

PENINSULA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 19, 2023 Minutes

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, Directors Mark Burnham and Tracey Smith. Staff present: Fire Chief Andy Courtright, Battalion Chief Steve Hart & Administrative Assistant Holly Coons. Public present - 6.

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

4) Approval of Minutes for March 15, 2023:

President Foote called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for *March 15, 2023*. Upon a motion by Director Kimball, seconded by Director Burnham, and with a unanimous vote, the Fire Board Meeting Minutes were approved as written.

5) Approval of Agenda:

President Foote called for a motion to approve the Agenda for *April 19, 2023*.

Upon a motion by Director Burnham, seconded by Secretary Kimball, the motion was approved unanimously.

6) Public Comment:

Fire Chief Matt Balzarini was welcomed to the Fire Board meeting.

Chief Balzarini introduced himself as the current Fire Chief for Chester Fire. He explained that he wanted to come congratulate Chief Courtright on his retirement and thank him in person. He went on to say that Chief Courtright has been very good to him. He said Chief Courtright welcomed him when he was hired and helped him navigate through the EMS system because it is very different here in the Lake Almanor basin.

President Foote thanked Chief Balzarini for attending.

7) Old Business:

A. Contract between Peninsula Fire & Hamilton Branch Fire Districts:

Chief Courtright stated that the only change in the contract is the pay rate increase.

President Foote called for a motion to approve the administrative services agreement between Peninsula Fire & Hamilton Branch Fire Districts. The contract rate is now \$368,500.00 – July 1-2023 to June 30, 2024 with twelve monthly payments of \$30,708.33 from Hamilton Branch Fire.

Upon a motion by Secretary Kimball, seconded by Director Mark Burnham and with a unanimous vote, the motion was approved.

8) New Business:

A. Monthly Financial Statement-Period 9 FY 2022-2023:

Chief Courtright explained the Monthly Financial Statement for Period 9 - March 2023.

Chief confirmed we are still right on budget and that there are three more periods in this fiscal year.

B. Cummins Service Estimate for Pierce Fire Engine 7122:

Chief Courtright explained that Cummins has found problems with Fire Engine 7122.

Chief reviewed the quotes with the Fire Board. One quote is for parts to repair the radiator and the other is for a new radiator. He said the problem with ordering a new radiator is, we do not know how long it will take the manufacture to deliver it.

Chief Courtright explained that he needs approval from the Board to move forward with repairing Fire Engine 7122.

President Foote moved to approve \$8,000.00 to get Engine 7122 repaired, seconded by Director Burnham and with a unanimous vote, the motion was approved.

C. SingletonAuman PC Audit Engagement Letter for Year Ending June 30, 2023:

Chief Courtright informed the Board that it is time for the Fire Districts audit.

There was a brief discussion regarding the cost being \$14,500.00.

President Foote called for a motion to approve SingletonAuman PC Audit Engagement letter for year ending June 30, 2023.

Upon a motion by Secretary Kimball, seconded by Vice President Barry and with a unanimous vote, the motion was approved.

D. Pay Adjustment for Administrative Assistant – Holly C. Coons – Price:

Chief Courtright explained that an approval is needed for Secretary Coons-Price pay adjustment. He explained that she waited until negotiations were completed to request an increase.

Chief said we are in agreement that she will receive the same increase as the other employee did.

Upon a motion by Secretary Kimball, seconded by Director Burnham and with a unanimous vote, the motion was approved.

9) Reports:

A. Fire Chief's Report:

Chief reported 16 Emergency Calls for March. 16 Medical and 9 Fire calls.

Chief reported the average response time in the District was 6 minutes and 5 seconds.

Chief reported Fire Engine 7122 is still in Sparks, NV.

Chief said we survived the winter storms. We had one confirmed report of a collapsed home on the peninsula. The other reports on damages are being forwarded directly to the County of Plumas.

Chief Courtright read his letter aloud to the Fire Board as follows:

Since becoming Chief in December 2020, many things have transpired, some good and some not so good.

We were just beginning to see the COVID spiking in our area and had many unfunded mandates from the state. We assisted Seneca Hospital and the County of Plumas in conducting vaccine clinics. We all conducted ourselves proudly during this difficult time. However, this created budget issues with the free Covid sick leave and the need for more medical supplies that became ever-expensive. We were turned down for Covid relief every time.

