



GOLDEN GATE

Fire Protection District

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Golden Gate Fire Protection District Meeting Minutes

21 May 2020

1. Preliminary

- 1.1. Location/Call to order: Mr. Patton called to order the regular meeting of the GGFPD Board at 7:00pm via telephone conference call.
- 1.2. Welcome audience
- 1.3. Pledge of allegiance
- 1.4. Roll call indicated a quorum was present with Mr. Patton, Ms. Carlon, Dr. Kinnard, Mr. Trost, and Mr. Agar. Chief DiFeo was present.
- 1.5. Additions and deletions to the Agenda: Add line 5.2 Paul Trost to discuss letter received from Aaron Primmer regarding septic tank work bid.
- 1.6. Board Election Results: Sheila Carlon and Dave Kinnard were re-elected for 3 year terms. Paul Trost was re-elected for a 2 year term.
- 1.7. Election of Officers (President, Treasurer, Secretary).
 - Election of President and Vice President. Mr. Patton asked if there were any self nominations for president: none. **Motion #1** by Mr. Patton to elect new president. Mr. Trost nominates Sam Patton. 2nd by Ms. Carlon seconds. Mr. Patton declines. Discussion:
 - Dr. Kinnard mentioned that when he nominated Mr. Patton 4 years ago, these are not appointments for life and in the spirit of volunteerism, it would be nice to see someone else step up. **Motion #2** by Mr. Patton to nominate Sheila Carlon for president. 2nd by Dr. Kinnard. **Motion #3** by Ms. Carlon to nominate Dannel Agar for president. 2nd by Mr. Trost. Mr. Agar declines.
 - Vote results: 5 in favor. **Motion passed** with Sheila Carlon as president.
 - Nominations for Vice President: **Motion #4** by Ms. Carlon to nominate Sam Patton. 2nd by Dr. Kinnard. Vote results: 5 yes. **Motion passed** with Sam Patton as Vice President.
 - Nominations for Treasurer: **Motion #5** by Mr. Patton to nominate Dannel Agar as Treasurer. 2nd by Dr. Kinnard. Mr. Agar declines. **Motion #6** by Mr. Patton to nominate Paul Trost as Treasurer. 2nd by Mr. Agar. Vote results: 5 yes. **Motion passed** with Paul Trost as Treasurer.
 - Nomination for Secretary: **Motion #7** by Mr. Patton to nominate Dave Kinnard as secretary. 2nd by Mr. Trost. Mr. Kinnard declines. Discussion to name administrative assistant as secretarial the duties already include in these responsibilities. **Motion #8** to nominate Mitsu Binns as Secretary. 2nd by Mr. Agar. All in favor. **Motion passed** with Mitsu Binns as Secretary.

2. Public Agenda

2.1. Public comment:

- Dave Primmer would like to see the Chief's resignation as of tomorrow for the merger with Timberline Fire Department (TFD).
- Terri Costeldia read a letter she sent on April 19th about the lack of transparency on the merger. Many questions/issues raised. Bottom line: taxpayers of this community are proud of the FD and focus should be on recruitment rather than merger. Treasurer pointed out that from a financial point of view, he has not seen any exploratory or formal financial analysis of a merger with TFD. He noted there was an administrative outsourcing last summer but this person was working for the Treasurer.
- David Kincheloe questioned the Treasurer about Board awareness of any merger with TFD. He also asked the Chief if he had any discussion with TFD. Chief replied that the only discussion happened at the strategic planning meeting last year looking at long term future plan. Board confirmed there are no discussions going on with TFD. Mr. Kincheloe wanted to see a totally independent committee separate from the board. Ms. Costeldia clarified that the committee mentioned was in reference to Chief's presentation on volunteer FF status and subsequent committee proposal.
- It was reiterated that no decisions are being made other than to form a committee.
- Mr. Patton reined in the discussion reminding everyone that this is public comment time and discussion on committee proposal will continue during agenda item 5.1.

