

NEWCASTLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

May 18, 2016, 6:00 P.M.

at 461 Main Street, Newcastle, CA 95658, Newcastle, CA 95658

MEETING MINUTES

Board Present: Jim Jordan, Chairman
Eric Sprouse, Vice Chairman
Jonita Elder, Secretary
Rocky Robinson, Director

Absent: Robin Enos, Director

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

- (A) Chairman called meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- (B) All Board members present with the exception of Director Robin Enos
- (C) Chief Higgins was also in attendance.
- (D) Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- (A) May 18, 2016 Meeting Agenda.
Director Robinson moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Secretary Elder. Motion carried out unanimously with Board Members present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- (A) Director Robinson made the motion to approve the minutes for the regular board meeting of April 20, 2016, seconded by Vice Chairman Sprouse. Motion carried out unanimously with Board Members present.

4. BILL APPROVAL:

- (A) Monthly Expense Report – Month of May, 2016. Spreadsheet presented and reviewed by the board.
 - No questions or clarifications.
 - Director Robinson made the motion to approve the monthly expense report as submitted; seconded by Vice Chairman Sprouse. Motion carried out unanimously with Board Members present.
 - Financial Report: Email copy available upon request info@newcastlefire.org

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

- (A) The board received correspondence from the Office of the Attorney General regarding a class action suit for CRT monitors. Per Chairman Jordan, not aware of any issues.

6. Newcastle Professional Firefighter Association:

- (A) Statement from the Association: none

7. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- (A) Resident Bill Monahan had questions for Chairman Jordan and asks if he is for or against consolidation with Penryn. Per Chair Jordan, this is a time for public comment so the board is not in position to answer any questions; however personally in favor of consolidation. Discussions on benefits to Newcastle will be covered at a later time.
- (B) Resident asks to confirm that the fire department will be at the Newcastle Celebration Event this Sunday. They will have a presence, per Chief Higgins. If Newcastle staff are not available, they will have representation from Penryn.
 - Concern about vehicles coming through and traffic. Expecting a large crowd.
- (C) Resident Jack Boan received homeowners bill from Hartford insurance. It went up 47%. Proposing money paid in taxes, that they get some kind of a rebate back.

- (D) Citizen asks about if board members are in favor or not of consolidation. Per Board, they are collecting information.
- (E) John Carr – former fire chief. Made recommendation to consolidate with Auburn. Asks what Penryn brings to the table.
- (F) Bill Kahrl, president Newcastle Community Association seconds presence at Sunday event, and appreciates support of fire department. Concerns and anger about closing the fire station.
- (G) Arthur Lenner – representing self and mobile home park people. It is very important to them (225+ people living there) to have the fire station and emergency responses.

8. ACTION ITEMS:

- (A) Financial Analysis/Business Plan for the District – The County of Placer to conduct the Audit, and assist the District in creating a business plan. Direction/Approval needed from Board.
 - This has come out of the fire study. Some of the smaller fire districts were recognized as lacking business plan. Format is important. Chair encourages the board to approve the process and proceed with approval. Secretary Elder thinks it’s a great idea. Would like to see us have a plan going forward 5+ years. Asks if the County is willing to support financially. The County is willing to foot the bill. CityGate to provide services.
 - **Secretary Elder makes a motion to approve moving forward with the Financial Analysis/Business Plan for the District. Seconded by Vice Chairman Sprouse.**
 - Vice Chairman Sprouse asks the representative in the audience ...who is prepared to provide information on the plan and what the County will provide. Plan will have sustainability information.
 - Aaron Wilson – Chair in Penryn Board. Asks about Consolidation Study.
 - Per John M of Placer County OES, the original plan was called a Fire Service Consolidation Improvement Plan. Worked on it...changed to a Fire Service Improvement Plan. Ultimate outcome depends on what outside district does or does not want to do.
 - Resident asks where fiscal data will come from...past data, the County etc.? Fiscal data will come from several sources.
 - Final City Gate report will include comments from the district’s fire chiefs.
 - Secretary Elder asks...will you allow input from the Board of Directors? Per John, they’d like to work with one person to be more efficient...For the business plan document development...Board can funnel questions through the Chief.
 - Mike Monahan – had questions on proposition and fees and rates ...taxes increasing or decreasing upon consolidation. Per Chairman Jordan, they stay the same until the time the legislature passes new laws. (Prop 13).
 - **Chairman Jordan seeing motion being brought and seconded to move forward with the Audit. No further discussion. VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR with board members present. Motion carries.**

