

REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DE BEQUE FIRE STATION  
July 13, 2021

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Pursuant to notice, the regular board meeting of the De Beque Fire Protection District was called to order by President Annette Tanner at 6:01 PM on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call:** Cynthia Farris, present; Melanie Hansen, present; Annette Tanner, present; Dustin Koehler, present; A quorum was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed.

Others present: Forest Matis, De Beque District Fire Chief; Zach Adams; Jason Lee; Nate Voorhees; Kim Latham; Deborah Borrego.

**ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

- 1) None

**APPROVAL ITEMS:**

- 1) Swearing in of Maria Ramthun as new member to the Board of Directors for the De Beque Fire Protection District with approval from the Board by aye votes.
- 2) Minutes from the June 8, 2021 regular board meeting were discussed by the Board. Motion was made by Board Member Farris to approve the June 8, 2021 board meeting minutes pending one typo correction. Annette Tanner seconded the motion. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, abstain (due to absence from that meeting); Maria Ramthun, abstain (not a Board Member for that meeting); Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Annette Tanner asked the public for comments. Deborah Borrego introduced herself as a new member of the De Beque area.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1) Roof repair update: The old tin will be taken down by the crew team on duty to be recycled; Chief Matis will put out a request for bids on repairs; we may need to set up a special meeting to approve which bid we will accept, or we could call for a vote through email if we can't get a meeting set up.
- 2) Mill Levy Increase Plans: We need to move forward quickly if we are going to get it on the ballot for next elections, otherwise we'll have to wait until 2024. Chief Matis recommended we move forward. Jason Lee reported how the union could help with the process. Chief Matis will contact the lawyer to see what we need to do to move forward.
- 3) Quickbooks Update: Kim Latham reported on the progress with getting Quickbooks up and running. Kim (Reeves) from the Grand Valley Fire Department has come down to help get it set up for payroll and the FPPA deductions. There are two part time employees who have not logged in time for quite awhile and should have been put on Leave of Absence. Motion was made by Board Member Ramthun and seconded by Board Member Koehler to pay the FPPA for the part timers who have not been working and then have them sign a leave of absence if they are not going to be able to fulfill the one day a month requirement. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye;

Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed. President Tanner asked how we could compensate Kim Reeves for her time to come down and help us out. Chief Matis reported that he talked to Kim about that, she said the District Chief in Grand Valley is considering it a mutual aid and she will be paid through their system. We would like to do something for her for all her help.

- 3) Jet Boat Day: We will move forward with the Jet Boat Day. Chief Matis will get it scheduled.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) Grant Discussion – Melanie Hansen presented results from the grant research she has been working on.
  - a. Burn curtain for the green dump burn pile - A FEMA/Homeland Security grant is possible for a Fire Prevention/Safety program utilizing a woodchipper combined with a fire prevention program (educating the public). It would be a 5% match, we and might be able to partner with the Town (of De Beque). If we coupled a burn curtain, a green thumb, a big chipper, and a skid steer, along with our wildland defensible spaces growth overgrowth mitigation program, we could qualify.
  - b. FEMA Safer Grant – Hiring, Recruitment & Retention grant. It could bridge the gap between now and a mill levy increase; It could backfill firefighters while we have a training officer to get our paramedics up to Mesa (County) standards; We could utilize our house for a full-time wildland team running Timberwolf nine months of the year. Jason Lee & Chief Matis have been looking into the Safer Grant and would recommend we apply.
  - c. AGF Grant – To buy a firetruck and purchase turnout gear.The union will help with grant writing. Chief Matis & Jason Lee will get on the grant processes.
- 4) Beds – The mattresses in the crew bed quarters are inadequate and broken down. Chief Matis would like to get four new twin mattresses for the dorm rooms. Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Farris to purchase new mattresses for the dorm rooms. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 5) Recliners for Day Room – The current recliners were donated to us and are broken. Chief Matis would like to get three new recliners for the Day Room. President Tanner suggested we also provide some type of TV content membership for the day room. The crews are using their personal accounts right now and we should provide TV programming. Chief Matis suggested we purchase Amazon Prime and Netflix. President Tanner emphasized that the programming is for the station house only and not to be used personally at other locations. Motion was made by Board Member Koehler and seconded by Board Member Farris to purchase new recliners for the dorm rooms. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 2) New PC for Office – The computer for the office is very old and keeps crashing. A new computer is needed. Secretary Latham also requested we look into some time of cloud storage (such as Drop Box). We also need to upgrade the Office program and would like to go with Office 365 at \$99/year that would give us Office for five computers. Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Ramthun to purchase a new office computer not to exceed \$2000. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 3) New Laptop for Fire Chief – The Chief's laptop computer is old and needs replaced. Chief Matis requested a new laptop. Consensus was to approve up to \$750 for a new laptop. No vote was necessary due to the amount being under the limit for Chief purchases.
- 4) Cell Phone for Fire Chief – Chief Matis would like to add a phone for his use to the account and upgrade the Lieutenant phone.
- 5) Online Banking – Secretary Latham still does not have access to the online banking account. Also, there are some logistic problems with having two signers come into the office to sign checks. Once online banking is up and running, we can do a process that enables Kim to enter the bills through the bank online account, then the two signers (currently President Tanner & Board Member Hansen are the only signers) would go online and approve the payments. The payments would only go out after approval

