



Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District

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MINUTES

For the Regular Meeting of the Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District's Board of Directors held at 141 Delleker Rd., Portola, CA 96122 On February 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Board Members: Vice Chairperson Angelina Sutcliffe, Director Teresa Whitfield,
Director Donna Carpenter and Director Dave Rudolph

1. Call to Order:

- a. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Vice Chairperson Sutcliffe. Director Carpenter was absent.
- b. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

2. Public Comment

Ashlee Sims spoke via Zoom and reminded everyone that public comment is for the public only, not directors of district boards and provided the definition of members of the public.

3. Consent Items:

- a. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting January 15, 2024.

Director Sutcliffe made a motion to approve the minutes. Director Rudolph seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Director Sutcliffe – Aye, Director Whitfield – Aye, Director Rudolph – Aye.

The motion passed.

4. Regular Calendar:

4.1 Department staff reports:

Secretary Katy Martinez informed the Board that the heat situation at the Delleker Station has been resolved. She believes that equipment batteries may need to be taken to Les Schwab for assessment in order to get trucks started. Ashlee Sims spoke and suggested that the insurance company may offer towing assistance that would cover a tow truck coming out to the district to check batteries.

4.2 Update on Budget and Warrants:

Katy informed the Board that warrants from January 1, 2024 through February 15, 2024 total \$6,747.19 and the balance is \$95,793.69. Board discussion ensued regarding costs associated with workers compensation and inspection/certification of the air filling station and SCBA's. Cary Curtis spoke and asked that the District look to save money where it can. Daniel Smith questioned the District paying for workers compensation when there are no volunteers. Katy explained that she provides a roster listing all safety and non-safety employees as well as payroll every quarter; and it is her understanding that any refunds in premiums paid are seen the following year when actual payroll is audited. Board members and the secretary are covered by workers compensation premiums. Ashlee Sims spoke and asked that everyone stick to the agenda item only, not annexation. If Director's wish to provide their views, they should ask to be placed on the agenda.

4.3 Brown Act Training:

Director Sutcliffe stated that each Board member will receive a link to a video providing Brown Act Training. The link will be emailed to them by the secretary and it will contain a link and password. Katy will send out the emails as soon as she receives the link.

4.4 Discussion and possible action: Annexation status, and create ad hoc committee to work with LAFCO and Beckwourth Peak ad hoc committee in annexation process.

Director Sutcliffe asked that this item be on the agenda since LAFCO is providing assistance with the annexation process. She would like the 2 topics to be merged and an official ad hoc committee be created to cover both LAFCO and annexation. She would like for herself and Director Whitfield to remain on the committee. Cary Curtis stated the Beckwourth Peak and EPRFPD members met and worked through some initial steps, Angie provided LAFCO with a request to reduce their fees and the LAFCO commissioners accepted that request. Because Beckwourth Peak does not yet have a fire chief, Beckwourth Fire Chief Kenny Osburn would be the one to coordinate with Director Rudolph for inventory assistance. Cary has told Kenny to expect a call from Dave. Director Sutcliffe asked that Cary speak to that topic under agenda item 4.5.a. Cary stated that she has $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Resolution done, needs the answers to the questionnaire sent to EPRFPD in order to finish it. Director Sutcliffe stated that following tonight's meeting those answers will be provided. Ashlee Sims spoke and expressed that she wants to make sure that the District follows the required process for annexation. She believes the District should be holding a public hearing tonight to inform the public of the District's intent to submit an application to LAFCO. She believes that each District (EPRFPD, Beckwourth Peak, LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors) should be holding public hearings. This is a lengthy process and she wants to make sure no steps are missed which would only cause delays. She believes a public hearing is required prior to an application being submitted to LAFCO. Jeanne Graham spoke via Zoom stating that she would be looking to LAFCO for guidance on when and how public hearings must be held as they are the knowledge source on the necessary steps. Daniel Smith agreed with Jeanne that LAFCO's directions should be followed. He stated that LAFCO presented 3 different options and the one that EPRFPD selected, based on the lack of volunteers, it would be best to dissolve and annex. There is a process that LAFCO gave EPRFPD and it does not require EPRFPD to do a public hearing ahead of that because the board already did that by holding a public meeting here in the board room, which is what LAFCO told EPRFPD to do. If EPRFPD puts in an application to have the fees reduced, and decides to move forward at that time, if you have 25% or more, it can move forward. If you have less than 25%, at the protest hearing which is run by LAFCO not EPRFPD, and EPRFPD gets less than 25% it has to go to a public vote. There are other circumstances that people might advise EPRFPD on but he thinks Jeanne is right and EPRFPD should follow directions given by LAFCO. This is just his opinion. Ashlee Sims spoke again and said she would like to address the process. The Fire Protection District Law of 1987 clearly states that when there are any changes within a service area or zone, taxes are raised or there is a resolution, public hearings must be held. She said that LAFCO and Jennifer only understand their portions of the process and the same goes for Daniel and Cary. Each Board has to follow their own appropriate steps and follow due process in accordance with the law. She stated that LAFCO is not the one and done authority. Board discussion ensued. Director Sutcliffe stated that they have met and started the process of moving down the line of application tasks before we can get to the actual application itself. Director Whitfield made a motion that she and Director Sutcliffe continue to be the ad hoc group for the annexation process. Director Rudolph seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Director Sutliffe – Aye, Director Whitfield – Aye, Director Rudolph – Aye, Director Rudolph – Aye.

The motion passed

4.5 Updates from ad hoc committees:

a) Department Inventory

Director Rudolph informed the Board that he has reached out to Kenny Osburn via email asking for help with the inventory.

b) Contract negotiations with Graeagle Fire and Beckwourth Fire for past/current/future coverage of the District

Director Sutliffe has not heard back from Chief Ward regarding the email she sent to him asking for a meeting. Chief Osburn has responded and would like to meet. The Board has received call information from Sheriff's dispatch and now knows the fees LAFCO will be charging and can now make a more informed decision regarding any request for compensation. Negotiations will continue. Ashlee Sims asked what methods have been used to communicate with Chief Osburn. Director Sutliffe said that she sent an email and received an email in response.

5. Closed Session:

5.1 Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation

5.2 Conference with Legal Counsel – Conference with Labor Negotiators

Public Comment: Ashlee Sims asked are the attorney's labor negotiations on behalf of themselves? Director Sutliffe responded no. She then asked who the labor negotiators are. Director Sutliffe responded herself and Director Whitfield.

Director Sutliffe moved the meeting into closed session at 6:43

6. Report on Closed Session:

Director Sutliffe brought the meeting back into open session at 7:22 PM. There was no action to report. Ashlee Sims asked what was being negotiated. Director Sutliffe responded that it is related to the annexation. Ms. Sims then asked if they are negotiating a labor agreement. Director Sutliffe responded no, it is working with the annexation.

7. Next scheduled Regular Board Meeting March 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM

8. Adjournment

Director Whitfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 PM.

Director Sutliffe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Director Sutliffe – Aye, Director Whitfield – Aye, Director Rudolph – Aye.

The motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.

ATTEST:

Katy Martinez, Secretary

Angelina Sutliffe, Vice Chairperson

APPROVED AND SIGNED AT EPRFPD'S 04/15/2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING