

**Elsie-Vinemaple Rural Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting August 16, 2022**

**Minutes**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Board members present:** Wayne Carmichael (Chair), TJ Hecox, Vivian McCann, Ed VanDyke, Sharon VanDyke

**Fire Department members present:** Hans Mulder
**Community Members present:** Sue Robinson

**Wayne opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m.**

**Reading and approval of July minutes:** Wayne read the minutes of the July 19 meeting. TJ moved to accept the minutes; Ed seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**Budget report/vote:** Hans read the August budget report. Following some brief discussion, Vivian moved to accept the report. Sharon seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

**Review and Pay Bills/Vote.** Wayne and Vivian reviewed the bills and signed checks. Ed moved to pay the bills; TJ seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**Old Business**

1. **2022-2023 Budget.**
	1. As a follow-up to the concerns raised previously about the current year’s budget, TJ noted that amendments to a budget are commonplace. Vivian suggested we keep that option in mind going forward when we encounter issues like we did this year with grant funding not yet awarded or received, or other income or expenses that may be anticipated but uncertain. One question raised was whether the process of a budget supplement takes 3 months like the full budget process takes. Wayne noted that we already will be doing a supplemental budget this year to account for the 35K grant we received from the State Fire Marshal for summer wildfire season personnel.
	2. To increase clarity and transparency for our district constituents, we will aim to do the following as we move ahead:
		1. Utilize standard governmental procedures in place to amend or create supplemental budgets as needed when some income or expenses are uncertain at the time of budgeting.
		2. Include more detailed information in our minutes regarding budget items, so the minutes supplement the budget and help clarify our numbers.
		3. Work to get our website up and running so we can post minutes, budgets, and other explanatory material. Vivian volunteered to take on the website, with the goal of getting it operational in advance of next Spring’s budget process.
2. **Station 2 Updates.**
	1. Water service: We have a bid from Hillsboro Pump Service for the water at Station 2. We need two additional bids, and will aim to get them from Precision Pump and Clearwater in Forest Grove. Wayne will contact them.
	2. Water rights: We have water rights, but we will need to go through the process with the County and the neighbor to get an easement. TJ suggested we start working on getting the easement now, since it could take a little time, and that way it won’t slow us down once we choose a contractor and are ready to go. Wayne and Mike will work on that.
	3. Septic: We are waiting to finalize where the water system will be before moving ahead on the septic system.
3. **Zoom updates/ Use of Starlink/Verizon**. TJ suggested we contact Monica Steele, the Assistant County Manager, to inquire about special district funding to help us upgrade our internet system. Vivian will contact her.
4. **Stipends for Primary Department Volunteers.** The Board agreed to table this until all Board members and Chief Mike are present.
5. **Incident reports to support possible billing for services provided to non-residents of our fire district.** As previously noted, this is a potential revenue source for our department, but we have not had the personnel to pursue it in recent years. As we continued this discussion, one issue that came to light is the necessity of timely completion of paperwork involved for the billing (e.g., run sheet, medical report done by EMT if applicable). There is also some question about what types of calls are covered (MVAs? Fires? Medical calls? etc.). Sue has volunteered to help with the billing process if/when we get our process clarified and routinely executed.
6. **Cradlepoint Subscription.** Hans donated his Cradlepoint unit (which is a mobile hotspot) to Station 2. In order to utilize it, we need to pay for monthly service, which is $40 to Verizon. We currently pay this for Station 1. Ed moved that we add the subscription for Station 2; Sharon seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
7. **Follow-up on State Fire Marshal grant for a 1-ton vehicle.** Wayne reported that Mike said he may still proceed with the grant application, but we would be low on the priority list due to the grant specifications.
8. **Supplemental budget report for State Fire Marshal grant.**
	1. We recently learned that our Department was awarded $35,000 as part of a grant to help rural departments respond more quickly to wildfires. The funds are for personnel only and our firefighters, EMTs, and junior firefighters are all eligible for hourly pay during the hours they work at Station 1 during the grant period (which runs through October 1).
	2. Since our 2022-23 budget did not reflect this grant, we will prepare a supplemental budget after the grant monies are fully utilized or when the grant period ends (if we don’t utilize all the funds).
	3. Ed noted the possibility of questions being raised regarding conflict of interest in disbursement of the funds, due to the manager of the funds (Mike) paying three people in his family. Despite everyone’s awareness that the three family members in question are bona-fide members of the department, the group agreed that, on paper, the issue could be questioned, and that we should consider that if the program repeats again next year.

**New Business**

1. **Awards Ceremony.** Prior to the Pandemic, the Department had an annual party/awards ceremony during the Winter holiday period. Department volunteers would vote for the outstanding volunteers in each category (e.g. firefighter, emt, etc.), and awards were given on that basis. Wayne suggested it may be time to reinstate the annual gathering, and the group agreed. Vicki, a former volunteer who passed away 2 years ago, was instrumental in organizing all the prizes, gifts, and the event itself, so the first step is probably finding someone who can step into that role.
2. **Website**. We paid the $289 annual fee for our domain name, which is ElsieFire.Org. Now we can move ahead on creating the site.
3. **Station 1 Roof**. It was recently noted that the roof of Station 1 is rotting. Mike is in the process of gathering bids.

**Good of the Order**

1. Hans asked if our minutes should be reflecting attendance of guests and/or community members. The group agreed that was a good idea.

**Adjourn**

TJ moved to adjourn; Ed seconded. The motion passed 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.