

**COLESTIN RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

March 9, 2012

PRESENT: Pam Haunschild, Alissa Lipking, Peggy Moore, Teri Thomas, Cindy Warzyn, Steve Avgeris. Sharron Halvorson (Budget Chair), Lisa Buttrey (Budget Committee), Karen Dwyer (Budget Committee). Chief Bernie Paul, Keith Callison, Darin Dow (all Cal Fire), Greg Alexander (ODF), Howard Hunter, Tom (BLM), Nancy Ames (community member)

ABSENT: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 at the Hilt Church.

MINUTES

It was M/S/P (Lipking/Warzyn) to approve the February minutes as distributed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Teri passed out a budget comparison document, which the Board thanked her for as it makes looking at the budget, year to year, easier. There was not much to comment on as we continue to be in good shape financially. Cindy reported that she was able to get the County to cut the cost of the electrical permit for the generator in half. She was able to save us \$116.

BUDGET

Sharron and the budget committee passed out additional information. They moved some money so that we are able to offer Fire Fighters a short sleeve and a long sleeve shirt and a firefighter decal for their vehicle. The Board thought it was an inexpensive way to acknowledge the tremendous commitment our volunteers make to CRFD.

The budget only reflects about half the cost of a new set of turnouts. We will need to fundraise or write grants to purchase additional clothing. The cost of outfitting a firefighter is close to \$5,000 each. This includes the wild land and structure gear, boots, fire shelter.

Teri mentioned the cost of insuring those on the roster as active fire fighters. There are 23 volunteers listed currently.

After some brief questions the Board was prepared to vote on the tentative budget. Peggy suggested that if the proposed tentative budget is acceptable to the Board, we could pass it as the official tentative budget to sunshine to the community. Betsy will post them on the upper road and in the Hilt area by the mailboxes for public comment. We can vote on the final budget, accept public comment and be prepared to submit the budget to the state at the April 20th meeting. It will need to be posted no later than March 29th to meet the sunshine requirement.

It was M/S/P (Thomas/Lipking) to approve the tentative budget as submitted by the Budget Committee. The Board thanked the Budget Committee for all their work, once again. They do a wonderful job of working up a flawless budget.

MONUMENT

The Board welcomed our guests – Greg Alexander from ODF, Howard Hunter and Tom from BLM, Nancy Ames – who have accepted our invitation to discuss the Monument and Wilderness Area with us to provide clarification and information so that we are informed how we can continue to provide protective fire services to our Valley and work within the parameters of the federal laws dealing with these areas.

Peggy began by having people introduce themselves and their relationship to the fire service. She emphasized that CRFD is not interested in the political issues surrounding the Monument but rather seeks to understand the issues surrounding the monument and wilderness areas and find ways we can work together to provide a fire safe Valley.

Tom and Howard provided excellent maps of the areas, background on the establishment of the monument and wilderness designation (and the difference between the two) and clarified how fire is dealt with in these areas. They have left these with us as well as a very detailed picture of areas in the monument and wilderness areas that have a legend at the front and can be used by engineers and firefighters responding to an occurrence in these areas. It's sort of a picture "run book."

They emphasized that while these areas are protected and the goal is to protect wildlife, rare plants and the general eco structure in the areas, threat to life and or property does still come first. The first choice in a fire in the wilderness area is to not use mechanized equipment, including chain saws. However BLM has a contract with ODF to provide fire protection in both wilderness areas and the monument. If, in the professional opinion of ODF supervisors, it is necessary to bring in mechanized equipment that can be done with the approval of BLM. When a fire is reported, the contact between ODF and BLM begins immediately. BLM knows that ODF comes to a fire with a low boy and a dozer. They also have a plane available so that fire fighters and retardant can be used on the fire. When asked the time it would take to get appropriate approval, they said about ten minutes at most.

Key to mechanized equipment in the wilderness area if the fire threatens to leave the wilderness. At that point, responding agents are free to use whatever is needed without permission.

Howard reinforced the point that there is no such thing as private property in wilderness designated areas. And in the private areas surrounding the wilderness, anything can be used. In the Wilderness Area, if life or property is immediately in danger and the best way to contain the fire is to use a dozer, permission may be given by BLM to ODF to use equipment. And we were assured that on rare occasions that has happened. Sometimes, particularly if the fire is 10 acres or less and not on the edge of private land, it is better to contain the fire in the wilderness and let it burn under contained conditions than to bring the dozers in.

BLM representatives showed on the map that in 30 years there have been three fires in the Monument.

ODF, CAL FIRE, BLM and CRFD can and should continue to work together and communicate immediately if a fire erupts in either Monument or Wilderness areas. ODF manages the fire on BLM land through contracts. These are carefully monitored by both agencies and thus far there have been very few issues.

Board members were appreciative of all present to help us understand this delicate and important relationship. Some of the clarifications were new to some of the Board members and knowing that timely response is available, that there is no private land in wilderness areas, the ODF has the authority to manage the fire and understands that CRFD might well be first response to a fire and that staying in communication with ODF will allow us begin containment efforts made us feel much more comfortable and much clearer on this subject.

NEXT MEETING

The April Board meeting has been moved to Friday, April 20th rather than the 13th.

It was M/S/P (Warzyn/Thomas) to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Moore

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Approval of Final Budget

Discussion of Ski Road – charging for services in the light of Fire District 5

Changing the way we charge home owners outside the District for service