2.2. Approval of minutes from April 16, 2020

- **Motion #9** by Mr. Patton to approve minutes. 2nd by Dr. Kinnard. Mr. Agar wanted to address item 1.6 to add LOSAP to agenda. Add item 4.4 LOSAP investments under Old Business. Vote results: 5 yes. **Motion passed.**

2.3. Approval of Special Board Meeting minutes from April 23, 2020.

- **Motion #10** by Mr. Patton to approve minutes. 2nd by Mr. Trost. Discussion: Ms. Carlon would like to table this to June so she has an opportunity to see the minutes. **Motion not passed.**

3. Committee Reports

3.1. Treasurer's Report

- See attached.
- Open issues/summary of discussion:
 - Dr. Kinnard reviewed the financials and discussed all items and questions raised.
 - Chief noted that line item "restricted funds" shows a zero balance but needs to be \$10,000.
 - Dr. Kinnard responded that this was brought up to the accountant already. This will be restored so it will show up on regular reports.
 - Mr. Agar asked if stipend payments had been made. Checks were cut this week for a total of \$1619.52 for Q1. This will be on financials next month.

3.2 Chief's Report

- See attached.

- Open issues/summary of discussion:
 - Communications/JeffCom issue:
 - ▶ We need to invest to get 800s working correctly and board was appropriately flustered on getting equipment we don't need.
 - ▶ FFs are not getting calls on 800 side. Our calls do not get aired unless AMR gets toned. Background: a medical call dropped and the radio toned but it was AMR's tone. The only reason it stood out was that a FF recognized the address as within our district. GGFD was never actually toned to this call. In the past 2-3 months, at least 2-3 calls were smoke investigations that GGFD didn't get toned for.
 - ▶ Problem stems from the original design of JeffCom. Pleasant View FD, Golden FD, and Fairmount FD paid out of pocket to put this system in their stations so they can get tones on 800 radios. We don't need a station alerting system and we were not included in this. Received a quote from Westnet which will cost \$8300 to fix the 800 problem; \$3400 to fix the automated alerts on the VHF side. VHF can be budgeted and put off to next year. But the \$8300 is critical. This is a one time fee for license and hardware.
 - ▶ Westnet provides the equipment. This is not a JeffCom issue. Discussed why JeffCom can't code their system to include us. JeffCom should have the software. Questioned why the FD should have to pay for this equipment. Noted that we can't work off another department's system.
 - ▶ \$8300 will not tie VHF to 800s. This will cost a total of \$12K altogether.
 - ▶ Question raised why JeffCom isn't responsible since they hired Westnet. We were forced to move to JeffCom.
 - ▶ Need more background on this issue before any decisions are made.
 - ▶ Financially, we have \$12K unspent under equipment in Capex. Also \$2K in operating expenses under communications unspent to date.
 - ▶ For action: investigate service agreement and look at dialogue that occurred on this issue to aid in decision making.
 - ▶ Important to recognize that we have a gap on non-medical calls. Need some strategy in the FD to address this gap in notification.
 - ▶ Mr. Trost asked Chief to get percentage of missed calls due to this gap in notification.
 - Ms. Carlon asked about the status of the damaged vehicles at station 81. One more extrication training will be performed on them and then they will be removed.
 - Mr. Agar had 2 questions regarding septic issue: 1) was Gerrit Verschuur paid for the work he performed on parking lot? Yes. and 2) what was the value of the contract? Do we require 3 bids for work over \$5K?
 - Ms. Carlon asked if FFs have enough PPE for responding to COVID calls. Yes, PPE received including from private donations.

