

LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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

March 16th, 2023 @ 18:00

Present: Directors Heikes, Mower, Valdez, and Brunner were in attendance. Director Chimenti joined the meeting via ZOOM

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

Guests: Cindy Jameson, Justin Jameson, Laura Jameson, Haley Jameson, Brian Jameson, Jim Littlefield. Sue Alt, Jim Alt 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.

Approval of Agenda

* **MSA:** The March 16th, 2023, Agenda was approved with adjustments. The audit exemption was added to the meeting agenda.

Minutes

* **MSA:** Minutes of the February 9th, 2023 regular meeting were approved.

Public Forum

- Hanna Jameson addressed the Board of Directors to thank them for the use of the fire building to sell her Girl scouts cookies.
- Justin Jameson addressed the Board of Directors and read a letter into the public meeting, please see attached. Director Heikes answered some of the statements made by Justin Jameson in his address. Director Heikes thanked the firefighters for their support and ability to fight the fires with efficiency and skill. Director Chimenti also responded to some of the comments regarding the fact that the Board Members being volunteers as well and that it should not be allowed. Director Mower also agreed with the idea that the Board of Directors should not be allowed to be volunteers as well. Director Heikes stated that he feels that people can and do separate the two different tasks. Director Valdez also addressed the statement about the Board members being volunteers and she also addressed the discord and strife in the department and in the Board of Directors. Director Valdez feels that Director Brunner attacks the fire side of operations at every Board of Directors meeting and that the attacks are unneeded and unfair. Director Valdez feels that the Board of Directors is not a healthy Board. Brian Jameson also addressed the Board of Directors regarding the standards of the fire department and that he feels that they should not lower their standards because of just a few people.
- DEO Cynthia Jameson addressed the Board of Directors regarding pay for her duties. Cynthia agreed to the \$2,000.00 to perform the tasks of DEO for the district. She did ask that if the amount of time that she spends on the election goes excessively over the agreed \$2,000.00 that there would be an adjustment in the amount to give fair compensation. Cynthia reported that she has 3 of the election judges that have agreed to be the election judges. Cynthia stated that she would like to have an alternate judge just in case something happened, Director Chimenti stated that since she is not running for re-election that she would be an alternate judge. The Board of Directors agreed to pay the election judges \$300.00 each for the hours they are working the election. Cynthia will be getting 2 election booths from the county to be used the day of the election. The ballots have been printed and picked up, so they are ready for the election day. The absentee ballots are ready. Director Brunner asked Cynthia about the campaign finances and reporting. Cynthia stated that she has checked and verified that the candidate can spend up to \$200.00 and anything that is over that amount must be reported to the State. Director Brunner asked what the

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

order of the names on the ballot would be, she stated that the order is 1) Dave Mower, 2) Mickey Schmidt, 3) Mike Lacey, 4) Jim Alt. Director Brunner also asked about the process for obtaining an absentee ballot, Cynthia stated that the registered voters needed to contact her by phone or by email.

Guests, Correspondence, and Presenters

Treasurer's Report

- Director Brunner explained the large deficit of the negative income and that it was due to the EMS billing company writing off a large number of old account receivables, the monies that are not collectible (bad debt). Director Brunner requested Administrator Ray how the process works, it was explained that the billing company QMC sends a bill and if it comes to excessive time, the list of accounts payable is sent to the EMS director and asked what should be done with the accounts. It was explained that a list is given to the QMC as to what to do with the accounts, write it off or send them to collections. QMC had not been keeping up with the list until they made an adjustment all at 1 time causing a large negative income number shown on our reports.
- Director Brunner pointed out that the tax monies are starting to come into the district so the accounts will begin to improve.
- * **MSA**: The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Fire Chief Report

