

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the monthly meeting of The Board of Directors, December 7, 2019.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by President Kellogg. Board members present: Cliff Kellogg, Robert Carlyle, Glenn Borland, Michael Pique, Keith Ronchetti. Also present were CalFire Chief Cal Hendrie, CalFire Captain Dean Kowalski, Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (FSC) board member Mike Wilson, and CERT manager Bill Leininger.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: John Mandel was concerned that when he passed a rollover accident on the way up the South Grade last Monday night, no fire trucks were there. Captain Kowalski said the station 79 engine responded as soon as they got the call.

Cliff Kellogg reported that Doc Sowards, a long-time Palomar resident and volunteer firefighter, has died. Captain Kowalski said that our firefighter-paramedic rode to Palomar Hospital along with Doc to help the ambulance medic.

Minutes: The minutes from the 11/02/2019 board meeting were approved with the correction of "Station 97" to "Station 79".

Financial Report: Keith Ronchetti's written report (included as part of these minutes) showing a balance of \$107,187.52 was approved. We have paid our property tax and liability insurance bills but not yet paid for the last dumpster.

Station 79 Report: Captain Kowalski went to the snow emergency planning meeting with the CHP, the Sheriff's office, and other agencies. "It all comes down to what enforcement staffing is available the day it snows". With heavy snow, the low-hanging branches make the Birch Hill and Crestline easement roads even less passable. On the bright side, he says these past few months have seen fewer accidents on the South Grade Road; that with the speed limits, everyone is driving observably slower on the Grades and we feel safer out there now. The station is still depending on a series of generators during power outages. A small gasoline generator can be started up rapidly but has limited power. A large diesel requires the county send up an electrician to start (or stop) it, which takes many hours.

Chief Hendrie says he was up here in the middle of the past snow, 9:00 AM Friday. Overall, crowd management looked good. He said the CHP checkpoints were letting a lot more people up here than he expected; both South and East Grades had checkpoints for 4WD and chains; no resident credentials were checked as far as he knew. Cleveland National Forest (CNF) officers said about 300 people were up. They were writing parking and no-chain tickets. Unfortunately, the county activated only two small snow plows. Birch Hill was especially bad: Glenn Borland said that no one is currently plowing easement road 32 – a job Bruce Graves did for many years. Ambulances do not usually carry chains, and "we can't help if we can't get to you". Chief Hendrie said the county is aware that the large vehicles we have up here may not be

the best choice. Chief Mecham is talking about reassessing the equipment needs around the county. For example, a 4-door, 4-wheel-drive Patrol (SUV) might be more agile to reach further into the woods, and run hoses from wherever the water tender was able to get to.

Chief Hendrie revealed that at the end of the year he is transferring to Battalion 3, in the south county, to be nearer to his family. Robert Reynolds will be our new Battalion Chief.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): Bill Leininger has emailed residents who have home Barricade gel supplies to bring them indoors for the season. He has revised the CERT activation manuals adding, for example, detail maps of the State Park and Observatory grounds. Winter projects are: more house number signs, water tank hose-size checks, and ongoing contact with citizens (have logged 100, need 400 for Office of Emergency Services grant). A new statewide mobile-phone-based CERT identification system is coming live: when CERT members would show up at an emergency location to check in, their phones would show their certifications, allowing more streamlined duty assignments.

Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (FSC): Cecelia Borland, FSC Secretary, sent a written report. On December 3 we submitted an application for a CalFire CCI Fire Prevention Grant for fuel reduction in the Crestline/Birch Hill area: 1) to facilitate emergency access and evacuation by roadside brush clearing and 2) to protect vital infrastructure water, power, communication. (~\$190,000). A big grant proposal for Birch Hill evacuation route improvements (32J and Conifer Road) was turned down by SDG&E. The FSC has received 13 pledges of work from residents who responded to a letter sent out by local Realtor John Cooper.

Old Business:

Station Construction Progress and County Fire Authority Update: Cliff talked to Liz Johnson, who says the contractor has been chosen but not yet announced. We also do not know Palomar's priority relative to Sunshine Summit and Mount Laguna. Cliff has not yet discussed covering the open-roofed patio or having a shed for the yard equipment. Unfortunately, she says a permanent electrical generator is two years away.

Donation of 2500-gallon water storage tanks: The FSC and the PMVFD are now planning to put both 2500-gallon water tanks near the Lodge. Cliff talked to Austin at Temecula Pipe & Supply and has a parts-cost estimate of \$1669 for the two tanks. Robert Carlyle suggests A-1 Irrigation in Valley Center is worth visiting for a quote. The board authorized \$2000 for the fittings, Cliff to decide vendor and details.

Adjournment: 10:10 AM 12/07/2019. The next board meeting is Saturday 01/04/2020, at 9:00 AM. Michael Pique will be away.

- Michael Pique

Minutes approved by PMVFD Board 01/04/2020