



WEST POINT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING, JULY 12, 2023
MINUTES

6:07 P.M. West Point Station

Chair Steve Schoenthaler called the meeting to order.

Directors Steve Schoenthaler, John Hesketh and Tim Adams were present. Directors Julia Marsili and Greg Pryor were absent. Also present were Chief Terry Miller, Chief Mike Downs, CERT Reps Sam and Kathy Hernandez, Chaplain Carolyn Oliver, Payroll Clerk Jill Jenkins and Assistant Clerk Bronwynne Wolf.

THE MINUTES from the May 10th and June 14th meetings were reviewed. Steve made the motion to adopt the minutes as written. Tim seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted with 3 votes.

CORRESPONDENCE for the month was presented. The Bank of Stockton account statement was reviewed.

Chief Miller compiled information for the State Controller's office regarding Measure A and Measure C funds; specifically, how many parcels paid the tax and how many were exempt. From Measure A, the \$78.50 parcel tax: 1,919 parcels paid, 108 parcels were exempt with a total revenue of \$150,641.50. From Measure C: the \$180.00 parcel tax, 1,919 parcels paid, 108 were exempt with a total revenue of \$345,420.00.

Cathy Castillo, who performs the annual audit, requires a retainer of \$1,500. The total cost of the audit will range from \$4,500 to \$5,250. The retainer will be paid using the CalCard. Steve motioned to pay the retainer to Cathy Castillo, Tim seconded the motion. Motion passed with 3 votes.

NEW BUSINESS- None

OLD BUSINESS - Retirement Service options: Chief Miller suggested the discussion be moved to the next board meeting on August 9, 2023.

Review of clerk's monthly pay rate and Assistant Clerk Applicants: Jill requested that the clerks' pay be increased \$200.00 per month and that duties be split into two separate positions beginning with the 7/01/23 fiscal year and that the



clerks' pay rate be reviewed annually during the recommended budget planning. As such, the payroll clerk's monthly pay rate will be \$450 per month and the Assistant Clerk's pay rate will be \$800 per month. Bronwynne Wolf was the only applicant for the Assistant Clerk position. Steve made the motion to accept. Tim seconded the motion. Motion passed with 3 votes.

Update Regarding Insurance Commissioners' Meetings: Bronwynne read an email update from Director Greg Pryor which stated the following: *I'm still working with the State Insurance Commissioner on the California Fair Plan being transparent and realistic with its new risk modeling as well as the Fire Insurance industry as a whole. So, if the Chief gets complaints from residents that they aren't being risk modeled or treated properly by the California Fair Plan or their private carrier, I need the documents they are reviewing to take to the Insurance Commissioner. Please redact personal info but I need the documents to prove my case. I'm still working with Jack Garamendi as well to bring sense to the insurance craziness.*

Steve has been in touch with an agency out of the Bay Area, whom he highly recommends, that will come out to evaluate a home/property which has been damaged by fire. This company uses multiple independent evaluators to collaborate and request/advocate for this assessed value/settlement from the insurance company. This service is available to anyone in the community for essentially nothing out of pocket as the company will receive payment of 7% of the agreed upon settlement amount that the insurance company pays out. Steve will provide this company's information to Chief Miller to make it available to the community.

THE CERT REPORT was presented in written format and is attached with these minutes.

THE WEBSITE REPORT- Sam stated he has added Chief Downs and Chief Miller to the board email. Regarding the website, he reports that there has been a slight issue of authentication on emails that have been bouncing back due to ATT. He has made the necessary changes to resolve the issue.

THE ASSOCIATION'S REPORT- Tim reported they have received \$600 in donations as of 6/30/2023 and the ending bank balance is \$26,104.64.

THE CHAPLAIN'S REPORT- Carolyn stated Bruce is currently at Camp PiPi serving as the nurse. Carolyn imparted that in order to prevent lengthy response



times in the future, she and Bruce are going to improve their communications in order to make Chief Miller aware of who will be available when.

