



## Nederland Fire Protection District Board of Directors Regular Meeting August 5th 2020 Minutes

Note: There was a failure of the board meeting recording. These minutes are from the Chair's memory and meeting notes and may be incomplete.

### **Roll Call**

Iain Irwin-Powell – Y  
Patrick Richardson – Y  
Todd Wieseler - Y  
Ray Willis - Y  
Henry Zurbrugg -Y  
Chief Dirr – Y

### **Announce Quorum & Call Meeting to Order @ 19:04**

### **Approve the meeting agenda**

Approved 5-0-0

### **Acceptance of previous meeting minutes**

- July 1st meeting

Approved 5-0-0 with one change to be made

### **Chair Statement**

The Board Chair thanked all of our staff, volunteers, mutual aid providers and multiple other county agencies that assisted on the Alpine Drive call that spanned 10 days. An unprecedented time for a call for a small volunteer department. Thank you to everyone for the long hours covering the investigation and managing our normal call load. The Chief sent out a thank you email to other agencies. Internal AAR to come, multi-agency AAR already happened.

The board chair noted that there was a special meeting scheduled and explained how that would be handled as both meetings were being carried out via Zoom.



## **Chief's Report**

- Calls to date and of note (Call stats sheet)  
Chief commented the Jim Harrison had produced a new spreadsheet for the board of call statistics which showed volunteer response and response time.  
67 calls in July, including 10 days on scene on Alpine Drive covering Boulder Bomb Squad and County HazMat teams.
- Alpine Drive – as much as we can discuss  
Not much to add as it still ongoing. There was a multi-agency AAR at which the chief was present and some other department members by Zoom.
- Any other pertinent business
- Active volunteer status  
Volunteer response at night is still problematic. Due to the high call volume the department had a number of overlapping calls in July that created staffing issues.
- Ambulance inspection completed  
Minor repairs to 5622 otherwise nothing of note
- 5601  
Keeter discovered a problem with the rear axle and are now waiting for parts to complete the repair. No ETA.

## **Old Business**

- HR Quotes and investigation – Patrick – Board Resolution Required  
Patrick presented a proposal and business case for using CPS as an HR resource for the department. CPS can provide both HR services and employment legal advice to help keep the department compliant. One board member had failed to receive the documents to read them prior to the meeting other board members had questions that needed to be answered. No vote on the resolution to retain CPS was had, a special meeting was set up for August 12<sup>th</sup> to close the matter.
- Vehicle Maintenance Update – Chief  
5601 still at Keeter, 5641 will be the next to go for repairs
- Shift officers daily task list progress – Chief – Progress report  
Shift officers have started to work with a daily task list. Lt. Vinnola has made some changes to prevent overlap with other staff members. Continues to be an evolving process and will be further discussed at the monthly officers meeting.
- Volunteer firefighter maintenance costs - Ryan has supplied those – IIP  
IIP still has not had chance to review.
- Vehicle maintenance contract updates (EVT) – Chief  
Talking to 2 parties still trying to establish costs.

## **New Business**

- 2021 budget request/discussion – Board

The board discussed how to apply business cases for the next budget. There were many questions about whether the process was overly complicated but it was noted that business cases only apply for items outside of general operating expenses (everything required to keep the lights on) and allowed the department to plan for the future and identify priorities for purchasing and not be reactive. The shift officers were asked to identify items that they believe the department needs and provide business cases for them.

- Job Descriptions

A discussion took place regarding job descriptions, specifically for the volunteers. There is much confusion about the expectations of each role specifically reserve members. Henry noted that making overly complex requirements may be a barrier to retention. The Fire Chief noted that requiring reserves to meet minimum standards may also do the same thing and be difficult to manage.

- Create an up to date member roster

Discussion about the 'white board roster', which it is felt does not provide enough information and is not updated regularly. Chief tasked with updating the roster for the next meeting and placing somewhere it can be easily located. The request also included updated information on certifications and expiration dates.

- New applicant process

Discussion about the new applicant process. Generally new requests are funneled through Jim Harrison and the Chief makes contact or if they are made in person a station tour and meet the on shift officer for an initial impression. Applicant is then background checked and sent for psychological evaluation before being accepted.

Comments were made that the process relies on the Chief and suggestions made that there should be a board of Chief, Board member, Shift Officer and 1 or 2 volunteers. The Chief stated that he was in support of the idea.

Further discussion regarding when to on-board new recruits. The general impression that twice yearly would be better than the ad-hoc method currently applied. It was also suggested that this be January and June and a recruitment drive and outreach program be used to raise interest in the department.

