

# NORTH SAN JUAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

### Final MINUTES

**Adopted 9/22/2020**

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

**ABSENT:** None.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM. Roll taken. Quorum established.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Rich Mead asked the Board to consider investing in a water storage system for fire use on his property on Cruzon Grade. Currently, there is no significant water storage in that area, Grizzly Hill School is the closest water source. Rich's property is flat and easily accessible from Cruzon Grade.

Tim Tschantz shared that there is about 80,000 gallons of water storage tanks on the corner of Robinson and Oak Tree, not being used, and suggested we inquire on the availability and functionality of it.

- Heidi Ryan announced that she has joined the Oak Tree Park District Board, fulfilling the last two years of Tracy's term.

**3. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- Minutes of June 23, 2020 Regular Board Meeting
- Minutes of June 30, 2020 Special Board Meeting
- Correspondence

Pat Leach moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Bruce Boyd seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ed Beckenbach referenced the recently published obituary of Tracy Corris and remarked on his life accomplishments.

Ed Beckenbach announced that he will not be running for re-election. He is proud of his time on the Board, and excited about the new staff and getting new blood on the Board. Ed made clear this decision is not a result of a specific incident, but rather his time has been served.

## 5. REPORTS

### A. Chief's Report – Battalion Chief, Boyd Johnson

- Presented call statistics for June 2020.
- Chief Flores will likely be gone 14 days, he is on the Modoc.
- Tom Browning is on the July Complex with Engine 6164.
- Shawn Olson is a Line EMT on the same incident as Jason.
- An Availability Chart has been put up on the white board in the training room at station 3 identifying available personnel. Considering personnel on fire assignments, personnel that live out of the District, and personnel unable to respond due to concerns about Covid, there is only a small number of active volunteers available. When the Covid pandemic hit, the Chief Officers developed a drawdown plan that included the possibility of reducing services based on personnel availability. Although we are not short staffed because of Covid alone, if we use the same parameters as identified in the draw down plan, we should have started to reduce services already. Although this is familiar territory for us in the summer months, Covid has added an additional challenge. This will be discussed with Chief Officers upon their return.
- Grizzly Hill School has replaced their old water tanks. Mark Roland inspected tanks at both Grizzly Hill School and the Oak Tree School campus, and discovered the tank at Oak tree is not being filled (he filled it with the tender) and the new tanks at Grizzly Hill will not be accessible for fire response purposes. There are three hydrants on the campus, but they are not efficient. Boyd checked with the school about making the tank accessible for fire and was informed Public Health would require a double check valve that is testable as the tanks provide potable water to the school. Peter's Drilling and Pump Service will likely be installing a 4-inch double gate valve that will be locked and only used in an emergency. This issue requires follow up attention.

Ed Beckenbach noted that June was a busy month. Boyd agreed and pointed out that the response was handled by a small group of responders.

### B. Treasurer's Report – Pat leach

- i. Donations – Donations were received as follows: \$50 for the month of June 2020.
- li. Financials for June 2020

After review of the financial reports, Bruce Boyd moved to accept the June 2020 Financials as presented, Tim Tschantz seconded, motion approved by unanimous vote as follows:

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Tim Tschantz – Aye

Pat Leach – Aye

Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

- **iii. Preliminary Budget 2020-21- Pat Leach**

Pat Leach presented the Preliminary Budget for 2020-21 alongside the Actuals for 2019-20.

General Fund

Bruce Boyd asked about why she is planning for a 2% rate on secured tax revenue, Pat Leach responded that she is aiming low for revenues and reminded that we will have three opportunities to adjust our budget throughout the year as the numbers materialize.

Liz Walsh asked about why Workers Comp was so low, Pat Leach responded that it is directly related to strike team activity, and at this time is anticipating less strike team activity.

Rhea Williamson asked about strike team expenses being low, Pat Leach responded that she is anticipating low strike team activity which would equate to low strike team expenses.

Pat Leach pointed out that we are anticipating running a deficit this year.

Mitigation Fund

Pat Leach noted that she is anticipating low revenues to the Mitigation Fund and that we will likely transfer up to \$20,000 from the Mitigation Fund to make a lease payment for the new engine.

Measure Q

Pat wanted the Board to understand there will be less interest earned on this fund as we are spending the money.

