

NORTH SAN JUAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

13200 Tyler Foote Crossing Rd., Nevada City, California 95959

P.O. Box 299, North San Juan, CA 95960

Phone (530) 292-9159 Fax (530) 292-1417

www.nsfire.org

info911@nsfire.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 6, 2022

Final – Adopted January 24, 2023

PRESENT: Tim Tschantz, Chair; Bruce Boyd, Vice-Chair; Pat Leach, Treasurer; Samantha Hinrichs; Rhea Williamson

ABSENT:

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM. Roll taken. Quorum established.
Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 6, 2022 REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the agenda as written, Pat Leach seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

A. **Minutes of October 25, 2022, Regular Board Meeting**

B. **Correspondence From Nevada County BOS Regarding Liability Insurance**

Bruce Boyd asked to pull 4.A for discussion.

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the Consent Calendar with item 4.A removed, Pat Leach seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion of item 4.A

Bruce Boyd noted that Samantha Hinrichs arrived late to the October Board meeting, but she was listed as being both “Present” and “Absent” in the minutes. Bruce suggested if Board Members arrive late, they should be listed at “Present” with a note on their arrival time by their name. Heidi Ryan, Board Secretary, agreed and will make the correction.

Bruce Boyd moved to approve item 4.A as corrected, Rhea Williamson seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Tom Browning reminded the Board that email discussions between three or more Board Members constitutes a serial meeting.

Rhea Williamson announced that she has recently traveled to Lexington and visited Revolutionary War monuments, which was moving. Rhea realized North San Juan Fire Protection District Board meetings is the only place where she recites the Pledge of Allegiance.

6. REPORTS

A. Chief's Report – Jason Flores

i. September 2022 Statistics

ii. Department Activity

- On track for a standard number of annual responses.
- Getting the tool rig mounted on E6168.
- Considering a special training on MCI's (multi causality incidents).
- Christian Moorhouse will be starting the Firefighter 1 Academy in January.
- Eugene Lehman is in the top of his EMT class.
- Christmas card has been sent out.
- Conducted a live fire training at Whittlesey's Junk Yard.
- Heidi Ryan is working on new ID Cards.
- Annual Firefighter Awards for 2022 will be determined after the end of the year.
- Officer's meeting scheduled for December 7th, considering some temporary changes to the Org Chart, among other items of discussion.
- Firefighters will be setting department goals for 2023.
- Station 42 is closing on Monday (December 12th).
- Landon Haack has promoted to Division 2303, Sean Ryan will be the new Battalion 2314.
- Current Department roster is 28.

Rhea Williamson asked if the number of canceled calls (4 total) in the call data is normal. Chief Flores responded that it is and gave some possible reasons for why the calls were canceled.

Tim Tschantz asked if the fire department can conduct live vegetation fire training burns. Chief Flores responded that the department has done a few in the last few years. Due to liability concerns, it's better for NSJ Fire to attend local prescribed fires in a support role. A discussion ensued on planning, liability, burn boss roles in prescribed fires.

Tom Browning announced that he is looking to combine the two electrical meters at station 1 combined to one meter and install the generator recently removed from station 3 to provide back-up power at station 1. Additionally, Tom added that of the two tanks at Station 3, it was discovered that one of them was closed. Boyd Johnson relayed that historically, one tank was always closed in the event the water of the open tank was drained (by accident or otherwise), the station has a back-up supply of water.

B. Treasurer's Report – Pat Leach

i. Financials –September 2022

Pat Leach presented the financial reports for September 2022.

Tom Browning reminded the group that although the General Fund shows a substantial balance, much of that money is earmarked for purchases and reserves for Capital Improvements.

Rhea Williamson asked why we have overspent the landscaping budget. Tom Browning responded that the work landscaping work was completed in the previous fiscal year, but the invoice was submitted after the current fiscal year commenced.

Bruce Boyd asked staff to investigate Starlink service for internet and to replace Dish Network.

