

**MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
LAKE VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
OF EL DORADO COUNTY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2015**

The Board of Directors of the Lake Valley Fire Protection District of El Dorado County met in regular session on September 10, 2015 at the Meyers Firehouse, South Lake Tahoe, California.

ROLL CALL

Director Huber called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There were present the following directors: Huber, Rossi, Bettencourt, and Rice. Also present were Chief Harris and Lake Valley Personnel.

AGENDA

Chief Harris asked to move item 8D to after Item 6 on the agenda. A motion was made by Director Rice and seconded by Director Bettencourt to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Director Bettencourt and seconded by Director Rice to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 13, 2015, with the following changes:

Remove the word “subcontracting” from the last paragraph of the minutes on page 3075 – Item C JPA Update. Also, change the word “The” to “He” on page 3076 – Item B Battalion Chiefs.

The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

Lake Valley personnel responded to a call at Lover's Leap and encountered a man with a severely fractured ankle. Firefighter/Paramedic Wes Long properly applied a tourniquet, an uncommon practice, and ultimately helped to save the gentleman's foot and life. A surgeon from Barton Hospital sent Chief Harris an email commending the crew for an amazing job.

Item 8 D. Transitioning Legal Counsel

Attorney William Wright has represented the District for a long time and is continuing to do so. However, as he is transitioning into retirement he recommends the District transition legal counsel to Girard and Edwards.

Attorneys David Girard and Kyle Raney, from Girard and Edwards, were present to introduce themselves and answer any questions the Board may have had.

A motion to approve the Agreement for the Provision of Legal Services by Girard and Edwards was made by Director Bettencourt and seconded by Director Rice. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Update of FEMA Hazardous Wood Roof Replacement Program

The Roof Grant Program just paid out approximately 18 homeowners. There is a final push for homeowners to complete their roofs before the end of the season.

B. JPA Update

The September 1, 2015, County Board of Supervisors JPA agenda item was removed from the agenda, by the County CAO. The reason for the item being pulled from the agenda had nothing to do with the CAO not approving of the plan. It was simply because he prefers that the Board of Supervisors be well educated on a topic before it is presented in an open session. This impacts the time frame of Lake Valley's plan A.

The Director of Health and Human Services, Don Ashton, is meeting with the Board of Supervisors individually to inform them of the situation. Presently, he has met with two of the Board members and they are in strong support of the plan. The County CAO also wanted a fee schedule approved and written confirmation from County Council. An RFP has been initiated for the fee schedule, and we are still on track for being placed back on the agenda at the beginning of 2016.

The Board had questions on whether the City is willing to wait until Plan A is decided on by the County. Lake Valley's understanding is that the City still has the same responsibilities that they have always had, and that there is nothing in writing yet stating a definitive end date for the City. The City feels that they can be relieved of their obligation at any time. The County said if that is the case, they will be in default of the contract and there could be legal ramifications. Chief Harris informed the Board that Chief Meston is aware of where we are in the process. He said that he cannot speak for the City, but that they are down personnel and have a different sense of urgency than Lake Valley. The Board asked Chief Harris to formally request, in writing if the City will wait to turn over the ambulance service to Lake Valley until the County Board of Supervisors votes on funding. They also wanted to make sure that the response came in a timely manner.

Director Rossi is concerned with the quality of applicants we may receive if we move forward with Plan B and have to hire 12 apprentice firefighter/paramedics. Chief Harris proposed that we create two hiring lists, one for apprentice firefighter/paramedics and one for firefighter/paramedics. There is minimal cost associated with creating a list and it will help to expedite the hiring process once it begins.

Questions also arose about Plan B. Nothing formal has been received on increased IFT funds. They were looking from the JPA, for a quantified impact from IFT's. In Rich Todd's estimate it should be about \$80,000, but there is nothing definite yet. There is also nothing in writing about an increase in GEMT money, a new dispatch contract or a Station 2 lease. The County CAO is looking at the GEMT money and proposing an 80/20 split for the three retroactive years between CSA 7 and CSA 3. Director Bettencourt expressed concern over these issues and mentioned that there are a lot of moving parts and he is not getting a good feeling. The Board asked if there was anything that could be done to expedite the process.

Chief Harris let them know that Don Ashton and Rich Todd are fully aware of the situation we are in, and though the pace of things has slowed down, they are still moving forward.

After discussing both Plan A and Plan B at length, the Board asked Chief Harris what his opinion would be if there were no additional fees for IFT's, no GEMT money and no help from the City with dispatch fees. Chief Harris said that he probably would not be comfortable with that scenario. He stated that if Lake Valley received full JPA funding it would be approximately \$2 million but it would cost us \$350,000. Our core mission cannot be compromised and we need to provide a sustainable future. We don't have an extra \$350,000 to throw against it and he would have to advise against it.

