



Long Valley Fire Protection District
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING August 10th, 2022

Date: Wednesday, August 10th, 2022
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, CA 93546

Members Present: Hank Brown, Sharon Shaw, Ron Day, Tom Beveridge, Kim Czeschin

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Acting Fire Chief Vince Maniaci, Division Chief Fred Stump, District 2 Mono County Supervisor Rhonda Duggan, Training Officer Scott McGuire, Fleet Manager Billy Czeschin, Volunteer Soibian Spring, Secretary Katie Durgin via teleconference, Sunny Slopes public present: Hap Hazard, Nick Bianchini, Evan Cassaday, John Millane, Bob Wilsey, Scott Wing-Hartlean, Kelly Alvarado, Yuliana Garcia, Ismael, Alvarado, Lee Scotese, Cheryl Hart, Sheila Irons, Erin Cassaday, Meg Alston, Eric Bruechner, SanJay Choudkrie, Clon Vaughan, Brian Gomez, Keith McCue, Emily McCue, Rocky Scholl, Karen Scholl, Annie Rinaldi, Becky Davis, Rollin Davis, Alastair Greig, Sharon Millane, Jim King, Allan Weidner, Heidi Goodwin, Steve Touns, Ruby Hoyng, Francisco Rosalba Gomez

Others Absent: None

1. Call to order, roll call, Pledge of Allegiance, and announcements. Meeting called to order at 7:14pm. Commissioner Shaw introduced the Board of Commissioners to the public present at the meeting. No announcements.
2. Opportunity for public to address the Board on non agendized items. All public attending the meeting are present to discuss the proposed fire station in Sunny Slopes area (refer to discussion on Agenda item #9).
3. Approval of the Minutes of the July 13th, 2022 regular meeting. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BROWN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DAY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 13TH, 2022 REGULAR MEETING. Motion passed 5-0.
4. Chief's Report.

- A. Volunteer's Report. Volunteer Soibian Spring reported that this past month the volunteers were able to work the Bluesapalooza Festival in Mammoth Lakes. Training Officer Scott McGuire reported that there have been seven calls since the last regular meeting, most of them medical aids. Scott reported on the volunteer trainings. He stated that there have been four trainings since the last Board meeting. The trainings focused on rope skills and wildland training. The volunteers also toured remote parts of the community including McGee, the roads behind Tom's Place, and Pine Glade.
- B. Report on Current Fire Department Activities, Assignments and Schedule for potential Board direction. Seven calls since last regular meeting.
- C. Long Range Planning Discussion.
- (a) Personnel. No news.
 - (b) Airport. Chief Maniaci reported Long Valley Fire will be conducting a full review of the new Snow Removal Equipment (SRE) and Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) facility that will be built at the airport. Chief Maniaci is working to see if Long Valley Fire can have an engine present at the new building.
 - (c) Geothermal. Chief Maniaci reported the Casa Diablo IV (CD IV) geothermal plant is officially online. He has not yet received any information from them regarding performing a walk through. Fred Stump commented on the tax revenue that will come from the CD IV plant. He stated that because the facility is built on federal land, there will not be secured property tax revenue. However, there will be an unsecured property tax on the value of the improvements to the facility, a tax on the electrical infrastructure, and an additional tax on the amount of electricity produced. He explained that all of these taxes will go into the county pool. Long Valley Fire will then receive a percentage of the county tax pool.
 - (d) Station Maintenance. Chief Maniaci reported that Chris Baitx memorial rock is complete. Chief Maniaci will have the rock installed within the week. Chief Maniaci has obtained a quote he would like to discuss with the Board to replace all lights at the station with LED lights.
 - (e) Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance. Commissioner Brown asked regarding the old 3232 engine and the crack that is in the motor mount. Equipment Maintenance Manager Billy Czeschin clarified that the crack is not in the metal, but in the rubber. Billy Czeschin will follow up on getting the motor mount issue addressed.
 - (f) Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations Discussion and Possible Action. No news on the Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations. Chief Maniaci reported

that he has formulated separate letters for the three projects in the area that are being proposed at this time: the Appleton project, the Reedy Schott project, and the project behind Crowley Lake. Chief Maniaci explained the nature of the three projects being proposed. The Appleton project is an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) that concerns the current road not meeting the current or proposed CalFire fire safe regulation criteria. Chief Maniaci is providing a No Will Serve letter to this property. The Reedy Schott project concerns an overhead electrical line that is being moved. Chief Maniaci is providing a letter stating that the district is opposing the above-head electric line and would like to have it in-ground. The project on the backside of Crowley Lake concerns a proposal of year-round yurt structures used for camping. Given the access difficulty and lack of water, Chief Maniaci will be providing a No Will Serve letter for this project as well.