In July of 2021, the Dixie Fire began, and as most of you know I lost my home and everything I owned in the fire. I stayed on duty for nearly two months total only leaving when I had to evacuate my wife and animals as the fire progressed. We had major overtime costs and the staff worked hard in being ready when the fire was encroaching on the Hamilton Branch District. They took action so that it would not come any further up HWY 147. There were many instances that the staff really put it out there for the public.

We did receive some reimbursement for the Dixie Fire but it did not cover all the cost of our time.

I have spent countless hours looking for ways to cut costs and save money all the while dealing with staffing shortages that plague the entire public safety system in California. And thus far have minimized the losses of the pandemic and the Dixie Fire.

We returned the Office of Emergency Services Engine as the program became too hard to keep up and with staffing shortages, we did not have the staff to conduct those operations and staff the district. However, through contacts, we were able to find a reserve engine that would fill our needs and allow us to respond to out-of-county assignments if available.

I have written and received nearly \$500,000 in grant funds for equipment. We were able to replace an old underpowered tractor for snow removal as well as upgrading extrication gear. We are placing two more evacuation sirens and have a functioning emergency broadcast system for the basin. I also assisted in pushing the Fuel Reduction grant that was awarded \$832,000.

Most credit for this admittedly goes to Hannah from the Fire Safe Council, but I and others have been pushing this project for over 15 years.

In the last two-plus years I have focused on this job and the people of the District. In a way, I was coping with everything going on in an unhealthy way. I usually work 60-hour average weeks and when taking time off I would have to take my computer with me to still conduct business. This has left my work/life in an unbalanced state. It has taken its toll on me both physically and mentally. Some have mentioned how well I have done in spite of all the recent hardships, nomadic lifestyle, and travel trailer living. I have only been able to do so by avoiding my personal responsibilities to myself, my well-being, and my wife.

Notice of Intent to Retire from Peninsula Fire and Hamilton Branch Fire:

With a heavy heart, I announce my retirement date of December 29, 2023.

Do to the living conditions that we have been contending with for the last 20 months, my wife and I have decided to end this chapter of our lives. Many other factors were considered in our decision. And it was not decided easily.

I initially started my career with Peninsula Fire in the late 80's as an "apprentice firefighter" working through the job training partnership act. I worked two summers at Peninsula Fire for Fire Chief Ray Poff. At the time each station was staffed by husband-and-wife teams each working one week on and one week off. We relied heavily on volunteer response at that time with the "live-ins" providing the main fire and ambulance services.

Shortly after, I joined the United States Army and served in many locales. On my return to the area, I began volunteering for Peninsula Fire and completed my Emergency Medical Technician training. After becoming a per-diem employee and then moving to full time, I put myself through a paramedic program to better serve the district. After many years and education, I continued to serve the district. The district has changed dramatically over the years. The level of service and the amount of staff working each day has continued to increase.

Over the last 26+years, I have given my heart and soul to the district many times, putting the district above my family.

I hope to leave the district in better shape and will provide services until my departure. I do have a vacation scheduled for April 22 through May 2 that I must take.

As has been established by the prior retiring fire chief and other retiring employees, I will take some PTO as retirement leave.

My last working day will be May 19, 2023, my retirement effective date will be December 29, 2023.

I will miss the district and the area and wish you all the best.

B. Fire Board of Directors' Reports / Comments:

President Foote asked if any of the Board members had any comments or reports.

Each Director had thoughtful things to say to Chief Courtright for all his hard work with the district and wished him well in his future.

10) Correspondence:

None

11) Future Agenda Items:

A. Monthly Financial Statement for Period 10 FY 2022-2023

B. Fire Chief Job Description

12) Next Scheduled Regular Fire Board Meeting:

May 17, 2023 @ 11:00 AM, Station 2

13) Regular Meeting Adjourned:

There being no further business, President Foote adjourned the Fire Board meeting at 11:25 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by *Holly C. Coons - Price*

The meeting minutes for April 19, 2023 *were approved on May 17, 2023.*

X

Nancy Foote, Fire Board President