

REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DE BEQUE FIRE STATION  
DECEMBER 14, 2021

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Pursuant to notice, the regular board meeting of the De Beque Fire Protection District was called to order by President Annette Tanner at 6:05 PM on Tuesday, December 14, 2021.

**OPEN WITH PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL/ESTABLISH QUORUM:**

Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, present; Dustin Koehler, present; Maria Ramthun, present; Annette Tanner, present; A quorum was present and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed.

Others present: Forest Matis, De Beque District Fire Chief; Lieutenant Jesse Hughson; Lieutenant Jason Lee; Nate Voorhees via zoom; Employee Triston Quigley; Secretary Kim Latham.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:**

- 1) Paul Miller - Contract for Audit Services 2021
- 2) Mill Levy Certification Signatures

**APPROVAL ITEMS:**

- 1) Minutes from Regular Board Meeting October 12, 2021 – Tabled to January board meeting due to no Quorum
- 2) Minutes from Regular Board Meeting November 9, 2021 - **Motion was made** by Board Vice President Ramthun and seconded by Board Member Koehler to approve the minutes for the November 9, 2021 board meeting. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

**PUBLIC HEARING – 2022 BUDGET APPROVAL**

- 1) **Motion was made** by Board Member Koehler and seconded by Secretary Hansen to close the regular board meeting at 6:16 p.m. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 2) A Public hearing for the 2022 Budget Approval on December 14, 2021 of the De Beque Fire Protection District was opened by President Tanner at 6:17 p.m.
- 3) Public comments: None
- 4) Board Comments:
  - a. Secretary reported that the auditor reported that the depreciation is not entered in the budget as a line item, then adjusted at the end of the year.
  - b. Fire Chief Matis explained small adjustments due to additional data received. The largest item adjustments are in deployment payroll because the hours are already included in the payroll amounts, so deployment payroll was removed.
  - c. If we were not to go on deployment, we would not have the income, but that is greatly offset by not having the expenses that would go with the assignment income.
- 5) Approval/Vote – De Beque Fire Protection District Budget for 2022 - **Motion was made** by Board President Tanner and seconded by Secretary Hansen to approve the De Beque Fire District Budget for 2022. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

- 6) **Motion was made** by Secretary Hansen and seconded by Board Member Koehler to close the 2022 Budget Approval Public Hearing. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed. Budget hearing closed at 6:28 p.m.

**REOPEN REGULARY BOARD MEETING** – President Annette Tanner reopened the December 14, 2021 Regular Board Meeting at 6:28 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No public comments

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- 7) Sale of Apparatus Update – President Tanner question the Chief as to why the fire truck is parked in the parking lot. Chief Matis reported that the fire truck has been removed from service and is being prepared for sale. Part of the reason it is parked in the parking lot is so that no one will try to take it out on a call. One of the squad command trucks is now Squad 81 and is ready as a squad truck with necessary equipment. We are still waiting on parts for the Ladder Truck. Chief Matis asked the Board to make a motion to move forward with selling it. **Motion was made** by President Tanner and seconded by Secretary Hansen that if we ever get the parts to fix the truck and it is fixed and operational, we contact the Chief at Lower Valley and give him 14 days to decide if he wants to buy it. If he doesn't respond within 14 days, then we move forward and list it with the company that the Rescue Truck is going out on. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 8) Election – All board members are okay to run again at next election.
- 9) Checks & Board Signatures – Fire Chief Matis and Secretary Latham would like to streamline the process for signing invoices and checks. The Board would like to have the invoices in one invoice packet pdf to sign versus separate emails with each invoice. Then they would like a text message to have them come sign checks when they are ready.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) Residence House Rental – The repairs at the residence house are now complete with the exception of some plumbing work in the tub upstairs. There was discussion about shutting down the residence house versus having an employee stay in the house. Secretary Latham would be interested in renting the house. The District can't rent the house out, but an employee could live there and pay for the utilities. If the Board is amenable, a policy should be established regarding expectations. The house would still be available for a staging place for firefighters as needed. Secretary Latham will check with Michael Santo regarding the legalities and report back to the Board at next meeting.
- 2) Employees PTO – Chief Matis presented a sheet regarding PTO suggestions for the District and showed comparisons to other local fire districts. In the event of employee resignation, a payout of 55% would be in effect. Carryover would be 336 hours per year. The employees are not looking at PTO as a retirement benefit, but rather as a benefit for more paid time off and/or security of income in the event of needed time off. Our current PTO amounts don't allow the employees to accrue enough PTO to ensure income in the event of an accident/needed time off. By law we don't have to pay out accrued sick leave, but we do have to pay out accrued vacation time. Because we have PTO versus sick/vacation leave, the 55% would satisfy the vacation accrual requirements. De Beque Fire District is in the low percentile of PTO benefits. The current PTO schedule needs to be completely overhauled as it is inconsistent. The Board would like to fix the PTO situation but needs more information with comparisons of what the employees currently have and what the optimum goal amount would be.
- 3) Rescue 81 Equipment – Chief Matis asked the Board if they want a line item of the equipment being sold. The Board does not need a line item of the equipment and will leave that to the Chief's discretion.

