

## LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

### La Veta Fire Station 100 Birch St La Veta, Colorado MINUTES

June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 6:00pm

Present: Directors Schmidt, Alt, Valdez, Lacy, and Brunner were in attendance.

Staff: EMS Director/District Administrator Eddie Ray and Fire Chief Ron Jameson.

Guests: Mark Worgan, Jim Littlefield, Melissa Ray, Dave Mower, Haley Jameson, Eric Guadagnoli, Sue Alt, Malea Schmidt, Sandy White, Justin Jameson, Bill Boeck, Sam Moringstar, Mark Craddock, and Sue Pezze. Norma Mower, Christina Guadagnoli, Paula Berg, Jim Berg, Kim Brunner, Cindy Worgan, Brian Jameson, and David DeTray joined via ZOOM

#### **Call to Order – Pledge - Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 18:00, the Pledge of Allegiance was given, roll call was taken all Board Members were present.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

- \* **MSA:** The June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Agenda was approved.

#### **Minutes**

- \* **MSA:** Minutes of the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 regular meeting were approved with spelling correction.
- \* **MSA:** Minutes from the Special Meeting of May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 were approved.

#### **Public Forum**

- Jim Littlefield addressed the Board of Directors regarding a request he had received from the San Isabel Electric Company. They are requesting to bring their food truck to host a "Thank the Members of the San Isabel Electric" at the station. They would provide a hotdog, bag of chips, and a drink to say THANK YOU to their members. They would like to use the station as a central location in the area. Jim Littlefield also offered to be at the station if needed. This is a 1-time event by them.
  - \* **MSA:** The Board of Directors approved the use of the station by the San Isabel Electric.
- Jim Littlefield addressed the Board of Directors regarding the current events at the La Veta Fire Protection District and the fact that someone of the department presented the actions of some of the members of the Fire Department and their threat to take a leave of absence to the local newspaper. The letter he read to the Board of Directors was also entered into the minutes.
- Jim Berg addressed the Board of Directors. The letter that he read to the Board of Directors was also entered into the minutes and the record.
- Director Valdez asked about a letter that was received from Melissa Ray and Mark Brunner if they should be read now or later. Director Schmidt stated that the letters would be addressed later in the meeting if the individuals wanted them to be read.

#### **Guests, Correspondence, and Presenters**

- We received a request from the local 4-H Board requesting an ambulance be on stand-by at their upcoming Mud Bog on July 1<sup>st</sup> at the fairgrounds. The 4-H is a non-profit organization in good standing with the State of Colorado so the ambulance will be provided at no charge to them.
  - \* **MSA:** The Board of Directors approved the ambulance be on stand-by at the fairgrounds for the Mug Bog.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

\*MSA = Moved, Seconded and Approved (unanimously unless otherwise indicated)

- Director Alt presented an updated report that he is working on to make the finances more user-friendly and easier to read by all. Director Alt stated that he will continue to work on the report, and we will be meeting with Century Financial soon to get more clarification on the reports that are received from them monthly. Director Alt asked if the report he developed is acceptable by all or if they had suggestions for changes or updates to the report. Director Brunner asked about the October, November, and December months regarding the taxes received by the county and how we will see that represented in the financial reports. Director Alt stated that we would have to look at the months and we may need to change some of the reports to better represent the monthly income compared to the yearly income. He will continue to work on the reports and present them next month. Director Schmidt stated that we need to look at having a workshop with the Board of Directors to better understand the reports we receive from Century Financial and what each like of their entries represents.
- \* **MSA**: The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