Chief Maniaci reported that Ales Tomaier is the new Fire Chief for Mammoth Lakes Fire Department. Chief Maniaci informed the Board that he and Assistant Training Officer Pete DeGeorge attended a radio communication vendor meeting. At this point the county and Town of Mammoth Lakes are still moving forward with the California Radio Interoperable System (CRIS). Office of Emergency Services (OES) is hoping to have six radio sites active by fall of 2022. Long Valley Fire will be provided with demo radios to begin to get familiar with the system. Chief Maniaci said the vendors have a portable radio repeater that Long Valley Fire can purchase to communication coverage in the Upper Rock Creek, Convict, and other dead spot communication service areas.

5. Board Review/Approval of Payment Warrants since July 13th regular meeting. All Board members have reviewed the warrants since last regular meeting. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BROWN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DAY TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT WARRANTS. MOTION PASSED 5-0.
6. Discussion on Possible Hiring of New Fire Chief. Chief Maniaci reported that he received a Letter of Intent from Training Officer Scott McGuire. Chief Maniaci and Scott McGuire are discussing the details of the position and will potentially begin the application process.
7. Review Draft of Long Valley Fire Protection District Bylaws. Chief Maniaci presented the updated draft of the Long Valley Fire Protection District Bylaws to the Board for review. He stated that there needs to be a Resolution in order to continue to do videoconferencing for regularly held Board meetings. The Resolution will state that the department will continue to use Google Meet and abide by the current California standards of the Brown Act. Chief Maniaci stated that the Board needs to designate a date that the recordings of the meetings are to be removed. He suggested that 60 days is an appropriate length of time that the department will keep the recording. Chief Maniaci discussed with the Board the revisions he and Commissioner Brown made to the bylaws. One of the items that Chief Maniaci needs to confirm before adopting the bylaws is whether ad hoc committees need to be agendized.

8. Review of paid staff positions, duties, and pay scale and possibly make any changes deemed necessary. Commissioner Brown began the discussion with questioning if the department needs the positions of the Assistant Fire Chief, Training Officer, Assistant Training Officer, and an in-house mechanic. Commissioner Brown stated that he believes the department does not need a paid staff position for building maintenance. He said that building maintenance should be subbed out to a contractor when the station has an issue. The low maintenance issues that come up at the station can be fixed by volunteers and staff. Commissioner Shaw stated that one of the reasons this agenda item needs to be addressed is because currently the Fire Chief has not had the support he needs. Changes need to be made to ensure the new Fire Chief does receive necessary support. Commissioner Shaw stated that the Board of Commissioners agrees that the taxpayer's money is not being well spent due to inadequate performance of some of the paid staff positions.

Discussion was made regarding the Assistant Chief position. Commissioner Brown suggested eliminating the Assistant Fire Chief position. In lieu of an Assistant Fire Chief, Commissioner Brown suggested creating a pay structure for Officers to step in as Duty Chief when the Fire Chief is unavailable. Commissioner Shaw stated that the Assistant Chief position should remain, but that she would like to see the Assistant Chief truly support and assist the Fire Chief. She would like to see the Assistant Chief step in as Duty Chief at minimum two days per week or eight days per month. Commissioner Day agreed with Commissioner Shaw that there needs to be an Assistant Chief who can provide sufficient support for the Fire Chief position. Volunteer Fire fighter Soibian Spring suggested keeping the current job positions but enforcing more accountability.

