

Battle Creek Fire Protection District

Meeting Minutes for November 30, 2023

There being a quorum, the regular meeting of Battle Creek Fire Protection District was called to order on November 30, 2023 at 6:34 PM by President Esposti in the Hayward Fire Hall with Directors Leo Van Sambeek, Ray Summers, Casey McNulty, Levi Van Sambeek, Jack Bradt present; additionally, Asst Chief Dave Lindblom and Fire Administrator Garrett Dixon also in attendance.

Secretary Report: All members having received the September 7, 2023 meeting minutes in advance to the meeting a ***motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes*** was made by Leo V. and seconded by Levi V., the motion passed. Leo V. noted that on page 2, first bullet the sentence should read “. . . meeting with no specifics to report.” Additionally in the last bullet that “winter” in the motion was misspelled. There being no additional corrections or additions to the minutes it was moved by Leo V. and seconded by Casey M. to ***approve the minutes to the September 7, 2023 meeting minutes***, the motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Levi V. provided the following reports: a review of the November 27, 2023 accounts balances for the General Operating fund, Contract Fire and Money Market funds totaling \$276,306.53 an increase of approximately \$70,000 from the September 5, 2023 balance. He noted that the Contract Fire checking account has remained essentially unchanged for the past two years due to limited out-of-district Contract Fire support. The investment accounts include three Certificate Deposit instruments totaling \$154,302.37, remained essentially unchanged. The Fire Department account balance was down with a balance of \$35,329.86 resulting in the total assets for the Battle Creek Fire Protection District at \$465,938.76. Levi then gave an assessment of the budget progress. Year-to-date (October 2023) reimbursements to the fire department are \$411,476.67 which is slightly below straight line at 81% of budget, with \$99,274 to be dispersed by the end of the budget year. Payroll is on budget and there was no significant deviation from the previous report. Motion to ***accept the financial report was made*** by Ray S. and seconded by Casey M., the motion passed.

Old Business:

- Regarding the sale of 2.75 acres portion of district property to Phil Lakner, John E. reported that processing of the sale continues with no additional actions on our part being required. When notified John E. will sign the appropriate documents to complete the sale; the proceeds of which will go to pay down the principal of the debt on the USDA loan for the Hayward Station.

New Business:

- The date for the Annual Meeting was discussed as well as the term expiration of the directors. The two-year terms are up for directors Levi V. and John E. as well as the partial term for Jack B. All three directors have offered to remain as candidates. Three director positions will be open to the district residents, one from each of the geographic areas of the previous fire districts. **The date for the Annual Meeting was set for February 29, 2024 to be held in the Hayward Fire Station at 6:30 PM.** Ray S. will facilitate the required advertisement of the meeting.

Battle Creek Fire Protection District

- Prior to discussing the 2024 budget Leo V. opened with a discussion regarding the long-term sustainability of the Fire Dept. to supplement the tax revenue stream through earned income from Contract Fire revenue on out-of-district fires. The limiting factor has been the absence, within the department, of the required Engine Boss to lead the team; we only have one (Gerrett Dixon) and he is too valuable to put on the road. Leo's proposal was to establish some kind of incentive for a Fire Fighter to earn this status. It is a rigorous 4 to 6-year process of training and practical experience. Dave L. acknowledge this situation and related that there has been an ongoing discussion within the department and committed to developing a plan and reporting prior to the next year's budget process. No further board action is required at this time.
- Dave L. opened discussion for the 2024 Fire Department Budget with a review of external factors outside of our control that impact the department's operation expenses. The proposed 2024 Budget is essentially the same as the previous year but reflects the impact of inflation that has accumulated over the past years. Increases in the cost of insurance, fuel, utilities, and payroll are the bulk of the added costs projected for 2024. There is no provision in the budget for future equipment (capital) expenditures. In the future, a tax component for capital expenses should be considered within the statutory limit of 0.6 mil, as well as an Opt-Out to cover the expanding cost of operations that exceed the projected tax revenue. This gap in expenses versus revenue has been met by the district's savings which has been depleted over the years. This is not sustainable. The current district tax payer burden within Pennington Co. is a mil levy is 0.751, well below the commitment made to the district during the merger of remaining below a mil levy of 1.0. The proposed 2024 Fire Department budget total is \$539,400, a 5.6% increase over last year. The requested Tax Levy Request to Pennington Co. for operations is \$460,836 leaving a deficit of \$78,564. A disbursement regime was proposed to deposit, monthly \$38,450 from the tax revenue and to meet the deficit an additional \$6,500 from the Contract Fire account currently at \$92,161.40. A motion to **approve the Fire Department Budget totaling \$539,400 plus the district budget of \$23,000 and the disbursement regime** was made by Ray S. and seconded by Leo V., the motion passed. Levi V. indicated that he will follow up with his report to USDA regarding the Statement of Budget, Income and Equity report due December 1 based on this approval.
- In effort to clarify the meeting times for the Battle Creek Board Leo V. made a motion **that meetings during 2024 will be held on a quarterly basis and posted on the district's FACEBOOK page** the motion was seconded by Casey M., the motion passed.
- President John E. made the directors aware that the City of Keystone has approved and is implementing a Burn Permit Ordinance to regulate the burning of slash pile within the Town of Keystone. The Battle Creek Fire Department staff was involved in the crafting of this ordinance. He suggested that the directors add this to their Director's Handbook for future reference.

Fire Chief/Administrator Report:

Asst. Chief Lindblom:

Battle Creek Fire Protection District

- Dave accepted another term on the Pennington Co. Fire Board. However, he expects some disagreements from the various Fire Chiefs during the upcoming meetings.
- He, along with Commissioner J. Lintz attended the Custer Co. Fire Advisory Board where continued deliberation of a proposed merger of western Custer Co. Fire Districts ensued. It was reported that there is an ample tax base available to support the merger. The Custer Co. Commissioners have the authority to call for a vote in lieu of a petition; this is likely to happen.

Administrator Dixon:

- A total of 315 calls as of November 27. A complete report will be made available at the Annual Meeting.
- Approximately 75 people attended the chili feed held at the Hermosa Station.

The next BCFD meeting will be the annual meeting and is scheduled for February 29, 2024 at 6:30 PM at the Hayward Station.

A motion ***to Adjourn*** made by Leo V. seconded by Jack B., motion passed; the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Ray Summers, Secretary

ADDENDUM:

Digital vote on December 19, 2023

An email vote was conducted to AMENDED minutes to the February 9, 2023 minutes to align with previously agreed purchase price of \$18,000 per acre for the sale of a portion of district property to Phil Lakner. During that meeting a sale price of \$0.435 per square foot was mentioned and recorded in the minutes; however, this per square foot amount was not consistent with the previously agreed amount of \$18,000 per acre. The motion for your consideration is:

Move to amend the February 9, 2023 BCFPB Minutes, first bullet under Old Business by deleting reference to \$0.435/square foot and the extended calculations to be replaced with \$18,000 as previously discussed.

The motion passed unanimously.