

Spokane County Fire District #5
June 28, 2010 Regular Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Todd Lehman, Gary Pietz, and Larry Wendlandt

District Secretary: Carol Harrington

Guests: see attached sign in sheet

Time Meeting Began: 7:00p.m.

- **Flag Salute**
- **The minutes from the May 24, 2010 Regular Meeting were reviewed.** Gary mentioned an error on page 2 under item #2 where Carol needed to change the tabling of the water supply to a motion he made; also correct a spelling error in item 5's paragraph. **After those items were corrected, Larry made a motion to approve the minutes, Gary seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously. The minutes from the June 21, 2010 Special Meeting were reviewed.** Ron Wood said those minutes were missing some discussion on the idea of Station 52's closure. He read aloud what his changes were; **the board told Carol to retype the minutes later for their signatures. Larry made a motion to approve the minutes with the changes Ron made, Gary seconded and they were approved unanimously.**
- **The treasury report was reviewed.** Carol read the report aloud.
- **The February bills** were reviewed. Carol read the bills aloud. The Northern Energy bill for Station 51's propane was discussed. Brandon Meier's website management bill was discussed; Carol will let Brandon know to bill the district quarterly. **Gary made motion to accept the bills as presented; Larry seconded the motion and the expenses were approved as presented for \$5,785.97.**
- **Secretary's Report:** Marjorie Ryan's funeral will be this Thursday, July 1, 2010 at 1:00p.m. at Ball & Dodd just south of the Vet's Hospital. Gary made a motion to donate \$50 to the Reardan FFA on behalf of the fire district in memory of Marjorie Ryan; Larry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Carol will make sure the check is given to Jim Ryan along with a sympathy card.
- **Correspondence:** Website hit info from Brandon, BVFF HB 2823 regarding retired members who still want to serve, and an Enduris letter regarding misinformation from competing insurance companies.
- **Fire Chief's Report:**
 - **Personnel:** N/A
 - **Training:** The 1st training of the month involved structural triage. We performed triage on six homes. The 2nd training we performed SCBA and ladder quarterlies incorporated into water transfer as well as a water tender credit practice flowing 250/gpm uninterrupted for 30 minutes at the Pence place east of Wood Rd. on Coulee-Hite Rd. We also filled our summer tank at that location. Gary asked if the water was holding. Ron said so far so good. We had an extra training on Waukon Rd. with a live structure burn with LCFD4. We took T52, E52 and seven firefighters. We also offered a first aid training class on June 19, 2010 at the Springhill Grange Hall for the S.C.O.P.E. members We had OTEP on June 22, 2010 on starting triage for patient care.
 - **Stations:** A matter of great concern to me is the comment made by a board member **to possibly close Station 52** and store winterized trucks in there in order to get more volunteers to respond to calls; I fail to see the connection but I think the agenda is to save money. This could result in someone dying or their home burning down. We should be using the equipment we have to the best of our knowledge and service; this is not the best way to serve our taxpayers and firefighters. If you want to increase the number of volunteers responding to calls, you'll have to increase the number of volunteers. **Larry:** We never said we were closing a station; it was just a discussion. **Ron:** You said to bring reasons and a defense. **Larry:** I said we are not ready to discuss it now but when the time came. **Ron:** That's not what I heard. **Larry:** We will discuss this after the business of the meeting has been taken care of; then everyone will have a chance to talk to us about it for as long as they want.
 - **Equipment:** Under New Business.
 - **Other:** N/A
 - **Station 52 outdoor light N. side of building:**

