



Foresthill Fire Protection District

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DISTRICT BOARD

CHRIS REAMS

PRESIDENT

KEVIN GREENE

VICE PRESIDENT

WALTER REED

DIRECTOR

RICHARD ARTHUR

DIRECTOR

TYLER HARKNESS

DIRECTOR

KIRK KUSHEN

FIRE CHIEF

Minutes of **Regular** Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2017

Foresthill Fire Protection District Administration Office

24320 Main St.

Foresthill, CA 95631

Video: <https://vimeo.com/247733838>

President Chris Reams called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Directors in Attendance: Chris Reams, Walter Reed, Richard Arthur and Tyler Harkness.

Directors Absent: Kevin Greene

Staff in Attendance: Chief Kushen and Secretary Metz.

Approval of Agenda:

Director Arthur made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Director Reed seconds the motion.

Motion carries.

Approval of previous Meeting Minutes:

- Director Arthur made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9th regular meeting. Director Reed seconds the motion. Motion carries.

Approval of Financial Report:

- There are no surprises and nothing out of line in the financials. Total expense is at 42.3% with 41.6% of FY elapsed.
- We skirted the "Dry Period Finance" bullet for this year. We won't need to borrow before our first tax revenue (55%) is received.
- GEMT for 16/17 was submitted to DHCS on 11/30.
- We have received notice that we are being audited by DHCS for GEMT for FY 2013/2014. We'll do our best so we get to keep the \$36,646.00 we were paid.
- We have spent 34% less money on EMS supplies compared to the same period last year. GREAT JOB by the guys!!
- Director Reed made a motion to approve the November financials as presented. Director Arthur seconds the motion. Motion carries.

Fire Chief Operations Report:

Strike team Deployment: 12/05/17 B88 staffed with 4 (Capt./LTE/2 Residents) deployed with rainbow strike team to Thomas Fire in Ventura, CA.

Significant calls: Structure fire large utility building on Black Hawk Rd. Marijuana operation. Initial engine encountered numerous vehicles exiting the area hampering access to scene. Building destroyed. Sheriff aware.

Structure fire involving large chicken coop adjacent to residence on Thomas Street. Coop destroyed. No damage to residence.

15 vehicle accidents in two week period. Several were roll-overs. Only a couple resulted in transport to hospital.

Simultaneous medical aids resulted in 2 transports by AMR.

Prevention: Hazardous vegetation complaint on Wizard Way has been referred to Placer County Code enforcement for abatement. Offending property owner failed to respond to FHF efforts to mitigate hazard.

Special events: None - Attorney reviewed FFPD Special Events resolution. Need some fine tuning which Johnson is working on. Even at that, unless the County is on board with requiring compliance it will be difficult to enforce. Rate structure needs to be dropped to realistic level for service.

Grants: Sacramento area regional grant for SCBAs still pending. Chief has securing used bottles from Sacramento. Life span yet to be determined.

Apparatus: In service. No significant issues. 90 inspections coming up.

Facilities: Station 90 electrical issue repaired.

Station 88 roof repair completed. There is a new leak in different area. Waiting for roofer to return.

Capt. Bowers fabricated covers for vehicle exhaust system vents to mitigate water entering both stations.

- EMS Training: Trying to merge training between FH, PH and NEW. Lt. Jelle is working with Captain Slusher (PH) on this.
- Mgmt. Consolidation: Consortium testing for upcoming Engineer positions will take place. Trying to develop a list that all agencies can hire from.

Action Items:

1. Board authorization to allow Chief Kushen to enter into a Mutual Aid Agreement with American Medical Response on behalf of Foresthill Fire Protection District.
 - a. John Michelini gave kudos to Chief Kushen for making this agreement happen.
 - b. Director Arthur made a motion to authorize Chief Kushen to sign the mutual aid agreement with AMR as presented. Director Reed seconds the motion.
 - c. Motion carries.
2. Accept 2016/2017 Financial Audit as prepared by Robert W. Johnson.
 - a. John Michelini suggested that the Board invite Mr. Johnson up to explain the report to the Board and the Public.
 - b. Director Arthur made a motion to accept the financial audit as presented. Director Reed seconds the motion.
 - c. Motion carries.

Discussion Items:

1. Paramedic Staffing Update, Station Staffing Discussion.
 - a. President Reams showed a PowerPoint presentation addressing the current staffing and financial difficulties facing FFPD. **ATTACHMENT 1**
 - b. Open discussion took place.
 - c. President Reams directed the clerk to put the closing of a station on the January agenda as an action item.

Reports:

1. Finance Committee (Reams/Greene)
 - a. None
2. MOU Negotiations (Arthur/Harkness)
 - a. None
3. Bureau of Reclamation Funding: (Reed)
 - a. Gene Lorange was in attendance. He reported that a report has been given to BOR. The contents of the report were not disclosed. President Reams asked Mr. Lorange for a copy of the report. Mr. Lorange stated that the Board and the public were not entitled to the report because it is not part of the current Board bylaws.
 - b. John Michelini notified the Board and Chief Kushen that he will be submitting a public records request to obtain a copy of the report.
4. Long Range Plan Committee
 - a. None
5. Consolidation Process
 - a. President Hills from PHFPD thanked Retired Chief Gow for his efforts to find solutions for the failing fire districts in Placer County.

6. Firefighter's Association:
 - a. Holiday dinner was a GREAT success. Meal was delicious!
7. Foresthill & Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council Report:
 - a. None
8. Director's Reports:
 - a. None

Correspondence:

- None

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- John Michellini: Requested a report detailing the dates, times and location of any scheduled station brown outs.
- Gene Lorange: Mr. Lorange does not feel that emergency vehicles should be going to private parties. He finds this "distasteful".
- Retired Chief Gow: In his 30+ year career he hosted the Weimar Station at his home for holiday meals on a regular basis.
- Chief Kushen: In his 35 year career, the practice has always been that as long as the crew are within their response area they may attend private functions.
- Director Arthur: Supports the position of both Chief Kushen and Retired Chief Gow.

Meeting adjourned by President Reams at 7:20 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2018 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Patrice Metz, Board Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1

CHALLENGES FACING YOUR FIRE DISTRICT



Prepared By: Chris Reams
December 14, 2017



FUTURE MONEY ISSUES

- As your Fire District has previously indicated, and the County has also recognized, Foresthill Fire is currently experiencing an immediately perilous financial situation.
- With minimum wage increases looming, fire engines needing replacement, and breathing apparatus' timing out, we determined a few months ago that station closure would be inevitable due to a lack of funds. The timing would likely be sometime during this current 2017/2018 fiscal year.

- A station closure will enable us to “keep the doors open” into future budget years.
- Compounding this problem is the fact that we have already spent 94% of our budgeted overtime for this fiscal year, yet less than 50% of the year has elapsed. The overtime projections indicate that instead of spending \$100k for overtime this year, that number is likely to be closer to \$200k.

- Our reserves will likely drop to \$200K or less.
- With our current inequity between revenue vs. expenses, a station closure is necessitated as soon as possible.
- This is unfortunate, but will actually help our financial position slightly. We will only be using 3 Firefighters (one of which is a Paramedic) and not using fire equipment or a station.

- We have to look at the grim truth facing us...

**A STATION CLOSURE IS NEEDED FOR FFPD TO
SURVIVE FINANCIALLY**



STAFFING ISSUES

Current Staffing Model

Station 88 (in town)

A Shift

F/T Captain/Paramedic
P/T Firefighter/EMT

B Shift

F/T Captain/EMT
P/T
Firefighter/Medic

C Shift

F/T Lieutenant/EMT
P/T
Firefighter/Medic

Station 90 (Todd Valley)

A Shift

F/T Lieutenant/Medic
P/T Firefighter/EMT

B Shift

F/T Lieutenant/Medic
P/T Firefighter/EMT

C Shift

F/T Duty Chief
F/T Captain/Medic
P/T Firefighter/EMT

F/T: Full Time
P/T: Part Time

- There are 7 full time positions. 4 are Paramedics.
- There are 9 Paramedics total (both F/T and P/T). We use P/T employees to avoid paying benefits and overtime.
- Shifts are 48 hours, 3 shifts per week then a 1 day overlap on the 7th day.
- 2 Paramedics per shift = 6 Paramedic positions per every 6 day work week for 2 stations.