Tim Tschantz asked for definition of the Retention and Recruitment line item for \$10,000. Pat Leach replied that the line item was not spent out in FY 2019-20, but there are plans for purchases for the firefighters in this FY.

After presenting the Preliminary Budget for 2020-21, Bruce Boyd moved to adopt the Preliminary Budget 2020-21 as presented, Tim Tschantz seconded, motion approved by unanimous vote as follows:

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Tim Tschantz – Aye

Pat Leach – Aye

Bruce Boyd – Aye

Rhea Williamson – Aye

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

**C. District Manager’s Report – Lynn McGarva**

- Nothing to report.

**D. Firefighters Association Report – Kritters Blevins**

- Firefighters happy to be holding trainings in person.
- Moving forward with dual compliant pants, Captain Olson is collecting pant sizes.
- Kritters is thankful to be able to attend the Board Meetings for continuity and connection to the administrative side of the Department.
- Firefighters are happy to be coming together.
- Firefighters are interested in developing a non-profit.

Ed Beckenbach asked how much the dual compliant pants cost. Kritters replied they are \$230 pair, and we have over 20 firefighters on the roster, two pair per firefighter. Having two pairs will help with hygiene, among other things.

Bruce Boyd asked if the association handles or is involved in firefighter recruitment. Kritters responded that a regular agenda item at Association meetings is Mentorship; making the department feel very welcoming and open, a cultural change to fire service in general. They have also discussed developing an outreach brochure.

**E. LAFCo Report – Ed Beckenbach**

No meeting, no report.

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

- Firewise Communities- The San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association is still planning to put together a mass training for Firewise Communities on the Ridge to coordinate stakeholders and discussing roadway clearing.
- Boyd Johnson pointed out that there are two escape routes from New School Road: one through Red Moon Ranch, one through Sages then Byron. The Firewise Communities and Road Associations in that area need to organize their efforts. Also, Boyd wanted to note that Oak Tree School could use some TLC to become more fire safe; pine needles need to be removed from the roof, clearing around buildings, weed whacking, etc.

**G. NCFa Report – Pat Leach.**

- No meeting, no report.

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Resolution 2020-06 Capital Improvement Plan Update- Pat Leach**

Pat Leach moved to adopt Resolution 2020-06 Capital Improvement Plan Update as presented, Bruce Boyd seconded, motion approved by unanimous vote as follows:

Ed Beckenbach – Aye

Tim Tschantz – Aye

Pat Leach – Aye  
Bruce Boyd – Aye  
Rhea Williamson – Aye

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

**B. Auditor Discussion – Pat Leach**

Pat Leach reached out to three auditor firms, all of which have worked with Fire Departments/Districts in Nevada County. Zack Pehling was the only auditor of the three that showed any interest in taking us on as clients. Zack Pehling came highly recommended by Nevada County Consolidated Fire District. All the local Fire Departments/Districts use Smith and Newell.

Ed Beckenbach proposed the Finance Committee prepare a specific recommendation for an Auditor to the Board at the September meeting.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Discussion of points and questions raised in Correspondence – Ed Beckenbach**

Ed Beckenbach pointed out that although much of Boyd’s letter had to do with financial matters, included in the Board Packet is a series of relevant questions answered by Gary Bell, the Districts Counsel.

Boyd Johnson asked how Board Members communicate advise from Counsel without it being a serial meeting, and when will they chose to sit on the information and not disseminate. Ed Beckenbach responded that relevant information received is forwarded to Board Members as needed.

Boyd Johnson asked Board Members access Counsel as there is no formal policy. Bruce Boyd shared that he will first confer with the Chair who will chose to contact Counsel, an informal policy that could be made into a formal policy. Counsel will advise if the information needs to be shared with the entire Board. Counsel understands the Brown Act and requirements of the Board, he is not a passive participant.

Bruce Boyd read a policy regarding Board positions highlighting that there is no rule of automatic rotation of Board positions.

Pat Leach thanked Boyd Johnson for bringing attention to the issues he addressed in the letter. Pat addressed the following points raised in the letter:

- From paragraph 1- two highlights from the Audit, which were the only deficiencies noted in the audit. Pat Leach mentioned the Corrective Action Plan included in the Audit was likely addressed by Tracy Corris, she was not involved in that.
- QuickBooks- Pat Leach wanted to make clear that while we will be starting a new company in QuickBooks, we will not be severing ties with the previous version. The previous Quick Books company will be backed up in multiple formats.