- Ron: he feels the light is necessary for the safety of the firefighters.
- Larry: Bob Harding's property line is so close it is his choice regarding the light and he has said that it is not necessary for the firefighters to have access back there.
- Ron: Could we put in a motion sensor?
- Gary: Ron, you first said it was for vandalism; you've been saying that for the last 3 months. You've never said before that it was for firefighter safety. What is the safety issue?
- Ron: No, I have stated that one of the reasons is firefighter safety. And it's because we go back there.
- Bob Harding: Only you and I go back there, Ron.
- Gary: If something happens, we'll deal with it then.
- Ron: Then it would be too late. Why can't Bob close his drapes?
- Bob: You are paranoid; we've never had a light back there before.
- Ron: That's because of the vandalism that occurred, which we had not had before. A lot of things have changed.
- Barb Johnson: How far is Bob's place behind the station?
- Ron: About a quarter of a mile.
- A discussion followed regarding Bob Harding's being an astronomer and his private parties to view the stars; the light from the station shines in his bedroom window and disrupts him and the viewing parties.
- Dan Patterson: We have female firefighters on our team who do not feel comfortable going back there with no light on; it is a safety issue.
- Todd: Would Bob go for a motion light?
- Bob: As long as it doesn't light the side of the fire station building.
- Larry: Would a different light or the position of the light make a difference?
- Bob: I may as well put up a property line fence; then they couldn't go back there. They don't need to anyway.
- Kjell Anderson: (addressing the board) You should be concerned as commissioners with not only the residents but with the firefighter's safety as well as vandalism of fire district property. This affects our insurance policy regarding property and firefighter safety. I would like to know who removed the light as it is gone now.
- Gary: Bob removed the light. I told him he could because the board had approved the removal of the light.
- Kjell: We do go in the back of that station; we need it lit. I don't think Bob's property line goes all the way to the station.
- Building access was discussed. Bob again said he could put the fence up.
- Todd: Would you be willing to try a motion light before you put up a fence?
- Larry: We didn't have a light there for the last fifteen years; and yes, there has been vandalism. All Ron's going to do is make Bob mad. Maybe Darel of Silver Star Electric can figure something out.
- Ron: That is why I mentioned a motion detector.
- Bob: Put the light up somewhere else, maybe with a shield.
- Gary: Isn't there a power pole around there?
- Discussion followed on where all the Station 52 lights are now.
- Larry: Let's bring in Darel and try to reach a compromise.
- Larry Durham: I have a shielded pole light I will donate. You can have it.
- Carol will call Darel of Silver Star Electric.

Old Business:

1. **Spokane County Ambulance Service Agreement:** Carol briefly explained the agreement to the resident's present: the agreement is to maintain ambulance service to all Spokane County Fire Districts

and the administrator is Spokane Valley Fire Department. They charge a fraction of the cost the Spokane Fire District (city) wanted to charge for the same service agreement. Carol read the resolution aloud that pertained to the contract agreement. **Gary made a motion to adopt Resolution 2010-01 regarding the ground ambulance contract; Larry seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

