

**COLESTIN RURAL FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
July 10, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Pam Haunschild, Peggy Moore, Teri Thomas, Cindy Warzyn, Steve Avgeris.

**ABSENT:** Tod Davies (excused)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Betsy Bradshaw, Lisa Buttrey, Karen Dwyer

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 and a quorum was established.

**MINUTES**

It was M/S/P (Warzyn/Thomas) to approve the minutes, which were re-sent with a correction.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Teri sent the Treasurer's Report electronically but also provided handouts. In light of the length of the Chief's report, Teri did not review the report but offered to answer any questions. The balances are: \$ 10,899.80 in the Checking account and \$101,891.67 in the State Treasury account. There were no questions.

**PICNIC**

Cindy reported that Jeane and Frank Marin are happy to do the cooking again this year.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

While not on the published agenda, Karen and Lisa asked to discuss the communications in light of the current [Klamathon] fire.

Karen had prepared a handout which outlined some of the concerns along with helpful recommendations for correcting them. There was also a section on comments from residents.

STEVE CAME IN AT 6:15 FROM A MEETING IN YREKA WITH CAL FIRE.

Steve mentioned he had a lot of comments to share about communication as well.

A lengthy discussion occurred around the subject. It included the following points:

- Several board members said the Facebook information from Cal Fire was helpful. There is also an unmonitored Twitter feed that Pam found helpful. The drawback is that there is no comment section.
- Lisa mentioned in the three or so areas where there was a point person, the phone tree worked as well. However, there has been a lot of turnover and some of the point people in the 12 sections are either gone or out of the area.
- The door to door notifications that the strike teams conducted were most helpful but they did not get to all residents.
- Areas we need to be mindful of: not everyone does or will use Facebook. Therefore, we need to have several ways to contact residents in the case of a fire. Automated texts were suggested as well as Facebook. In addition, the fire website for CRFD is monitored and updated daily in critical times. If the information is received from the appropriate agencies, it is immediately posted.
- There was a lengthy discussion about the misinformation that can occur on Facebook via people's comments. Examples included: the Colestin was burning, etc. Steve commented that no information is better than incorrect information. There are some legal liabilities with organizational Facebook pages.
- Steve will institute a PIO [public information officer] position, who will accompany him in the truck when he is responding to serious fire calls. That will ensure that the information being given is accurate and that he is not bogged down trying to provide information while dealing with the fire.
- We will seek a person and some alternates who can serve this function.
- Lisa has agreed to revisit the phone tree and fix it as much as she can. The Board believes this fire is an obvious wakeup call and people might be more inclined to step up to help in this area.

## **THE FIRE**

Steve reported we had and have one large vegetation fire. The facts are that it is 36,500 acres; 72 structures were lost and five out buildings. Thus far it is 13.6 million in suppression costs. It began at 12:31 pm on Thursday, July 5. One engine made an initial response. The fire began on the SE side of the Klamathon Rd and the Klamath River.

Steve said our volunteers were amazing. 100% of those in the [Colestin] valley showed up to work. They arrived, laid hose, and fought the fire like professionals. Steve ordered up two cats (his and another one offered by a friend); Terry Lehman and Christopher Avgeris were the operators. Poncho called Steve and brought his equipment and two firefighters.

Steve reported that the outside agencies were very helpful and Cal Fire and ODF worked very well together.

Steve will provide Peggy with the names and contact information for all needing thank you letters which we will send on behalf of the Board and the community.

Steve mentioned that he has now been receiving calls from community members, angry that they are not allowed back in. (That has been rectified). Peggy suggested that in handouts to the community and in other ways we communicate that ODF in Oregon and CAL Fire in California are the responsible incident commanders. Steve **MUST** follow their restrictions and their orders. And this needs to be made clear to our community.

Steve's quick action early on, which resulted in the cats coming in and the attack strategy being implemented literally saved the Colestin valley since the fire was coming towards us and the action of Steve and the volunteers turned the fire back.

## **THE FUTURE**

The Board discussion turned to next steps. People suggested that at the picnic we provide some educational information to attendees as well as some handouts. The general feeling was that was a good idea but we needed to have a response and communication with the community sooner.

The following steps will be taken:

- We will create a PIO position (with alternates) who will accompany the Chief in his vehicle when responding to a major incident. This person will be responsible for answering the phone, fielding questions and communicating to the public. This will free the Chief to attend to the business of the fire.
- We will seek Public Service Volunteers to "run errands" in the valley if access is restricted. This could involve checking on structures, feeding animals left, etc. They will not be used in dangerous situations.
- Steve will arrange for a meeting between the Board and appropriate other personnel with the two agency people responsible for communicating with other agencies (Michelle from ODF and Susan/Sara? From Ca Fire).
- We will hold a community meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup> from 9-10:30 am for the community at the Hilt Church. Betsy will either combine that information on cards when she sends out the ODF change to 'extreme' (which is expected by the end of the week) or send a separate card to residents, not the entire mailing list. This meeting will cover the following:

- ✓ Fire Safety and Prevention (Steve)
- ✓ Communication including sign ups, etc. (Karen, Tod)
- ✓ Q and A – all

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Steve reported that the water system will be ready in the next couple of weeks. It will hold 10,000 gallons of water. He has 300 feet to go. This will be in the middle of the valley and be of great assistance in case of fire.

Steve has put the older pagers into service to help with the current pager problem. They are more sensitive to signals. John Ames has agreed to work on the radios which will help.

Steve reported that he had ordered hose and equipment in the amount of \$5,000, based on last year's grant. It was finally delivered and we will need to pay for it through reserves since money from last year's grant primarily went for water storage. Steve mentioned that he was very happy to have this on the current fire.

Steve provided one of his cats for free. The other D7 is owned by someone else and Steve would like to compensate that person for the rental of the cat. It was 6 hours at \$125.00. In the event that we need it in the future, paying for it will ensure that it will be available. It was M/S/P (Warzyn/Thomas) to pay \$750 for the rental of that cat.

Steve will ask Poncho to invoice us for his services.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Hilt Church.

It was M/S.P (Haunschild/Warzyn) to adjourn at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Moore