

# CLOQUET AREA FIRE DISTRICT (CAFD) BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 2009  
CAFD Station #1 Training Center, 3:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

DeCaigny called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Members present: DeCaigny, DeMenge, Harms, Nemmers, Herb Johnson (alternate to Ahlgren)

Members absent: Ahlgren

Staff: Langenbrunner, Buhs, Hutchison, Klatt, Meagher, Schroeder, Vermeersch

Other: Schleret (Mahtowa Fire Department), Fritsinger (City of Cloquet), Marshall (IAFF or International Association of Fire Fighters), Eames (recorder)

Fritsinger arrived later in the meeting at the point members were discussing Item 5D insurance.

2. Approval of February 11, 2009, Meeting Agenda

**MOTION (DeMenge/Nemmers): To approve the February 11, 2009, meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

3. Approval of January 28, 2009, Meeting Minutes

A. **MOTION (Nemmers/Harms): To accept the minutes with changes under Item 4 and as listed below. Motion carried.**

(1) 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph (last sentence) to read: "This does not include emergency medicals calls."

(2) 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph (last sentence) to read: "Schafter expects the next upgrade to resolve this issue."

B. Eames explained that converting minutes from WordPerfect to Word had caused some unintended characters and symbols. In the future, she will work only in Word and send Schroeder corrected minutes to post on the web.

4. Presentation/Visitors

Joe Schleret, Mahtowa Fire, brought his town's Mutual Aid Agreement to be signed.

5. Old Business

A. Update on Fire Mutual Agreement Notices and Meetings

Mutual Aid Agreements from Cromwell and Mahtowa were presented to the Board for signature. Langenbrunner noted that the Board must still:

- (1) Obtain agreements with the MN Department of Natural Resources Forestry and Fond Du Lac Forestry; and
- (2) Begin work on the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Mutual Aid Agreements.

B. Process of Creating Goals and Objectives Relating to Mission of Fire District

DeCaigny, Fritsinger, and Langenbrunner met last week to draft goals and objectives for 2009. This draft was emailed to Board members and distributed at this meeting. DeCaigny's goal is to meet at least once each quarter with Fritsinger, Langenbrunner, and any interested Board members.

DeCaigny said he would like to track sub-objectives by persons responsible and percentage completed. The group could use the tracking tool as the basis of quarterly check-ins and to determine if they are on track or need a course correction.

In addition, DeCaigny emphasized the importance of communications in the early formation of the Fire District. He suggested seeking press and TV news coverage and updating the Premier Theater ad. Langenbrunner also suggested the following opportunities to encourage growth:

- (1) Post stories on the website about how the district has become more efficient or saved money.
- (2) Improve training opportunities and as room is available, open these training opportunities to outside agencies and charge for that service.
- (3) Talk about the District with the general public.

DeCaigny said he would set up another meeting. Nemmers said he cannot attend now, but will be available for future meetings.

C. Update on Communications Plan Development including Website

- (1) Staff: The website has 5 gigabytes capacity. So far, the District has used 2%.
- (2) Schroeder: Agendas and minutes have been posted on the website.
- (3) DeCaigny: Keep Communications a permanent agenda item.

D. Update on Insurance Needs

DeCaigny briefly discussed Fritsinger's written update on insurance needs (February 11<sup>th</sup> memo to the Board). Board members generally agreed that Errors and Omission coverage is needed; DeCaigny requested that Fritsinger obtain this coverage.

Fritsinger arrived soon afterwards and confirmed that Blue Cross Blue Shield will continue to cover the District as either a sub-group of the City of Cloquet or a stand alone agency.

Nothing new to report from Steve Micke (Reliable Insurance). Steve has initiated contact with Kristen McCullough at the Minnesota Association of Townships Insurance Trust (MATIT) concerning the impact of joint powers agreements. More to come later.

E. Fire/EMS Legislation Discussion

The final draft for legislative change given to Representative Hilty and Senator Lourey was also sent to Virginia and International Falls. In fact, Langenbrunner reported that John Tourville, Virginia Administrative Assistant, will hand-carry the draft to Representative Rukavina and Senator Bakke. Bakke could have a significant role as Chair of the Tax Committee.

Fritsinger had no new feedback from Hilty or Lourey. Langenbrunner asked if having staff start a letter-writing campaign would be helpful. Fritsinger said it would depend on what legislators do with the draft legislation. A letter-writing campaign would have more of an impact at that point. The support of communities and agencies with a vested interest in this draft legislation is important.

Fritsinger repeated the main points. The current legislation has certain limitations that must be reconsidered. For example:

- (1) The current legislation does not allow the District to tax anywhere within the service area without the approval of jurisdictions in the service area.
- (2) The current legislation mandates the District to provide service to these areas, but does not allow it (as part of the mandate) to collect sufficient funds. Something has to give: Either eliminate the mandate to provide service or eliminate the mandate that says the District cannot tax.