Discussion was made regarding restructuring of the salary positions. Commissioner Brown stated that because the salary positions all report to the Fire Chief, restructuring should be decided by the prior Fire Chief Fred Stump, acting Chief Maniaci, and the new Fire Chief. Fred Stump commented that the job of the Board of Commissioners is to approve positions and their level of funding. The Fire Chief is the one who administers those positions. Fred Stump suggested that if the Board wants to keep the current department positions and fund them as is, then they could include a stipulation that the Fire Chief can adjust the salaries arbitrarily based upon performance. Commissioner Day stated that the responsibility of the Board is to dictate the taxpayer's money and make sure that money is being spent appropriately related to these positions. He stated it is then the responsibility of the Fire Chief and volunteers to make sure the approved paid positions are being performed adequately and to a satisfactory standard. After discussion, the Board agreed to have the Fire Chief and Officers revamp all duties and positions and present their plan to the Board for approval.

9. Discussion on Proposed Fire Station in Sunny Slopes Area. Commissioner Shaw notified the public that the public comment section of the meeting will be held short given the large amount of people present.

Division Chief Fred Stump made opening comments. He stated that he wished the public attending this meeting would have attended the prior Board meeting to hear his presentation on all the efforts that have been made in the past by Long Valley Fire to build a fire station in the Sunny Slopes area. Fred Stump gave a brief recap of his prior presentation highlighting the lack of support from the Sunny Slopes residents at the time when this project began as well as the lack of funding available for this project. Fred informed the public of some of the efforts made in the past by Long Valley Fire including applying for grants three separate times. All were unsuccessful. After meeting with Mono County Planning Department, they had several stipulations on what they wanted for the fire station. Long Valley Fire accommodated the needs of the county. Through all the efforts made for this project the largest issue was lack of funding. Fred Stump assured the public that they have not been ignored in their efforts to build a fire station. Fred Stump noted that the public must be aware that even if a fire station is built in the Sunny Slopes area, it may not solve the problem of the inability to acquire homeowners' insurance. Fred Stump assured the public that Long Valley Fire has always accepted that Sunny Slopes is part of the district and requires a full response from all volunteers.

Chief Maniaci commented that Long Valley Fire has this project on their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and have no intention of removing it. Fred Stump and Chief Maniaci both informed the public that building a fire station in the Sunny Slopes area is a good idea. However, the constraints of funding and lack of volunteers to staff the fire station are major issues that need to be considered. Currently the department has two volunteers from the Sunny Slopes area. Chief Maniaci stated that we not only need the funding to build and maintain the station, but also the volunteers to run it. Training Officer Scott McGuire stated that he is very encouraged by the amount of public showing their support for this project, however he emphasized that they also need to understand the commitment. He commented about the amount of training that is required for volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to attend a minimum of 23 trainings (totaling 46 hours training time) in a year, weekend trainings, as well as outside trainings periodically throughout the year. Scott informed the public that it costs the fire department thousands of dollars to outfit and train a single volunteer. He stated that one of the challenges emotionally and economically is having an individual commit as a volunteer firefighter, the department spends the money and time needed for training and equipment, and then three months later the individual leaves. Scott McGuire ended his comments with reemphasizing that if people are considering and wanting to be a volunteer, they need to understand that it is a commitment.

Public Comment. Commissioner Shaw opened a period of public comment with a three-minute maximum per public comment:

- a) Sunny Slopes Resident Hap Hazard thanked everyone from the Sunny Slopes community who attended the meeting. Hap Hazard informed the Board that the public present makes up about 60% of the property owners in the Sunny Slopes area. Hap emphasized to the Board that he is not speaking on behalf of a small vocal minority, but that is representing the vast majority of the Sunny Slopes

community. Hap provided to the Board several written statements of support from community members who were not able to attend the meeting. Hap stated that it is good that the public hears from the Board that this project has not been forgotten by Long Valley Fire, but that it is simply not being moved forward. Hap said about 11 years ago he was given a building plan for fire station from Fred Stump and Chief Manaici that they developed with the county. Hap argued that the plan includes way more than what the community wants or thinks they need. Hap handed out a new building plan to the Board of a basic fire station layout that is more accurate to the desires of the community. Hap stated that the diagram he is presenting is much smaller, much more affordable, and much easier to maintain. Hap commented that within this community there are already many people who have shown interest to volunteer with Long Valley Fire.

- a. Commissioner Shaw asked the public who have shown interest to volunteer with the fire department if they are aware that they will need to volunteer for the entire district, not just the Sunny Slopes area. The public responded that they are aware.

