
**BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

A Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order via teleconference by Chairman Caretto at 5:04 p.m., Tuesday, February 2, 2021, pursuant to Governor Newsome's Executive Order N-25-20 and N-29-20.

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Chairman David Caretto
 Vice Chairman John Green
 Director Alan Lee
 Director Bynette Mote
 Director Rick Herrick
 Director Karyn Oxandaboure
 Director Randall Putz
 Director John Russo
 Director Larry Walsh
 Director Al Ziegler

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief
 Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal Mike Maltby
 Board Secretary Dawn Marschinke
 Senior Finance Officer Kristin Mandolini
 Authority Counsel Joseph Sanchez

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Moment of Silence: Observed, honoring Big Bear Valley residents that have died from COVID-19.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Director Ziegler

ROLL CALL

OATH OF OFFICE

The Oath of Office was administered to Director Alan Lee, and Director Bynette Mote by Board Secretary Marschinke.

Director's Lee and Mote made comments to the Board and the public present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Fire Authority's Administrative Office will be closed on Monday, February 15, 2021 in observance of Presidents' Day and will reopen on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

PRESENTATIONS

Recognition of Sue McIlwain's Retirement – 30 Years of Service

Speaker: Chief Willis

DIRECTORS' GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chairman Green welcomed the new directors and looked forward to getting to know them. He also congratulated EMS Billing Coordinator Sue McIlwain on her retirement after 30 years of service to the City of Big Bear Lake and to Big Bear Fire Authority.

Director Ziegler welcomed the new directors and thanked them for serving. He offered his assistance should they need it.

EMAILED PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Willis provided an update on the Ambulance Operator model, stating that the program has been working well and is exceeding expectations to-date. Six months into the program the Department is at the 50% mark of anticipated total staffing for the program. The Battalion Chiefs are reporting the model has been successful. The bargaining unit reports they are pleased with the program. At the upcoming budget workshop, Chief Willis may discuss acceleration of the program to ensure the Department has nine firefighters on-duty daily.

He reported that during fire season (and various other times) CAL FIRE staffs Station 284 in Baldwin Lake. Upon CAL FIRE's departure, Big Bear Fire Department has been staffing this station with an ambulance since January 11, 2021. The Department expects CAL FIRE to be back to seasonal staffing of the station in late March or early April.

Chief Willis also made note to the Board that the Department is considering changing Board member stipend reporting from 1099 to W2 after staff has thoroughly reviewed IRS code.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Speaker: Kristin Mandolini, Senior Finance Officer

The year-to-date Financial Report through December 2020 was presented.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

FIRE AUTHORITY CONSENT CALENDAR

Action: Motion by Vice Chairman Green, seconded by Director Ziegler to approve the Consent Calendar including the minutes of December 11, 2020 as corrected, as follows:

FA1. Approval of Demands – Check Issue Date 11/01/20 through 12/31/20 in the amount of \$1,811,774.83

AYES: Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, and Caretto

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Lee

FA2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the December 01, 2020 Regular Meeting of Big Bear Fire Authority

AYES: Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, and Caretto

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Lee, Mote

FA3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the December 11, 2020 Special Meeting, as corrected, of Big Bear Fire Authority

AYES: Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, and Caretto

NOES: None

ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Lee, Mote

FA4. Receive and File Big Bear Fire Department Monthly Activity Reports for November and December 2020.

AYES: Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh,
and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Lee

FA5. Sale of Surplus Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

Board consideration of authorizing the Fire Chief to discharge SCBA surplus and use proceeds generated from the sale to be directed back into the Self-Contained Breathing program.

AYES: Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh,
and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Lee

FA6. Auction of Surplus Fire Apparatus and Miscellaneous Equipment

Board consideration of authorizing the Fire Chief discharge two vehicles and miscellaneous items as surplus equipment and authorize the Fire Chief to sell at auction to the highest bidder. Proceeds from the sale will be deposited to the Authority's General fund.

Item FA6 was removed from the Consent Calendar by Chairman Caretto.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

FA6. Auction of Surplus Fire Apparatus and Miscellaneous Equipment

Board consideration of authorizing the Fire Chief discharge two vehicles and miscellaneous items as surplus equipment and authorize the Fire Chief to sell at auction to the highest bidder. Proceeds from the sale will be deposited to the Authority's General fund.

Augmenting the staff report presented, Chief Willis presented a request to the Board from the Bomberos Program, to donate the 2007 ambulance (designated as surplus) to San Vicente, Ecuador rather than sell it at auction. Chief Willis stated that the ambulance's value at auction is approximately \$5,000 to \$7,000.

