

## **The Palomar Mountain Community Fire Association**

Minutes of the monthly meeting of The Board of Directors, January 8, 2022.

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 A.M. by President Kellogg. Board members present by Zoom teleconference: Cliff Kellogg, Michael Pique, Keith Ronchetti. Also on the call were Hiroshi McDonald, Eddy Riener, Palomar Fire Safe Council President Yvonne Vaucher, Community Center of Palomar Mountain board member Rosie Lopresti, CERT coordinator Bill Leininger, and CAL FIRE Captain Dean Kowalski.

Public Comment: Cliff Kellogg says the county is planning to erect community identification signs. There's a chance we could get a welcoming arch or a big sign. This will be publicly discussed at the next Sponsor Group meeting on February 17.

Minutes: The minutes from the 11/06/2021 board meeting were approved after clarification of the mission statement's wording. No December board meeting.

Financial Report: Keith Ronchetti's written report (available at palomar-fire.org) showed a balance of \$89663.40 (with \$2,521.90 held for CERT). New CERT expenses of about \$700 are not yet posted. The report was approved.

Station 79 Report: Captain Kowalski: the department is going through tough spots with COVID rules, a lot of paramedics are out. He said no help arrived to plow the station driveway during the December snowfall. There is no effective plan and no workable options for third-party snow removal. Last year they were able to plow with the construction contractor's Bobcat, slow but workable. He is concerned that medical rescue access in snow is also lacking. Perhaps obtain an ATV equipped with a flat bed. Chief Reynolds has been inquiring about when the new crew quarters will be ready - the time has gone from "2 more weeks" to "3 months".

County Fire Advisory Board: Cliff Kellogg says the board will vote next Monday to advise on "heli hydrants": a water tank for helicopter fire-fighting as is being evaluated in Rainbow. The goal is a water drop every five minutes. But Palomar, like Borrego Springs and much of the east county, has limited water. We might be able to partner with the observatory and the Mutual Water Company. It would require a large tank, costing about \$150,000.

The county is still looking into creating an agricultural "Farm/Ranch" pass that would allow certain residents to re-enter areas faster after fire closures. This would be coordinated with the sheriff and the Office of Emergency Services.

No update on the long-life roadside fire retardant proposal except that it is under CEQA review.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): Bill Leininger met with county Office of Emergency Services on the CERT–CAL FIRE coordination. Still working on supplies for the trailer; Bill hopes to get the county decals and registration paperwork this month. Plans are in the works to make the layout of the CERT trailers similar across the county. Modules for, say, “winter snow” would be optional and removable.

An outreach/educational event is tentatively scheduled for January 22, CERT may be able to give away “go bags”, lanterns, and first-aid kits. A CERT Academy in February is just not happening. CERT has some revenue coming in from house number sign sales.

Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (FSC) Yvonne Vaucher: The FSC has \$5690 in unrestricted funds, and has received a \$42,000 advance payment from CAL FIRE to start work on the Crestline and Birch Hill road clearing. Robert Carlyle and Captain Kowalski marked the trees to be taken down and Cecelia Borland will notify residents that the work will start. The contractor, Stumpmasters, is now waiting only for the weather to clear.

No update on the evacuation flyer. We now plan a single-page map, primarily for B&B guests. It would be a simple major-road map with basic readiness info. No news on the FSC web site, which is said to be “slowly progressing”.

The US Forest Service burned 104 acres behind the observatory, 53 acres southeast of the observatory on the Palomar Divide, and 8 acres above the East Grade Road mile 6.

Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM): Rosie Lopresti says some confusion about their IRS tax filing seems to be clearing up. Rosie will ask Mike Appelman about possibilities of obtaining some of the T&T tourist tax funds.

Cliff Kellogg has been talking to Monica Toledo at the county about legal arrangements for the CCPM to reclaim use of the small house. It now seems less likely the county would sublease it back to the PMVFD, but rather would license specific uses of the house. The county would need to know who will use it, how often. We do not know if the users themselves would need separate licenses or whether the CCPM would hold a blanket license. The discussion is continuing with the county counsel and real estate departments. A license would let the county pay for maintenance, repairs, gas, water... but they could pull the license at any time. Rosie asked if the county would also pay for repairs to the stage. Cliff: probably not. How about the informal book club meetings? Would they need a license. Bill Leininger notes that county licensing in the past has been dreadful, such as requiring food-handling-licensed personnel just to serve snacks. Cliff will try to get a draft/sample license for us to review.

Palomar Mountain Planning Organization (PMPO) Michael Pique (Secretary): next meeting is 03/05/2022 at 10 AM, probably by WebEx.

Old Business:

Hank Vargas' Honor Brick has been placed, according to his widow Martha.

Adjournment: 09:52AM 01/08/2022. The next board meeting is Saturday 02/05/2022, at 9:00 AM. - Michael Pique, Secretary Minutes approved by PMCFA Board 02/05/2022.