Samantha Hinrichs moved to approve the Financials for September 2022, Rhea Williamson seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

C. Firefighters Association Report – Chris Rainville

- The Association has acquired an EIN number.
- 501c3 application has been submitted. A huge thanks to Badri and Gita Matlock for getting that done.
- Department dinner is this Saturday, December 10th.

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

There are currently 85 FireWise Communities, with 4 more pending review.

E. NCFA Report – Bruce Boyd

Most of the meeting was used to discuss the recent increase in Liability Insurance. The group discussed whether to get rid of the command vehicle, ultimately leaving the fire Chief's to make the final decision. The group also discussed the radio antenna by Washington (tone 5), and potentially building a tower for it and how to fund and maintain that.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. “Preparing for Large Fires” – Tim Tschantz

Tim Tschantz began by stating one way we can help our residents prepare for large fires is to encourage them to clear brush, hardening structures, and using prescribed fire. A discussion ensued on SB332, which states, “this bill will ensure that no person shall be liable for any fire suppression or other costs otherwise recoverable for prescribed burn if specified conditions are met...” This appears that it is not just the burn boss that is covered, but any individual would be covered if they were negligent. Tom Browning added that his understanding is that to conduct a prescribed burn, you must have a certified burn boss write a plan that must be approved. Firefighter Bill Scott, who has attended training for burn boss added that he understands the bill only covers certified burn bosses with an approved plan, not any individual. Prescribed burning on private property under 1 acre does not require a burn plan. Bill Scott offered to contact the BBA (Burn Boss Association) to clarify this issue.

Rhea Williamson noted that it would be helpful to summarize the process and practice of prescribed fire to make available to our public.

Bill Scott summarized his training and experience trying to navigate becoming a certified burn boss. Bill added that in communicating with the public on the importance of using prescribed fire, a huge selling point is that using prescribed fire (safely and appropriately) is less expensive than other forms of creating defensible space; brushing, chipping, etc.

Tom Browning will work to get another prescribed fire class scheduled.

Bruce Boyd noted that prescribed fire is one part of the process. Another, less popular method, is thinning trees, partly due to the expense of having trees logged, but also out of a distaste of cutting trees.

B. Hydrant Committee Update – Tom Browning

Tom Browning shared that a meeting with the church to show the plans for the tanks. The next step is getting the agreement completed with the Church, as well as 5 other agreements. The goal is to have the construction for the hydrants done by the end of next year.

C. Resolution 2022-09 Fee Schedule for FY 2022-23 for Cases of Negligence, Criminal Activity, and False Alarms – Tom Browning

The Board voted on this meeting in September. Boyd Johnson asked if the Board was required to hear the resolution a second time since there was a change made during the motion. Staff contacted our council and were informed that we were not required to hear the resolution a second time due to the change, but since this Resolution was setting a fee, it should have been noticed in the paper and we should have held a public hearing. The Board is hearing this Resolution a second time to ensure we are operating within the appropriate manner.

i. Public Hearing

Opened at 7:13: No comment. Public hearing closed at 7:13

ii. Board Discussion/Adoption

Board members noted multiple grammatical errors.

Tom Browning noted that we have not collected fees established in this resolution since 2015. Additionally, Staff plan to write a new ordinance that takes out the requirement to set the fee, by resolution, annually. Instead, we will only need to pass a resolution if we chose to increase the fees.