Hap closed with presenting a letter from Birchum Community Water District stating their support of this project and that they will work with Long Valley Fire Department in moving forward.

- b) Sunny Slopes resident Lee Scotese asked any public individuals present to raise their hand if they are in support of building a fire station in the Sunny Slopes area. Lee commented he agrees with Fred Stump that building a fire station may not help residents to obtain homeowners insurance. However, Lee Scotese is still in support of the project to provide more efficient emergency response to the area.
- c) Sunny Slopes resident Steve Toups stated that there is a fire hydrant already present near the property where the station would be built. He stated he will volunteer as a firefighter for Long Valley Fire. He agrees with Lee Scotese that he is in support of the project not necessarily in hopes to obtain homeowners insurance, but instead to provide better emergency response time to that area. Steve stated that he has been in Sunny Slopes for 32 years and argued that he never remembers anyone saying no to building a fire station in the area. If there was pushback, he informed the Board that he himself has always been in support of this project.
 - a. Commissioner Shaw and Chief Maniaci both confirmed that they did receive push back from the Sunny Slopes community when they first began pursuing this project.
- d) Hap Hazard stated that the opposition Long Valley Fire experienced 11 years ago is no longer present. He commented that opposition at the county level was from three county supervisors ago that no longer have any say in the project. He also stated the two attorneys who threatened a lawsuit lived directly above the construction site. These individuals no longer reside in the Sunny Slopes area.

- a. Chief Maniaci made a point that between the start of this project years ago to now, this is the first that Long Valley Fire Protection District has ever heard of any support for the project.
- b. Commissioner Shaw emphasized that though we may now have the support of the community, Long Valley Fire does not have the funding for it.

Hap Hazard stated there is potential grant money through the United States Department of Agriculture. He explained that the new building plans are also much simpler than the original which will lower the proposed costs of the project. Hap Hazard stated that the community of the Sunny Slopes area is asking of the Board of Commissioners to begin discussions and explore other options in order to move forward with this project.

- c. Chief Maniaci responded stating that Long Valley Fire is not saying no to the requests of the community. However, he stated that the Sunny Slopes community needs to provide individuals to facilitate the grant writing process as well as other necessary tasks.

Discussion was made regarding establishing an ad hoc committee both from Long Valley Fire Protection District and residents of the Sunny Slopes area to move forward with this project. Hap Hazard requested that Long Valley Fire provide two Commissioners and the Fire Chief to be a part of the committee. Given that Long Valley Fire is in a transition phase of finding a new Fire Chief, they settled that the ad hoc committee would consist of two Commissioners and six members of the Sunny Slopes community. Commissioner Brown suggested that Hap Hazard take lead in working with the ad hoc committee on exploring funding sources for this project.

- e) District 2 Mono County Supervisor Rhonda Duggan commented that it is wonderful to see this large amount of people in agreement on pursuing this project. Rhonda expressed appreciation for the public stating that this is their livelihoods, their homes, their safety, their family, and their entire community. She shared that she is ready and willing to get involved in any way she can. Rhonda stated that there are things existing today that did not exist 11 years ago including several new funding sources, changes in building codes, and community support. She shared that she is willing to contact another supervisor to explore funding options to further this project. Rhonda stated there is no dispute that this project will be more expensive than it could have been years ago. However, the focus must be on what will be needed for the project now and what needs to be done to meet the needs of the Sunny Slopes community. Rhonda stated she is also willing to work with the ad hoc committee to move forward with this project.
 - a. Commissioner Shaw clarified that this project originally started more than 11 years ago. The department purchased the Sunny Slopes property in the mid-90's. Long Valley Fire Board of Commissioners worked very hard to get this project complete and were very disappointed at the attitude from the Sunny Slopes residents.

