

NORTH SAN JUAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

Adopted January 26, 2021

PRESENT: Ed Beckenbach, Chair; Tim Tschantz; Pat Leach, Treasurer; Bruce Boyd; Rhea Williamson

ABSENT: None.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM. Roll taken. Quorum established. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
No public comment.
3. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - A. Minutes of October 27, 2020 Regular Board Meeting
 - B. Correspondence; Letter from resident Liz Walsh

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Tim Tschantz seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote as follows:

Tim Tschantz - Aye

Pat Leach – Aye

Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Rhea Williamson informed the group that she is currently unable to access her NSJ Fire email and asked how to correct the issue. Pat Leach informed her to contact Amund at Clientworks.

Ed Beckenbach announced that tonight will be his last meeting, his term is up December 31, 2020. He wanted to ensure the Board understood how much he has enjoyed the past 18 years (two as a volunteer firefighter and sixteen on the Board). Since the Board will be selecting the new Chair at the January 26 Board Meeting, Ed asked the Vice-Chair, Tim Tschantz, to open the January Meeting before moving to select a new chair. Ed wanted to be sure the firefighters know how much he admires them, likes them, and is proud of their dedication to the Community, that goes for all the Board Members as well. Over the years, Ed has witnessed so many wonderful volunteers and employees at NSJ Fire, always considering and working towards what is best for the District. The Board has done well

over the years, with memorable highlights including the annexation and Measure Q. Ed wanted to thank everyone, and he wishes everyone well.

5. REPORTS

A. Chief's Report – Chief Jason Flores

- Presented call statistics for October 2020

Rhea Williamson asked how to respond to inquiries from Community members about response times on incidents. Chief Flores provided a detailed description on factors affecting response times once 911 is notified of an emergency. Chief Browning added that she could contact Heidi Ryan and ask for the response times for incidents as provided on the Crystal Reports (agency reports pulled from the Emergency Command Center).

- We are out of fire season, the burn ban has been lifted, but we are in a dry spell.
- We are still having Covid-19 Team meetings. We are seeing an increase in Covid cases in the County and are monitoring for any changes mandated by Governor Newsome.
- We have stopped in person trainings.
- Fire fighters are limited to two individuals staying overnight in the residence.
- Looking at setting up an online training format; Youtube, etc.
- We have 5 firefighters in an Advanced EMT class in Downieville, they should be certified after the beginning of the year.
- We have been increasing the skills of our EMT's. Recently added skills include: EPI pens, Narcan, and Aspirin. SSV (medical licensing authority) has just approved us to administer i-Gel, which is an airway junction that we can put into patients to keep their airway open. This will mean we will need to increase our trainings to keep up with those skills.
- Chief Flores will be traveling to Michigan in January for final inspection on the new fire engine. The engine will then be inspected by Burton in Stockton before the engine is delivered to us in late January. We hope to have the engine in service by early February. The plan is to have the engine housed at station 3.

Tim Tschantz asked if CAL FIRE was still staffing station 42. Chief Flores responded that they are still at full staffing, possibly down staffing to one engine in December, then likely closing station 42 after the beginning of the year.

B. Treasurer's Report – Pat leach

i. Donations – Donations were received as follows: \$500 from Babsi Clark and \$50 from M. Nielsen. \$550 for the month of October, 2020.

ii. Financials- October 2020: Funds Summary, Disbursement Detail, Deposit Detail, Cal Card.

Boyd Johnson asked for clarification on the payment for CPR training (10/9/20, \$630); how many students attended? What portion of the expense is salary for the instructor and cost to the Red Cross for certifications? Lynn McGarva answered to the best of her knowledge and let Boyd know she would investigate it further and provide more details.

Boyd Johnson thanked Lynn McGarva for the additional breakdown of Cash Disbursements and Cal Card purchases.

Pat Leach asked Lynn McGarva to provide further details on expenses to Nancy Picker and describe what her roll is with the Department. Tom Browning provided the clarification: Nancy Picker is a retired CAL FIRE dispatcher. OES contacted Chief Browning about adding Nancy as an auxiliary member of NSJ Fire. She gets called out on OES incidents, is paid through our Department, then we are reimbursed for all her expenses and we earn 10% Administrative fee.