- (B) F/Y 2016/2017 Proposal for “Direct Charge Submittal” by Neil Anderson. Board Approval Required.
 - Per Chief Higgins, we received a Proposal to do the work from Mr. Anderson for the sum of \$2500. It will also cover work on the new AB2109 the State will impose. It’s a different format of the submittals we do, due to the County. We are unaware of what the new format will be. Per Neil, he will look into it. It’s for the District to report to the State all budgetary aspects. He will research and provide data to the Chief or Board, whoever gives the report to the State.
 - **Chairman Jordan ask for a Motion to proceed with the Direct Charge Submittal. Director Robinson made the motion to proceed, seconded by Secretary Elder. VOTE: ALL IN FAVOR with board members present. Motion carries.**
 - Director Robinson asked Neil regarding parcel fees for square footage on home parcels, but different for mobile home park. Director Robinson thinks we should take a look at what is being charged.

9. INFORMATIONAL/NON-ACTION ITEMS:

- (A) New Fire Station Update (Chairman Jordan)
 - All permits are completed. All encroachments completed. The only hang-up is making sure funds we are planning to use are in place. After much diligence and contact with Jeanine... In January of

2013 we did a resolution to work with the County on this issue. For the most part finalized. There are a couple positive aspects from waiting – interest rate has dropped from 3.75 to 3.0, subsequently payments and total expenses have dropped. Annual savings of \$9000 approx., or \$230,000 over the period of the loan. Before it goes before the Board of Supervisors, hopefully in early June, it will require signatures of the President or the Chairman of the Board as well as the Secretary of the Board. He has signed, but she is hoping to sign later today or tomorrow so it can be put on the next meeting agenda.

- We will continue with getting the bid package out as soon as possible. We have had a couple setbacks... Chief Bettencourt who was going to assist has had some personal delays. As soon as the bid goes out, will be posted, and make sure everyone knows. Perhaps before the June meeting, but no later than the June meeting we will have the bid package.
- Resident comment: because measure B passed – to build a new fire station... that must be done. He doesn't want to see the [current] fire station closed.
- Resident asked about what might be the Secretary's concerns. Per Sec. Elder, she knew in this meeting there might be some questions/concerns about consolidation. Wanted to hold off to hear of what tax payers might have to say. She talked to Jeanine, and asked to postpone a little on signing... just wanted to feel comfortable with signing. Sec. Elder said she thinks this is a great loan and wanted to Thank Jeanine for putting this together. It's an excellent deal for us. Will make an appointment with Jeanine and sign on Thursday.
- Resident had concerns about building the fire station with all the consolidation issues.

(B) Fire District Comparative Review (Vice Chairman Sprouse)