### **Fire Chief Report**

- Training: Propane training, it consisted of 7 departments, three different counties, and was well represented by all departments. We did have 3 LVFPD volunteers sustained burns on their shoulders because of using old gear.
- Engine 63 had the right-side mirror broken.
- A company that writes grants has submitted a proposal to write a grant for us, they have an 80% return on what they submit. They will be applying for approximately \$75,000.00 worth of grants that will cost us approximately \$5,000.00 if they are successful. This grant would provide for about 15 SCBA units.
  - a. \* **MSA**: The Board of Directors voted to move forward with the grant proposal. Director Brunner asked that the process for the grant follow the SOPs in that the Board of Directors will have the last say in the approval of the grant, that they BOD will know the full extent of the grant, and the full amount that the LVFPD will be financially responsible for. Director Schmidt stated that he agreed, the SOPs do need to be followed and the company Firehouse Grants would be given the 5 items listed in the SOPs prior to entering a contract with them. Director Alt stated that the SOP items will be included in the contract and monthly reports will be given to the BOD. All agreed and the motion passed.
- The ISO inspection went very well. The only thing lacking on the inspection was the pump testing on the trucks which is scheduled for the end of August or the first of September. We have 90 days to become compliant. Our cooperation with Huerfano County, them having a station within 5 miles of our district and us having a station within 5 miles of their district has helped our rating.
- Hose testing is scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Chief Jameson requested a workshop with the BOD.
- The auxiliary held their annual pancake breakfast on May 27<sup>th</sup>, they served 164, and with donations they were able to raise \$2,577.00.
- Chief Jameson put in 59 hours last month and drove 236 miles in his POV.
- Director Alt asked Chief Jameson when we could expect our ISO rating, he reported we could expect it in 9 months to a year.
- Director Lacy asked Chief Jameson how the ISO rating is calculated. It was explained that the ISO rating is based on our equipment, our hose testing, our pump testing, the quality of volunteers and our training hours.
- Director Brunner asked about the station within 5 miles of our district, and it was explained that the station that Huerfano County has in Navajo is within 5 miles of our district border.

### **EMT Director's Report:**



- Training covered helicopter safety which was conducted by Flight for Life.
- Replaced the wiper blades on Rescue 1
- We had 13 total calls for the month 6 were transported to the hospital and 7 were refusals or cancellations.
- EMS week appreciation dinner was a success.
- The EMS class has been completed.

### **Administrator's Report:**

- We would like to schedule a workday at the station to clean up the station, touch up the paint, and repair a few things around the station. Justin was thanked for mowing around the building.
- Director Schmidt asked that a copy of the job description for the District Administrator/EMS Director be emailed out the Board of Directors and he would like to schedule a workshop to go over it and look at making some changes to it.

### **Old Business**

- The district inventory is coming along. We are continuing to work on our inventory and entering it into a spreadsheet that can be easily verified and accounted for. Administrator Ray stated that there are 15 800 radios that are not accounted for.
- Volunteers being allowed to serve as Board of Directors. Director Schmidt stated that the discussion would only be about the policy in question and the discussion would not descend into personal attacks. Director Schmidt stated that he would allow 2 – 3 minutes for each person that wanted to speak about the policy issue.
  - a. Director Bruner read a statement into the minutes that was also submitted to the Board.
  - b. Chief Jameson stated that he has been accused of starting this process, but he wanted to make it clear that the members came to him with their concerns. He then brought the concerns to the Board of Directors and the members felt there was nothing done about the complaints nor were they taken seriously.
  - c. Director Schmidt stated that the volunteers of the district need to follow the SOPs when speaking about the district issues and not speak for the district. When people from the media come asking questions it would be best if the volunteers would direct them to the Board of Directors. Mark Craddock, from the Huerfano Journal, voiced concern about the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment and not to silence the voices of the volunteers. Director Schmidt stated that he was not denying them to speak only to be cautious about what was said and how it was said.
  - d. Haley Jameson addressed the Board of Directors. She stated that it was made clear that the current issue was not started nor spearheaded by the Chief nor were any of the volunteers bring any of their personal grievances into the current issue. They were putting personal grievances aside and they did follow the chain of command. She also stated that in the last meeting there were a lot of accusations made earlier they were not trying to discredit the department or hurt the community, they were trying to create a healthy work environment for everyone and a clear chain of command.
  - e. Dave Mower addressed the Board of Directors. He stated that there have been many accusations calling him the troublemaker, so be it, he stated others opinion about him is none of his business. He also stated that for others to hurt his feelings, he must first value others opinion. Dave Mower stated that when he was on the Board of Directors he did bring this topic up and it was voted on by the Board of Directors and it was passed as a resolution for the simple fact it wasn't personalities necessarily, but for the simple fact there are conflicts of interest at so many levels when a person sits on the Board of Directors and is also a volunteer, or an employee, or anything else. It should have been stated in the last minutes that it was brought out at that time. Dave Mower asked Director Alt about the Board



