

**PENINSULA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**September 20, 2023 Minutes**

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**1) Fire Board President Nancy Foote called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M.**

**2) Fire Board Members present:** President Nancy Foote, Vice President Bill Barry, Secretary Kim Kimball, Director Tracey Smith & Director Mark Burnham. Staff present: Interim Fire Chief Stephen Hart, Battalion Chief Kurt Duff & Administrative Assistant Holly Coons. Public present - 7.

**3) Pledge of Allegiance:** President Foote led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4) Approval of Minutes for August 20, 2023 & Special Meeting for September 6, 2023:**

President Foote called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for *August 20, 2023*. Upon a motion by Secretary Kimball, seconded by Director Burnham, and with a unanimous vote, the Fire Board meeting minutes were approved as written.

President Foote called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for special meeting of September 6, 2023. Upon a motion by Secretary Kimball, seconded by Vice President Barry, and with a unanimous vote, the Fire Board special meeting minutes were approved as written.

**5) Approval of Agenda:**

President Foote called for a motion to approve the Agenda for *September 20, 2023*.

Upon a motion by President Foote, seconded by Secretary Kimball.

President Foote called for a count, the motion was approved unanimously.

**6) Public Comment:**

President Foote acknowledged the amount of public that were attending the meeting. She asked if they would prefer to hold their comments and questions for the agenda items. Comments from the public were to follow the agenda as posted.

**7) Old Business:**

**A. Seneca Hospital, Chester Fire & Peninsula Fire Ambulance – Discussion – Negotiator Nancy Foote:**

President Foote asked who would like to speak. Kim Green, Vice Chair of Chester Public Utility District (CPUD) stated that as you all are aware, Chester Fire District is working on financial difficulties.

Kim Green informed Peninsula Fire Board that CPUD is facing closing down Chester Fire District EMS and Fire operations by the end of this year.

Kim reminded the Peninsula Fire Board that back in April, CPUD was invited to a meeting which included NorCal EMS, Plumas District Hospital & Seneca Hospital. There was an idea proposed to Chester Fire at this time that Seneca Hospital could take over their EMS license and take over billing at a much higher reimbursement rate than we are receiving currently. In May another meeting was attended by CPUD with a lot of encouragement. In August another meeting was held with a printed proposal from Seneca Hospital to review and consider by CPUD. When reviewing the proposal lots of red lining was taking place on the proposal. In the next meeting in August,

CPUD and Chester Fire understood that a revised proposal would be coming back to them for review. Kim stated she contacted Seneca Hospital Board Chairperson to explain that time is running out to financially keep Chester Fire in business and asked if there was some sort of an agreement they could come to. At that point she was told that if Peninsula Fire District did not agree with the EMS licensing contract then they would not be moving forward with an EMS agreement with Chester Fire District. Kim Green stated that to date Chester Fire has not received a revised agreement from Seneca Hospital.

Vice President Green explained that Chester Fire District is going to be forced to send out layoff notices at the end of October. She explained the consequences for the town of Chester. Without their EMS and Fire response availability, fire insurance rates would be much higher or most likely canceled. Kim Green added that Peninsula Fire will be responding out of our district to cover Chester Fire District's calls.

Chester Fire Chief Matt Balzarini explained that he was ambushed by all EMS providers in this area and was told that the only way Chester Fire could remain providing EMS services is to turn over their license to Seneca Healthcare District and they would provide billing services for us at a higher reimbursement rate than we are currently receiving on our own.

Chief Balzarini asked Peninsula Fire Board to consider a resolution or a memorandum of understanding to join with Chester Fire and Seneca Hospital to provide EMS services in the basin.

President Foote stated Peninsula Fire would have to have a separate MOU with Seneca to preserve our autonomy.

There was a discussion regarding Chester Fire's Measure to increase their special tax assessment coming out on the November Ballot. Chief Balzarini said even if their measure passes it will not be enough to run Chester Fire financially along with their two million dollar debt to CPUD. He said they need both incomes to keep them in service.

