

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Sunday, September 3, 2017

The meeting was called to order at noon by Board President Cliff Kellogg.

Board members present: Glenn Borland, Robert Carlyle, Cliff Kellogg, Michael Pique, Keith Ronchetti. CalFire Captain Dean Kowalski was also present.

The 14 community members in attendance included Yvonne Vaucher, Brian Wagner, Anita Carlyle, Kathy Lande, Vickie Swenson, Tricia Lucia, Bill Leininger, Rosie Lopresti, Jack Weisgerber, Sharon Dahl, and Susie Kellogg.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comments: Tricia Lucia asked the status of the New York Fire Department ceremonial flag; offering that she would take care of it if necessary. Cliff Kellogg said it was safe and in storage. Sharon Dahl said that in past fires she'd not been able to get permission to come evacuate her livestock. Cliff Kellogg said that was a California Highway Patrol decision, not under the PMFD's control.

Approval of last annual meeting minutes: The minutes of the September 4, 2016, Annual General Meeting were approved as presented by Michael Pique.

Financial Report: Keith Ronchetti reported on the current financial status of the Department as submitted in his written report, included as part of these minutes. Net assets are \$108,833.16. We have paid our share of the summer porta-potty rental. At yesterday's CCPM Fair, Cliff and Keith sold \$42 of T-shirts. The report was approved.

Station 79 Report: CalFire Captain Kowalski presented an oral report. His crews are continuing the defensible space inspections, which he knows are difficult for some people. He is trying to be as cordial as he can. His firefighters being called out to off-mountain fires has delayed the re-inspections. Last week's South Grade fire was inaccessible to ground units; because our station is part of CalFire, we got fast and efficient dispatch of air fire-fighting resources, not only immediately for the fire but (last Friday) for a re-kindle. Our water tender has gone out to wild land fires for several incidents, but because Palomar (Station 79) is a must-cover station, we get a replacement within a few hours. As of two weeks ago, we have round-the-clock paramedic staffing, for the first time ever. The paramedic can call an ambulance if necessary, and if our paramedic has been called off the mountain (which seldom happens), the ambulance will respond. Today, for example, we are staffed with 3 CalFire members and one San Diego county reserve.

The \$70,000 septic system construction is in progress. The design will accommodate both the existing house and the planned new station/crew quarters. There's no official

word yet on when the station will be built, but probably not in 2017. The design will likely include a fence and gate between the station with its crew quarters & equipment bay and the house (which is to come back to the community, according to Cliff Kellogg). Cliff added that he has met with the project manager and it will be at least 6 months, probably longer, before plans are even drawn up. The Palomar Christian Conference Center wants the current office trailers and is working on getting permits to move them to the Center. We will need also to move the current storage containers, probably to the southwest corner (near the USFS Group Camp gate) and Cliff says the county will look into permits for that use and site.

Rosie Lopresti said she was impressed with the CalFire response to the South Grade fire. Captain Kowalski said that even the “Low Dispatch” level summons a water tender, one or two engines, and air attack. The air attack pilot can tell ground resources the situation and order more air response if needed. The goal is to keep any fires from growing to 10 acres. Tricia Lucia said we were lucky that nothing else was going on that day. Captain Kowalski acknowledged that, yes, sometimes resources can be overwhelmed, but that over the past four years there have been a lot of additions to the resources he can call on, including from Hemet-Ryan air base “just over the next ridge.”

Vickie Swenson asked about any changes in fire insurance availability and costs. Cliff says water delivery is still a critical issue – we need another water tender up here, which was what was supposed to get us our “three” (better than “nine”) ISO rating. Captain Kowalski said we may be getting a second, “attack”, tender. The catch is that we don’t usually have enough staffing to drive both the fire engine and the water tender that we already have. He would recommend we first push for always having two qualified drivers here before asking for more vehicles. Cliff pointed out that when CalFire Unit Chief Mecham came up and talked to us about ISO ratings a few years back, that two tenders with drivers would not hurt. Captain Kowalski said that Birch Hill and Crestline residents need to improve their access roads: if he can’t get an engine in there, he would not be able to get an engine and two water tenders in. As the roads are now, he can’t get in to “a lot” of the easement roads. He can’t emphasize enough that even though the roads are privately owned, they must be made accessible to allow medical aid, structure fire fighting, or wild land fire suppression. This is the community’s biggest safety issue: our SMALL engine needs 10 feet wide and 13 feet high clearance.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) report: Bill Leininger thanked the Community Center for letting CERT put up a booth at yesterday’s Fair. CERT handed out books and arranged for Barricade fire-blocking gel exchange (the gel goes stale after a few years in storage). September is National Preparedness month, with useful info at the ready.gov Department of Homeland Security/FEMA site.

Fire Safe Council: Yvonne Vaucher said the Council held a Wild land/Urban interface (WUI) fire preparedness workshop on August 23. Tim Gray of the US Forest Service will be conducting a chainsaw use, care, and safety class on September 23: it is Bring-Your-Own-Chainsaw. Our San Diego Fire Safe Council and Resource Conservation District

grant for free chipping will end in December 2017 so please take advantage of it. The Council meets the fourth Saturday of the month and has three open board positions.

We are part of the county-wide evacuation planning. There is only one way out of Birch Hill and Crestline area. For emergencies, we are looking into making available the Walls family 11E route, and opening up and improving the 32J route north over the ridge to Conifer Road and the East Grade. We have a contractor plan and bid for Conifer Road fuel reduction and for rerouting the 32J easement route around a difficult boulder. We are hoping for SRA (State Responsibility Area) funds we could use this fall for these projects.

The FSC wants to improve easement road access by arranging 'field trips' to measure and locate where road clearances need the most work. Dana Barre from the US Forest Service has told us that brush thinning will be done this fall on the Palomar Divide & Truck Trail (north and east of the Observatory) and on the slopes above the East Grade Road near Kica Mik (Penny Pines), about mile marker 10.

Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM): Rosie Lopresti says there's been a lot of activity this past year but they now have only three board members. They were very pleased with the turnout at yesterday's County Park Fair, and happy to have the firefighters, the kids, the CERT team, and the PMVDF booths. The expenses were \$100 or so and donations brought in \$479.

New Business

Thank-you Letter: Cliff Kellogg said a thank-you for the improved highway enforcement went out to CHP Captain Amy Mangan, written jointly by the PMVFD and the PMPO. We have noted the fewer number of unsafe motorcyclists in particular.

PMVFD By-Law Revision: Cliff Kellogg explained the background that the current by-laws were written when the PMVFD board was actively running an entire volunteer fire department, and had sections about hiring, promotions, disciplinary procedures and much else that is not currently relevant. The proposed by-law revision simplifies and focuses the role of the PMVFD, a 501(c)(3) none-profit, in protecting life and property. The revision was approved by community member vote.

Board Elections: The incumbents holding the two open board positions, Michael Pique and Keith Ronchetti, were re-elected by unanimous show of hands from the community members.

Adjournment of Annual General Meeting 1:07 PM

Convening of Board Meeting 1:09 PM

A brief meeting of the PMVFD Board members was held to elect officer positions. It was agreed that this would be as follows:

President: Cliff Kellogg

V.P.: Glenn Borland

Treasurer: Keith Ronchetti

Secretary: Michael Pique

Member-at-large: Robert Carlyle

Upcoming business includes site preparation for new fire station, especially relocation of storage containers and move of the office trailers to the Christian Conference Center.

Next board meeting October 7, 2017.

Adjournment of board meeting 1:13 PM.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting and subsequent Board Meeting approved at Annual General Meeting 09/02/2018.