



LITTLE LAKE FIRE DISTRICT



74 E. Commercial St. • Willits, California 95490
(707)459-6271 • Fax (707)459-7898

Chris Wilkes
Fire Chief

MINUTES

November 12th, 2019

- OPENING:** The regular meeting of the Little Lake Fire Protection District Board of Directors was called to order by Tony Madrigal at 5:01PM.
- ROLL CALL:** Present: Tony Madrigal, Skip Lucier, Arnie Mello and Nancy Stipe.
Absent: Tom Herman
- MINUTES:** The minutes for the October 8th, 2019 meeting were reviewed and accepted. Motion to accept the minutes: Skip Lucier 1st; Tony Madrigal 2nd.
- TREASURER'S REPORT:** Chief Wilkes reviewed the Treasurers Report with the board. Michelle Schnitzius reviewed the firehouse appendix. This is a separate appendix for the firehouse only as it will be a more transparent way to understand the payables and receivables which is separate from the general budget. Motion to accept the Treasurers Report: Arnie Mello 1st; Nancy Stipe 2nd.
- CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Chief Wilkes informed the board a gentleman came into the office and thanked the department for their quick response on the Blackhawk drive structure fire.
- OLD BUSINESS:**
- FIREHOUSE:** Hoping to have the plans to the City of Willits soon. The transformer placement has not been decided as of yet with PG&E. The Humboldt House is still going to be removed by a local couple.
- CANNIBIS EXCISE TAX:** Tony Madrigal stated that he is working on a date with the City of Willits for a meeting. Chief Wilkes informed the board the AdHoc did do an educational walkthrough last month. Chief Wilkes felt it was an eye opener to the City of Willits and AdHoc on the demands on the Fire Department. Tony Madrigal stated he felt it really was enlightening about the operation and he felt it was professional. Chief Wilkes informed the board he has spent a lot of time making sure these facilities are safe. He does not want firefighters to go into the unknown. Chief Wilkes stated the fire department will have to carry specialized



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equipment which will cost about \$3,000.00. Tony Madrigal stated that will be something the excise tax will need to cover if it is approved. Arnie Mello asked if ethanol is considered volatile. Chief Wilkes stated science says it is but because it is used in a cold process they made an exception.

EMS: Chief Wilkes informed the board as of December 1st, 2019 Falck will be pulling their permit. Medstar is working hard to provide service locally. Chief Wilkes stated Medstar has offered 9150 to us and though we do not want an ambulance we may acquire 9150 and use as a rescue, not an ambulance. Arnie Mello inquired if that will change our policies; Chief Wilkes replied just our liability. Chief Wilkes stated many fire departments are going this route as the fire departments have no confidence in the ambulance service. The rescue would not be available for non-life threatening injuries. Chief Wilkes is hoping Medstar will be able to make it work. Skip Lucier stated if his family member was in a situation and no ambulance service available he would appreciate the extra help from the fire department. Chief Wilkes stated that could happen as the closest ambulance is often south of Ukiah.

NEXUS STUDY: Chief Wilkes was given a list of questions to answer for the Nexus Study. City of Willits was also asked for a document of proposed buildings and housing. Chief Wilkes stated the City of Willits produced a solid document and thanked them for that. All documents have been submitted to the Nexus Study. Arnie Mello asked what the Nexus Study was. Chief Wilkes explained the Nexus Study provides information on the level of service when there is an increase of housing or buildings. Growths in the city can burden smaller departments, therefore impact fees can provide for additional equipment that is needed to provide for the development. The fees cannot be used for administration, salaries or benefits. Arnie Mello inquired if the fees were collected by the City of Willits. Chief Wilkes stated that the City of Willits or Mendocino County will collect the fees. Arnie Mello asked if the study is just for the district; Chief Wilkes answered yes as the City of Willits would have a separate study. Skip Lucier asked how long it may take for the document. Chief Wilkes stated maybe 6 months. Arnie Mello asked once we have the study, will that give us permission to charge fees. Chief Wilkes stated we would have to take an ordinance to Mendocino County as well as the City of Willits.



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NEW BUSINESS: **EMERGENCY VEHICLE REPLACEMENT:** Chief Wilkes stated there was a major failure with duty rig 5404. Recently the rig broke a cylinder head and diesel was in the coolant. This fix will be approximately \$10,000.00 to fix and no guarantee it will stay fixed. Tony Madrigal stated the EGR has been replaced 3 times. John Thomen added the rig has had 5 starters and he feels we have spent about \$30,000.00 in maintenance over the years. Chief Wilkes informed the board the district has funds to move over for the new rig from Fund Balance Available. Skip Lucier asked what we were doing with the rig. Chief Wilkes informed the board a trade in value is only \$2,000.00. The staff has not decided what to do with the rig yet. John Thomen tried to purchase the new rig locally but they were unable to confirm the vehicle needed as far as specs. Motion for Emergency Vehicle Replacement: Nancy Stipe 1st; Skip Lucier 2nd.