4. Old Business

4.1 District/Grange Shared Well Agreement at Station 83

- Along with owning that property is a commitment to share and maintain the well but the language of the original agreement “as long as the well shall function” releases everyone in perpetuity if it fails. GGFD maintains the water main to property line and the Grange maintains the main from property line to their building as well.
 - Ms. Carlon asked for clarity on #5, terms and conditions.
 - Mr. Patton questioned #10: if something happens to the well, then the agreement goes away. This is not accurate. It only covers if the well becomes contaminated. Mr. Trost noted that this was addressed.
 - Mr. Patton raised the concern about paying for all maintenance and where to draw the line, e.g. what if the pump fails? Is it a taxpayer’s responsibility, many who aren’t members of the Grange? FD would have to replace it. Discussed that additional cost of Grange use is probably modest. Discussed the FD should handle the cost even if there is unequal use.
 - For action: need to have follow up meeting with Dave, Terri and Paul to finalize and present this to the board.
 - Discussed that the easement issue should get executed at the same time as the septic issue.
- 4.2 Personnel Policy Review
- Status: redline copy not ready for approval. Document needs to get sent to the board so everyone can see comments first.
- 4.3 Planning Session Update - Nothing to report
- 4.4 LOSAP investments
- Mr. Agar requested that a decision be made to either pay LOSAP balances out annually or invest in the HERO Plus plan.
 - Chief noted that the FFs have not had an opportunity to review the HERO Plus plan.
 - **Motion #11** by Mr. Agar to table the LOSAP investment options to June. 2nd by Mr. Trost. Vote: 3 in favor (Dr. Kinnard and Mr. Patton recused themselves). **Motion passed.**
 - Noted that the two FFs who resigned did get their LOSAP payment and thank you letters.
 - Mr. Trost asked about gifts or recognition for these FFs. Plan to have a retirement party at Grange but on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. New business:

- 5.1 Committee formation to explore options related to department staffing / retention.
- Chief presented his research: 13 page document. We need to look longterm, next 5 years. Volunteer recruitment/retention is a global problem. Look at what our options are, i.e. do we share volunteers with other departments? Chief asked that we put a committee together to look at if/how we can share resources. Just an exploratory committee to investigate options. Bottom line we currently don’t have the coverage to respond to calls in our district.
 - This is not a short term committee. Expect at least a year to do the research.
 - Ms. Carlon wanted the challenges outlined.
 - Chief was asked to look at a plan on how to manage our resources i.e. sharing training, and getting other departments involved. Discussed that this should not be an independent group but someone with board experience, FD experience, a broad committee with community

membership. It was pointed out that the Gallagher Amendment may crop up again and 2021 may be a difficult tax revenue year for us.

- Mr. Trost praised Chief's excellent job in presenting this problem. He's perplexed why so much emphasis was put on mergers. He noted this issue is not new and exposing it for public discussion is logical. Community/citizens need to be involved. The more discussion the better, preferably face to face with more than 10 people. This phone forum does not lead to good discussion.
- Ms. Carlon suggested sending an email out to everyone to alert them. (Our email list consists of 94 members.)
- Chief stated that we have no info to put out, yet. Just asking that board meets, committee meets so that we have facts/data to present to the public.
- Mr. Trost preferred to post the document to provide an opportunity to explore all options and ensure no one option is favored.
- Mr. Agar thanked Chief for the well written report. Paying FFs is the bottom line but this is a long term issue. What can we do more immediately through e.g. Facebook or social media, to promote the FD?
- Chief noted that advertising for volunteers was in the newsletters. He's talked to FFs. We have a new Facebook page. He's talked to Fairmount FD retirees, etc.
- Ms. Carlon pointed out that this is not just the Chief's job. It's a community responsibility.
- It was commented on that neighboring departments are poaching our FFs.
- We have an aging force. 12 FFs have left over the past several years although we recruited 3 new FFs. We are losing more than we retain. There's no one single reason that FFs leave. The fact gathering committee's purpose is to analyze this. FFs have one job: to provide the best emergency care at the lowest cost.
- Mr. Trost would like to see comparative numbers of citizen v. volunteers, compared to other mountain districts. Are we anomalous or in the same boat? Considering we have one of the lowest budgets, citizens should be able to measure how our district compares to others. Chief responded that is the purpose of the committee.
- Ms. Carlon addressing the cost per call data: Prior chiefs couldn't figure it out. Too many variables. Maybe this committee can gather this data. SDA may have budget information.
- Chief noted that we run 100 calls a year, our budget is \$200K, so our calls cost \$2K/call is one way to look at it.
- Discussed the makeup of the committee. Come up with board action and deliverables.
- This is a transparency issue. Postpone this to next board meeting until people can review and digest this. But we are not looking for public comment to form a committee.
- Start with board members, a FF, and then once people see the document they can volunteer.
- Mr. Agar thought the committee should be small. Advised posting the document on website with the request that anyone interested in joining the committee should send in their reasons.
- Chief recommended forming a committee starting with 2 board members and the Chief and they will subsequently decide on other members. Mr. Trost was concerned about the abruptness and would like to wait until next month. Perception is there is a merger which is not true.

