

CLOQUET AEA FIRE DISTRICT BOARD (CAFD) MEETING MINUTES

February 26, 2009
CAFD Station #2 Perch Lake, 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

DeCaigny called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: Nemmers

Staff: Langenbrunner, Q. Anderson, B. DeLovely, D. DeLovely, Klatt, S. Olson, Toboleski

Other: Fritsinger, Eames (recorder)

2. Approval of February 26, 2009, Meeting Agenda

MOTION (DeMenge/Harms): To approve the agenda with the following additions. Motion carried.

A. Station #1 Staffing - New Business E

B. Mutual Aid Agreements (First Responder) for areas previously covered by Perch Lake Fire – New Business F

(1) Cromwell

(2) Area near Carlton

3. Approval of February 11, 2009, Meeting Minutes

MOTION (Ahlgren/Harms): To accept the minutes as recorded. Motion carried.

4. Presentation/Visitors

Darren Guentzel and Justin LeBlanc from the Scanlon Fire Department introduced themselves.

5. Old Business

A. Update on Fire Mutual Aid Agreement (Department of Natural Resources Forestry)

Langenbrunner reported that the agreement is nearly complete and should be ready for signing at the next meeting.

B. Update on Communications Plan Including Website/Local Press/Public Relations

The Cloquet Area Fire District is likely to benefit from the press and public relations generated by the following events:

- (1) Meagher's attendance at a meeting with the Veterans of Foreign Wars to discuss the Fire District. In addition, he has been invited to meet with the Kiwanis next month.
- (2) Duluth News Reporter Janna Goerdts's attendance at a meeting with the Battalion and Division Chiefs at the Cloquet Administration Building. Langenbrunner expects to see a story soon.

DeCaigny will forward comments to Langenbrunner regarding website improvements.

C. Update on Insurance Needs

Fritsinger reported that Steve Micke, Reliable Insurance, advised him today that the District's policy is in place and includes coverage for Errors and Omissions, General Liability, and Workers Compensation for full-time and volunteer firefighters. Both Stations 1 (Cloquet) and 2 (Perch Lake) are covered under this one policy. Fritsinger further expected to receive written confirmation from Micke and will forward copies by email to both Eames and DeMenge at Station 2.

D. Fire/EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Legislation Update

Fritsinger said he spoke with the revisor drafting the bill in St. Paul. The revisor asked many questions, including, "Why don't you just amend EMS taxing district language?" Fritsinger said he had to explain what the District is trying to accomplish and how this is different from an EMS District.

They both agreed to call this a Fire and Ambulance Taxing District in order to avoid confusion with the current EMS District statute.

The revisor agreed to email Fritsinger the final draft of the bill before it is jacketed and presented.

6. New Business

A. Personnel Policy Discussion

Langenbrunner reported that the Battalion Chiefs and Division Chiefs of both Stations have reviewed the personnel policy document. In fact, they are on the eighth revision. They are awaiting input from Station 2. The goal is to have one policy that covers everyone in the District.

Langenbrunner said he would like to have the staff complete their review in March, and then have Attorney Yetka review the revisions. He hoped to have it back to the Board in April for final review and approval.

The strategy is to have staff fine-tune it for Board approval, rather than have the Board tackle it page by page.

B. Fond Du Lac Forestry – Wildland Firefighters

Langenbrunner said he sent a letter to Fond Du Lac Resource Management, asking about the signing of a new Mutual Aid Agreement. So far, he has heard nothing. Steve Olson reported that the letter wound up on his desk. Langenbrunner hoped to have this Agreement signed by April before wild fire season starts.

C. Review Letter from Christi Bond

Langenbrunner presented a letter from Christi Bond, who received an invoice for the Heavy Rescue Unit called out when her son rolled his car. Both the unit and an ambulance responded to a 911 call. Fortunately, her son was not injured. While grateful for the quick response, Bond described the hardship in paying the billed amount and asked to have it reduced to \$150.

Langenbrunner explained that while no clear policy exists for billing in these situations, the past practice has been to zero out the balance if no 911 call is made and no extrication is involved.

Both Fritsinger and Langenbrunner described an ongoing problem. Someone falls, is involved in an accident. This generates 911 calls from bystanders on cell phones. The ambulance and rescue unit respond and often are not needed. The person billed calls and complains about services he or she did not need.

Whether someone is billed often depends on who made the call. For example, the District might not bill for a call made by a babysitter, but will certainly bill for a call made by police or highway patrol on the scene or by someone from a house where everyone is drunk. Most instances merit case by case consideration.

Langenbrunner suggested that the District should work with Dispatch to clarify if someone has been injured before toning out the CAFD.

Board members discussed all aspects of this problem with staff. Eventually, they discussed the pros and cons of charging a minimum fee. Several persons mentioned a minimum fee for fuel and mobilizing emergency personnel as reasonable, especially in light of a governing entity's deficit budget.

Board members asked staff draft a policy to include the following:

- (1) Dispatch to obtain additional information about someone being injured before toning out the rescue unit.
- (2) District to charge a minimum fee for toning out the rescue unit..

MOTION (Ahlgren/Harms): To zero out the balance of Invoice #5469 to Christi Bond and not require payment of the invoice. Motion carried.

D. Approval of Payment of Bills

MOTION (Ahlgren/Harms): To approve payment of list of invoices dated 2/25/09 in the amount of \$14,668.64. Motion carried.

E. Station 1 Staffing

Langenbrunner advised that staffing must be changed because some firefighters have been called to active duty. He noted that the District needs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the union regarding these temporary assignments. He will have that MOU for the Board at the next meeting.

F. First Responder

For years, Perch Lake has responded to Sawyer Township, an area also covered by the Carlton Fire Ambulance. Perch Lake has never had a written agreement with Sawyer Township. Langenbrunner reported that Carlton, when contacted, was not interested in entering into a formal agreement. Dispatch has not yet been informed.

Perch Lake also had an agreement with Cromwell who provided the ambulance to Progress Township area south of Moorhead Road (includes the Ditchbank area). Occasionally, a deerhunter or logger needs assistance. Langenbrunner recommended having a mutual aid agreement with Cromwell for that area. He will come to the Board with an agreement soon.

7. Other/Next Agenda

A. Future agenda items

- (1) Memorandum of Understanding with union.
- (2) Appointment for Station Captain, Station 2: Langenbrunner stated that this position has been posted and closes Monday. He hopes to hold interviews on March 9 and have an appointment by the March 11th meeting.

B. Schedule next meeting

- (1) Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 3:00, at Station #1 Cloquet Fire Station Training Room.
- (2). Langenbrunner and DeCaigny suggested that the Board discuss changing to monthly meetings.

C. Action items

See items entered February 26 on Action Items List.

8. Adjourn

MOTION (Ahlgren/Harms): To adjourn at 6:45 p.m.