- Chief Jameson reported that a number of fire trainings will be coming up soon.
- The Rural Engine boss training is scheduled for the end of the month.
- Chief Jameson reported that we have 10 sets of fire gear that are over 10 years old and need to be replaced. Chief Jameson applied for a \$20,000.00 grant but ordering the 10 sets of gear the amount is over the grant by \$3,050.00 over and would be the responsibility of the department.
- Chief Jameson and Laura Jameson are looking into the application for the USDA grant.
- Chief Jameson stated that he would appreciate some communication from the Board of Directors when duties are added to his responsibilities and would like to receive compensation for such tasks. Director Chimenti stated that she would be willing to track the training hours of the Firefighter for him and that she did not want compensation to do so.
- Chief Jameson stated that he has created a job description for the Communications officer. It was very simple. Director Brunner pointed out that the SOPs gives an outline and has a detail of what need/is required to be in the job description. Director Chimenti stated that she would help Chief Jameson create a job description that matches what is expected/required to be in the job description.
- Chief Jameson stated that he was in favor of the stance that the Board of Directors should not be allowed to be responders in the district and that he was disappointed in how a situation between the Board of Directors and the Auxiliary was handled. He also stated that he has tried to have a meeting with Director Brunner for the past 6 months but has not been able to do so.

EMT Director's Report:

- Training: Covered LifePak 15 operations and radio communication.
- We replaced some warning light bulbs on both R1 and R2.
- We had 12 total calls, 9 were transported to the ER, 3 were refusals or cancelation.
- Director Ray is still working on entering the data and information from the CMS reporting.
- The EMS Basic class is coming along well, we are nearing the end of the class.

- Director Valdez expressed gratitude from Owens, a student that had to drop the class due to family emergency, in how Director Ray reached out to her and offered help if needed.
- Director Ray reviewed the job descriptions for all positions on the EMS department and made some very minor changes, correcting spelling and grammar.

Administrator's Report:

- Administrator Ray reported that the Provident Insurance policy renewal was received, and the coverage was continued.
- The district received a letter from the Town of La Veta regarding the quality of the water and their work to correct the issue.

Old Business

- The road conditions in Cuchara. Nothing new to report
- The Board of Directors reviewed the SOPs regarding the fire training. The changes were made to the SOPs and they are all up to date. Director Chimenti asked about the term "Support Team Member" and if they were to be receiving the same compensation and if the term needed to remain in the SOPs. It was determined that the term should remain in the SOPs so that if they are added back onto the district at a future date.
- Director Mower stated that if claims that are made by public and the people are not willing to reveal the names of the people making the claims then the complaint should not be heard by the Board of Directors and the issue, they are bring is a dead issue. Director Chimenti stated that this particular issue should be addressed. The topic was originally discussed in an Executive session. Directors Chimenti and Valdez met with the Auxiliary chair and treasure regarding a question about donations made to the La Veta Fire Protection District but were deposited into the Auxiliary account. After a review of the financial statements there was nothing found to be out of order. All checks were address to the Auxiliary. It was discovered that a \$1,000.00 check was written to the District but should have been written to the Auxiliary. A copy of the check was presented to the Board of Directors that the check was in fact written to the District and not to the Auxiliary. The Board of Directors agreed that a check for the amount of \$1,000.00 would be written to the Auxiliary to refund them the funds.

New Business

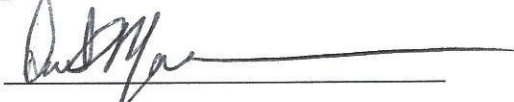
- The annual Audit Exemption was presented to the Board of Directors and approved by the Board.
- * **MSA:** The Board of Directors approved the annual Exemption of Audit.
- * **MSA:** The Board of Directors approved to pay Cynthia Jameson \$2,000.00 as the DEO and \$300.00 per election judge for the 2023 election. If the amount of time Cynthia spends exceeds the reasonable amount of time the amount paid to her would be amended to cover the added time.
- The Fire department presented a request that the members of the department not be allowed to serve as a member of the Board of Directors.
 - Director Mower made a motion that article 3 section 1 would be amended so that any member of the volunteer department would not be allowed to serve as a Board member. If they are elected to a position of a Board member, they would take a leave of absence from the volunteer status until their term as Board of Directors member concludes. The volunteers would be required to surrender their gear and radios while they are no their leave of absence. Director Chimenti stated language that a person would not be an active "member" as defined in article 5 section 1 of the La Veta Fire Protection District SOP. An existing member can take a leave of absence while serving on the Board of Directors.
 - Director Brunner asked why would we want to jeopardize the mission of the district to not allow a member in good standing with the district not be allowed to server just because they are a Board member. There was extensive discussion regarding this issue.

