

## LA VETA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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

May 11<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: Cindy Jameson, Jim Littlefield, Melissa Ray, Dave Mower, Laura Jameson, Haley Jameson, Eric Guadagnoli, Sue Alt, Brian Jameson, Malea Schmidt, and Conner.

### 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 May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Agenda was approved.

### Minutes

\* **MSA:** Minutes of the April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 regular meeting were approved.

### Appointment of new Board Members

- Oath of Office of James Alt as a member of the La Veta Fire Protection Board
- Oath of Office of Mike Lacy as a member of the La Veta Fire Protection Board
- Oath of Office of Mickey Schmidt as a member of the La Veta Fire Protection Board

### Election of Offices

- Mickey Schmidt – President
- Vonnie Valdez – Vice President
- James Alt – Treasure
- Mickey Lacy – Secretary
- Mark Brunner – Director

### Directors Compensation

- The Board of Directors in the past have set up an account at the ColoTrust called the Directors Stipend funds to be deposited into. They have chosen to keep the money that would be paid to them for the meetings in the bank to collect interest rather than receiving the money from the district. The money in the ColoTrust Directors Stipend account could then be used by the district to cover any shortfall the district may experience. The funds can also be used to cover the purchase of special items that are needed by the district. Director Schmidt requested that a form be created to give each Board member the chance to choose what they would like to be done with their stipend. The form will be ready at the next Board meeting.

### Public Forum

- Jim Littlefield addressed the Board of Directors thanking the exiting Board of Directors members and welcoming the new Board of Directors members. Jim Littlefield encouraged the Board of Directors to stay focused on the running of the board matters and not get dragged into the operations or any departmental issues in the district. He also encouraged them to focus on the future financial stability of the district. He expressed his feeling that the department has 2 very effective and competent department heads that are doing a good job running the department. He encouraged the Board to make sure the department heads are fairly compensated for the work they are doing. Jim Littlefield stated that it is the responsibility of the department heads to bring their wants and desires to the Board of Directors. It is the responsibility of the department heads to report back to the volunteers on the decisions of the Board of Directors. The volunteers should try to work together and be respectful of each other and the leadership. There should not be any

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

bickering between volunteers, department heads, or between department heads and the Board Members. We are a small district, and we cannot afford negativism or drama at any level of our organization. Our SOPs stress that so let's live it. Jim Littlefield thanked the volunteers and their ability to protect the district and attending the trainings that are necessary.

- DEO Cynthia Jameson updated the Board of Directors on the election. She thanked the judges and the wonderful job they did. The voting booths have been returned to the County Court house. She also gave a brief overview of the election, we received 29 absentee applications, 20 absentee ballots were sent out, 16 were returned, 5 absentee applications were late, 4 absentee ballots were ineligible due to them being a trust or a corporation. There were 274 votes-casts, 16 absentee votes giving a total of 290 votes. Cynthia Jameson will be responsible for all voting items, the voted ballots are retained for 25 months. The election canvases have been submitted. Cynthia submitted invoices and receipts for items spent on the election and for the election judges. Administrator Ray requested an invoice from Cynthia for her time and all that she did to be submitted for her payment.

### Guests, Correspondence, and Presenters

#### Treasurer's Report

- Director Brunner stated that he has been working on the financial statements to get them more user friendly and readable by the Board members. Director Schmidt stated that he would like to see a report that is based on the amount spent, the amount budgeted, and the amount remaining.
- Director Schmidt asked if there is anyone on the Board that actually looks at the invoices and approves them prior to them being paid. Director Brunner explained that the treasurer receives a report of what has been written and what money has been deposited. Director Alt recommended that we have a threshold of what amount needs to be approved beforehand. Director Alt recommended that we track the invoices for the first month and monitor invoices that are paid. Administrator Ray explained what is paid online, what is paid by debit card, and what requires check to be written by Century Financial. Director Alt asked if the budget is categorized by account and is the budgets allocated to each month or for the entire year. Currently the budget is reflected on the reports as an amount for the year and represented as a percentage of the total budget per month.
- \* **MSA**: The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