2. **Water Tanks at Greg Lucht's:** Gary read a letter from the board to Greg aloud (Carol handed Greg the original) regarding the board's intent to move the tanks off Greg's property as soon as possible. Greg said one of the tanks has wheels that won't come off. Greg doesn't remember how they were moved in. Larry talked to some scrap metal guys and they were not interested as they never called him back. He said we may have to move them to our property. Jennifer Jensen asked if we could have them moved to the land on Wood and Coulee Hite Rd. for an extra water source; we could also use an extra water source at Station 52. We already own them and maybe we could use them if we ever got a third station. Gary said that the board previously asked Ron if he had any use for them and Ron told them no. Larry said we could call AgLink and see if they could move them to the corner of Wood and Coulee-Hite Rd. Carol was directed to call AgLink and get a quote for their transport as soon as possible. Greg said he would appreciate a call regarding when someone would be on his property to look at them or remove them as he has dogs.
3. **Generator:** Gary said he went over prior minutes and that in April's regular meeting it was decided the item be taken off the agenda.
4. **Recruitment:** Bethany Cobb is a new volunteer as soon as her physical is clear.
5. **Medic 51 Payoff:** Carol called both the Spokane Treasurer's Office and the USDA to push for an earlier payoff; the USDA called the Bank of New York and worked it out so we could pay it off earlier. Carol said that the amount of the payoff was figured by Cathy Lyon at USDA Wenatchee office for a July 1, 2010 date to give The Bank of New York, which carries the bond, time to process the check. Carol has had that money transferred from the General Fund into a check to the Bank of New York. That amount is \$8,190.41.
6. **Fire/EMS truck at Durham's Event Aug. 7, 2010 7:00p.m:** Carol was asked by the board previously to call several other entities to see what they would do regarding placing a truck and several volunteers at a special event in their district for fire coverage. Carol called four different entities and spoke with both Fire Chiefs and Commissioners. She read their responses and they were all unanimous in denying a request of that nature stating it opened the district up for liability issues, obligations to cover any and all personal events in our district, and was unwise to remove a truck during fire season. Larry said we could call our attorney. Ed Lynch and Larry Durham said to forget about it. Ed Lynch stated he did not want to see any fire trucks at any firefighter's homes.
7. **Courtney Patterson/Patty Bonner meeting:** Larry said he had scheduled a meeting on July 7, 2010 at 7:00p.m. with Ron, Courtney, Patty, Dan Patterson and himself present. Patty wants to clear the air about something she says was misconstrued. Basically, this happened because the district was used as a mailbox. Dan Patterson asked if Patty lives in and pays taxes in our district. Larry said no. Dan said then you could have shut this down a long time ago. Larry said he just wants to get it fixed and done with. Dan asked if the board uses Robert's Rules of Order to run their meetings; he has a copy and would be happy to let them borrow it. Gary said we don't have to use them unless we adopt them and we don't have to adopt them. Greg Lucht said you may want to check your records on that, Gary.
8. **Plan for Better Response:**
 - Ron: If you want better response, you need more volunteers. He discussed the idea of the rotation of three volunteers for the weekends. Carol is working on a sign-up calendar.
 - Gary: Do the volunteers present at this meeting understand that rotation?
 - Bonnie Cobb: We do what we can. I am working an immense amount of hours at my job right now. I am coming to training and am ready to go as our crew trains on all the equipment.
 - Van Wohl: I am in the same spot.
 - Kjell Anderson: Why does the board feel response is a problem? Have you asked the Fire Chief if he thought it was a problem?

- Todd: There are a couple of volunteers who have not been to training or calls for a long time.
- Kjell: Are we not serving the community? Are we failing?
- Gary: The ambulance on one call left before any of our crew got on scene. There are calls at 10:00p.m. and only 4 people responding. How can only 4 people out of 20 volunteers be available on a weekend?
- Dan Patterson: Are you insinuating volunteers are hearing their pager and not responding?
- Gary: I hear some are unavailable. What does that mean? We are asking why they are unavailable.
- Dan: Because they are volunteers.
- Jennifer: I was on that call Gary referred to earlier with the ambulance when AMR got there first. Sometimes AMR responds from somewhere close by; they are not always coming from Spokane. We do EMS calls as a favor to this community. We do not receive any funds for medical calls from the taxpayers – only fire funds. We have all put in many, many hours for this community and have lives and jobs and kids and family. It is frustrating for a board to constantly harp on us more and more and more. All of my spare time is here; if my pager goes off I am here. It is hard to bring in more volunteers when you have a board hounding the team. You have a good team here and you should support us.
- Todd: We do.
- Jennifer: That's not what I hear.
- Todd: Things heard second hand are not always true. Several of you do outstanding jobs; it is just a few that are in question.
- Jennifer: One of the volunteers I think you are referring to is going to school and working a full-time job. Now that summer is here he can offer us more time. You guys are not going to the Spokane County Fire Commissioner Association (SCFCA) meetings out there; you are not doing your job. If you went, you might see what other departments are doing.
- Larry: I ran under the ticket that I will not raise taxes and that I would try to build up the coffers.
- Dan: Gary stated in his campaign that *"I am committed to seeing the fire/EMS service continue to grow and would work diligently to make that happen."* That's not what I am seeing here with this current board; in fact, it seems the opposite is true.
- Gary: You are diligent.
- David Hess: When I was on fire district 4 there were a lot less people out during the day to respond; this happens everywhere; it is common. AMR does beat fire districts sometimes to the scene, even when the stations are manned. Volunteers have to take the weekend and trade off.
- Larry: There will be no more interruptions. We need to get the business meeting done.