- The vote was taken on the motion: Director Mower voted yes, Director Chimenti voted yes, Director Heikes voted yes, Director Brunner voted no, Director Valdez abstained from the vote. The motion passed.
- Jim Littlefield addressed the Board of Directors and commended the Board of Directors and what they are accomplishing for the community. He also complimented Chief Jameson for the work he has accomplished in raising the standard for the Firefighters. He also complimented EMS Director Ray for his training and skill that have been added to the EMS department.

Executive Session – C.R.S. 24-6-402(E) – Personnel issues at 8:00pm.

- Executive session ended at 8:40pm
- Director Valdez made a motion that was seconded by Director Brunner to rescind the resolution to change the SOPs Section 5 Article 1 that volunteers cannot be members of the Board of Directors and that the Board of Directors work better as a team and bring stability to the department.
 - The vote was taken: Director Mower voted no, Director Valdez voted yes, Director Chimenti voted yes, Director Brunner voted yes, Director Heikes voted yes. The motion passed.
 - Director Mower suggested that the discussion be continued at a later date.
- Director Mower suggested that the funds from the Railroad back taxes be applied to the debt on the building and pay down the principle of the loan on the building. Director Brunner suggested that we wait until we meet with Century Financial and Tim Dixon regarding our financial situation. The topic was suggested that we table the discussion until after the meetings.

* **MSA:** The meeting adjourned at 8:58pm



David E. Mower, Secretary

Justin Jameson's letter to the Board of Directors

We are here to voice some concerns and things that are positive. We all love serving our community one call at a time. The community has a department to be proud of. The fire department has things to be thankful for. A great team of aggressive volunteers. The department saved a house a year ago and a gas stat. It's been quite a few years since that happened. The department and the community should be proud of the auxiliary. We have a great batch of ladies doing great things. Working very hard to raise money to finish a room and put a kitchen in.

Everyone has been working hard to improve this department. From training to finding new volunteers which makes this family stronger. All the training our chief has made available to us has made us better fire fighters. EMS is also offering trainings to improve their abilities. We are lucky to have this training in our own house. We have a great relationship with our mutual aid partners. Walsenburg and gardener have also been coming to join in our trainings. Which makes all of us stronger. When a fire happens within the county, we can fight fire as one.

E-51 has become a topic. Wondering why it was purchased. When Brian found the engine online it was unanimous that it would be a perfect fit. There was a grant in the works and Eddie said to buy the engine. Here we are today having to pay for the engine. This department has quite a few rejects from other departments. It's time we improve quality not numbers of apparatus. E-51 has been a huge asset to the department. The right engine for a MVA on 160. With foam, jaws, plenty of room for personnel. The engine can even be used for wildland fire. Last week was a perfect example.

Training has been a hot topic. 36 hours isn't a hug commitment. If you show up for training be a part of the team. Training not only helps us improve but builds trust in each other. Also, we can learn our limitations. I personally am not going in a burning building without knowing I can trust the person behind me. You should not show up just to put your name on the sign in sheet. That has happened in the past. I feel like there is two types of people. Ones that fight fire for the love of fire and those that want to improve their social standing in the community.

Asset accountability has been brought up the last few meetings. We need to protect our assets. We all need to remember this is for the department as a whole. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. The board was moving in the right direction till the last election. Politics always seem to be a big part in fire. It's hard to believe one person can change the dynamics so quick. There is always something new every month. We want to be a family not a bad marriage.

We are tired of things not being completed. Volunteers that have been on the department for some time can't even get a ID Card. Everyone that currently holds a ID card is expired as of January 1 2023. We are always ready for the next call and eager to serve the community. We don't ask for much.

We are here to make one thing clear. If things don't change, we are all taking a leave of absence. Ask yourselves one thing. How many volunteers do you want to lose?

We strongly feel if a board member is a volunteer, they should have to take a leave of absence. This would include turning in gear and radio for the time they are seated on the board.