The Details

- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires overtime to be paid to firefighters after 53 hours per week.
- FFPD is REQUIRED by Sierra Sacramento Valley Emergency Medical System (SSV) to have at least 1 Paramedic on each ambulance that responds to calls.
- All of the P/T Firefighter/Medics have other jobs. They typically work for other fire districts, AMR or one of the local hospitals. This means they are spread thin having multiple jobs and family obligations. This limits the time they have to work for FFPD.

The Details (cont.)

- Your fire district has an ongoing hiring process which has been largely unsuccessful. Our low wages (the lowest in Placer County), inadequate benefits and lack of retirement make attracting new employees nearly impossible.
- Currently there is a statewide shortage of paramedics which makes our recruiting efforts all the more futile.

More Details

- Because the P/T Medics are not always available to fill open shifts, FFPD has had to fill shifts with F/T Medics which are paid at their OT rate. There have been a few occasions when the District was forced to “*brown out*” a station due to lack of staffing.
- This has caused your fire district to greatly exceed the amount budgeted for overtime.

More Details (cont.)

- Your fire district has already lost several Medics to other agencies.
- Don't forget, your fire district has to staff positions to backfill for sick leave, vacations and required training.

The Situation

- Your fire district is having problems filling Paramedic shifts NOW. In 5 months we have spent 94% of our OT budget to fill these shifts.
- South Placer Fire is currently hiring 10-12 Medics. In addition, several other local districts are hiring over 100 Medics in the Sacramento region. With regard to So. Placer, it appears that FFPD will lose 1 F/T and 2 P/T Medics immediately. That brings our Medic total from 9 down to 6.

- #3 on So. Placer's hiring list is a F/T Lieutenant/Medic. His position will have to be filled immediately.
- Currently, we have only 1 P/T Firefighter/Medic that is qualified by experience, training and certification to be a Lieutenant. With 2 P/T gone and 1 P/T moving to F/T, that is a total of 6 Medics remaining.
- That will leave us with 6 F/T Medics. This will undoubtedly require more overtime to cover all of the shifts.

- With this scenario, there will be 0 P/T Medics.
- There is a limit as to how much OT your staff can work. We want to avoid fatigue related issues. It will be hit and miss at best.
- FFPD doesn't have a mandatory work policy. When positions are not filled, we will have no choice but to "*brown out*" a station.
- Additionally, 2 of our Medics have ranked #10 and #11 on So. Placer Fire's hiring list. If #10 is hired, that will cause FFPD to lose our Medic that is qualified to be a Lieutenant.
- So. Placer has said they are going to hire 10 candidates right away.

- Even with OT, if we lose 1 more FF/Medic (keep in mind, others are testing elsewhere), it will be impossible to cover the 6 positions each week.
- At some point, it is inevitable that we will not be able to staff 2 stations.
- FFPD realizes that homes and lives could very well be in jeopardy because of a 25% reduction of FF and a 50% reduction in ambulance service.
- The cost of insurance will likely increase and some may get cancelled. This hurts all of us, but there are not any other options at this point.

- One possible solution is for Placer County to step in and help, however, this appears to be unlikely at this time.
 - What does all this mean?

A STATION CLOSURE IS IMMINENT



- Until staffing levels can be brought up to standard any your fire district's financial position improves, a station closure is the only action that can begin to insure FFPD's survival in the future.
- With the current draw for Medics throughout the State, it will be difficult to recruit people to work for us at the current wages we are able to offer.

Which Station?

- Your fire district has determined that our best path is to look at the number of calls run out of each station. During the summer months, we run more calls out of Station 88 (town), mostly due to the National Forest.
- During the winter months we run more calls out of Station 90 (Todd Valley) mostly due to vehicle accidents on Foresthill Rd. and house/chimney fires.

Which Station?

- FFPD will close Station 88 to start, leaving Station 90 open for now.
- In the spring, we will close Station 90 and open Station 88.

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION