

**COLESTIN RURAL FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
March 13, 2009**

**PRESENT:** Cheri Avgeris, Carolyn Brafford, Tod Davies, Peggy Moore, Teri Thomas, Steve Avgeris, Andy Herskind, Carole Herskind, Betsy Bradshaw, Jeff Burns (CAL Fire)

**ABSENT:** None

Peggy called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

**MINUTES**

It was M/S/P (Thomas/Davies) to approve the minutes of the February Board meeting as distributed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Cheri reported that the checking account has \$15,155.08, the Savings \$1,667.60 and the Treasury account has \$32,849.13. There is \$20,346.07 in the rental activity account and we have spent \$19,301.93 of the \$39,648 that we generated this past season.

Cheri shared with the Board a letter from our insurance carrier, Wilson-Heirgood, which detailed the estimated insurance costs for next year.

**PROPOSAL FOR STIPENDS FOR FIRE FIGHTERS**

This subject was raised at the last Board meeting.

Teri reported that she has done some preliminary research on the tax code with respect to payment of stipends. The IRS is getting more rigid about stipends in non-profits. Currently, a person can receive \$30 a month, tax-free "no questions asked" over and above actual expenses. Otherwise, individuals receiving money without receipts and outside of the \$30 a month regulation would receive a 1099 from the fire district and be responsible for reporting to the IRS.

Jeff Burns commented that he has experience in both Butte and San Bernardino Counties in the 1980's with paying volunteers but he stated that much has changed since then.

The Board agreed that the intent of providing any kind of stipend is to draw in new and younger individuals to respond to emergencies in the Valley.

Steve laid out eight scenarios for the future of volunteers and CRFD. These are not listed in any order.

- 1) Pay per call (amount to be determined)
- 2) Research contracting out fire and medical to an outside agency. This might mean an increase in taxes.
- 3) A leadership change might bring in new people to train and serve.
- 4) If we can't get new people, down size equipment to match the volunteer numbers (go down to one engine, one water tender, one rescue unit). Revenue saved because of reductions would go back to the taxpayers.
- 5) District 5 would be willing, under their current Chief, to take the Ski Road to mile marker 2 ONLY. The Commissioners didn't approve the proposed annexation of the Ski Road to District 5. If this happened, most people in the Valley would lose their Class 9 insurance rating if a District 5 sub station was on the ski road since the distance for response time is greater than allowed by the insurance industry for a Class 9 rating.
- 6) Begin down sizing slowly to eventually phase out the District, leaving the Valley without CRFD.
- 7) Keep doing what we are doing. Steve pointed out that the average age of a fire fighter in CRFD is 53.6.
- 8) Explore moving to a fully paid department, which would cost approximately \$323,000 a year. This would be a very slim crew of five paid people (2 on, 2 off and one reserve) and the price does not include some kind of living space for the people on duty. It also does not include the cost of equipment. Currently people pay \$1.94 ½ cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation and we have 17 million dollars of assessed valuation. Taxes would need to be \$20.00 per 1,000 of assessed valuation to pay for this. Currently a value of \$200,000 costs the homeowner \$500 a year. The new amount would be \$5,000 a year. Based on the current rate of 40 calls a year it costs \$900 a call. Moving to the bare bones paid department would cost \$8,975 per call.

The Board agreed this information needs to be further discussed at the next meeting and we might want to have the information go out to the community.

## **BUDGET**

Sharron presented the Board with a draft of the preliminary budget for review and discussion. She stated a few budget assumptions, which include:

- The committee is seeking transparency, particularly because of the additional money generated from the rental.
- A long-term goal is to look at paid or partially paid department.

- Looking at a reserve that is built into the budget. A reserve has a ten year window and the category cannot be changed during that time. The idea would be to adopt a general category or two (such as equipment) to provide latitude for the Board.
- Provide more community education (more post cards and continue to upgrade the website).

Peggy suggested that we have a subcommittee to work on long term goals, or at least devote a meeting to discussing and adopting some. It was suggested that we have 5 and 10 year plans. Peggy suggested that was too difficult, given the changing nature of our community and the needs. She suggested a one, three and five year plan.

Before going through the budget in detail, Sharron stated that the Budget Committee asked that one of the requested rescue lights come from the 2008 budget. Sharron also recommended that we continue to figure 8% off the proposed levy since that is generally the amount of uncollected taxes. There is no money in the proposed budget for cleaning the fire house. The budget committee has volunteered to rotate cleaning it and would welcome other volunteers to help.

Teri suggested we should consider purchasing good wild land boots for regular volunteers.

Jeff reminded the Board that when we rent local equipment with Cal Fire, if Cal Fire is using their own personnel, they pay \$1,000 a day for the rental. If they are using our equipment and non Cal Fire staff, they pay \$1,800 a day.

After a lengthy review of the tentative budget and some amendments to the amounts in certain categories, it was M/S/P (Brafford/Thomas) to approve the tentative budget as amended for posting. The required length of posting is two weeks. The Board expressed its appreciation to Sharron Halverson, Karen Dwyer and Lisa Buttrey for all their work, once again, on the budget.

### **FIRE/RESCUE CALLS**

Steve reported that CRFD had 34 total incidents from January 1, 2008 until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. There were three calls since the last meeting.

### **PROPOSED NEPOTISM POLICY**

Peggy had forwarded to the Board a proposed nepotism policy. It was M/S/P (Thomas/Brafford) to approve the policy as proposed.

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Steve declined to give a full report in the interest of time but did inform the Board that there is no one at the moment that has all of the skill levels to perform as an Assistant Chief on the Oregon side. Andy Herskind is the Assistant Chief on the Hilt side. Steve is

hoping to have an assistant to the Chief and hope that at some point an individual will be available who has both the mechanical and management skills to be an Assistant Chief.

### **RAILROAD**

Tod reported that the railroad people are going to remove the material but they want a CRFD person to “ride the rails” with them and point out where they are. Steve agreed to contact them.

### **GRANTS**

Tod reported that we received the safety grant of \$1,042 towards the security system in the station. More information on the clearing land opportunity will be discussed in April.

### **COMMUNITY MEETING**

The Board agreed that we need to have a community meeting. We might want to do this in June.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at the Hilt Church at 6 pm on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

M/S/P (Davies/Brafford) to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy A. Moore