of Directors for the Water department if they would allow an employee to sit on that Board, his answer was "No that would not be allowed". Director Alt explained the difference being the employees of the CSWD are salaried employees and would not be allowed to be on the Board. Dave Mower stated that we are talking about policy here, the fact that Norma Mower also sat on the Board of Directors as did Dave Mower, but times have changed and just because we have always done it that way it does not make it right. The current policy that the district operates under is not illegal but in Dave's perception it is unethical. When the Board of Directors has a financial interest in the outcome of a vote no matter what the amount of the financial vote. In Dave's opinion, the Board of Directors make decisions based on the agenda of that Board member.

- f. Sandy White addressed the Board of Directors. When he was on the Board of Directors, they also faced the same issue, not conflict of interest but the Board of Directors exerting their authority during incidents. When they looked at the members and the Board of Directors it was determined that they could not conduct business without allowing members to serve as Board members, there were not enough interested parties that would allow them to do that. So, they set policy that a Board member would not usurp their authority while on an incident. The policy, to his recollection, resolved the problem.
- g. Norma Mower addressed the Board of Directors. Based on what she had heard during the meeting, Norma Mower chose to resend her letter for a request for a leave of absence. Her feeling is that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed and need to be looked at and if she is on a leave of absence, she will not be able to help address and help work on the issues. Norma Mower stated that due to her work schedule she has not been able to attend a lot of training in person, but she has attended ZOOM. There are so many things that she and Dave Mower have to offer the department and they would like to be a part of but there must be a cohesiveness between EMS and fire. Director Schmidt requested that her resending of her leave of absence request be sent to the EMS director.
- h. Director Schmidt stated that he can sense and hear how deep the feelings are on this issue, but we need to focus on the policy question which is "is it in the best interests of the La Veta Fire Protection District for a responder to also set as a member of the Board of Directors. Director Schmidt feels that the two functions should be separated due to the potential of the conflict of interest. Every decision that the Board of Directors makes affects all of the members one way or the other. Director Schmidt does not believe there is a shortage of people in the community that are not members that would serve on the Board of Directors. Director Schmidt does not believe that if an EMS personnel takes a leave of absence that they have to forfeit their certification, they can volunteer elsewhere to maintain their qualifications and their skills for the field. Director Brunner disagreed with him regarding that issue. Dave DeTray also stated that in order to maintain the EMS credentials an individual must maintain an affiliation with a department, attend training, remain proficient in the skills of an EMS provider at their level, and the trainings must be approved by the Medical Director. Director Schmidt stated that in his opinion that there is a conflict of interest if a responder also sets on the Board of Directors. Schmidt also stated, that he does not like making a policy that will outlive everyone in the room, why continue to face this issue when we can settle it with a policy change.
- i. Director Valdez stated that she was at first opposed to the separation but after seeing the amount of time this issue has consumed, the emotions that are involved, and the fact that the issue has surfaced many times over the years, she is also in agreement with the separation of the volunteer and the Board of Directors.
- j. Director Lacy stated that he also sees the logic in separating the two as well, that in the perfect world we could have people serving on the Board and people volunteering and responding. He also stated that he values the input from Director Brunner and Director Alt in making decisions for the volunteers as they are boots on the ground, serving in the



trenches. The value that their insight brings to the Board is also needed. Director Lacy asked Justin Jameson regarding the number of volunteers we have on the roster and do we have enough volunteers to serve and have enough people to serve on the Board of Directors. His review of the volunteers that actually respond to calls and attended training was a concern of his. He also stated that if all parties involved were willing to work together that this issue could be resolved without a policy change. His wish is that people would choose to work together rather than fight over this type of issue. In his opinion, there is not a perfect answer in this situation.