was made. President Tanner suggested that we go back to allowing the secretary (Kim Latham) to be authorized as one signer (this was how it was done in the past), then we would only need one other signer. Kim also previously suggested a list of pre-approved bills that she could pay each month that are regular bills (water, power, etc.). President Tanner brought this up and said she was okay with that. Getting debit cards set up was a bit confusing as one bank representative said we could not put limits on debit cards while another bank representative said we could put limits on debit cards. Chief Matis will go to Alpine to see if we can get a Captain's debit card. We will get a Chief card, a card for Kim, and a Captain's card. Kim & the Captain's card will have a smaller purchase limit potential than the Chief's card. Kim has access to the command vehicle for running district errands but will need to be put on the insurance policy for coverage.

- 6) Salary Adjustments – There are large discrepancies in wages for the employees who have been here some time. The new hires are making more wages than some of the seasoned employees. Chief Matis will compile numbers according to our current wage scale document. Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Farris to fix, from the current pay period, the wages to fair current pay amounts. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed. Chief Matis stated that with the change in personnel, less benefits, less outside (accountant) fees, the increases and additions should be close to a wash in wages/expenses.
- 7) New Hires – Zach Adams is one of our new full-time employees and is a paramedic. He's taking over the target solutions training program. Jason Lee will head up the training with Zach at the lead guy. Tyler Sepsey is the other full-time employee. Applicants this go around were very good. Three applicant's files have been saved for future openings. One new part time employee is an BLS provider and is getting qualified as a paramedic. She is also a coroner. Another part time employee (Triston Quigley) is also a BLS provider and is signing up for shifts and fitting in well. Derek Campbell is the third part time employee and is an ER Tech. Chief Matis met with our Junior Firefighter and went over the protocol for the program, and as he accomplishes goals it will help him step up to enable him to eventually work into a fill in employee and would be a perfect applicant for our residency program.
- 8) Website Discussion – We now have access to the website. There is also (info through the website tech) that if we operate our website in a certain way with certain information that opens up possible grant opportunities. President Tanner stated that she would like to see the website used more effectively. Some info has been updated (Board Members, etc.). Chief Matis would like to add pertinent and current information on the Chief's page (may rename) that would get info out to the public. President Tanner would like to get information on the page introducing new employees/positions, etc. We have had more followers since Jesse updated Facebook. If we change some appearance/information that reaches out to the community, it can help with grant processes.
- 9) Newsletter – Would like to get the newsletter and web site on the same path. President Tanner suggested we put the newsletter on the website and Facebook first, then tell people if they want a hard copy to come to the fire station to pick one up. Mass mailing the newsletter is not cost effective, especially if they get thrown into the trash upon reception. We could leave some on the counter at the Post Office or the store for those who do not have internet access. We can use blips on Facebook to tell people to watch for the Newsletter when we are ready to put that out. President Tanner would like to post on the website a wage comparison for our district verses other districts.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT AND UPDATES:**

- 1) Financial statements for June 2021 were presented by Secretary Latham.
- 2) Expenditures for June 2021 were presented by Secretary Latham.
- 3) Insurance Adjustments/Write offs – Will work on how to get access to those.

