depend on the fire department for emergency fire and medical services. He recommended that the Board extend the Fire Chief's contract.
- Ms. Maguire, Meadow Vista felt that this was a case of "rabble rousing".
- Ms. Cook, Applegate supports Chief Gow because he knows and supports this community. She did not think the nationwide search for a Chief would work.
- Mr. Evans, Business Owner Meadow Vista, was assisted by Chief Gow in getting his business license. Chief Gow has a well-trained force.
- Ms. Sweeney, Meadow Vista highly recommended extending the Chief's contract.
- Ms. McDonough former Board member, Weimar, noted that people do not attend the Board meetings when they support the Fire Chief. She recommended that Chief Gow's contract should be extended for a couple of years and then go on a national hunt.
- Director Stuart stated that as a Board they could not ignore the 60 people who attended the meetings in November and December in 2012 who had expressed the exact opposite opinion of the audience today. She has concluded that the Board is inconsistent. The Board froze the wages of the firefighters and then in turn approved substantial pay increases for the Chief and Office Manager. The Board tried for a tax measure and then attempted to close a station. These actions were prior to her position on the Board. She requested working on the Chiefs contract in January. A nationwide search for a Fire Chief is consistent with the position.
- Ms. Broadwell, Meadow Vista has known Chief Gow for many years. He is very responsible and does a magnificent job in the protection of our communities.
- Mr. Mapa, Applegate suggested extending the contract for 90 days.
- Mr. Bostick (sp), Lincoln has known Chief Gow for many years. He is a born leader and has dedicated his time and expertise to this department. It seems that the Board needs to work out their internal problems.
- Mr. Broadwell, a Meadow Vista resident for 50 years felt that dismissing the Chief would be unconscionable.
- Mr. Arrabit, Meadow Vista expressed that not extending Chief Gow's contract was irresponsible and would compromise public safety.
- Dr. Mulligan, Meadow Vista, noted that Chief Gow is devoted to patient care and is respected throughout Placer County.
- Mr. Root, Meadow Vista, stated that Chief Gow implements Board policy so he cannot be blamed for past policies. He commended the Board President in trying to stop the Board from doing something which may be liable.
- Mr. Adams, Weimar has great confidence in Chief Gow and requested the Board to keep him.

- Fire Chief Reed, Roseville, noted that the first national search for a Roseville Chief failed and that being without a Fire Chief is very harmful. The succession plan needs to be well thought out. He encouraged the Board to do their due diligence.
- Ms. Harlan, S-SV EMS Agency, reported that Placer Hills is the only successful ALS department throughout several counties.
- Captain Drone, Foresthill, pointed out that the Board's decision could be harmful to Foresthill Fire as well.
- Mr. Cunha, OES, could not think of a worse time to be changing a command structure in this significant drought/fire season. He relies heavily on Chief Gow in times of need.
- Chief Harris, Cal Fire, noted that there was over 200 years of fire experience at this meeting and that it speaks volumes for the support of Chief Gow. The Chiefs look for guidance from Chief Gow.
- Mr. Pedroni, AMR, said that Chief Gow holds the ambulance company accountable for its delivery of services. Chief Gow fights for improved services for his community.
- Mr. Griffith, Cal Star added that Chief Gow helped bring Cal Star to this area. Chief Gow also helped him as a neighbor on a fire last summer.
- Chief Paulus, Cal Fire read a letter from Mr. Conners who was surprised that the Board was even questioning the Chief's contract. Chief Paulus encouraged the Board to take advantage of Chief Gow for as long as they can.
- Ms. Reese thanked Chief Gow who personally helped with their defensible space clearing.
- Mr. Witz, Meadow Vista, voiced concerns about political problems within the Board. Chief Gow has assisted him with his insurance rates, fire hazard removal and fire safe presentations. Chief Gow has his act together!
- Mr. Jeffries, Weimar was the department's Fire Chief when the budget was \$43,000. He feels that since 9-11 fire departments have been asking for more money. Mr. Jeffries worked with Chief Arrabit to get the ISO rating of 5. Director Stuart has been diligent and hard-working since she has been on the Board. Mr. Jeffries is not in favor of getting rid of the Chief but would like to see a year to year contract.