Bruce Boyd moved to adopt Resolution 2022-09 as corrected, Rhea Williamson seconded, motion passes by roll call vote as follows:

Bruce Boyd: Aye

Pat Leach: Aye

Rhea Williamson: Aye

Samantha Hinrichs: Aye

Tim Tschantz: Aye

D. Statement From Board of Directors – Rhea Williamson

Rhea Williamson moved to have the following statement be made public by inclusion in the NSJFPD Board meeting minutes of December 6, 2022 and, when available, via the newsletter and inclusion on the NSJFPD website:

"The North San Juan Fire Protection District Board of Directors has many responsibilities as described in the District's Organizational Manual (<https://nsjfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-DISTRICT-ORGANIZATIONAL-MANUAL.pdf>). Primary responsibilities are to oversee the budgeting for the fire department, approve the disbursement of funds, oversee the collection of all taxes, and provide direction and oversight of District staff charged with conducting the financial affairs of the District. All bills and invoices are reviewed by the Finance Manager, and either two (2) Board Directors or one (1) Board Director and the Chief. The Finance Manager is directed to notify the Board of any penalties and or refunds deriving from the operations of the District. Members of the NSJFPD Board are elected by the public to provide such oversight of District finances. The public is invited to attend Board meetings per the California Government Code known as the Ralph M. Brown Act (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=2.&chapter=9.&part=1.&lawCode=GOV&title=5) that requires Board actions and deliberations be conducted openly so that the people are informed."

Rhea Williamson moved to adopt the statement from the Board of Directors, Bruce Boyd seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

E. Water Storage Committee – Rhea Williamson

Rhea Williamson provided an overview of the recent committee meetings. The committee has created a checklist for site considerations. Additionally, they have created an installation diagram. The next step is to create an agreement between the landowner and NSJ Fire and to establish a tentative timeline for our Beta site.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Letter of Advocacy to State Officials – Tom Browning

Tom Browning reminded the Board that the Board of Supervisors drafted a letter of advocacy to state officials regarding the increase in liability insurance for local fire departments. The County provided a template for us to draft a similar letter. Heidi Ryan noted that a minor edit is required.

Rhea Williamson moved to approve having the Board Chair sign the letter as amended, Bruce Boyd seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

B. Station 3 Flooring Quote Award – Jason Flores

Jason Flores summarized the two quotes received. Bruce Boyd noted he would not vote on selecting a vendor without having a sample and spec sheet for the flooring identified in the quotes.

C. Resolution 2022-10 Proposed Salary Schedule Change – Bruce Boyd

Bruce Boyd presented the proposed salary schedule change for all new hires. Rhea Williamson asked to have item 9 to read, "Merit Step Schedule...".

Bruce Boyd moved to adopt Resolution 2022-10 as amended, Rhea Williamson seconded, motion passes by roll call vote as follows:

Bruce Boyd: Aye
Pat Leach: Aye
Rhea Williamson: Aye
Samantha Hinrichs: Aye
Tim Tschantz: Aye

D. District Manager Merit Step – Bruce Boyd

Rhea Williamson recommended removing the last sentence in item 4.

Rhea Williamson moved to approve the merit step increase (to \$30.75) for both District Managers, retroactive to October 6, 2022 following a positive evaluation, as amended, Bruce Boyd seconded, motion passed by unanimous vote.

E. Resolution 2022-11 Petty Cash Fund – Tom Browning

Historically, the signers on the Petty Cash fund have been all Board members, and the Fire Chief and the custodian of the fund was Tracy Corriss. This new resolution establishes Lynn McGarva as the fund custodian and authorizes the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and both District Managers as authorized signers. The Board will still see and authorized all payments from the Petty Cash Fund.

Bruce Boyd moved to adopt Resolution 2022-11 as corrected, Rhea Williamson seconded, motion passed by roll call vote as follows:

Bruce Boyd: Aye
Pat Leach: Aye
Rhea Williamson: Aye
Samantha Hinrichs: Aye
Tim Tschantz: Aye

F. CLOSED SESSION: Pursuant to Section 54967 of the Brown Act: Public Employee Performance Evaluations: District Manager of Finance and Facilities.

This item was moved to the January meeting.

G. Report on Closed Session

Not Applicable.

9. NEXT MEETING: January 24, 2022, 6:00 PM.

10. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Heidi Ryan

Heidi Ryan, Board Secretary