Both DeCaigny and Fritsinger agreed that the District's request may involve some negotiation. If legislators oppose the District's taxing as requested, then the District may have to ask to adjust the service area boundaries or get out of providing service. A possible compromise is to have only one person on the District Board representing those townships that are unable to pay.

F. Personnel Policy Discussion

Board members agreed that the Personnel Policy document will be an important administrative tool. They discussed options for reviewing this document in-depth. Fritsinger suggested identifying critical areas for feedback and discussion as opposed to reviewing each page. He will prepare a list of critical topics for consideration at the next meeting.

Langenbrunner was concerned about getting this document to his management team to review. He must determine whether the sections for career staff and paid-on-call staff must be separate or blended. He has already begun deleting and revising some sections. Steve Olson is assisting with the paid-on-call portion.

Finally, DeCaigny suggested the following order of review: Staff, Legal (Yetka), then Board. Langenbrunner suggested that April or May is realistic for Board approval of the final draft.

G. Battalion/Division Chief Position Appointments

In his February 11, 2009, memo to the Board, Langenbrunner made five recommendations, and the Board acted as follows:

- (1) **MOTION (Nemmers/Harms): To appoint Steve Olson to the position of Division Chief Paid-On-Call. Motion carried.**
- (2) **MOTION (DeMenge/Nemmers): To appoint Ken Klatt to the position of Division Chief Training and Safety. Motion carried.**
- (3) **MOTION (Harms/H Johnson): To appoint Kevin Schroeder to the position of Battalion Chief. Motion carried.**
- (4) **MOTION (Nemmers/Harms): To appoint Steven Kolodge to the position of Battalion Chief. Motion carried.**
- (5) **MOTION (DeMenge/Harms): To appoint Gordy Meagher to the position of Battalion Chief. Motion carried.**

Nemmers commented that he was pleased to be part of the interview team, that he and DeMenge were mutually impressed with the quality of personnel under consideration. DeCaigny expressed confidence that the persons appointed will help move the organization forward.

H. Captain – Eligible List

In his February 11, 2009, memo to the Board, Langenbrunner recommended three appointments from the existing Captain eligible list (September 2007), and the Board acted as follows:

- (1) **MOTION (Nemmers/Harms): To appoint Chad Vermeersch to the position of Captain. Motion carried.**
- (2) **MOTION (H Johnson/Harms): To appoint Scott Castleman to the position of Captain. Motion carried.**
- (3) **MOTION (DeMenge/Nemmers): To appoint Jesse Buhs to the position of Captain. Motion carried.**

Finally, Langenbrunner said the following positions will soon be posted and filled: Fire Equipment Operator and Captain for Station 2 (Perch Lake).

6. New Business

A. 2010 Budget/Township Schedule

DeMenge stated that Perch Lake will, at its Annual Meeting, Tuesday, March 10, 2009, delay final approval of its 2010 budget and recess until August to allow clarification of budget items.

Fritsinger warned Board members that they are likely to continue to hear news of budget shortfalls from St. Paul, i.e., a \$7 billion, rather than \$4.8 billion-dollar budget. He will probably have nothing to report until June.

In addition, Fritsinger acknowledged some items may require Board action now rather than later. The question is: What happens if we act now or later? What are the cost implications? For this reason, he will have to do more homework on operational items before bringing them to the Board. At this point, he offered no specifics.

Fritsinger has met with the city's unions, including Fire. Some of the above questions will impact the union and future contract negotiations.

B. Approval of Payment of Bills

None at this time.

7. Other/Next Agenda

A. Future Agenda Items

None at this time.

B. Schedule Next Meeting

Thursday, February 26, 2009, 6:00 p.m. at Perch Lake Town Hall.

March meetings are listed in the previous minutes. Langenbrunner noted that he will not be able to attend the March 26, 2009, meeting.

C. List of Action Items

(1) DeCaigny quickly reviewed the status of each item on the list as open or closed. Then he asked that completed items be transferred to a separate Archive sheet.

(a) Perch Lake history: Steve reported that he plans to visit with retired folks to get more details.

(b) Future evening meetings: February 26 and March 26. Also, DeCaigny reminded everyone that in March, the Board will determine if they can go to monthly meetings after March.

(c) Bureau of Mediation Services: Consider filing a joint petition for representation. Marshall said he had forwarded, and Fritsinger acknowledged receiving "Intent to Negotiate." He warned that the positions filled today are not represented by a union, which creates a problem. Langenbrunner recalled that this question was resolved at a meeting this afternoon: The positions are not part of Local 88. Therefore, the persons appointed to fill them do not have a contract.

- (2) Items to be added to list
- (a) Two pending mutual aid agreements
  - (b) Goals and objectives

8. Adjournment

**MOTION (DeMenge/Nemmers): To adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.  
Motion carried.**