

Albany County Fire District Meeting Minutes January 20, 2021

This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance for Board Members, Board Staff, Chiefs and others, as well as through Zoom because of COVID. (*Formal action taken by the Board is indicated via italics.*)

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm. Board members present were Art Sigel, Brett Wadsworth and Luke Hawkins.
2. December Meeting Minutes: *Chairman Sigel moved to approve the December board meeting minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Board member Wadsworth and approved unanimously.*
3. Public Comments: No public comment.
4. Election of Officers of Board: Chairman Sigel announced that Board members Wadsworth and Hawkins had been sworn in as duly elected government officials by the Albany County Clerk. Chairman Sigel moved to nominate the following officers for ACFD#1 for 2021: Board member Hawkins as Chairman and Board member Wadsworth as Treasurer. *Board member Wadsworth seconded the motion and also proposed an amendment to the motion by nominating Board member Sigel as Secretary. Board member Sigel accepted the nomination and amended his motion, which was seconded by Board member Wadsworth. There was no discussion. The slate of officers was voted upon and approved unanimously. The officers of the ACFD#1 Board for 2021 shall be:*

Luke Hawkins – Chair

Brett Wadsworth – Treasurer

Art Sigel – Secretary

Board member Sigel then turned over the meeting to newly elected and appointed Chairman Hawkins.

5. Financial Report: *Chairman Hawkins moved to approve the financial report as presented. Motion was seconded by Secretary Sigel and approved unanimously.*
6. Outside Agencies / Guests reports:
 - (a) LFD- Chief Dan Johnson was present but had nothing to report.
 - (b) EMA – Blake Halsey, Emergency Coordinator, reported that they are still working on the Mullen Fire recovery. Otherwise, nothing else to report.
 - (c) LARC – Steve Morgan, PSAP Administrator, attended the meeting but had no report, except to comment that data was being transmitted and being stored at dispatch in the wrong place, which was requiring corrections.

- (d) County Fire Warden – Warden Chad Dinges was present and reported that fire billing for the Cameron and Mullen Fires had been completed. Warden Dinges reported that he expects \$129,000 to come in and be paid around Monday, 1/25/21, which represents 7 of the smaller fires. The Warden requested the Board consider and discuss Fire Pay, as well as the status of the land / station located at the Little Laramie Valley Volunteer Department location.

7. Board Topics

- (a) Fire Pay. Secretary Sigel recapped the Fire Pay practice and policy. The current policy of the Board, per 3/22/17, requires only that Firefighters be paid when and as the Board decides. Secretary Sigel however said practice of the District from 3/22/17 through the current has been to pay the first 50% of all fire pay at the time it is billed and becomes due to the firefighters. The second 50% is not paid until the District receives reimbursement from the state or federal government in full for the fire pay. Secretary Sigel proposed a potential change in practice to allow the District to pay the second 50% prior to receiving reimbursement from the state or federal government so long as the District's cash reserves do not fall below \$75,000.00 minimum. Secretary Sigel however cautioned that occasionally the State makes reductions or deductions in its reimbursement, and thus it might be more prudent to only pay 40-45% until receiving the reimbursements. In considering the second 50% of fire pay due on the Mullen Fire to firefighters, Teri Jo advised the Board that there was \$52,000.00 in monies available to pay if leaving a reserve of \$75,000.00. This amount represents ½ of the second 50% left to pay, or 25%. *Treasurer Wadsworth moved to pay firefighters of the Mullen Fire up to \$52,000.00 which represents 25% of the remaining full amount of pay due and owing. Secretary Sigel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.* Once the District receives reimbursement from the state, the remaining 25% shall be paid.
- (b) AFG Grant department status. Chairman Hawkins reported that it was his understanding that each department was eligible to apply for AFG grants, and the District was not limited to one grant or one application as a District. Chairman Hawkins strongly encouraged each of the departments to be mindful of deadlines and priorities of funding for each AFG cycle and to make applications. The discussion also reminded the Board and the departments that potential matching funds intended for use by the departments in the grant applications must still be approved by the Board prior to submission.
- (c) Little Laramie Valley Volunteer Department. County Fire Warden Chad Dinges reported that a complaint has been made by the original grantor of the property where the department station is (was) located. The complaint requests that the real property, together with the improvements/building, be turned back over to the grantor since it is no longer being used as a fire department. Attorney Goetz requested that the Board allow her some time to converse with County Attorney Trent to discuss the legal status, any reversionary interest and potential options

between the County and with the landowner. The Board did discuss initial pros and cons of retaining the land and building for fire suppression in the future, but made no decisions until receiving a legal update from Attorney Goetz at the next board meeting.

