

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

August 31, 2009
3111 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062

Director Gardner called the regular meeting of the WFPD Board of Directors to order at 7:05 pm.

Directors Present: Peter Berger, John Gardner, and Patrick Cain.

Staff: Fire Chief Armando Muela, Fire Marshal Denise Enea, B/C Dan Ghiorso, B/C Emil Picchi, B/C Kevin Butler, Captain Steve Slaughter, Business Manager Kate Edwards, and Admin Assistant Pamela Van Horn

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

CONSENT AGENDA:

Agenda Items: Items 1 – 4 and 6 were moved to the consent agenda and unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA:

ITEM 5: FISCAL YEAR SPREADSHEET 2009-2010. - After reviewing actual figures from past years, Business Manager Kate Edwards reported that no consistent pattern of highs or lows is evident for either Expenses or Income. Most estimated figures on this spreadsheet reflect an amount of 1/12 the projected total for FY 2009-2010. Any anticipated variations appear in the spreadsheet for the month the activity should occur. ERAF serves as an example. In prior years, a figure appeared in the February column corresponding to the ERAF line under Revenue. On the current spreadsheet, the message “?ERAF?” appears in lieu of a dollar figure. Director Berger confirmed that the Board recognizes the budget spreadsheet as a “living” document. Changes to the original projections are likely and will be made as required and approved. The budgeted figures represent an educated guess based on specific assumptions. Assumptions change and additional information becomes available as time progresses. BM Edwards advised that the State of California can borrow up to 8% of the revenue received in FY 08-09 and repay it in three years. On a positive financial note, WFPD received full payment from the State for strike team activity through FY 2008-2009.

ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF FINAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010. – The Board requested clarification of line items within some accounts appearing in the Final Detail Budget. Director Cain asked for a description of two line items under account number 5733, Fire Prevention. *Fire Investigations*Inspectors*Out Sourcing* reflects the

planned payments to outside sources for plan check services. *Plan Check*Inspection Fees*, indicates income to Fire Prevention by way of fees charged during building or remodeling for services provided by Fire Prevention Inspectors. The inspectors are fire fighters with appropriate training to conduct this work during their time off. The negative identifies the value on this line as income. The fees are designed to cover the salaries of the inspectors, not to produce income. The Inspector program involves training, testing, and teaching and provides valuable experience for the participants.

Director Gardner inquired about the *Portola Valley Donation* line item in account number 5927, Disaster Preparedness Expense. Fire Chief Muela explained that this is actually a donation to the Fire District from a Portola Valley resident to cover disaster preparedness activities for the exclusive benefit of residents of the Town of Portola Valley, Los Trancos, Ladera, and Vista Verde.

Director Berger noted the \$799,000 figure for account number 5612, Workers Compensation Insurance. BM Edwards advised that the Workers Comp rate has increased a modification rate of 92 - 107%. This increase is based on the value of claims and the industry on a whole. In order to educate our employees and contain costs as much as possible, BM Edwards, Fire Chief Muela, and BC Ghiorso meet with State Comp advisors every six months for a review. The loss of life the department suffered in late 2007 (FY 07-08) was a major contributor to the increase of our rates. The District could have saved money had it issued a check directly to the beneficiary.

The last three line items under account number 5733, Fire Prevention, required explanation. *Investigators Equip*Maint*, refers to resources used in the investigation process and maintenance of the same. The last two items are *Grant #1 (RG)* and *Grant #2 (FS)*. The *Grant #1* amount is the remainder of a larger grant awarded to replace all out-of-date District radios, as necessitated by recently implemented County/State protocol changes. The difference between the sale price at purchase time and the expected expenditure submitted in the grant application left \$30,000 of the grant award unspent. The District received authorization to retain the remainder with the understanding it is for fire prevention purposes only. *Grant #2* is for a fuel modification program. This grant request, for calendar 2010, is pending. Grant money cannot be spent until it is received. Federal grants are paid within specified time frames. State grants are often not timely and payment may be questionable due to California's current fiscal challenges.

With the clarification of all board member concerns, the FY 2009-2010 Budget received unanimous approval.

ITEM 8: RESOLUTION # 237 AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF FUNDS. – Director Gardner noticed an error in the fourth paragraph of this resolution. The fiscal year 2008-2009 appeared instead of 2009-2010. Resolution # 237 was amended and approved.

ITEM 9: RESOLUTION # 238 ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATIONS LIMITS. – Resolution #238 received approval as written.

ITEM 10: RESOLUTION # 239 ESTABLISHING WFPD AS A MEMBER OF THE JPA.
– The Board approved Resolution #239 as written.

STAFF REPORTS:

FIRE PREVENTION – Inspection of defensible space continues. FM Enea mailed letters to owners of residences within the fire district having private roads that need attention. Residents liking the overgrown look are contacting the Towns to express their displeasure with the clearing process. Both towns support and participate in the cleanup efforts and are in the process of clearing overgrown public roads. Portola Valley Ranch applied for a federal certification as a Fire Wise area. The certification recognizes community efforts in cleaning up local areas. To earn the certification, an applicant group must meet specific requirements for a broad range of activities. Any neighborhood, development, etc. can develop its own Fire Wise prescription customized to its needs. Susan Boynton, a member of the Woodside Town Council, informed the Board that the Town of Woodside, after years of discussion, assembled a committee of three to coordinate fire related issues. Had it existed at the time, this committee might have lessened the negative reaction to and streamlined the passage of the Fire Hazard Map. Director Berger requested that Ms. Boynton define a “heritage tree” as interpreted by the Town of Woodside. Ms. Boynton responded that a simple answer to that question does not exist and she lacks the depth of knowledge of the appropriate codes to provide an accurate response at that given moment. She will provide an answer at a later date. Searsville Lake, at Jasper Ridge, needs dredging. Director Berger said Jasper Ridge is not getting its vegetation management completed. This puts the adjacent Westridge area at risk. FM Enea will contact Jasper Ridge for an update and to express the Fire District’s concerns. A safety plan for Webb Ranch is also in discussion.