THE MONTHLY PAYABLES were presented in 2 transmittals: \$2,714.69 for Cal Card purchases and \$3,029.16 for regular payables. Jill stated there is a journal entry for a bill in the amount of \$500.00 from the Murphy's Fire Protection District for an E.M.T. class which will essentially be a transfer of funds. Chief Miller received a check from the State of Ca in the amount of \$946.67 and a US CalCard rebate in the amount of \$261.94 which will be deposited to the Bank of Stockton account. John made the motion to pay the bills as presented. Steve seconded the motion. The bills were paid with 3 votes.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT- Chief Miller stated the department responded to about 24 calls this month. Regarding Proposition A (the proposed 1% increase in sales tax): currently have 2,402 signatures. 2,100 signatures are required for Measure A to be placed on the ballot, but 3,000 total signatures are ideal to accommodate for any that do not pan out. Ace Hardware and Hesketh Auto in West Point have forms available to sign for those that would like to support the measure. The county board approved \$61,200 from the TOT Tax and \$32,500 from Prop 172.

Chief Miller introduced Chief Michael Downs, who will be his replacement come this time next year. Chief Downs started his fire career at Murphy's Fire in 2002, straight out of high school, then went onto San Andreas Fire and Columbia College. From there he chased fires all over Nevada on the eastern side of the Sierras for quite some time. Moved closer to home, back to San Andreas Fire, as well as Bureau of Indian Affairs, CalFire and has been working as Battalion Chief for Altaville Fire for the past four years. While he hasn't spent much time in West Point (yet), his father grew up here and shared with him that West Point is a community not quite like the rest of the county. Chief Downs shares he's excited to be here, and the community reminds him of how Angels Camp used to be when he was a kid; kind of like how life should be.

Chief Miller would like a meeting of the Finance Budget Committee. Julia will be setting a date.

Apparatus: Chief Miller received a bid of \$62,000 for a new pump and motor for Engine 316. About \$10,000 of that will come from the Fire Association. Engine 316 is expected to be back in service by the end of July. Water tender 313 was taken in for six recalls (no charge to the department) and is now back in service.



Strategic planning committee was not held.

Chief Miller stated he and Chief Downs will be meeting with the GIS people to get started on the parcel mapping project. The mapping project utilizes QR codes which will open maps of our area with necessary information (such as where an engine can find a water source). These QR codes will be posted on the district's website, so that in the event of a local wildfire, any incoming engines (who may not know the layout of our area) can go to the website, take a picture of the QR code and have immediate access to maps that will enable them to find and make use of these necessary resources, saving valuable time.

BOARD MEMBER'S COMMENTS- Steve stated the tax measure coming up can be beneficial to our department and hence our community. Fire departments across the United States are rated on an ISO scale by the Federal Government of 1-10. 1 being best, 10 being worst. In 1991, the West Point Fire Protection District was rated a 10. Today it is rated a 3. That is important for three reasons:

1. We save lives for emergencies, much better today than ever before.
2. We beat fires back better than ever before.
3. Insurance companies always look on your homeowner's policy at what the ISO rating is on your local fire department. If you have a rating of 3 instead of a rating of 6; what the community pays per parcel saves more than what you would pay for the insurance if the ISO rating was higher.

A properly run fire department can use the additional tax as funding for personnel in order to get a higher ISO rating, because if the rating improves from a 6 to a 3, that will in fact save each property owner hundreds of dollars more on their fire insurance costs each year. Therefore, would you rather be in a fire district with a rating of 6 and pay more for your fire insurance or would you rather put part of that money in your pocket, support your fire department and keep the rest of your money? The more personnel a department has available to staff an engine is extremely important. Having four people on an engine versus three people will get a better ISO rating and therefore a better insurance rate.

THE REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:18 p.m.
NO CLOSED SESSION WAS HELD

Respectfully Submitted,
Bronwynne Wolf