- (d) Ski area. Chief Davis reported that the Snowy Range Ski Area has been in need of EMS to respond to incidents and calls during the ski season. Chief Davis reported that Centennial has only one volunteer trained in EMS and she also is a fulltime employee at SRSA. Chief Davis reported that he is going to have discussions and work with LARC to modify paging for EMS calls and needs to include other departments to be able to more adequately respond to calls.

Dispatch Liaison. Secretary Sigel discussed that a new liaison from the Board needs to be appointed to be the liaison with the Board, the Departments and LARC for purposes of dispatch and paging issues. (Jon Essley is the former liaison / board member.) Chairman Hawkins acknowledged this need and will consider the appointment of a liaison at the next board meeting.

- (e) CVVFD Truck. Centennial sold a vehicle for the price of \$15,000.00. *Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to except the sales proceeds of \$15,000.00 and to transfer to Centennial's truck fund account. Secretary Sigel seconded. All voted unanimously in approval.*
- (f) District 2 Annual Operating Planning Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for 2/29/21. *Secretary Sigel motioned to appoint Fire Warden Dinges as the District's representative at the meeting. Treasurer Wadsworth seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in favor of the motion.*
- (g) Department Strategic Projects. Treasurer Wadsworth reported that the Chiefs had met and developed the following strategic projects in order of priority:
- (1) CVVFD Well
 - (2) VVFD bathroom
 - (3) TSVFD bathroom
 - (4) BLVFD Genset
 - (5) WyCo ventilation

Discussion also occurred by the Board recognizing that restrooms for each station with working latrines and sinks must be a priority for the 2021 year. Each Department was asked to identify it's needs in this regard and come to the next Board meeting with an estimate for such expenses. Secretary Sigel also noted that the 2020 budget has approximately \$20,000 remaining in unencumbered capital expenses. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to apply /use those remaining unencumbered funds towards this construction/repair need. Secretary Sigel seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in approval.*

Treasurer Wadsworth also inquired into the status of electronic submission of reimbursements by department with the District. Currently the practice is for each

department to print the invoice, stamp with confirmation the approval, scan the approval and email to the District. Treasurer Wadsworth is seeking to explore software which would allow for electronic submission and approval. Teri Jo updated the Board that there are challenges with the cost of Adobe Pro and the workings of Adobe Reader. She will continue to research and report back to the Board next month.

(h) Vedauwoo Land status. Chairman Hawkins asked Secretary Sigel for an update, who then requested Attorney Goetz provide the status. Attorney Goetz reported that she and Secretary Sigel met with Dave Coffey, the surveyor who was commissioned by the District to perform a survey. Based upon the initial results of the survey, there does appear to be an issue as alleged by the neighbor complainant. Attorney Goetz recommended that she next visit with the neighbor/complainant and seek to discuss potential resolutions to the issue, while simultaneously exploring historical lot lines of the lots/ subdivisions as well as title insurance issues. The Board did not take formal action but unanimously agreed with Attorney Goetz's plan. She will report back to the Board next month with an update.

8. Chiefs' Reports.

(a) BL / Chief Shawn Sommerfeld.

- i. Chief Sommerfeld discussed pages within the County and the current procedures. Currently, LARC pages and dispatches Central to all wildland / MVA calls within the BL area. He discussed that it is not necessary and often an inefficient use of resources and volunteers. Chief Sommerfeld discussed that he would like to propose changes to this (no changes proposed to structure calls). Chief Sommerfeld would like to move from an auto-aide scenario from Central within any Department area to a mutual aide, i.e., the Department in the area with jurisdiction to the call will request aid and assistance from Central if needed, rather than an automatic response by Central to all calls. The Board indicated its approval to the modification but took no official action. Instead, Chief Sommerfeld will draft a proposed 2021 Policy Dispatch Statement to discuss and circulate with the Chiefs and ultimately to present to the Board for review and approval.
- ii. Chief Sommerfeld plans to hold a red card class in February and April. He commented that Centennial may hold a 131 class via zoom in May.
- iii. BL had 2 incident calls within the last 30 days, 1 structure and 1 MVA. BL has 22 active volunteers, 7 EMTs and 3 new candidates.
- iv. All BL fire equipment is usable and operational.
- v. BL requests the purchase of a K97 rescue saw and new blade in the amount of \$2,000.00, 100% from department money. *Treasurer Wadsworth motioned to approve the expenditure. Chairman Hawkins seconded the motion. All voted and approved unanimously in favor. PA #270.*
- vi. BL requests an expenditure of \$700.00 to rebuild a Honda pump engine. The estimate cost to replace the engine is \$1,800.00, 100% from department