A third plan, Plan C was also discussed. This plan would entail Lake Valley continuing to do business as usual while establishing a hiring list and wait for more information. The drawback to this plan is if the City believes they no longer have an obligation to continue providing ambulance service, a legal battle could ensue. Lake Valley believes it is important to have the City involved in its discussions so that we are all on the same page. The Board raised a question, asking if the City Council members knew what was going on. Chief Harris informed them that he sent an email was sent to Chief Meston; who in turn forwarded the email to the City Manager and Council members, informing them of current status of the JPA and updating them on the prospect of the two service areas merging. He also attended a luncheon hosted by Sue Novasel, in which all the Board of Supervisors and City Council members were present. He personally talked to each member and was pleased that there was no animosity and no one expressed concern regarding the chain of events that have transpired pertaining to the JPA.

The Association voiced their concerns stating they feel Plan A is a great plan but Plan B is not preferable and we need to pump the breaks and slow down until we have more information. They feel that rushing in and tapping into reserves is not an option. Everyone agreed that there is not enough money in the current contract for 18 personnel. There has been a previous request from the JPA, for more money under the current contract but the County denied the request. Battalion Chief's Zlendick and Hekhuis both agree Plan A sounds great if we can get there but Plan B is going to be tough.

Director Rice expressed his concern with the Public Relations side of things. He doesn't want the public to think that Lake Valley is leaving them hanging. He also has concerns with the growth impacts that go along with increasing personnel numbers. He questioned whether we needed more leadership positions amongst the ranks and expressed that the departments culture could change drastically. He said we should take our time with this. He likes Plan A, but not Plan B.

Director Bettencourt encouraged Chief Harris to get direction from Chief Meston for a drop dead date for ambulance service. The Board wants clarity as to if the City is in it until we tell them we are able to take it over. Our intentions are the same but slowed down due to the County.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Firefighter's Association

Engineer Perry Quinn thanked the Board for the JPA discussion.

Fire Fest is scheduled for Sept. 26, 2015.

Engineer Quinn mentioned that it is time to start talking about negotiations. The current contract is up in February 2016. Two members of the Board, Herback and Bettencourt will be on the committee. They will come up with a start date in early November and December. Chief Harris would like to be involved along with a Battalion Chief in the negotiations as well. All Board members present agreed.

Chief Harris commended the Association for back staffing the station and staffing engines while crews were out on strike teams. There were no force holds and everyone really stepped up. He also thanked Captain Joe McAvoy for the bathroom remodel work. It looks great!

B. Battalion Chiefs

Battalion Chief Hekhuis informed the Board of the upcoming Engineers test in October. He thanked everyone for covering shifts, and reported that Chief John Poell is out as a strike team leader again and Lt. Tony Gasporra is out as a fire line paramedic.

Battalion Chief Brad Zlendick thanked the Association for their hard work and patience. He stated that the Basin puts out a quality product and people look for us on fires.

C. Review and Adoption of the 2015-2016 Final Budget

A motion to adopt the 2015-2016 Final Budget was made by Director Rice and was seconded by Director Bettencourt. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

A. California Tahoe Emergency Services Operations Authority

A JPA meeting is scheduled for Oct 12, 2015. This is Columbus Day and the date should be double checked and confirmed.

B. Lake Valley Fire Protection District Reports

The Lake Tahoe Summit was well attended and included Senators, Congressmen and Governor Brown. The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act could bring \$150 million in fuels reduction work to the Basin.

El Dorado National Forest has a new Supervisor. He stated that the Forest Service will no longer respond to anything but wildland fires. The TMU Forest Supervisor is saying the same thing, unless we request them.

We are moving forward with getting a ropes cache at the top of Lover's Leap and hope to have it in place before the winter. Director Huber said that he has a job box he would like to donate if it is something we can use.

CLOSED SESSION

A. Closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6

The Board went into closed session at 9:47 pm. The Board resumed open session at 10:10 pm. No reportable action was taken.

REVIEW AND APPROVE DISTRICT YEAR TO DATE INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORT

A motion was made by Director Bettencourt and seconded by Director Rice to approve the District year-to-date income and expense report (July 1, 2014 to June 31, 2015). The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVE DISTRICT PAYROLL

A motion was made by Director Bettencourt and seconded by Director Rossi to approve the District payroll for pay period 18 for \$152,422.05 and for pay period 19 for \$184,570.23. The motion passed unanimously.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

After being reviewed, a motion was made by Director Bettencourt and seconded by Director Rossi to approve the bills paid on August 25, 2015 for \$71,971.86 and on September 4, 2015 for \$49,385.49. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 pm.

Approved at the meeting of October 8, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Huber, Chair
CHAIRPERSON

Robert Bettencourt
SECRETARY

K. Labrado prepared the minutes