New Business:

1. **Supply Request Ron:** Is it okay to use the \$2,186.00 EMS Grant money for **EMS supplies** without board approval since the grant application was previously approved and the money has been deposited in the general fund? Yes, the board members thought that was fine. A class for epinephrine injections was discussed; the fee for the class may be \$140. Larry said that the grant money we just discussed may be used for the payment of that class. Ron showed the board some map pages he had gotten from SCFD10; they had made us a copy of our district in a satellite type map image on pages when they had their district maps done. Ron would like 10 copies of FD10's and 50 copies of our **district's maps laminated** and bound for the trucks, firefighter's and possibly other entities for use in locating ingress/egress, vegetation, and other map items important for response. The board reviewed the maps. Gary doesn't see any advantage to these maps over the map books we have now. Jennifer said these are very different from what we have now; these are more topographic and show timber density, canyons and fields. Larry said he could see where these kinds of satellite image maps would come in handy; he preferred these types of maps because they show canyons and where the heavy brush areas are. The board told Ron to go ahead and have them printed. Carol said she would take them to Office Depot and have them copied and bound so they lay flat when open.

2. **Supply Request Carol:** The board gave Carol the okay to purchase more coffee and creamer.

Public Concerns: Todd said before we get into this portion of the meeting he wanted to say that the closing of Station 52 was simply an idea Larry mentioned at one special meeting; it was the first time it had ever been mentioned. There is nothing happening anytime soon regarding this.

- Dan: I didn't know it was Larry who brought it up. Larry said in his election campaign, "*This does not mean cutting services; we will still provide our volunteers with what they need to continue to do an outstanding job.*" I am also recording this right now. This would not carry service forward. I will be referencing these quotes when I write letters to the editor should any further discussions progress about Station 52 closing down. Do you take your job seriously and look for grants? If you go down this road a lot of people who live in that area wouldn't be serviced as they are now; if there is a fire or emergency in those areas, that would be on your shoulders. We put our trust in you to do what you were voted in to do.
- Todd: Haven't you ever thought over a project and thrown out different ideas? That's all it was.
- Larry: I look at ways to cut costs; I have been a businessman for twenty years. We have 12 trucks but only about 6 go out even if every person took a truck. I am looking at the possibilities and the uses of our equipment. I have not turned Ron down on anything he has asked for. We are simply looking at ways to save money. We have a big propane bill over there. The extra vehicles would be stored over there should we have a third station in the future. We need a lot of volunteers to run a district now. Gary and I are looking at it from years ago when farmers were available. A lot has changed and I realize that. Families and jobs change. We have all this equipment and we are not using it.
- Dan: Do you keep a spare tire on your rig?
- Larry: No.
- Dan: Well, most people do. Some also carry a spare tank of gas for emergencies. That is what you have to do. Maintain what you have and make sure spare equipment is ready to roll should it become necessary.
- Greg: Closing a station is a decision to take seriously. You should set goals on why you would want to do this. Set all your goals for this district out in the public; get the statistics. It is up to you, the board, to prove why this would be an option – it is not up to the Fire Chief or us to prove why you shouldn't do it. Regarding the call Gary referenced earlier when he said AMR came and none of us got there; where I live I do not get dispatch radio traffic. There is no repeater and the pager information is scrambled; I can't even read the location much of the time. We need a better dispatch and communication system. I was in my vehicle ready to roll just waiting to get some kind of an address to that particular call. Don't just look at one call, look at all the responses.
- Todd: Ron has explained that problem to us as well as problems at Bonnie's house with information on pagers. It is a difficult situation. Larry was just voicing an idea that may or may not have been part of any plan to close the station.
- Greg: Maybe the words he used were not chosen well.
- Todd: It was meant for Ron to bring us statistics regarding the activity of the station.
- Greg: Are you coming out anytime soon with a 5 year plan for all this money you want to build up in the coffers? Money in the bank does not save lives or property and it doesn't keep trucks and equipment on the road ready to go. What is your plan? You need to make it fun for people to be here; then you'll get more volunteers.
- Todd: We are not trying to attack anyone here. You all do a great job training.
- Greg: The EMS grant is one we get every year. Is there a plan to replace PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)? Are you looking into grants to replace anything?
- Larry: We always ask Ron if he needs anything.
- Ron: Yes, and I tell you.