- Over the last six months or so, we have been talking about looking into options to help us be sustainable. No decisions have been made. Have met with Penryn Fire. Looking at viable options. Thanks Aaron, Joni, Chief on financial and other information. We're looking at all the facts... not an emotional decision, although appreciates the passion from the community. Future planning for the community is what is most important.
- There are a lot of things to look at before decisions are made. Feels we need to move forward with building new fire station. No matter what, Newcastle is a hub. It's in a great location. No matter what happens, the building will be utilized.
- Ran through slides of comparison facts between NFPD and PFPD.
- Penryn Fire raised wages by \$4 per hour last month to aid in retention.
- Parcels: Penryn has 1203 parcels versus 1930 Newcastle parcels. Area coverage: 35 sq. miles for Newcastle, Penryn has about 10 sq. miles. Call Volume for 2015: 618 Newcastle and 596 Penryn. Employees: Newcastle has 5 personnel, plus the Chief. Penryn has 6 personnel fully staffed and a Chief. In September this number will probably go down. We have to do something to keep the fire station up and running. Wages: Newcastle Captains \$12.25/hr., and \$16.25 for Penryn. Raised by \$4 last month to aid in retention. Engineer's Wages: Newcastle \$10.75 and Penryn \$14.25. Salary and wages annually: Newcastle is \$398,000 and Penryn is \$579,584. General taxes: Income Newcastle is \$212,000 at 3.4%. Penryn is \$313,960 at 7.41%. Special Assessment tax: Newcastle is \$443,674. Penryn is \$106,294. Brown out days YTD: Newcastle: 7.5 (soft-close). Penryn: .
- PFPD doesn't charge for parcels that don't have structures on them.
- Data points are meant to inform the public as to what we are looking at. Want to look at some facts.
- Wants to focus on getting the fire station built first, and getting us sustainable. And getting the fire study done. (2nd City Gate Study)
- Second City Gate report on July 12. Board agreed to go into the 2nd phase – or the business plan portion of the study. Anticipating study will get started within the next 90 days.
- Response by Mutual Aid Agreement is mandated. Will the County step in and help support Penryn Fire and decrease burden on Newcastle? Contingency plans? Per Supervisor Holmes... discussion is premature. Would need to make sure the deal is revenue neutral.
- VC Sprouse reiterates again... It is a time-consuming process (looking at sustainability and consolidation) ...the board is just gathering data at this time.
- Sec. Elder asks VC Sprouse regarding yearly salary figure (NFPD=\$398,000, PFPD=\$579,584.). She said it was the same figure that they had before. Does the figure include the \$4 raise? Yes, the Chief had that figure built into his contingency.

- Per Neil, regarding tax revenue... Penryn in the red because of salaries versus tax revenue. Newcastle would have to pick that up.
- Newcastle Fire as Training ground...will always be that way...can't expect more taxes to pay for the increase in wages.
- Several audience concerns were entertained and discussed:
 - Staffing retention
 - Not enough tax revenue
 - Fire Station build
 - Livable wages
 - Viability of wage increases versus tax income and budget sustainability.
 - Tax increases to help the budget
 - Brown-outs
 - MOU Agreement and Penryn Coverage
 - Chief Bettencourt's Consolidation presentation
 - Prop 172 allocation of funds...nothing to fire districts
 - Training
 - Side note: look on Facebook for Newcastle hours and information.
- Per VC Sprouse, audience presence today (standing room only) is appreciated.

(C) Chief's Report

- Training for the month of April consisted of 141 hours
- Emergency Responses for the months of April:
EMS: 31 A u t o : 4 Fire: 2 Public Assist: 8. Total of 45 responses.
- General information:
 - The Newcastle Highway Project is nearly completed. 2 to 3 weeks until Hwy 80 project is completed.
 - We are still working with the Castle City Mobile Home Park, the Engineering Firm, and the Water Resource Board in the grant process. If this grant is awarded, it will improve their overall water delivery system.
 - With the recent north winds and higher temperatures, we are already seeing small vegetation fires throughout the County. Most recent one out in the western portion of the County near the Casino that was approximately 150 acres and was driven by the winds. The Placer OA sent immediate need Type 1 S/T from Placer County (Closest Resources) and 1 through Sac Region. Total of 5 engines responded.
 - Currently, we are working on the upcoming Fire Codes Adoptions for the State and for any local amendments by each jurisdiction. Once the District Board approves (in the next 2-3 months), the District's ordinance is then forwarded to Building Services for ratification before the Placer County Board of Supervisors. The ordinance isn't in effect until such ratification is approved by the Placer County Board and once Building Services files such ratification with the State's Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department.

(D) Staffing

- Already went over this previously.

(E) Sustainability for the future

- We covered this topic.

(F) 172 Update. Activity suspended awaiting the final Fire Study Publication.

- The districts are somewhat waiting for completion of the fire study as well as ...funds needed for each District.

(G) County Fire Service Study Update

- Covered. July presentation.

10. Board of Director Reports:

- (A) Director Robinson: He received several emails regarding staffing problem. Reassures...there are 6 agencies that surround us that have our back. 911 service is always there.
- (B) VC Sprouse – nothing further
- (C) Sec. Elder – nothing further
- (D) Sunday Festival!

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

11. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Wednesday, June 15, 2016. Location: 461 Main Street.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gayle Capik, Recording Secretary