#### Fire Chief Report

- Training was a combined training with EMS/Fire covering extrication. Training also included personnel from Huerfano Fire and Gardner Fire.
- E-63 broke down on its way home from a fire in the Agular area and was towed to the repair shop that recently repaired the turbo on the unit in La Junta. The unit has been repaired and back in service.
- E-62 is having issues with either the transmission or the transfer case. Brian is looking into the issue.
- Grants and Meal Levy increase needs to continue to be worked on.
- We are still working on an agreement on the County burn permits, we are working on getting the verbiage from the Department of Health to include in the burn permit process, smoke permit.
- Chief Jameson reported on the E-911 authority board. Attorneys are still negotiating an agreement with them. We are working on getting a spot at the table to help with the decisions that affect them. Director Schmidt asked for clarification of the make up of the E-911 authority board. The proposal would increase the number of voting members of the E-911 board from 3 to 7. Director Brunner asked about the possibility of Director Schmidt being part of the meetings because of his

experience with the Board. Director Schmidt recommended that Chief Jameson remain the point of contact as he has more understanding of that the district needs.

- ISO inspection will be at the end of May. Things are moving forward with the paperwork.
- We received a new application for membership to the district as a firefighter.
- Chief Jameson has received letters from 5 different volunteers requesting a leave of absence most of them will start on June 9<sup>th</sup> for the length of 1 year. Chief Jameson is hoping that the new Board members will help resolve the issue. Director Schmidt asked if the letters of absence had all the required items based on the SOPs. Director Schmidt read the section of the SOPs that covers the request for a leave of absence. Justin Jameson addressed the Board of Directors regarding the letter he read to the Board of Directors 2 months ago and the statements that they were simple threats. He is stated that their words are not just threats. Director Schmidt replied to him that they are a new Board and they are trying to get to the bottom of the issues. Director Valdez stated that she does not want to lose a number of volunteers over formalities and policy. Director Valdez stated that we do need to follow the SOPs and that we should meet before the next regular Board Meeting. Director Alt agreed that we do need to have a special meeting to discuss this issue. Director Schmidt stated that according to the SOPs if there is a issue between members and it cannot be resolved then it should be taken to the next level of leadership. This is to continue until it reaches the Fire Chief or EMS director then it needs to be brought to the Board of Directors if it is not resolved. Chief Jameson stated that the Board of Directors needs to take action, kicking the can down the road is not working and a decision must be made. He stated that the firefighters do what they do because they like firefighting, it's a personal thing not for the community thing. Director Valdez asked the firefighters what they wanted in all this. Justin Jameson stated that they are asking for a separation between the volunteers and the Board of Directors. If a member is elected to the Board of Directors, then they should be required to take a leave of absence from volunteering. Justin stated that the firefighters feel that there are too many things going from the volunteer side to the Board of Directors. Justin Jameson stated that Mark Brunner did not attend very many trainings, nor did he respond to very many fire calls until he became a Board member. As a result, of Mark Brunner attending training and responding to fire calls the firefighters feel that they are being spied on. Justin Jameson stated that La Veta Fire Protection District and the Stonewall Fire department are the only 2 departments in the area that allow volunteers to be on the Board of Directors. Justin Jameson stated that the Board of Directors needs to find money to help purchase equipment and replacing old, outdated equipment in the department. Director Schmidt suggested that a special meeting be scheduled to discuss this issue and only this issue, the date for the special meeting was set for May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00pm.

- a. \* **MSA:** The Board of Directors voted to hold a special meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00pm.

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

- Training: extrication training and neurological emergencies (stroke, migraine, and seizure)
- The dump systems was repaired on Rescue 1, cost of repairs was \$463.00.
- We had 14 total calls, 8 were transported to the ER, 6 were refusals or cancelations.
- EMT Basic class has been completed, 7 students completed the course. 2 of the students have the written portion of the NREMT exam scheduled.
- All CMS (Medicare/Medicaid) data collection has been completed and submitted to the State.
- The RETAC grant funds have been approved in the amount of \$10,000.00. The items purchase:
  - a. 3 iPads for the ambulances
  - b. 3 portable scanners
  - c. 2 automatic steps for Rescue 2 and Rescue 3
  - d. The IAR subscription

- e. The medical director fee
- The EMS week is May 21 – 27. I would like to have a dinner for the EMS department rather than a gift for each EMS member. \* **MSA**: The Board of Directors voted to approve up to \$400.00 for the dinner for the EMS week.

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

- The Friends of the Library calendar's renewal is due. The cost is \$118.00 for the year. The calendars have our training and Board meetings listed on the calendar. \* **MSA**: The Board of Directors voted to continue with the calendars.