- Discussed committee could look at short term challenges.
- Noted there can't be more than 2 board members on a committee.
- Another challenge was having people who may be biased.
- 2 motions were presented and subsequently withdrawn following discussion:
 - **Motion #12** by Mr. Patton to form a committee with 2 board members and Chief for basic fact finding and define deliverables. Discussion: Ms. Carlon thinks deliverables are for later. We should start with just recruitment and monitoring the point system. Mr. Agar agrees that we need something short term. Start with recruitment and once the whole committee comes together then look at sharing resources. **Mr. Patton withdraws the motion.**
 - **Motion #12** by Ms. Carlon to form a committee of 2 board members and Chief to look at recruitment issues within the district. 2nd by Mr. Patton. Discussion:
 - Dr. Kinnard argued that this seems too narrow a start. We have received this concern from Chief. We need a committee, not a wide open, non-fact-based public forum. Prefers to have more parameters on how this is going to work and how this is going to get accomplished. If this means we wait a month then we should.
 - Ms. Carlon suggested this was 2 separate issues. This starter committee should focus on recruitment.
 - Mr. Trost suggested not calling it a committee. Rather appoint 2 board members with Chief to explore recruitment issues. Then appoint a separate committee in the future once problems are defined better to include broader membership to explore the other issues. Mr. Agar asked if we are going to ask the public to contact the board members between now and the next board meeting with suggestions on how to improve recruiting, or increase the viability of our FD. Members agreed this is a good idea.
 - Ms. Carlon asked Dr. Kinnard if he wanted to amend the motion to expand the committee for public comment. It was suggested people could respond via generic email but Chief pointed out that someone still needs to review these public comments and respond. **Ms. Carlon withdraws her motion.**
- Mr. Patton will post the plan on the website. Comments will get forwarded to the board to be discussed at the next board meeting.

5.2 Aaron Primmer's letter to Mr. Trost, Ms. Carlon. Mr. Agar also saw it.

- Aaron put a bid in lower than Ramstetter's and he was not selected.
- Chief explained his bid was \$200 lower but did not include removing the leach field tank. 2 different engineers quoted \$1500 to get engineer drawings. Ramstetter found a different engineer who quoted \$750. A couple hundred dollars is an unfair advantage especially since Aaron had knowledge of what his bid was from a prior meeting. Chief did attempt to get other bids. They wanted to see engineer drawings and quoted \$8-9K.
- **Motion #12** by Mr. Agar that any expenditure over \$5K must have 3 separate bids. Discussion: Ms. Carlon thought that a committee should be formed to review these bids. Mr. Agar amended the motion to go forward with the septic work but this policy will go into effect after that. 2nd by Dr. Kinnard. Discussion:

- May be cleaner to have a separate motion to proceed with septic bid. **Motion #13** by Mr. Patton to proceed as it has been awarded. 2nd by Ms. Carlon. Discussion:
- Dr. Kinnard noted that Chief has worked on this for several months. There is a competitive advantage in addition to public health hazard. Vote: 5 yes. **Motion passed.**
- Mr. Agar provided clarity on amended motion: any bid over \$5K requires 3 bids and review by 2 board members. Ms. Carlon seconds. Discussion:
 - ▶ Dr. Kinnard suspected there was already documentation on this and moved that we table this and do research so we aren't reinventing the wheel.
 - ▶ Mr. Agar agrees to table this motion to June pending further research to redefine the motion. All in favor of tabling the motion. **Motion #12 tabled.**

6. Other business:

- Discussed how to capture the comments from the chat room to broadcast on website.

7. Adjournment

- Sam Patton adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 18, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

END

Minutes approved by:



Sam Patton, President