## **FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Fire Chief Matis presented his monthly report to the Board.

- 1) Mesa County EMS
  - a. Mesa County is aware of transition and Mike's retirement
  - b. AQD Direction position will be filled by Lt. Lee.
  - c. Ambulance licenses have been updated
- 2) Wildland Fire/IQS
  - a. All IQS and associated accounts have been transferred
  - b. Chief Matis and Nate Voorhees will be managing the program
  - c. Trucks will be online and ready for assignment. This could be a good income resource for the District.
  - d. Grand Valley Fire has agreed to fill spots to minimize staffing issues. This will allow us to send out a truck while maintaining staffing levels.
  - e. Fittings for the trucks are needed to outfit for federal assignments. Estimated cost \$7000 (includes deferred maintenance issues). Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Hansen to spend up to \$8000 to fix the Wildland Truck. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Hansen to spend up to \$8000 to fix the Wildland Truck. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 3) General Maintenance
  - a. Command 81 was taken to the shop for repairs. Estimated cost \$1000
  - b. Sprinklers onsite need to be serviced. Estimated cost \$200-\$400
  - c. Brush 82 garage door has been fixed by Jesse.
  - d. Breakers for Engine 82 and ambulance bay are going bad again. There are two ways to alleviate the issue: 1) Replace breakers again at \$160, will have to replace again in a year (these have built in GFIs that wear out); 2) Pay \$15 for replacement breakers and put a GFI up top on the ceiling that will pop the GFI if there are issues. Will get a quote on cost to put GFI on the ceiling.
- 4) New Members – Chief Matis touched on new employees earlier (New Business Item #7)
- 5) Part Time Employees
  - a. One part time employee has signed up for shifts again.
  - b. No contact with other part time employee and he is not current. Chief Matis asked the Board how they would like to proceed with the issue. Employee has been put on leave of absence and will be given 30 days to respond or his employment will be terminated.
  - c. All other part time employees have been issued keys and gear.
- 6) Uniforms
  - a. Jason Lee has put in time to get helmet shields, badges, and pins ordered for employees. Some employees have never received a helmet or name badges. Cost \$1300.
  - b. Will initiate a pinning ceremony for new and promoted employees.
- 7) Promotions
  - a. Jason Lee, Jesse Hughson, and Nate Voorhees have all successfully been promoted to lieutenant status. They are being trained and assigned additional duties and functions. These promotions allow for better flow at the operational level and provide a distinguished line for the chain of command.
  - b. Shift Lieutenants will assist the Chief in the building of new policies and procedures and updating of the employee member handbook. The Shift Lieutenants will have the authority to issue write ups. The on-duty Shift Lieutenant will attend board meetings to maintain transparency and communicate district needs and will communicate Board decisions to the crews.

- 8) Crew Updates
  - a. Red Crew = Jesse Hughson, Matt Bollig
  - b. Blue Crew = Nate Voorhees, Zach Adams
  - c. Green Crew – Jason Lee, Tyler Sepsey

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- 1) Discussion ensued regarding appointment of Vice President to the Board of Directors. Motion was made by President Tanner and seconded by Board Member Farris to appoint Maria Ramthun as Board Vice President.
- 2) Chief Matis presented to the Board the current wage schedule for the Grand Valley Fire District. There are no current plans to add more employees to De Beque Fire Protection District due to budgetary restrictions. Chief Matis reported that training is very important for the community. Not only do our employees need updated training, but the community deserves outstanding service from our services. Also, our insurance ratings are partly graded on our training practices and visibility of a ready state to serve. Training and visibility equal lower insurance ratings.

#### BOARD COMMENTS:

- 1) We have the lowest mill levy in almost the entire state.
- 2) We need to utilize our Facebook page better. Jesse has done a good job adding pertinent information. We should continue to improve our communication to the community.
- 3) We need to say thank you to the outgoing employees.
- 4) Chief Matis would like to acknowledge staff birthdays with a birthday card and an appreciation gift card.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Board Member Hansen and seconded by Board Member Farris to adjourn the July 13, 2021 board meeting. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, aye; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, absent; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

Next regular meeting: **August 10, 2021**

**Approved by the De Beque Fire Protection Board of Directors on September 22, 2021.**



Annette Tanner, President



Melanie Hansen - Secretary