Director Tresidder was baffled by the motion and thought it would be irresponsible to approve it. Director Hills found the proposed motion inappropriate and thought it foolhardy and irresponsible to leave the district without a fire chief at this time. It would cause great disruption to the district's activities. There is no game plan and the recruitment process would take time. He urged the Board to follow the advice of legal counsel. He hoped that if the motion did pass that it would not leave the district open to liability. He cannot support the action and urged the Board to direct the negotiating team to complete the Chief's negotiations. He then called for the vote on the motion. Motion failed 4 votes to 1 with Director Stuart being the only vote in favor of the motion.

*b. Extension of Fire Chief's contract to allow for completion of negotiations:*

The extension of Chief Gow's contract to July 2, 2014 would give the negotiating team adequate time to complete the process and report back to the Board at the Closed Session at the June meeting. On the assumption that a new contract is forthcoming, the Board would then take action in open session at the July meeting. Director Harvey moved to extend the Chief's contract to July 2<sup>nd</sup> which was seconded by Director Tresidder. Chief Gow concurred with the contract extension. Motion passed unanimously. At the Chair's discretion and in light of the previous motion, Director Hills suggested that the Board consider appointing an alternate with himself on the negotiating team which is currently Directors Hills and Stuart. Director Stuart does not believe her motion would affect her ability to negotiate in good faith. She was impressed with the outpouring of support for both the Chief and the firefighters. She asked the Board to reconsider. There was no change to the negotiating team.

c. *Fire Facility Fee Plan and Schedule update:*

The Finance Committee continues to look at the material presented by the consultant. There is no update at this time.

d. *Foresthill FPD's request for a one year contract for Administration Services:*

Foresthill FPD's current contract for Administrative Services from Placer Hills FPD expires on June 30, 2014. Foresthill FPD submitted a letter of interest for a one year contract from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. Chief Gow encouraged the Board to create a committee to discuss the contract. He enjoys working with Foresthill and would like to continue. Invoices have been sent to Foresthill for the Administrative services for March and April. Director Wright would like the actual costs incurred with this agreement. Director Tresidder volunteered to be on the committee with Director Hills to negotiate with Foresthill. The district will need to assign the Chief's administrative duties to someone else while he is in Foresthill. Motion made and approved unanimously to create an adhoc committee with Directors Hills and Tresidder to meet with Foresthill FPD. (Tresidder/Wright).

e. *Discussion on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015:*

Director Hills reported that the revenues for this year are holding at about 3.7%. The County is predicting a 2% increase for next year. Staff has looked at the depreciation schedules. The district reserves will last longer to 2018.

f. *Budget update and approval of expenses of \$88,721.20 for April 2014:*

Staff will research a discrepancy of over \$400 from the checking account ending balance from March to the beginning balance in April. Motion made and passed by all present to approve the budget update and the expenses for April.

g. *Draft Bylaws/Policies for the District's Board of Directors:*

The discussion of the bylaws was carried to the regular meeting on June 4, 2014 at 6 pm.

The Board went into Closed Session at 9:10 p.m.

h. *Adjourn to Closed Session:*

- i. Govt. Code Section 54957.6 (a) Labor Negotiations: Board to discuss Memorandum of Understanding with NCPF Local 3800

- ii. Govt. Code Section 54957.6: Conference with Labor Negotiators (Hills and Stuart) (Fire Chief)

Board reconvened into open session at 10:49 pm. Director Hills reported that both the negotiating teams for items i and ii were given direction.

8. Directors' comments:


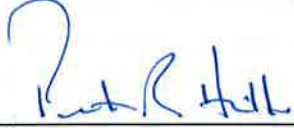
- a. *Report on activities of interest to the District which the Director is engaged in or is considering. No action will be taken on these items at this meeting.*
- b. *Request items for inclusion in subsequent meetings, or request a special meeting:*
- c. *Reminder of next Board meeting:*  
Wednesday, June 4, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Meadow Vista Fire Station.

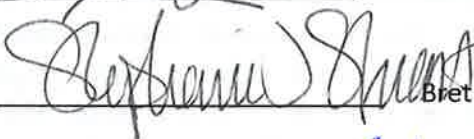

b. Adjournment:

Motion made and approved by all present to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:   
Gillian Lofrano, District Manager

Approved by:

Alex Harvey  Peter Hills 

Stephanie Stuart  Bret Tresidder 

Mark Wright 