Seneca Hospital CEO, Shawn McKenzie confirmed that without a contract from both Peninsula Fire District & Chester Fire District's agreeing to turn over their EMS licenses, it would not benefit the hospital financially.

Chief Stephen Hart explained that Peninsula Fire is currently responding to Westwood, Clear Creek & Susanville. Chester Fire covers the Peninsula when we are out of our district. When Chester responds to Lassen Park, Peninsula Fire Covers them. Steve said he has researched Title 22 known as the 35 mile radius law & NorCal EMS cannot take over the basin as long as Peninsula Fire is responding. We cannot lose our District's autonomy.

Secretary Kimball asked if Peninsula Fire would be an Independent contractor with Seneca Hospital. Shawn said yes.

Chief Hart stated as a Fire Chief he is looking at the reimbursement to both Fire District's, even with a 100.1% reimbursement from ambulance billing that the Hospital says they will be receiving, and with the cost of this new program with all the expenses it will take to accomplish this, he said he does not see Chester Fire or Peninsula Fire receiving the enough funds to staff and maintain their vehicles.

Shawn McKenzie explained he could not afford to pay the fire service 24/7. He would only pay for when the ambulance is on an EMS call or an Inter Facility Transfer (IFT) and some reimbursement for maintaining the ambulances.

Chief Hart stated his is not 100% for this contract with Seneca, but he sees the writing on the wall and what will happen to Peninsula Fire if Chester Fire folds.

Shawn McKenzie said he not out to make a profit, he is looking out for the citizens in this community.

Chief Hart & Balzarini both stated they do not like what is happening and feel like they have no choice to keep providing EMS services to the community.

President Foote confirmed that Hamilton Branch Fire is separate from Peninsula Fire.

Chief Hart confirmed that Seneca Hospital is requesting a MOU from Peninsula Fire to relinquish their EMS license for negotiations purposes before moving forward.

President Foote stated that both Fire Boards should not meet together until needed. There would have to be a separate MOU for each Fire District.

There was a discussion regarding timing. Nothing can be decided until after Chester Fire's Measure is passed.

## **8) New Business:**

### **A. Emergency Warning Sirens – Clarification**

Chief Hart explained that he was asked to get clarification on what tones are available on the emergency warning sirens. The company told him that they have tried in the past to work with different signals or tones for different emergencies and it failed.

Chief inform the Fire Board that the siren company did not recommend trying to change the system. Currently the siren sounds at 1:00 PM for one minute on the first Tuesday of each month to make sure the sirens are working. In the event of a real emergency the sirens continue to sound every two minutes non-stop.

President Foote explained that if the emergency warning sirens are sounding, turn your radio to the emergency broadcast system, channel 1700AM, where you can listen to the HAM RADIO contacts for further instructions.

## **9) Reports:**

### **A. Fire Chief's Report:**

Interim Fire Chief Hart reported 32 emergency calls for *August*.

29 - Medical Aids

0 - Public Assists

3 - Fires

Chief Hart informed the Fire Board that all equipment is running appropriately. We had some tire issues that were taken care of. There has been no out of service issues with our equipment.

Chief reported that our annual pump testing on all of the engines is taking place this week.

### **B. Fire Board of Directors' Reports / Comments:**

President Foote asked the Board if they have anything to report.

Bill Barry – None

Secretary Kim Kimball asked how the hiring process is going with the new Chief.

Chief Hart confirmed that Robert Gray will receive his pre-employment physical and background check soon. Chief Gary's start date will be November 1, 2023.

Mark Burnham – None

Tracey Smith – None

**10) Correspondence:**

None

**11) Future Agenda Items:**

**A. Seneca Hospital, Chester Fire & Peninsula Fire Ambulance Service.**

**12) Next Scheduled Regular Fire Board Meeting:**

*October 18, 2023 @ 11:00 AM, Station 2*

**13) Regular Meeting Adjourned:**

There being no further business, President Foote adjourned the Fire Board meeting at 12:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by *Holly C. Coons - Price*

The meeting minutes for *September 20, 2023* were approved on *October 18, 2023*.

X

*Nancy Foote, Fire Board President*