

Battle Creek Fire District

Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting

March 31, 2021

Annual Meeting of Battle Creek Fire District called to order at 7:03 PM by Director Jim DeHaai in the Hayward Fire Hall with Directors Esposti, Summers, DeHaai, Reder, and Van Sambeek, Fire Chief Gadbois, Deputy Chief Lindblom, Accounts Manager Garrett Dixon, and Station Chief Nathan Kaustinen. Patrons Wayne Kummer and Jim Lintz also participated in the annual meeting.

Election of Directors and Officers

DeHaai called for election of three directors. The incumbent directors are DeHaai, Summers, and Van Sambeek. DeHaai stated that he wished to retire from the board and not be nominated for re-election. The other two incumbents indicated a willingness to be re-elected to a new two-year term.

DeHaai nominated Ray Summers (Hayward area), Leo Van Sambeek (Hermosa area), and Wayne Kummer (Keystone area) as Directors. Cofoid seconded the nominations. There were no additional nominations. By unanimous vote of the Directors, the nominations were closed, and the three nominees were elected Directors for two-year terms.

Cofoid nominated with second of Kummer, that Esposti be the new President of the Board. Unanimous approval.

Van Sambeek nominated, with second of Cofoid, Summers for Vice-President. Unanimous approval.

Summers nominated, with second by Cofoid, Van Sambeek remain as Secretary/Treasurer. Unanimous approval other than abstention by Van Sambeek

Summers voiced; on behalf of the District Board, the firefighters, and the District's patrons; "Thank You to retiring Director Jim DeHaai", who was instrumental in the efforts to merge the three former districts into the Battle Creek Fire District, its highly successful transition into a staffed firefighting organization, and its initial four years of financially sound operation. Esposti emphasized that the "thank you" is truly on behalf of all District patrons.

Minutes and Financial Report

Van Sambeek read aloud the minutes of the September 22, 2020 regular meeting. Jim Lintz pointed out that Buffalo Gap is a volunteer department not a fire district. Summers moved with second by Cofoid to accept the minutes as read and corrected. Motion passed unopposed.

Secretary/Treasurer Van Sambeek distributed and presented the financial information attached to these minutes. A few key points included:

- The ladder truck at McPhersons is still without title. Kummer volunteered to accept the challenge of securing a replacement title. If successful, the truck will again be offered for sale.

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Battle Creek Fire District

- Motion by Summers with second by Reder to officially enter into the records the document prepared by Van Sambeek for December 12, 2020 email resolution and unanimous Director approval regarding Fire Department and Fire District 2021 budgets. Unopposed.
- Discussion on mil levy limits, opt-out procedure, and capital outlay levy. The current mil levy for our tax request is 0.95 mils (the maximum allowed operating-funds mil levy is 1.00). Our capital-outlay mil levy is 0.00 (the maximum allowed capital-outlay mil levy is 0.60). Since we are not at either mil levy, there is no need for an "opt out." Some consideration should be given in the future in differentiating budget items as "operating" or "capital outlay." Heretofore, Hayward building payments (\$20,407 per year) and all truck purchases have been from tax-based operating funds or monies from contract (wildland) firefighting.
- Relative to a request at the last meeting the Hayward building "current" loan balance (December 21, 2020 prior to 2021 payment) was \$272,573.17; after the 2021 payment, the balance is expected to be \$262,803.

Moved by Summers and seconded by Cofoid to accept the extensive financial report; unopposed.

Unfinished Business and Updates

DeHaai reported that USDA is still questioning the merger of Hayward District into BCFD. Dave Lindblom will co-ordinate with Pennington County's Fire Board for them to officially recognize the merger of the Hayward District into BCFD.

The sale of the Hayward acreage is still pending USDA sign-off.

New Business

Van Sambeek distributed a letter from Pennington County limiting the maximum District 2022-budget tax request at an expected \$417,896. This based on a CPI of 1.2% and estimated growth in valuation and assessments. Our 2022 tax request must be submitted by September 30th. Van Sambeek also presented a chart of the District's valuation by county and annual tax request since budget year 2017. The 2021 figures, relative to 2017, show the valuation of the Custer County portion has increased 30% and Pennington County's portion by 15%; our tax request has increased 16% over the past five budget cycles.

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Gadbois reported some items about the status of the Fire Department as follows:

- In 2020 there were 280 calls versus 163 the previous year.
- Year to date the Department has had 50 calls.
- So far this year, approximately \$11,000 has been invoiced for contract fire responses. Personnel shortage will hamper our responding to out-of-district (contract) fires.
- For the most part, training activities were suspended for 2020 because of covid-virus concerns. Some training has recently resumed.
- No firefighters contracted the virus in 2020. About 1/3 of the firefighters is already vaccinated.

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- Staffing the shifts in Keystone has become a problem. Western Dakota Tech's dropping of their fire program is hurting our recruiting.
- Equipment issues are minor bugs and hiccups; no major issues or repairs are known.
- Dixon prepared a successful matching-grant request (\$6,500) to the State for wildland PPE and structural-fire gloves, lights, etc.
- We have received the \$24,000 from Custer County (part of the so-called Commissioners' money). The remittance was bundled with a monthly tax receipt payment so it was not immediately noticed.
- Station Chief Daniel Van Cleve has resigned. Interviews for his replacement are taking place already.
- In response to Custer County Fire Board, BCFD has identified the following priorities: \$25,000 for extraction equipment (Hermosa), \$18,000 to upgrade three thermal-imaging cameras (structure engines), \$2,100 for three multi-gas detection meters (LEL and noxious gases), and beginning of longer-term process of large-diameter hose replacement at \$120,000.
- Station signs are up on the Hermosa station.

Deputy Chief Dave Lindblom reported:

- Fire Administrator has been hired for Custer County.
- BCFD is now being copied on pages for Fairburn and Folsom fire departments.
- The \$4000 every-other year payment from Pennington County Fire Board is likely gone.
- A new Mutual Aid agreement has been signed. No substantive changes from previous agreements.
- Discussion slowly continues regarding a west-side Custer County fire district. BCFD is taking an advisory role in the discussion.
- Buffalo Gap VFD is not providing fire department response to traffic accidents. Hot Springs or Hermosa may need to respond. Buffalo Gap does have an ambulance district.

Other Business

Resolution by Van Sambeek, second by Cofoid, to substitute John Esposti for Jim DeHaai as signatory for District's banking accounts and loan documents. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next regular Directors' meeting was scheduled for May 18th at 6:30 PM. A tentative date of July 20th at 6:30 PM was picked for a subsequent meeting to discuss the 2022 budgets.

Adjournment

Summers moved with second by Reder to adjourn at 8:39 PM – motion was unopposed and Esposti declared the meeting over. Respectfully submitted by Leo Van Sambeek, Secretary/Treasurer

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