Bruce Boyd moved to approve the October 2020 Cash Disbursements as presented, Pat Leach seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote as follows:

Tim Tschantz - Aye
Pat Leach – Aye
Bruce Boyd – Aye
Rhea Williamson – Aye
Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Bruce Boyd noted that his motion was to approve both the October Cash Disbursements as well as the October Cal Card Summary. Moving forward, the motion will be titled “Disbursements”.

C. District Manager’s Report – Lynn McGarva

Lynn McGarva wanted Ed to know that she will miss him very much. Lynn also reminded the Board that she will always have batches to sign on Thursday mornings by 10:15. The Auditor will accept emails from Board Members as authorization. If authorized batches are submitted to the County on Thursdays, they will be processed on Tuesdays the following week. Keeping on this schedule helps us ensure we avoid late fees and other unnecessary charges.

Bruce Boyd asked Lynn McGarva to investigate upgrading our HVAC filters to meet Covid-19 standards. Heidi Ryan answered that Boyd Johnson had directed her to order Merv 13 filters to replace all the filters at Station 3.

D. Firefighters Association Report – Nathaniel Van Order

- Re-stocking promotional shirts, which are sold at events as well as Mother Trucker’s and The Country Store.
- The Association is holding a competition on their Facebook page to redesign a new shirt. The winner will be announced December 16th.
- We have been working with Chief Flores and Heidi Ryan to create a comprehensive New Hire Process, to help clarify the requirements for prospective volunteers.
- The Association would like for the Boards feedback on the following idea regarding the new dual compliant pants: The Association would like to provide the option of having firefighters purchase their department issued

pants (cost new is \$350/each) at half the cost upon resigning from the department after three years of service. This would allow us to purchase more pants as needed, and uniform pants are not as easily re-issued (compared to turnout pants, as an example), as pant sizes are variable.

Tim Tschantz likes the idea of firefighters keeping their pants if they leave after three years of service, it could be an incentive for Firefighters to stay on longer.

Board members agreed that this is a great idea.

E. LAFCo Report – Ed Beckenbach

The group re-established the sphere of influence for Nevada City, a process two years in the making.

This was Ed Beckenbach' last meeting on the LAFCo Board, which means NSJ will no longer have a representative at the meetings or on the Committee. There will be a new election for his replacement representing special districts, interested individuals can apply.

F. Fire Safe Council /FireWise Coalition/Ridge FireWise Communities Report – Pat Leach

At least two FireWise communities on the Ridge were able to show at least \$100,000 in fire prevention work for their neighborhoods. Countywide, over \$8,000,000 in fire prevention work has been completed this year.

Great work has been done on Old Mill Road, though they are not a certified FireWise Community.

The Fire Safe Council is still working on creating helpful videos to make available on multiple platforms.

G. NCFCA Report – Pat Leach.

No meeting, no report.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Sick Leave Policy- Bruce Boyd

Second reading of the sick leave policy, re-written to match the format of our Organizational Manual. We have assured our policy matches state laws.

Rhea Williamson pointed out that there is a discrepancy between the sick leave policy and the salary step document which will be seen in Item 7 A. Bruce replied that the attachment in 7 A is an old document and the discrepancy will be corrected to meet the new policy, when it is approved.

Bruce Boyd moved to approve the Sick Leave Policy as written, Pat Leach seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote as follows:

Tim Tschantz
Pat Leach – Aye
Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye
Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

B. Water Storage Committee Update- Bruce Boyd

No meeting, no report.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Zach Pehling Introduction – Pat Leach

This item was moved before New Business as a courtesy to Mr. Pehling, 5:50 PM
Pat Leach announced that Mr. Zack Pehling came highly recommended by Nevada County Consolidated Fire District. Mr. Pehling is very easy to communicate with, willing to guide us in the right direction, and he is thorough.

Zack Pehling introduced himself to the Board and shared that he has been a CPA for 12 years, has lived in Truckee for 5 years, and has clients all along the Highway 20 corridor. He did Nevada County Consolidated's audit for three years. He wanted the Board to know that the North San Juan Fire 2019-20 audit is going well, and he is nearly complete. Zach will be submitting some draft documents to staff shortly and is recommending we make some policy changes to our fixed asset requirements, moving from \$500 to \$5,000.