- Why we need policies

- Pharmaceutical Replacement Policy – Board Motion to adopt 5-0-0  
Policy to formalize when to replace pharmaceuticals in the ambulances and medical kits and a formal policy of how to deal with shortages or certain medications that happen occasionally. NFPD medical director provided written guidance to accompany the policy.
- Advanced provider in EMS policy – Board Motion to adopt 5-0-0  
To address concerns about how advanced medical providers fit into the EMS system. The Colorado Common Code does not directly address this issue other

than noting that the medical director may designate duties to licensed providers as they see fit. Policy provides clarification on this point and medical director provided confirmation of those in the system currently.

- Email confidentiality – Board Motion to adopt 5-0-0

Due to a dispute regarding email confidentiality and a breach of the same the board instituted an email confidentiality policy. It was noted that while the personnel manual included an right to privacy section this did not cover confidentiality of communication. The policy is an interim to updating the personnel manual.

- Dispute process clarification – Board Motion to adopt/discuss – Needs HR policy first

The board were unable to adopt this policy as it depends on the HR role being filled.

- Reserve members returning to service – Discussion – needs more clarity

A lot of discussion regarding what a reserve is, how to maintain their skills and the process for them returning to service. The historical concept appears to be anyone who was at the department or lives in district who would be of use in large emergencies.

It was noted that while it was easy to accept that reserves who were serving career firefighters are relatively easy to accept back into the system those who are previous volunteers and may have many years of not being part of the system may need a formal return policy and assessment of skills.

It was suggested that reserves meet a minimum station time of 24 hours a quarter to maintain status and familiarity.

Slated for further discussion with the shift officers to establish guidelines.

- Board members on calls – Board Motion to adopt – 5-0-0

The current policy manual prohibits board members serving on calls due to the incompatibility of offices doctrine. Discussion regarding that this is a reasonable requirement but there is the exception that board members may be recalled in an emergency. The policy was crafted in response to member requests of what position a board member holds on a scene and was prompted by Iain responding to 2 calls where he assessed there was a requirement for additional resources.

It was noted that currently as we have 2 board members who are certified firefighters on the board and we have a shortage of volunteers it would server the public interest to relax this policy.

A lot of discussion regarding the ethical complexities of this decision and that it would require a good faith execution by all parties for it to work.

Fire Chief generally voiced support and also concerns.

Iain noted that other departments had problems with doing this. Todd asked if they had a policies to cover it, Iain replied that it was unknown.

It was decided to try the policy for 3 months and assess at that time its effectiveness.

- Firefighter safety on calls

- SES or investigation committee – Board Motion to adopt - Requires proper complaint

Board chair advised the board that he had received some concerning complaints about safety on scenes of incidents and requested a 2 person board committee to investigate the claims. Henry requested if the complaints made were done through the chain of command and why the Chief would not be involved with the investigation. Iain noted that the complaints had been made to officers and included the Chief thus excluding him from the investigation. Patrick commented that you cannot investigate yourself. Henry requested the complaint be made formally before proceeding. Patrick questioned Henry on his position regarding safety in the department to which Henry replied that it was extremely important and complaints about safety should be dealt with quickly. Iain pointed out that the dispute procedure as it stands is incomplete and that informing the board makes the complaint effectively public under the Colorado Open Meetings law and breaches confidentiality. Henry stated that by the time a complaint reached the board everyone knew about it anyway. There were public comments regarding the process and retaliation that the board should consider. Iain will follow up with the complaints and provide them to the board in an anonymous way to allow the board to decide what to do about the committee.

### **Any other business**

No other business

### **Special Executive Session**

Personnel issues regarding the fire chief. Public discussion regarding that the Fire Chief had breached confidentiality in a complaint that he and the board chair were recipients of. Board voted 5-0-0 to enter special executive session to discuss based on the following motion;

*I move that we enter an executive session pursuant to Section 24-6-402(4)(f) for the purposes of a discussing personnel matters regarding Fire Chief Dirr.*

No vote or decision was made in the special executive session, however, alternatives were discussed.

### **Special Meeting Conclusions**

Based on the discussion on all of the surrounding events the board passed a motion 5-0-0 that the Chief should formally apologize to those involved with an explanation of the circumstances. The board had earlier implemented the email confidentiality policy in response to this event and believed that this was a satisfactory result to the incident.

**Additional public comments**

**No public comments**

**Next Meeting September 2nd 2020 @ 7pm**

**Adjourn the meeting @ 11:18**