Discussion Ensued:

The Board considered the charitable donation of the Ambulance to Ecuador versus using the money from the sale of the ambulance with proceeds being used for local needs.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion by Director Ziegler, seconded by Vice Chairman Green to approve staff recommendation authorizing the sale of surplus equipment, with the exception of the 2007 ambulance to be donated to the Bomberos Program for use in Ecuador.

AYES: Ziegler, Green, and Oxandaboure
NOES: Walsh, Herrick, Lee, Mote, Putz, Russo, and Caretto
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Action: Motion by Director Herrick, seconded by Director Mote to approve staff recommendation to authorize the sale of surplus equipment.

AYES: Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Lee, Mote, Oxandaboure,
Putz, and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

PUBLIC HEARING

None

NEW BUSINESS

BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY DISCUSSION ITEMS

FA7. Ambulance Billing Contract

Board consideration of approving the Air Methods/dba Complete Billing Solutions agreement for ambulance billing and collection services.

Speakers: Chief Willis; Air Methods Area Manager Jason Johnston, Complete Billing Solutions Sr. Manager, Revenue Cycle Damon Broussard

Chief Willis explained that the Department's in-house ambulance billing employee is retiring in February. The Department publicly advertised for this position vacancy and also considered outsourcing the billing and collections functions. Preliminary research led to having conversations with Air Methods regarding contracting billing and collection services through them, as an alternative to performing the functions in-house. Chief Willis stated that outsourcing to Air Methods/dba Complete Billing Solutions (CBS) would be budget positive with an anticipated increase in collections revenue and approximately \$40,000 savings in expenses.

Jason Johnston reviewed the background of the existing successful relationship with Air Methods and Big Bear Fire Authority as the Authority's medical airship transport partner and their current role as the airship transport biller.

David Broussard provided information on who CBS is and what they can do for the Authority through a contractual arrangement as its ambulance biller and collections provider. The cost for the service is 4.75% of what is collected which equates to approximately \$85,000 annually.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

Discussion Ensued:

Concern was expressed that there was not a competitive bidding process to select the vendor. Without competitive bids, a 3-year contract term may be too long if the services are not as expected. Board members also had implementation questions. Staff explained that due to the urgency to fill the vacancy, they were approved by legal counsel to use a sole-source. Also, the Department has an existing business relationship with Air Methods, so it is familiar with them. This contract would have a budget positive effect of approximately \$40,000. The contract also has a 90-day exit clause. Legal Counsel Nick Norvell, with Best Best and Krieger, stated that he reviewed the agenda material. He said that the competitive market would not have resulted in anything substantially different, or more advantageous to the Authority; therefore, the agency has the discretion to do this as a sole-source as outlined in the staff report. Counsel also stated that the contract contains a termination for convenience clause that allows for an early exit with a 90-day notice, or sooner, if there is a material breach.

Action: Motion by Vice Chairman Green; seconded by Director Mote to approve Administrative Committee recommendation approving the Air Methods/dba Complete Billing Solutions agreement for ambulance billing and collection services.

Said motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Putz, Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Lee, Mote,
Oxandaboure, and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

FA8. 2019 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Budget Adjustment

Board consideration of approving a \$15,836.20 budget adjustment to meet the requirements of the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG), as well as a budget adjustment of \$316,721 for the grant revenue and expenses.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion by Director Putz; seconded by Director Russo to approve staff recommendation approving a \$15,836.20 budget adjustment to meet the requirements of the AFG, as well as a budget adjustment of \$316,721 for the grant revenue and expenses.

Said motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Lee,
Mote, and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

FA9. Appointment of a Standing Administrative Committee

Board consideration of the Board Chairman selecting four directors, to serve as the Administrative Committee for a period of one year, beginning February 3, 2021, to assist staff in the further development of further Department strategies, and for the Board approve the appointments by vote.

Speaker: Chairman Caretto

Chairman Caretto called for appointment of Administrative Committee members for 2021 as follows: 1) Chairman Caretto; 2) Vice Chairman Green; 3) Director Herrick; and 4) Director Ziegler.

AYES: Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, Herrick, Lee, and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

FA10. Appointment of a Fire Code Appeals Board

Board consideration of the Board Chairman selecting four members from the Fire Authority Board to serve, along with the Chairman, as the Appeals Board, for a period of one year, beginning February 3, 2021, pursuant to Section 108.1 of Ordinance No. BBFA2014-001, and for the Board approve the appointments by vote.

