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**BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY  
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF  
APRIL 23, 2019**

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A Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority was called to order by Chairman Jahn at 6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, April 23, 2019, at 39707 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, California.

**OPEN SESSION**

Moment of Silence: Observed

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Director Ziegler

Board Members Present: Chairman Bill Jahn  
Vice Chairman John Green  
Director David Caretto  
Director Rick Herrick  
Director Karyn Oxandaboure  
Director John Russo  
Director Randall Putz  
Director Larry Walsh  
Director Al Ziegler

Board Members Absent: Director Bob Jackowski

Others Present: Jeff Willis, Fire Chief  
Kristin Mandolini, Senior Finance Officer  
Dawn Marschinke, Board Secretary

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS**

The Fire Authority's Administrative Office will be closed Monday, May 27, 2019 in observance of Memorial Day and will re-open on Tuesday, May 28, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. Recognition of Professional Excellence, Deputy Destiny Derryberry and Paid Call Captain Nick Bruinsma  
Speaker: Chief Willis
2. Oath of Office/Pinning
  - Nolan Newkirk, Firefighter/Paramedic Promotional Pinning
  - Gerald Otteson, Flight Paramedic

The Financial report for year-to-date ending March 31, 2019 was presented.

Staff responded to questions from board members.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Action:** Motion by Director Putz, seconded by Director Caretto to approve the Consent Calendar as follows:

- FA1. Approval of Demands – Check Issue Date 01/01/19 through 03/31/19 in the amount of \$2,086,594.45**
- FA2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the February 5, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Big Bear Fire Authority**
- FA3. Receive and File Big Bear Fire Department Monthly Activity Reports for January, February and March 2019**

**Action:** The Consent Calendar was approved by the following vote:

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

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

*Any person may appear and be heard in support or opposition to the proposals at the time of the meeting. If you challenge the action in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues which you or someone else raised at the public meeting described in the notice or in written correspondence delivered to the Fire Authority at or before the public meeting.*

None

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

- FA4. Approval to Proceed with Public Noticing of Public Hearing to Adopt Fire Authority Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget**

Board consideration of authorizing staff to proceed with public noticing of Intent to Adopt the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget at the next Regular meeting on June 4, 2019 based on the draft budget presented to the board on April 17, 2019.

**Speaker:** Chief Willis

The preliminary draft budget proposed for FY2019-20 was presented to the board.

At the hour of 6:49 p.m., Chairman Jahn opened the floor up for public comment.

Bob Ybarra, Sugarloaf: Addressed the board regarding the recent formation of a citizens group called Save Our Station (SOS) on Facebook. They will be posting factual information and garnering support for a March 2020 election. He asked why there was were so many years of deficit spending on the Sugarloaf Station. He also stated that the cost of labor should not be attributed to a particular station.

Tiana Burkhammer, Sugarloaf: Addressed the board regarding her concern for the proposed closing of the Sugarloaf Station. She asked how it was determined which station to close. She asked the board when a tax measure will be ready to go to a vote and wants to know what the measure will be so people can start advocating to the community. She wants to be taught to be an advocate for the tax measure. She asked the board to move faster to decide on the tax measure.

Chief Willis responded that timing is of the essence. It is expected that there will be a recommendation to the board in a couple of months with a decision made in August.

Tiana Burkhammer responded to Chief Willis that the stated timing will get too close to winter and it will be hard to walk the streets in winter. She requested the board think faster.

**Action:** Motion by Director Caretto, seconded by Director Green to approve staff recommendation to proceed with public noticing of Intent to Adopt the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget at June 4, 2019 Board meeting, and was approved by the following vote:

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



## COMMITTEE REPORTS

February 13 and 27, 2019 and April 15, 2019 Ad Hoc Committee meetings

**Speaker:** Chief Willis

One of the major things the Committee is trying to understand is the information gleaned from the recent community poll that was conducted regarding where the community stands in terms of their level of support for the fire department's need and cost of service. The community highly values the service provided and they want a quick response time. The challenge is how will it be financed. The poll provided a range of options between a \$60 and \$150 tax for a residential structure. The Committee is wrestling with the polling data that says we are not where we should be to pass a tax at the Optimal \$150 level. There is still some work to be done to reach the \$60 level, but it appears there might be the support needed to be successful at that level. The department tends to hear from super supporters and the people that are anti-tax. It is important that we hear from those in the middle whom we have not heard from yet. That is the work that the department has ahead of them and is where we will find success. The next few Committee meetings will focus on revenue that will be acceptable to the community to achieve desired goals.