TRAINING – BC Butler advised that four of the seven probationary firefighters are winding down their driving training. Due to recent changes in equipment, everyone has a lot to learn. Firefighters have trained with other departments in the use of 24’ ladders, for which there is limited call in our district but which may be employed in mutual aid situations. The crews have been pounding pavement, pulling hose, and generally making themselves more visible to the public. Most of staff comments on the new engines have been positive. No service academy is planned for this fall. The possibility exists that there will be no spring 2010 academy.

EMS – BC Picchi advised that ambulance calls are up. He explained that there are two basic approaches to managing ambulances. One, based on geography, locates vehicles to allow each to cover a similarly sized area. The concentration method considers the pattern of call locations, resulting in briefer response time to a greater number of calls. When commitments are not met, the decision makers review statistics, consider the locations of fire departments, decide on a plan, work out the details, implement the plan for a test period, and evaluate the results. This is the current situation. M107 does not participate in move-ups during the test period. Should the

geographic placement of ambulances prove effective and accepted as the permanent process, M107 will begin participation. The short block of the new ambulance motor was replaced after the vehicle went to the shop for what was thought to be a water pump issue. Director Berger will be unable to attend the September 16 JPA board meeting and asked that someone represent the District. Director Pat Cain will attend the JPA meeting on the District's behalf.

OPERATIONS – Having included two new vehicle related reports with his monthly board report for several months, BC Dan Ghiorso suggested that only the mileage report be included in the future. He will maintain the “out of service” information but, with the new engines in service, OOS situations are significantly fewer. Both Seagrave engines have tank leaks, a known challenge of these engines. Seagrave provided a temporary fix. One at a time, they will go to Sacramento for repair. The engine roofs have a potential leak. A suggested fix is available but Seagrave has not yet made the fix. With an odometer reading in excess of 141,000 miles, the old engine 19 needs a new motor for an estimated cost of \$65,000 dollars. BC Ghiorso feels that this, with the other repairs that might be required, would exceed the worth of the vehicle. Disclosure of its problems makes a sale unlikely and its parts are not in demand. Some surplus engines end up in South America. This requires locating an organization willing to cover the shipping costs. With the agreement of the Board of Directors, BC Ghiorso would like to donate the vehicle to a small volunteer department in northern California. Most of the volunteers are retired firefighters with mechanical experience. They run an estimated 70 calls a month within an 86 square mile area. They currently have two engines, neither of which has an enclosed cab. The board accepted and approved the BC's suggestion. The metal storage sheds behind Station 7 will be replaced, space cleared for parking reserves, and CERPP supplies located elsewhere. FF Eric Laughlin may return to full duty at the end of October. He will work some light duty before then.

IT – BC Romero reported he was on vacation during most of July, but made himself available to log in remotely to handle routine tasks and respond to help desk inquiries. He also spent 20 hours setting up software and configuring the Toughbooks prior to having Foster City Fire set up and configure them for CAD.

NEW BUSINESS: Director Gardner suggested that WFPD needs some press. One particular local district constantly appears in the news. WFPD does many great things for its residents, but does not seek credit. Perhaps it is time to start providing press releases about activities such as strike team participation, pandemic flu preparation, CERPP activities, efforts toward disaster preparedness education, etc. Both the board and personnel supported the suggestion. No formal motion resulted. District staff will seek opportunities for implementation. Director Berger commented on a continuing Cal Water issue affecting his home. Residences along and around Mountain Home Road have been losing water pressure. Flow varies widely. To date the cause remains unknown.

October 27, 2009 is the first official meeting of the Holding Board of the Woodside-Portola Valley Fire Protection Foundation. The current board comprises Denise Enea –

President, Armando Muela – EVP, and Dan Ghiorso – Secretary Treasure. Sue Boynton serves on the Board of the Woodside Foundation, the funds for which are maintained separately from those of the Town of Woodside. She is happy to provide information on board members, organization, etc. that she has gathered or to which she has access. Her offer was enthusiastically accepted.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

1. Lillian Rutherford wrote a letter to Chief Muela commending the crew that responded so quickly to her call for aid and provided “such fine service.” She enclosed a donation.
2. Jeffrey Harris, an incoming cadet, wrote a letter to thank Javier Valdes for his assistance in helping Jeff complete his paramedic internship. Jeff had very nice things to say about WFPD, the organization, and employees.
3. The Chairman of the Fiesta Foundation thanked the District for hosting a rest stop for their Geo bike ride, a fund raising activity for the non-profit.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

The view of Station 7 from Woodside Road will change with the installation of an AED near the eastern driveway entrance. In addition to the pole supporting the AED, the planned setting includes a water fountain and lights. The project is a joint effort among the WFPD – supplying continuing water and electricity, the Sequoia Healthcare District – providing the AED and support pole, and the AED Foundation – paying labor costs.

CLOSED SESSION: None held.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is Monday, September 28, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Cain