#### **Old Business**

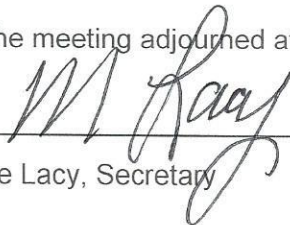
- The district inventory is coming along. We are continuing to work on our inventory and entering it into a spreadsheet that can be easily verified and accounted for.
- Director Schmidt asked about the communication officer and what the status was. Chief Jameson explained that the position was given to Paul Gomez who has a state issued key code to program our 800 radios.
- The Colorado Revised Statutes (24-6-402(a)(1)) regarding meetings of special district. The Board Members are not to have meetings or change the standard regular meetings must be done in the open meeting and cannot be handled in email.

#### **New Business**

- Director Valdez asked Chief Jameson about the coverage for the district for times when he is out of district. She brought up an incident that happened at the La Veta school for a smoke report at the school. Director Valdez called Mark Brunner regarding the call and why no one was responding to the call at the school. Chief Jameson stated that the shift leader is supposed to cover the district, that day it was Dave Steffan or Dave Mower that was helping cover. No one responded so she called Mark Brunner. Mark Brunner responded to the call. Chief Jameson stated that sometimes happens with a volunteer system, sometimes there is no one to cover and it takes multiple pages. Director Schmidt asked at what point the page roll over to the mutual aid call to Huerfano. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> call is not answered, then it rolls over to a mutual aid call.
- There are 2 Board of Directors that are unable to meet on the regularly scheduled meeting time of June 8<sup>th</sup> so it was proposed to move the meeting to June 5<sup>th</sup>. \* **MSA**: The Board of Directors voted to move the meeting to June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00pm.
- Director Schmidt asked about the time of closing the ~~Agenda~~ <sup>Agenda</sup> for the meeting, it was discussed but all agreed that the closing of the agenda would remain the Monday prior to the meeting.

#### **Executive Session** – not needed.

\* **MSA**: The meeting adjourned at 7:54pm

  
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Mike Lacy, Secretary

- The Board's role is to listen, discuss, consider and act upon the needs and wants brought to them. All of this being subject to the limits placed on the District in terms of tax revenues, mill-levy adjustments, EMS services revenue and all balanced with strategies to meet changing community needs. That's no small job!
- The leaders then report back to their volunteers on how their departments and the District are progressing on the steps ahead. No grouching or criticizing on agreed items from the Board. They must be good colleagues, respectful teammates, and work cooperatively with each other.
- There should never be bickering, mistrust or strife that becomes apparent to members or volunteers whether between the two department leaders, between the department leaders and the Board members or among volunteers. We're a small district and can afford no tolerance for negativism or drama at any level of the organization. Our SOPs stress that so let's live it.
- Lastly, we're largely a volunteer organization. I think the world of our Department Heads. The training that they plan and provide, the fabulous response to Fire & EMS incidents by both is much appreciated. Our healthy young volunteers turn out for training and incidents, and it is very much appreciated within our ranks and in the community. I must add that we do need more volunteers as we older folks fade away, so recruitment is essential. I also feel that the Auxiliary is doing great work. Kudos to them.
- To the new Board, THANK YOU again for your indulgence in allowing me to share these thoughts, Godspeed in your work.

- I'm speaking today simply as a longtime volunteer and as a former Board member.
- I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Board members for their hard work and a warm welcome to the three new Board members.
- I feel that our Leaders and Volunteers look forward to fresh approaches from the Board for better short- and long-term fiscal planning, more consistent funding, reporting and transparency and accountability.
- It is my hope that the BOD can stay focused on the key Board issues and not get dragged into departmental/operational issues or any needless personal attacks witnessed in recent times.
- We have two effective departmental leaders and they in turn have good officers. Let's ensure that the department heads have clear remits, responsibilities and are fairly compensated for their performance. That they work hard on their leadership, community relations and recruitment responsibilities. That they train, encourage, motivate, and report the progress of their teams to the board monthly.
- It is important that department leaders report to the Board what their respective needs and wants are and do so in a professional and fiscally responsible way, again with a short and long-term focus. Ron and Eddie are two highly capable individuals that in my opinion the District is fortunate to have. They should both be looking to the Board in accordance with budgets as agreed annually for the necessary equipment, supplies, grant & fundraising assistance necessary to meet community needs.