- Greg: You need to know, as a board, what is going on here. That is your job. You should know the condition of the resources you have.
- Todd: We don't know what condition the PPE is in.
- Larry: I am not a firefighter; I can't tell by looking the condition they are in.
- Greg: Go around the corner on the other side of this wall and look at the dates.
- Mike Smiley: I heard about the closing of Station 52 and getting rid of the trucks. He explained that he is not sure the need to do something like that even though he is a businessman himself.
- Todd: We are getting up there financially.
- Larry: If the firefighters and the chief told us we needed a new truck, and we told you we need help to get it, would you as a taxpayer, vote for a new truck not knowing the cost or would you rather we told you we need \$350,000 for a new vehicle? We ran on the borderline for years because things were bought. We now need to build up our fund. My goal is to get it to \$100,000.
- Gary: We have put \$10,000 in the past two years in a reserve fund.
- Kjell: There is a lot of money, about half a million, in equipment over there. There is an engine over there we got for \$30,000 which is necessary inventory. We got a grant to refurbish a brush/attack truck. We have a tender for \$80,000. We can't afford to replace that equipment. That engine gives us our ratings along with some other factors; no other truck will do what that engine can do in pumping water. There are many things all of us have done to get this equipment and maintain it. We have worked with each other and Carol in getting grants for the protection of this community but also for the safety of the firefighters. That is how we must do business. This light business behind Station 52 is absolutely ludicrous. We used to have a budget of \$75,000; I know it is more now (Carol said it is at \$92,500). Paying off the Medic Rig is a good thing. But certain monies have to be used to maintain this necessary equipment. If the propane tank over there is leaking or we are losing heat for some other reason we should look into that first. But you have to realize there is a cost to doing business in protecting this community. That is a cheap station to run but it is essential. Half the water to fight fires is housed over there. It's not like it was thirty years ago where we'd fight with one brush truck from the road with a one inch hose. There were good firefighters back then but things have changed. You are the caretakers. Larry, I appreciate your trying to build the coffers, but remember that money in the bank does not save lives or put out fires. What is your plan for the next five years? If you want a starting point, ask Ron, ask us. A pumper/tender combo truck has been mentioned in the past but never even made it into a discussion. I appreciate your business mind, Larry, but we have to maintain a service here, not simply a bank account. We have a formidable department here; we cover the best we can. How can we provide the same benefits to all the rest of the tax payers to the far reaches of the district? You need to consider grants; we would like a commitment to extend our fund by using federal dollars. We would like to see you all go to the SCFCA meetings. Talk to them and see how they deal with similar problems.
- Jerry Jensen: Don't any of you (the board) have a response to any of that?
- Todd: We have nothing to back up.
- Jennifer: Yes, you all need to go to those commissioner meetings so we won't reinvent the wheel. I know you are just thinking about how to save money. Why don't we patch insulate Station 52? I don't know why you all keep saying you are building up the coffers and saving money; we the volunteers take care of a lot of problems on trucks and equipment ourselves. We are the ones doing the work volunteering our time for maintenance and some of the repairs. We are the ones saving this district money. Do you know how many hours of training I have or how many different certifications I have as a responder? Why aren't you all volunteering? Why don't you step up?
- Todd: I have put in 18 years of volunteer service.
- Gary: I have put in 27 years. I have two knees that won't allow it.