- money. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve the expenditure. Secretary Sigel seconded the motion. All voted and approved unanimously in favor. PA #271.*
- vii. BL requests approval of an expenditure of up to \$1,200.00. to replace and upgrade all exterior door locks at its station, 100% from department money. *Chairman Hawkins motioned to approve the expenditure. Secretary Sigel seconded the motion. All voted and approved unanimously in favor. PA #272.*
 - viii. BL is still waiting on comparables from the State to fix portable alias.
 - ix. BL would like to evaluate the Verizon contract for department tablets and the need for service. BL doesn't need its tablet, and therefore will provide to Vedauwoo who would like to use it in addition to its assigned tablet. Central and Centennial both use and want their assigned tablets.
- (b) WYCO / Chief James Rinehart. Chief Rinehart reported that WYCO has 11 active volunteers. It also has a snowmobile and side-by-side to use for any rescue services. This is the first full month that WYCO is an operational department!
- (c) Central / Chief Dylan Whitmer. Chief Whitmer reported the following:
- i. Gave reports on the south department and current updates of its finish and construction completion.
 - ii. Gave report on the brakes of Engine 21. Chief Wittmer will bring an official expenditure request back to Board when received. Estimates are approximately \$3K.
 - x. Central requests an expenditure to replace nozzle of a hose which was damaged due to wind in the amount of \$1,300.00, 100% from department money. *Secretary Sigel motioned to approve the expenditure. Chairman Hawkins seconded the motion. All voted and approved unanimously in favor. PA #273.*
 - iii. Central requests an expenditure in the amount of \$850.00 for COVID-19 PPE equipment. This request for expenditure was tabled until Centennial explored whether any other grant or source of COVID-19 funding was available. Chief Wittmer will contact County EMS to explore FEMA and other sources of funding for this. A PA was assigned as #274.
 - iv. Central reported that it has been offered an 2001 American Lafrance rescue tanker. Park City department will donate it. Considerable discussions about accepting this possible donation and the exchange of Central's AC 27, possibly to BL. Board unanimously agreed to expend travel monies for Chief Wittmer to travel to Park City and inspect engine and obtain maintenance records for further review and discussion.
- (d) TS / Chief Jon Essley.
- i. Chief Essley reported the department is closed for the season until April.
 - ii. TS requests an expenditure of \$675 to upgrade genset controls, 100% from department money. *Treasurer Wadsworth moved to approve the expenditure. Secretary Sigel seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in favor. PA #275.*

- iii. Chief Essley also reported that TS is looking to get rid of its Type 4 and purchase a Type 6 command vehicle.
- (e) VV / Chief Brett Wadsworth.
 - i. All vehicles are operational and running.
 - ii. Working to expand CDL licensees.
- (f) CVV / Chief Sean Davis. (Chief Davis had to leave the meeting early.)
 - i. Centennial requests an expenditure in the amount of \$13,000.00, 100% from department money to rebuild engine on Engine 1. Chairman Hawkins *moved to approve the expenditure. Treasurer Wadsworth seconded the motion. All voted unanimously in favor. PA #276.*

9. New Business

- (a) COVID-19 Vaccines. Happening!
- (b) Special Board Meeting occurring 1/28/21 for purposes of new Board members receiving legal advice from Attorney Goetz. Entire discussion will be in executive session. No action will be taken.
- (c) Secretary Sigel discussed exploring and pursuing the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program to recover monies from the US Forest Service due to nonpayment of taxes.
- (d) Secretary Sigel discussed whether the future CDL requirements for volunteer firefighters is becoming or will be a crisis. The Board asked Attorney Goetz to consider an agreement that provides for training and CDL benefits to volunteers in exchange for a duration of service or payback. The Chiefs will discuss other ways to address this concern.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Megan Goetz, Attorney for ACFD#1 (substitute for Michele Turner who was absent due to illness)