- k. Director Alt stated that he has been hearing a lot about conflict of interest and he would like to hear some specifics. Have the conflicts been apparent, subtle, existent, or not existent. The issue of reimbursement, there could be a conflict of interest. With these types of issues, one could easily recuse oneself from the vote on that issue. Jim Littlefield stated that he had not seen the conflict in the department. Sandy White stated that he did not see any conflict of interest in the department at all. If there was a conflict it was handled at the leader level. Sandy White also asked about the current 2 Board Members, are they going to have to step down from the Board or stop responding?
- l. Bill Boeck addressed the Board of Directors. Bill is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Huerfano County Fire Department. In Bill's opinion, the health and safety of the volunteers and the training for them came as the first priority for the BOD then the safety of the community. Bill made a recommendation to the Board of Directors that they write the policy in a way that would allow the BOD to revisit the policy at any time in the future. Looking at the policy in the long term, are we always going to have enough volunteers to serve and are we always going to have enough people to serve on the BOD?
- m. Director Schmidt stated that he would like to recommend that we make a policy that would not take effect until the next election, that would cause Director Alt to make a decision in 2 years if he was going to continue as a Board member or not respond. He would also like to make the provision in the policy that would allow Director Brunner and Director Alt to continue to get the training they needed to remain certified. Director Brunner offered to take a leave of absence from the fire department and alleviate the issue the firefighters have with him; would they rescind their letters of request for a leave of absence. Director Schmidt stated that he appreciated that Director Brunner made the offer to take a leave of absence from the fire but that makes the issue all about Director Brunner. Director Brunner reiterated that according to all the letters that were submitted referenced Director Brunner directly, so it really is all about him. Director Schmidt disagreed with him. Director Schmidt stated that he would like to hear a motion on this issue as he cannot make a motion as the chair of the BOD. Dave Mower pointed out that according to the Special District Handbook he can in fact make a motion as the chair of the Board. Director Lacy asked the question about setting a policy that would allow each of the 2 current Board members to serve out their full term rather than forcing Director Alt to decide after only 2 years. Director Schmidt stated that he felt that would be too difficult to word and put into policy. Sue Alt addressed the Board of Directors regarding the issue and that we all just need to get along. Director Lacy asked the firefighters in the room what they would think if Director Brunner only served on the EMS side of calls. Haley Jameson stated that the issue is not a personal issue with just 1 person but they feel that the issue and a number of other issues would be resolved if this 1 policy were put in place. She also stated that they realize that Director Brunner is a good responder, and he offers good patient care. The issue is not Director Brunner and that if he was to take a leave of absence from the fire operations that it would only be putting a band-aid on the issue at hand. Norma Mower asked the question to the BOD that if the sitting BOD members would be willing to forfeit their payment for responding to calls that way they would show that they are not in it for the money.

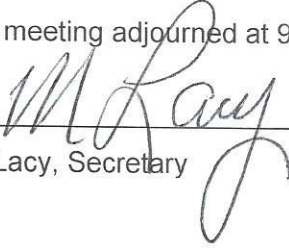
- n. Director Valdez made a motion that we make a policy that responders cannot be Board of Directors that would go into effect at the next election. There was no second to the motion, so the motion failed. The policy will stay as it is.

### New Business

- Resolution to add Director Alt, Director Schmidt, and Administrator Ray to the signature cards at the First National Bank of Trinidad and the ColoTrust accounts.
  - \* **MSA:** The Board of Directors voted to add the 3 names to the signature cards at the First National Bank of Trinidad and the ColoTrust accounts.
- The Board of Directors were given the option to receive a check for the monthly meetings or they could have the money donated back to the district. They each were given a form to decide what they would like to be done. Each person made their decision and turned it into the administrator.
- Chief Jameson asked the Board of Directors how they would like him to deal with the letters of request for leave of absence. Director Schmidt stated that most of the were on hold and 1 was rescinded. The firefighters were given the option to withdraw their requests or submit them.
- The paint on the outside of the building needs to be fixed. There are a number of places that the paint has been damaged and a repair was attempted but it does not look good. Director Brunner contacted Huston and had a conversation with them, and they are working on a solution to get the pain to look correct or replace the panels. Director Alt asked if Huston would stand behind their warranty, we hope that they will but we are not sure yet.
- Director Schmidt asked about the Gallagher of the district. It was explained that the level of revenues being received by the county property taxes. Director Schmidt would like to look into the option of de-taboring and take full advantage of the increased tax revenue.

**Executive Session** – not needed.

\* **MSA:** The meeting adjourned at 9:03pm

  
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Mike Lacy, Secretary