Speaker: Chairman Caretto

Chairman Caretto called for appointment of Fire Code Appeals Board for 2021 as follows: 1) Chairman Caretto; 2) Director Walsh; 3) Director Ziegler; 4) Director Lee; and 5) Director Mote.

AYES: Lee, Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, and Caretto
NOES: None
ABSENT: Herrick (dropped from call)
ABSTAIN: None

FA11. Annual Assignment of Board Representative to CJPIA

Board Chairman to appoint a delegate and their alternate(s), annually, authorizing them to act as official representatives of the Big Bear Fire Authority on the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority (CJPIA) Board for 2021.

Speaker: Chairman Caretto

Action: Chairman Caretto appointed Chairman Caretto as 2021 CJPIA Board Delegate and Directors Putz and Mote as alternates.

FA12. Lease Purchase Agreement and Resolution for Type 1 Structure Engine in Conjunction with Debt Issuance Policies and Procedures

Board consideration of approving the purchase of a Type 1 structure engine; to include the approval of Debt Issuance Policies and Procedures; Resolution BBFA2021-001; and reorganize the 3-year fleet replacement plan.

Speakers: Chief Willis, Captain Dykesten, and Engineer Whitmore

Chief Willis gave background on Department efforts to acquire a new Type 1 structure engine. Captain Dykesten expressed thanks to the Board and staff. He spoke of the Department's pride in ownership, and their great sense of responsibility of using public funds. Engineer Whitmore presented the outcome of the selection and bid process the Specification Committee went through to arrive at their recommendation to purchase a Pierce "Arrow XT Midship Pumper" from South Coast Fire Equipment. Pierce is known in the industry for building high quality engines. Pierce is able to deliver on price, quality, service, and support. The Committee's specifications for the engine will fit within the \$875,000 budget.

Chief Willis also explained that he would like to review the three-year vehicle replacement plan with the Administrative Committee based on the now-known delivery dates that were gleaned from the Specification Committee's work.

Staff responded to questions from board members. Board members provided comment.

Action: Motion Director Walsh; seconded by Director Russo, to 1) approve Resolution No. BBFA2021-00; 2) approve Big Bear Fire Authority Debt Issuance Policies & Procedures; 3) Authorize the Chief in consultation with legal Counsel to execute the Master Lease Purchase Agreement between the Authority and PNC Equipment Finance, LLC upon approval of the Authority's credit; 4) request legal counsel to issue an "Opinion of Counsel" stating the Authority is a political subdivision of the State of California as defined by statute and as required by PNC Equipment Finance, LLC.; 5) authorize the Fire Chief, Authority Counsel, Board Chairman and Pierce Manufacturing representatives to develop and execute a purchase contract that is not to exceed the agreed upon purchase price. Purchase contract will establish deliverables and performance timelines to protect the Authority's interests; and 6) authorize staff to present and work with the Administrative Committee to reorganize the 3-year fleet replacement plan to better align with known future delivery dates.

RESOLUTION NO. BBFA2021-001

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY, A CALIFORNIA JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY, ADOPTING A DEBT POLICY PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 5852.1, AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A MASTER LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH PNC EQUIPMENT FINANCE, LLC, AND TAKING CERTAIN OTHER ACTIONS RELATED THERETO

Said motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES:	Herrick, Lee, Mote, Oxandaboure, Putz, Russo, Walsh, Ziegler, Green, and Caretto
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A Fire Authority Administrative Committee Meeting was held on January 26, 2021, represented by Chairman Caretto, Vice Chairman Green, Director Herrick, and Director Ziegler.

Vice Chairman Green thanked staff and everyone for working so hard together on the engine purchase. It shows cooperation between management and staff can get things done, and he is a strong proponent of that.

DIRECTORS' CLOSING COMMENTS

Director Ziegler thanked the firefighters for the time and work that put into the engine specifications.

EMAILED PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR CLOSED SESSION

None

CLOSED SESSION

1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9:
No. of cases: 1

At the hour of 7:05, p.m., Chairman Caretto adjourned to Closed Session.

At the hour of 7:46, p.m., Chairman Caretto adjourned Closed Session.

At the hour of 7:48, p.m., Chairman Caretto re-opened regular Session.

REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

The Department's legal counsel Nick Norvell of Best Best & Krieger reported on Closed Session. The Board met in closed session on Closed Session Item 1, there is no reportable action taken by the Board in Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Fire Authority at this session, Chairman Caretto adjourned the meeting at 7:49 p.m.


Dawn E. Marschinke, Board Secretary

APPROVED AT THE MEETING OF APRIL 6, 2021