

CHRISTOPHER KOHL'S FIRE DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
APRIL 13, 2009
STATION 51

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm, 13 April, 2009. Pledge of Allegiance.

In Attendance: Deborah Dawson, Chairman
Margot Holmes-Fish, Vice Chairman
James Oliver, Clerk/Treasurer
Electra VanEckhoutte, Fire Chief
Dionne May, Administrative Assistant
Department members attending were identified.

Agenda Item 3.

- A. The Minutes from the 9 March, 2009, Board Meeting was approved by the Board after a motion by Mr. Oliver and a second by Mrs. Holmes-Fish.

- B. The status of the District Bank accounts for March, 2009, was given by Mr. Oliver. The closing of the Chase account was discussed. Mrs. Dawson accepted the Treasurer report as read.

- C. Chief VanEckhoutte gave the Chief's report and discussed the status of the Department and activities of the members of the Department. The starting of the fuel break around Christopher Creek area was discussed. Mr. VanEckhoutte said that a fuel break cut was in progress around Colcord and Ponderosa Springs area.

Agenda Item 7. Information/Discussion/ on services agreement with Tonto Rim Christian Camp (TRCC). This item was taken out of order. This item concerns the overpayments that the TRCC has made in years past due to being charged for District Properties. Ms. Lafoy and Mr. Fultz were present representing TRCC. Mrs. Dawson and Ms. Lafoy have discussed this issue prior to the meeting. The Board and the TRCC representatives proposed several repayment options. It was agreed that a refund of overpayment for three years past payments in equal payments for three years would be acceptable. No interest would be included. The amount of overpayment is \$6778. Method of refunding was discussed, and a reduction of yearly charges would be made via issuing a separate warrant. Mr. Oliver made a motion to accept the agreed conditions and was seconded by Mrs. Dawson. The motion was carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6. Information/Discussion/Action on selection of a financial company or agent for lease/purchase agreement for new engine currently on order. This agenda item was taken out of order. Mr. Oliver explained that a new type 3 engine was ordered last summer authorized by the Administrator. Delivery is expected mid-June. Mr. Oliver outlined the 3 bids before the Board for the agreement. The formal contract will be signed at a later meeting, with a formal resolution required. Based on the bids and the Chief's recommendation, Mr. Oliver recommended that the agreement be completed with Government Capital Corporation. Mrs. Holmes-Fish asked about the adjustment of rates at specific intervals. Mr. Oliver said that Government Capital indicated a rate adjustment based on Treasury bill rate at 5 year intervals but that this bid was just for interest rates and not the formal agreement. Chief VanEckhoutte said that most companies would want something similar. Mr. Oliver said that he thought refinancing was possible with a lease purchase agreement. Mr. Hagen asked about service life of an engine. Mrs. Dawson asked Chief VanEckhoutte to describe the new engine, which the Chief did in some detail. Chief VanEckhoutte explained that she intended to send the truck out of District on wild land firefighting assignments and through such assignments hoped to pay the engine off early without additional tax money required. Mrs. Dawson asked about prepayment under lease purchase, and Chief VanEckhoutte said there was no prepayment penalties. There was discussion between the Board and the Chief about various details concerning the agreement. Mrs. Holmes-Fish made a

Motion to accept Government Capital Corporation as the company to complete a lease purchase agreement with, and Mr. Oliver seconded. The vote to accept the motion was unanimous. There was discussion between the Chief and several unidentified audience members concerning wildfire assignments for the Engine. Mr. Oliver said the decision to purchase the engine was authorized by the Administrator last summer, and not the present Board. Mr. Oliver said the first payment was due on delivery, which should occur in June, but could be delayed until next fiscal year.