Lynn asked Zack to explain to the Board what this audit is for and why. Zack responded that the audit is a compliance requirement, checking on our finances and ensuring we prepare them in a way that is the same across all districts.

B. Community Outreach on Fire Prevention Discussion – Ed Beckenbach

At the October 27th Board Meeting, Liz Walsh made a comment during Public Comment asking the North San Juan Fire Protection District to assist, if possible, in communicating and ensuring fire prevention work is completed by residents in her neighborhood. Rhea Williamson added a point to Mrs. Walsh's comment during Board Announcements suggesting some options the Department could employ, at which point Ed Beckenbach suggested the item be agendaized for further discussion.

Rhea recommended collaborating with other non-profits in the area, the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association as an example.

Bruce Boyd suggested having the Ponderosa community develop a Fire Wise community. Pat Leach added that they are working on a Fire Wise community in the Ponderosa area, and that the program is a great avenue for community outreach on fire prevention. Additionally, Joann Fites Kaufman has agreed to be a speaker at the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association event in January that will be available on Zoom as well as a distanced gathering in person. The event will be focused on FireWise Communities that have already been approved as well as communities that are working towards being recognized as FireWise Communities. This event has been approved by the Fire Safe Council.

Bruce Boyd brought up the Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance (a County of Nevada Ordinance) and asked Tom Browning to remind the group why we are not enforcers of brush clearing on private property, to which Tom replied that the County has three inspectors, NSJ Fire has neither the manpower nor resources to commit to this role. However, Tom added that we could make recommendations to property owners about brush clearing through LE 100's (defensible space inspections), but the County has the authority to enforce property clearing under certain circumstances through the abatement program. Tom also cautioned against taking on more responsibility that can overwhelm our volunteers.

Tim Tschantz noted that some residents may be negligent, others may lack the funds to ensure proper clearing. Tim asked if there was any way we could provide trainings or complete prescribed burns for residents. Chief Flores replied that there are groups that conduct prescribed burns and some funding through the Chipper Program and suggested we could ensure our website has links to all the resources available. He also noted that Tim had a great idea, but again cautioned against the increase burden and liability.

Rhea Williamson suggested both updating our website and utilizing the newsletter.

C. Board Vacancy- Bruce Boyd

Only two individuals submitted applications for the three Board positions up for re-election at the November election. The Board of Supervisors then advertised for the position but had no applications. To move forward with filling the Board Vacancy we have two options: 1) hold a special election, which will cost upwards of \$5,000; 2) We can advertise for the opening, conduct interviews, and appoint a candidate at our January Board Meeting. The second option will require we advertise for the position for at least 15 days at three locations throughout the District.

Bruce Boyd moved to forego an election and appoint the new Board Member after an application and interview process, Pat Leach seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote as follows:

Tim Tschantz

Pat Leach – Aye

Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

D. OES Information Sharing – Pat Leach

Pat Leach announced that OES is proposing to build four sandwich Boards to display around the Ridge to share information on emergencies. OES is looking for responsible individuals/entities to take on the responsibility of updating these boards.

A Discussion ensued which resulted in more questions than answers. It was decided that this item should be tabled until OES provides more information.

E. District Manager of Finance and Facilities, District Manager of Operations and Personnel Salary- Bruce Boyd

We had positive evaluations for our two district managers at the October 27 Board meeting. The Personnel Committee had met before hand and suggested we move them up on the pay schedule to \$22/hour, retroactive to the end of probation. The Personnel Committee recommends this action. The District Managers both began at \$20/hour, instead of \$18, so this will be their first step increase.

Rhea Williamson pointed out that step 8 on the Salary Schedule attachment needs to be removed or edited to reflect the recently adopted Sick Leave Policy.

Bruce Boyd moved to approve a salary step increase for both District Managers to \$22/hour retroactive to the end of their probation (October 6th), Tim Tschantz seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote as follows:

Tim Tschantz

Pat Leach – Aye

Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

F. CLOSED SESSION: Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Gov. Code § 54957)

Title: Fire Chief

G. Report on Closed Session

We evaluated our Chief, found him very acceptable. No action was taken.

8. NEXT MEETING: January 26, 2021, time and location to be determined.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Heidi Ryan

Heidi Ryan, Board Secretary