Boyd Johnson wanted to point out that the Board still has not discussed the audit in depth, and suggested the Board was not paying attention. The Auditor referred to “unidentified journal entries”, Boyd asked why this has not been discussed publicly. From Boyd’s perspective, there are times the Board appears to approve financial documents without really understanding them. Lynn McGarva made the point that auditors will often conduct journal entries to change how entries are categorized. Boyd replied that an Auditor is making changes and the Board is not discussing it.

Pat Leach wanted to assure Boyd that she is not dropping the subject of the audit, but she has not discovered the origin of the issues identified. Regarding the \$18,000 surplus, the District’s money is held by the County, there is no reason to suspect that fraud or criminal activity has occurred. The investigation is ongoing.

Pat Leach referenced a line in the letter in which Boyd claimed the Board spent thousands of dollars on defamation against him. Pat asked to see what Boyd was referring to for further discussions.

Pat Leach acknowledged when Boyd Johnson referred to the expertise of Catherine Rice and Liz Walsh. Pat was happy to announce that both individuals are still actively working with the Department in some capacity.

Boyd Johnson suggested the Board replace the Pledge of Allegiance with a part of the Brown Act which points out a Boards responsibility to be open and transparent to the public. Pat Leach said she would love to add that verbiage to our website but would like to continue to pledge the flag at each meeting.

Rhea Williamson relayed that she sensed Boyd Johnson’s frustration in the letter, and asked him to review the April 28<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes, in which she asked specific questions regarding the audit. Although Rhea is new to the Board, she felt accused by Boyd’s letter. Rhea wanted to assure Boyd that the Board is working for the good of our community and Board Members are paying attention.

Liz Walsh wanted to point out that she was shocked at the items that were highlighted in the audit, and she agreed with the concerns raised by Boyd Johnson. She sees the new Board and managers are taking this to heart and are working to correct this, time to move on and make things better.

**B. Biennial Notice for Conflict of Interest Codes – Ed Beckenbach**

The Political Reform Act requires every agency to review its conflict of interest code biennially. The District updated said code October, 2019, and has taken the necessary steps to inform the County.

**C. Resolution 2020-07 Fee Schedule for Cases of Negligence, Criminal Activity, and False Alarms FY 2020-21 – Ed Beckenbach**

Ed Beckenbach provided a summary of this annual requirement. A discussion ensued clarifying how the rates are determined and billed.

Bruce Boyd moved to adopt Resolution 2020-07 Fee Schedule for Cases of Negligence, Criminal Activity, and False Alarms FY 2020-21, Pat Leach seconded, motion approved by unanimous vote as follows:

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

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 0

**D. First Reading of Proposed Changes to Organizational Manual Section 2300 – Pat Leach**

Pat Leach read the proposed changes to section 2300 of the Organizational Manual. Primary changes made to Mitigation Fee Refunds, Payroll Processing, as well as financial processes to reflect changes initiated by the County Auditor Controller Department.

Rhea Williamson asked for the language on Mitigation Fee Refunds to specify refund requests must be made within one year of receipt of payment.

There will be a second reading of the proposed changes at the September Board Meeting.

**E. Water Tank Storage Discussion – Rhea Williamson**

Rhea Williamson is interested in obtaining written specification for water storage for fire protection, then make that information accessible to our residents.

Bruce Boyd remarked when someone applies for a building permit at the County, the County Fire Planner makes certain requirements for water storage, and they have the handle for the installation of tanks, hydrants, and sprinklers. A handout would be helpful. However, the District establishing larger storage tanks around the District would probably be more helpful than many smaller tanks.

Boyd Johnson said we have a handout at the office for residents that want to put water storage on their property for fire protection, different than when accessing a permit. Residents should also contact the Fire Department and discuss with a Chief. We can provide guidance but will not be responsible for inspection. We could find what we have and put it on the website.

Ed Beckenkach believes the District should consider installing additional water storage throughout the District.

**8. NEXT MEETING:** September 22, 2020, at 7:00 PM.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

*Heidi Ryan*

Heidi Ryan, Board Secretary