Agenda Item 5. Information/Discussion on status of the fuels reduction grants SFA 7004, and other pending or anticipated grants. Mr. Oliver said that he had asked Sam Seay and Caren Christenson, grant administrators, and Chief VanEckhoutte to halt further activity with the grant until it was determined the money would be available for matching funds in next year's budget. Mr. Oliver said that he did not want an obligation from this year carrying over to next year with no money being available. After the budget is approved in June, the grant can be started again if there is money, extended for a couple of years if needed, or stopped completely. Mr. Oliver said there was a grant being worked on with an April 10 deadline for application, and he asked the administrators to stop work and not apply for that grant. Mr. Oliver felt that even though it did not require matching hard money, he felt it would benefit too few residents. He also had concern about the State stopping the Grant before completion, leaving the District liable for unpaid obligations. Mr. Oliver said there is a grant application pending that the District may get, and the decision to accept it will be made at that time by the Chief. Mrs. Dawson asked about matching funds. A general discussion concerning grant procurement, types available and procedures took place between the Chief, Mr. Oliver and Mrs. Dawson. Mr. Oliver said that he felt that grant procurement, applications, and administration were the responsibility of the Chief of the Department, and that the Boards responsibility would be limited to approving matching funds for grants. Mrs. Dawson asked Chief VanEckhoutte what amount she provided for matching funds for grants, and the Chief said there was no budget item for matching funds. Mr. Oliver said the proposed budget would show income/expense money for grants to cover any grants received. Mrs. Marazza spoke the need to continue seeking grants, making applications and forming a grant committee. Mrs. Dawson asked about the grant committee, and Mr. Oliver said the committee that was formed was to help administer and develop policies for the current fuel reduction grant, not to find grants. The Board discussed status of the grant and monies involved. Mr. Lloyd commented on payment schedule. Mr. Hagen asked about continuing soft money match.

Agenda item 4. Information/Discussion/Action on the fiscal year 2010 budget. Mr. Oliver outlined the schedule for preparing the Budget, saying a budget would be approved for publication, advertised for at least 30 days, then a public hearing held to formally approve the budget. He also said a tax rate was set in April so that the service agreements could be sent out. He anticipated that the Board would set a tax rate at this meeting, and possibly a budget for publication. The hearing schedule was discussed. The Chief was asked by Mrs. Dawson about the two budgets the Chief had presented the Board. Chief VanEckhoutte stated that the budgets were what she proposed, differing only in the item for the cell tower. The Chief and the Board discussed various items on the presented budget, and the method of calculating different items was discussed. Mrs. Dawson said the proposed rates; one at \$2.30 and one at 2.38 with the tower item were too high. Mrs. Dawson felt the Department was moving too fast in its manning levels. The lack of volunteers answering calls was discussed by the Chief, and the need for addition personnel was presented. Mr. VanEckhoutte discussed manning requirements. Mrs. Ronan asked about volunteers and what happened to them. A discussion among unidentified audience members took place. Mrs. Dawson discussed lack of volunteers, and the demands placed upon the Board to meet the obligations placed upon it. She felt that 3 people would not help the situation, that assessed values would go down, and the Board needed to be conservative. Mr. Sundra spoke to the need to avoid raising taxes, addressed the volunteer problem and advised the Board to go slowly. Ms. Thornton spoke to the need for quick response to calls, felts taxes should be kept as low as possible, but supported the need for additional personnel. Mr. Lloyd spoke on several occasions, asking for no new taxes, a tax reduction if possible, ambulance service, no raises for personnel and saying if people wanted better service, they could move to town. Mr. Seay spoke against a raise in taxes, and said he had recruited 2 new volunteers. Mrs. Marazza spoke strongly against raising taxes, felt the business owners were being very hard hit, and it would affect them severely. Paramedic history in the District was discussed among Mrs. Dawson and