- Jennifer: Then put your time into the commissioner's meetings and our neighboring districts networking. Some of our mutual aid districts don't see why they should aid a district who has a board that won't support us. What number of volunteers responding would make you happy?
- Gary: I have spoken with Chief Anderson of SCFD9 and he said he was talking about automatic aid which is a whole different thing than mutual aid.
- Jennifer: We are able to cut insurance ratings which are things we need to keep up and offer our residents. How many responders will it take to make you happy?
- Gary: Enough to take care of the call.
- Jennifer: You have it now.
- Gary: Ron said he was scared on one call because he didn't have backup to land a helicopter.
- Jennifer: Did that call go through? Was it handled?
- Larry: I'd like to see an average response of 6 volunteers.
- Jennifer: How did you come up with that number? How do you know we don't have that now? Why don't you go to the commissioner meetings?
- Larry: I am going to one in January.
- Gary: I get the minutes of those commissioner meetings and I can call other commissioners to stay current.
- Jennifer: Why aren't we going for any grants?
- Larry: Ron hasn't told us he needs anything. I guess I need to come up here and check out all the equipment myself.
- Jennifer: We are afraid we'll have no one to back us if we make one mistake. That is a huge problem; we need to feel you are for us, not against us.
- Larry: I went to a training meeting a month ago and introduced myself and asked if there were any questions – there were none. We (Gary and I) got no response.
- Jennifer: They don't feel comfortable and fear repercussions if they question you.
- Dan: I feel I can approach you as a taxpayer, but not as a firefighter. There is a fear of backlash that will come against us as volunteers.
- Larry: We have tried to work with everyone. I will learn more and more as I go on. I wish you all would come to more meetings. I made one comment about Station 52. My goal is to try to get everyone together. If we had a Firestorm, we will need to pull together as a community. I am trying to do that. I have known Bob for years; I am trying to make it right for both Bob and the fire district. I don't want Bob building a fence.
- Jennifer: I think the light needs to be there.
- Kjell: The light matter: we need to think of the bigger picture here. The safety of the volunteers. Not one of you asked the firefighters to come up with suggestions for the problem yet you allowed a resident, Bob, to remove the light himself.
- Barb Johnson: Twenty years ago, there was not much traffic up here. Now there are a lot more as well as more accidents. We all have woods somewhere around us. Stop arguing and keep growing along with this community. This is a big area with more and more houses.
- Bonnie: Our trainings are now very sophisticated; we train as hard as Spokane County Fire District 10 and the Valley. I have my hats off to this team. The board needs to know that.
- Todd: We agree. Training is very impressive and well done.
- Barb Johnson: You have a lot of homes out here; you need to keep your equipment and trucks up.
- Larry: He discussed CRP and crops and how land uses have changed.
- Ruth Southwick: We have a house today that was saved because of this fire district. The furniture was even saved. Those guys stayed and worked. I love them. They saved it. When your life is at stake – you didn't know us then – but you saved us. You are doing a terrific job. It was the training and them working together so well.

- Todd: Back to Jennifer's statement: I want to say that when I say the money is being saved, I mean everyone in the district is doing this; we've all done it together.
- Bobbie Baker: Look around here and see how old most of us are. We are old. We can't do many things now. Find some young people and get them in here.
- Larry: We did. We also set some precedence's regarding summer volunteers. An example is Bethany Cobb; she is a college student and said she can make up the training she misses. She is an EMT already. Summer help is a great option for a program.
- David Hess: I am new to the area; I moved here about one and a half years ago. From this meeting I would like to know about the pagers. Are they digital?
- Ron: Yes.
- David: Regarding the truck requested for Larry's party; why would you need to consult an attorney? It seems like it wouldn't even need to go beyond the Chief or captain on something like that.
- Larry: It's a sue-happy world.
- Jerry Jensen: How many SCFCA meetings are there?
- Carol: They occur every odd month.
- Jerry: How many meetings have you all been to?
- Commissioners: Answered individually, all said none.
- Jerry: Why aren't you going for grants?
- Gary: In the past we spent a lot of money for things that we didn't need. We were close to not being able to pay the bills.
- Jerry: Then look for grants that are appropriate.
- Gary: Maybe the grants aren't appropriate. There was a discussion on whether grants are free money as well as the match percentages.
- Jerry: Larry, how can you not know about firefighter equipment if you volunteer for another fire district?
- Larry: I am their chief mechanic; I don't fight fires.
- Jerry: You are all just trying to get off the hook; I have never seen so much of it.

Todd Lehman, Chairman, told Carol she could stop taking minutes; at this time it was 9:45p.m.

There was no other business.

The next regular meeting will be July 26, 2010 at 7:00p.m.

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:52p.m.

Spokane County Fire District5 Chairman

Spokane County Fire District5 Commissioner

Spokane County Fire District 5 Commissioner

Attest: Spokane County Fire District 5 Secretary