- 4) Engine 82 Pump – There is an issue with the Engine 82 pump. It is not reaching the capacity it should. There may be some repairs that will need to be made. Chief Matis and the Lieutenants will assess the problem and decide if we can fix it or if we will need to hire someone to fix it.
- 5) Certified Mill Levy for 2022 – The mill levy didn't change for 2022. **Motion was made** by President Tanner and seconded by Vice President Ramthun to accept the 2022 Mill Levy for Garfield and Mesa Counties. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

#### **ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT – Kim Latham**

- 1) Financial Statements for November 2021 were submitted to the Board.
- 2) After speaking with the attorney, we are not required to amend the 2021 Budget tonight. It is better practice to wait until the year ends to be more accurate.
- 3) Expenditures for November 2021 were submitted to the Board.
- 4) Insurance Adjustments/Write Offs for October 2020 – Write Downs = \$3,037.92. No Write Offs.
- 5) Insurance Adjustments/Write Offs for November 2021 – Write Downs = \$5,239.02 and Write Offs = \$8,296.60.
- 6) **Motion was made** by Vice President Ramthun and seconded by Board President Tanner to approve the financial statements for November 2021. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 7) **Motion was made** by Board Member Koehler and seconded by Secretary Hansen to approve the expenditures for November 2021. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.
- 8) **Motion was made** by Vice President Ramthun and seconded by Secretary Hansen to approve the insurance adjustments for October and November 2021. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.

#### **INTERIM FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT –**

- 1) Call Volume – We are up 53% for November from last year, year to date we have had a 15% increase.
- 2) Fire Assignments – All but one fire assignment has been paid. We are in process of discussing how to operate next year with fire assignment deployments and how to manage employees.
- 3) PTO – Discussed earlier.
- 4) County Relations – Assisted Garfield County in mitigating the waste from burning piles left over from the Pine Gulch fire.
- 5) Strategic Plans – In process of working on how to present strategic plans to the community. Chief Matis presented a preliminary report of questions/answers to questions designed to give information to the community. Vice President Ramthun questioned if the questions/presentation would come off as driven by the need to ask for a mill levy increase and not as informational. Discussion ensued regarding how to get the community members to engage in conversations. Mailers and meetings did not work the last time because no one showed up to the meetings. Chief Matis would like the staff to get out into the community and talk to the community on a one-on-one basis.
- 6) District Operations – Chief Matis will get with the attorney to get a schedule of things we need to do for compliance to regulations.
- 7) Election of Board Members – Already discussed.
- 8) Residency House – Already discussed.
- 9) Ladder Truck – Already discussed.
- 10) Classes – Chief Matis had to reschedule his S215 class. Other employees have been able to attend classes to further their education.
- 11) Budget – Already discussed.
- 12) QA – Jason has been attending QA. He has also been working on wildland class schedules and researching the ability to put on wildland classes here at the station. Jason has been working with other Chiefs in the area to implement in house training, including classes for Junior Firefighters.
- 13) Christmas Party – Is planned and ready. President Tanner asked if the crew on tomorrow could come help transport decorations to the station for the party.

- 14) Jesse Hughson had no crew updates. He also asked that the Board consider hiring Chief Matis full time as permanent Chief versus Interim Chief.
- 15) Jason has been working with Trevor on his EMR class and education facilities in the area for EMT classes.

**BOARD COMENTS:**

- 1) Board President Tanner noted for those up for reelection, a letter of interest needs to be submitted to the lawyer sooner than later (at least 90 days in advance). We also need to figure out what our advertisement is for Board elections.
- 2) Regarding unexcused absences – just FYI, the rule is that if you have three unexcused absences in a row you are off the board.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion was made by Secretary Hansen and seconded by Board Member Koehler to adjourn the meeting. **Vote:** Cynthia Farris, absent; Melanie Hansen, aye; Dustin Koehler, aye; Maria Ramthun, aye; Annette Tanner, aye. Motion passed.. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

**Next regular meeting: January 11, 2022**

**Approved by the De Beque Fire Protection Board of Directors on January 10, 2022.**



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Annette Tanner, President



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Melanie Hansen, Secretary