unidentified audience members. Mr. VanEckhoutte spoke of new restrictions on the ability of IEMT'S to administer drugs. Mrs. Holmes-Fish spoke to the length of time need to train Paramedics, and thought Electra had the solution. Mrs. Dawson proposed a hiring freeze, with any replacements being Paramedics. Chief VanEckhoutte spoke to the difficulty of using one person to fill three shifts. Mr. Schantz spoke for the increased level of service, saying the increased cost was worth it. Mr. Hagen said the solution was to recruit one Paramedic volunteer, let him train other volunteers. Mr. Gourdoux spoke to people living on fixed incomes being priced out of their houses and said he was against raising taxes. Mrs. Keown spoke to the need to keep taxes low, said her business is hurting, people have given up paychecks, and there are lots of ways to look for volunteers, especially weekenders. Mrs. Keown said we should go with Hellsgate if we want Paramedics. Mrs. Dawson asked what the tax rate would be if a hiring freeze was in place. Chief VanEckhoutte said that she had asked for what she felt she needed, and the Board would have to decide the rate. Mrs. Dawson asked Mr. Oliver the same question. Mr. Oliver said with hiring one Paramedic, keeping what we had, the rate would go up 8 to 12 cents. Mr. Lloyd asked about increased District valuation, and Mr. Oliver responded as to where that increase went. Mr. Harris spoke to the rising rate of foreclosures, and said that the District would lose money if people had foreclosures. Mr. O'Neal said he would volunteer, knew of others, and asked that agendas be posted on the web site. Mrs. Dawson stated her desire to only hire one Paramedic. There was a short break, resuming at 9:05pm. Mrs. Dawson asked if the Board wanted to set a tax rate. Mr. Oliver explained the schedule. Mr. Oliver said that a new cell phone tower has been built, and Mr. Slapnicka has offered a spot for a District repeater. The cost would be \$23,000 yearly. Mr. Oliver said that last year, before the planning and zoning commission, Mr. Slapnicka indicated that the space would be furnished to the district at no cost, and Chief Larsen, on several occasions, had said the repeater space was offered to the District at no cost. Mr. Oliver felt that the proposal, as presented to the District, would be illegal for the District to accept, and that there is a conflict of interest issue with any proposal. Mr. Oliver recommended that the Board not consider the tower proposal in this year's budget. The advantages of the repeater was discussed by the Board and the Chief. The issue of cost was discussed. Mr. Oliver made a motion not to consider the tower in this year's budget. Mr. Zalaska said that space has been offered on Promontory at no cost. Mrs. Dawson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Thornton asked about the cost of one Paramedic and raises for personnel. Mrs. Dawson said that the staff received a raise in December. Chief VanEckhoutte said the raise brought them to \$9.69 an hour. Mrs. Dawson said it was \$30,000 yearly. Mrs. Holmes-Fish gave the proposed salaries and said they were below poverty level. The Board discussed various levels of pay for several occupations. Mrs. Dawson asked about a rate of 2.15. Various proposals were discussed. Mrs. Dawson asked Mrs. Holmes-Fish for her thoughts. Mrs. Holmes-Fish said she thought the District needed the additional personnel. Mr. Oliver made a motion to accept Chief VanEckhoutte's budget as presented, with a rate of \$2.30 per hundred of SAV, with the intent of hiring 3 paramedics for 24/7 duty. Mrs. Holmes-Fish seconded. Mrs. Holmes-Fish and Mr. Oliver voted aye, Mrs. Dawson voted no, the motion carried. Mr. Oliver said he would prepare the service agreements, and the publication advertisement. Mr. Oliver said we could hold a hearing at the May meeting, and a formal public hearing at the June meeting.

Agenda item 8. Future agenda items. Mr. Oliver proposed discussing the cell tower and alternatives such as the Promontory tower. Mr. Hagen asked about ownership of the land at the cell tower site.

Agenda item 9. Call to the public. Mr. Schantz said that the response compensation pay could be reduced to assist the budget. Mr. Sundra thanked the Board for its service. Mr. VanEckhoutte mentioned the Promontory Tower issue.

Mrs. Dawson adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm, 13 April, 2009

Submitted : 20 April 2009, by James Oliver

Approved: _____ Chairman _____, 2009