GENERATOR REPLACEMENT: Chief Wilkes informed the board the military generator failed during the PSPS. During the PSPS the generator would not charge the air compressor for the fire trucks and breathing apparatuses. SCBA bottles depleted due to the 3 structure fires and Ukiah Fire had to come up to fill the bottles. Lori Adams informed the staff that a new generator would be a reimbursable item under relocation. The new generator will go on the outside of the building which will assist in space for gear brought over while the firehouse is rebuilt. Arnie Mello asked if there will be a generator in the new firehouse. Chief Wilkes informed the board there will be a natural gas generator in the new firehouse. Motion to purchase generator up to \$20,000.00: Skip Lucier 1st; Arnie Mello 2nd.

EMERGENCY FUEL ACQUISITION: Chief Wilkes worked with a local contractor for fuel during the PSPS. Mendocino Construction assisted with our fuel needs. Mendocino Construction are always strong supporters with EMS needs and their generosity is always appreciated. Tony Madrigal directed the staff to write an appreciation letter to Mendocino Construction. Chief Wilkes stated he would be happy to do so.

TRANSFORMER: Chief Wilkes informed the board the transformer is the last step in the firehouse project. Recently staff and Arnie Mello met with Ray from PG&E at the 540 fire station. The first location, PG&E wanted to place the transformer in the bay. Chief Wilkes informed PG&E



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that will not work due to the apparatuses. The City of Willits agreed for City Park placement, but PG&E said no. PG&E suggested the north end eastern corner but Chief Wilkes stated that will not work as we are risking hitting the bollards with the fire apparatuses as they will be too close to the engine bay. Sub surface was mentioned but Ray stated it will be double the cost and a monthly fee that PG&E cannot commit an amount to. Unfortunately the only area PG&E will agree on is the public area by Commercial Street. This will also take out 4ft of the training room. Chief Wilkes stated he was frustrated with PG&E on this project. Arnie Mello inquired about the sub surface extra cost. Skip Lucier stated it is an extra cost and the cost depends on the layout. Chief Wilkes stated we need to move the project forward and if the public area is the only area PG&E is able to agree upon then we are forced to do so. Skip Lucier stated it is not the perfect spot but it will keep the project moving forward. Nancy asked why we cannot move it underground. Chief Wilkes informed the board that PG&E does not want it underground. Arnie Mello asked if PG&E would delay the project due to sub surface. Chief Wilkes stated Ray did not say but it will have to go to special services. Skip Lucier added it will be quicker if we just give them what they want. Chief Wilkes also stated that he would hate to commit to a financial obligation of the sub surface not knowing what it may be. Arnie Mello informed the board he does not care for the location but we have to save money where we can and we have no choice. Chief Wilkes agreed as it would cause financial and time constraints. Motion to accept location in the public area: Skip Lucier 1st; Nancy Stipe 2nd.

BILLS: Motion to pay bills; Skip Lucier 1st; Arnie Mello 2nd.

TRAINING REPORT: Training Chief Eric Alvarez had to leave for a call. Chief Wilkes reported the last 4 drills have revolved around pumping. Recently Training Chief Alvarez held a fire extinguisher classes for Windsor Mill, first aid class at Willits High School and the Cub Scouts came for an educational tour.



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FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOC. REPORT: The firefighters BBQ and set up a table for Halloween. Michelle and Nancy also assisted. This event was successful and we look forward to it again next year.

CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief Wilkes reported that Mitch Franklin from Hopland recently became a strike team leader. Deputy Chief John Thomen will not be the only strike team leader in Mendocino County now which will be helpful. Cal Fire is implementing a pre-positioning program now for red flag warnings on a more consistent basis. They are trying to minimize fire protection. OES is now paying for local governments to standby. On one of the last days of the pre-positioning the Kincadee fire broke out. OES dispatched the strike team to the Kincadee fire. Deputy Chief John Thomen added if the weather does not change next year they will continue to request pre-positioning. Tony Madrigal stated it will be nice with the new station to be able to accommodate 24 hour occupancy so the response will be quicker. Chief Wilkes informed the board we have 706 calls this year so far. The ambulance crisis has affected our call volume. Chief Wilkes added he could not be more proud of our volunteers. During the PSPS we had multiple structure fires at the same time. There was a structure fire at 3AM on BlackHawk and then shortly after there was a structure fire at Wagon Wheel. The next day there was a structure fire on East Valley Road. Mendocino County Sheriff's Office was present to assist with the evacuations. Ridgewood Ranch, Brootrails Fire Department, aircraft and a dozer help fight the fire as well. Chief Wilkes stated it was a team effort with all entities to control the fire and spot fires. Chief Wilkes stated in his opinion 2 of the 3 fires were caused due to the PSPS. PSPS actually increases our call volume as fire danger does not decrease due to lack of power. The last drill night critiqued the structure fires. Critiquing the calls helps firefighters discuss any concerns or questions they may have. Arnie Mello asked if there are any public education classes on generators. Chief Wilkes stated PG&E holds the classes.



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Motion to adjourn to closed session at 7:28PM
Out of closed session at 7:58PM

Tony Madrigal, President

Michelle Schnitzius, Secretary/Treasurer

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Closed session notes:

Discussed succession plans for the new firehouse. Tony Madrigal would like Chief Wilkes to look into future additional duty officer compensation.