- b. Fred Stump agreed that given the increasing fire danger in the Sunny Slopes area, building a fire station is a really good idea. However, he emphasized to the public that volunteering to run the proposed fire station is a huge commitment.
- f) Nick Bianchini who works at the Forest Service station in Mammoth Lakes commented that there is need for a fire station, a fire engine, and a rescue vehicle in the Sunny Slopes area. Nick stated that the area does not need a large fire station, but one that is simple and affordable to do the job of protecting the community. He clarified that this fire station will not save the community from a large fire, but instead will be an opportunity to provide initial attack and medical response to the area.
- g) Training Officer Scott McGuire emphasized the training and time commitment it takes to staff a fire station. He highlighted that it takes years to even train and certify a volunteer to drive a fire engine. He also noted that it takes months to train a volunteer to properly handle a nozzle and respond to a structure fire. Scott made the point that in moving forward with this project, the number one thing the department will need are volunteers to show up. He stated that if the community wants this fire station, they need to start volunteering now.

In conclusion, the Board of Commissioners and the public agreed that an ad hoc committee will be established to explore all options including, but not limited to, architectural plans, volunteers to staff the station, funding sources, and potential restrictions from Mono County Planning Department. Commissioner Day and Commissioner Brown stated they will volunteer as they are able to serve on the ad hoc committee. Hap Hazard will report back at the September Board meeting with the members of the Sunny Slopes community who will serve on the ad hoc committee.

- 10. Update on Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF). No news. Carry over.
- 11. Discussion on solar panel installation at the fire station. Commissioner Shaw asked Fred Stump to share on this topic. Fred Stump commented that as the Fire Chief who helped the addition to the fire station be built and as a solar panel owner, he does not support installing solar panels on the station. Fred shared on some of the construction issues that arose when the station was built. One issue they found was that after a heavy winter, the snow would not come off the building. Due to this, the vents that go through the roof were damaged and needed to be fixed. Another issue they found was that the metal wall of the building began to bow due to heavy snow weight. The department had to reframe that entire side of the building to keep the wall from bowing. Given this, Fred stated that he is weary of mounting anything on the building including solar panels. Fred suggested the possibility of using the south facing parapet as a location for panel installation. He noted that the department may not get enough energy output for complete electrical coverage, but it could be an option to offset costs. Chief Maniaci suggested to include in the bid that the installation be done on the south facing parapet with the option for the department to hire a contractor to do additional structural reinforcement if need be. Chief Maniaci explained that the department must go to bid for this project. He has written a request for proposal draft for the Board to review. The Board agrees to have Chief Maniaci review the draft with

Fred Stump, make any necessary revisions, and move forward with submission. A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER BROWN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DAY, TO DIRECT CHIEF MANIACI TO REVIEW AND ADOPT THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SOLAR PANEL INSTALLTION TO THE NEW LOCATION AT THE FRONT OF THE FIRE STATION BEFORE SENDING IN FOR BID. Motion passed 5-0.

12. Secretary to the Board's Report. Secretary Durgin reported that the Volunteer Firefighter Length of Service Award (VFLSA) report has been submitted. Once she receives the updated invoice from VFLSA , she will forward it to Chief Maniaci and Commissioner Shaw to review. Secretary Durgin confirmed with Scheereen Dedman, the Mono County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, that Long Valley Fire is covered under the county Conflict of Interest code. Durgin reported that she will be leaving on a family camping trip August 28th through September 3rd. She stated that the trip will not affect her regular work, however she will be unavailable during the work week to answer emails or calls, but will follow up when she returns.
13. Review correspondence received since the last regular meeting. Secretary Durgin reported correspondence from Christian Mello with George Petersen Insurance Agency. Christian Mello was inquiring if Long Valley Fire is interested in hiring a financial advisor that he suggested. Secretary Durgin will forward the correspondence to Commissioner Shaw to review.
14. Review and adjust current FY budget line items as necessary and accept. Carry over.
15. New Business. No new business.
16. Call for Agenda items for next regular meeting. Discussion on Possible Hiring of New Fire Chief; Possible Adoption of Long Valley Fire Protection District Bylaws; Update on ERAF; Discussion on Solar Panel Installation at the Fire Station; Discussion on Proposed Fire Station in Sunny Slopes Area; Review of Paid Staff Positions, Duties, and Pay Scale; Resolution for Telecommunication at regularly held Board meetings.
17. Adjournment. A motion was made by Commissioner Beveridge, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, to adjourn the meeting and reconvene in regular session on September 14th, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Long Valley Fire Station, 3605 Crowley Lake Drive, Crowley Lake, California. The motion passed 5-0.

Katie Durgin
Secretary to the Board