Director Caretto added that we would all like to see the Optimal level and if we are asking \$150 for residential properties, we are also making a substantial ask of commercial properties, the mountain resorts, private home rentals and lodges. We have received considerable resistance from those parts of the community thus far. At the last meeting, the Committee was a bit discouraged because the polling indicated that not even residents are at the \$150 level, nor are they even at the \$60 level. The Committee has asked the Chief to prepare a couple of different scenarios that can be presented to the full board. These scenarios will provide a breakdown at the Optimal level and at a reduced level. It will be up to the board to decide how to move forward. The Committee has discussed doing another poll later this year. The results may change once the community understands the ask of the businesses and visitors etc. as part of the total package. Its going to take a lot of work from the community if they want to maintain our local fire department and get it to the service level that it needs to be.

Director Putz commented that he understands how it looks like this is moving at a snail's pace, but it is complex and detailed. The Ad Hoc Committee has met many times, digging into the minutia of how to solve the complex issues. Going through the process, the Committee has taken the community's desires into account. To date, the department has undertaken two community polls and the staff has done a lot of work filtering through the countless details and formulas. This is our money and we want to make sure that we are responsible with the effort and the money, and that ultimately, in an informed way, we achieve some level of success. There is still a lot of work to be done to reach the needed revenue goals. Hopefully, the community will be there to help in the effort and

that they understand that this is not an insignificant effort. While things are still fluid, the Committee anticipates this would be on the ballot in March of 2020.

Director Green responded to Committee comments and applauded the volunteers in the audience. His feeling is that the board should only go for the Optimal plan. He stated that the department can not do this again in another year or two. \$150 for the Optimal plan equates to only \$12.50 per month. We need to make people understand that the cost of not doing this far outweighs the cost of doing it. The cost could mean the possible loss of insurance, the possible increase in insurance rates, and increased response times. In addition, during the April 17 Board meeting, someone said the poll questions missed the mark. Director Green would like to see the poll questions next time. He stated he never saw the questions previously. His feeling is that the tax measure should be able to be passed at the \$150 level. In the last election, all the ballot measures passed, not just in Big Bear, but down the hill too. There is a public awareness and a need to approve things that improve our quality of life and level of safety. It is just a matter of education. He requested input on the poll questions next time. He believes the board should only and fully support the Optimal plan in order to move forward and speed up the process.

#### **DIRECTORS' CLOSING COMMENTS**

Director Walsh stated that at the April 17 Board meeting Chief Willis presented scatter maps of station response locations for last year. It was the first time he saw that type of information. The maps for Station 282 and 283 drew his attention. It now gives him some numbers to contemplate. Sugarloaf had 1,030 calls last year. Big Bear City responded to 2,244, more than double Sugarloaf responses. The density of responses within the Sugarloaf neighborhoods by Big Bear City Station 282, blew away anything that Sugarloaf itself was doing. Looking at all three maps, you can see that anyone, anywhere in the valley could be the subject of an extended response time. He stated that he believes this is why Chief Willis wants to add more manpower. This brought up a question and asked for clarification in the difference and what he saw as discrepancies between Budgets A and B and the revised Budget C.

Staff responded to Director Walsh's comment.

Director Ziegler commented that he hears about Sugarloaf all the time. The residents of Lake Williams, Erwin Lake and Baldwin Lake need to be educated on the issues too or there will be one heck of a problem.

Director Caretto reported to the board that he attended the FDAC Annual Conference with Chief Willis in early April and attended several sessions. Some of the key points he took away from the Conference include:

- Mental health in the fire service is an issue, having five times the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than the general population. There were 115



firefighter suicides reported. 20% of firefighters polled, reported having thought about suicide at some point. A Center of Excellence has been created to protect firefighters and offer support services. Director Caretto went on to say that he hopes Chief Willis is making use of that if the department has a need for it.

- In a disaster, the District Director may be evacuated, yet their role may require them to be admitted back into the area. Directors from recent large fires spoke about their need to get back into the area to create a Disaster Declaration and conduct emergency Board meetings. They had great difficulty getting back into the evacuated area. He pointed out the need for and official identification for Big Bear Fire Authority directors for this purpose.
- It was good to hear discussion on funding to fight fires included everything the Ad Hoc Committee had discussed. It made him feel good that all the options available had been explored by the Committee. He is confident that the department will get there because several speakers said you can get a tax measure passed, it's just a very difficult task. With a Community Facilities District being contemplated, it will require 66 2/3 affirmative vote of registered voters that vote.

It was an interesting conference and he was glad to be able to attend the meeting.

Chairman Jahn stated that the board all needs to be on the same page about how to get the vote in March.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Fire Authority at this session, Chairman Jahn adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.



Dawn E. Marschinke  
Dawn E. Marschinke, Board Secretary

APPROVED AT THE MEETING OF JUNE 4, 2019