

2015 Minutes

- **2015 Annual Crook County Fire Fighters Business Meeting Minutes February 25, 2015 in the Crook County Community Room**

The business portion of the meeting was called to order by Advisory Board President Tom McDonald at 7:15pm.

- **Reading of the 2014 Minutes**

- Jeanne Whalen corrected the minutes from 2014 to read from 22,00 trees that have been treated to 22,000, a typo in the minutes. Motion to accept by Doug Leis. No second. Passed unanimously.

- **USFS Report**

- No USFS representative was in attendance due to other commitments. However; the burn boss has given the training schedule to Gari. Crook County is very welcome to attend any of the training classes. They will be posted to the website, and given to the departments.
- The USFS is losing Scott Wheeler to Custer, and Shane Phillips to Sioux Falls, Adam Ziegler may become Captain.

- **Wyoming State Forestry Report**

- Bill Kohlbrand gave a report. The amount of pine beetle kill has increased by 1.3%. Crook County has been approved for \$585,000.00 bug money.
- We lost Crew Boss Ted Drake during a pack test last year. There are three new bosses and they are trying to rebuild the Smoke Jumpers.
- The Fire Wranglers in Riverton are gone, there are no crews. The Heletak is up, but Seat pilots are refusing to land at the Newcastle airstrip because of its poor condition.
- Pine beetle kill trees are down, pay attention and bring chainsaws for safety.
- It may be hard to get Seat planes to Wyoming as they are protecting sage grouse in the Great Basin to protect the sage grouse habitat.

- **Financial Report**

- Gari Gill spoke about the red numbers. One of them was because we sent a person to Oregon last summer, which cost us \$14,000.00 from that line. We are reimbursed for that. The SLIB Fire Cache line was also overdrawn due to extra engineering fees. It is finished now, and all are welcome to stop by and check it out. We also did a lot of repairs including tires and brakes to equipment.

- **Old Business**

- Gari Gill clarified the ICS classes. If you had a red card before 2008, the class is not mandatory, but it is recommended as a refresher.

- Pagers were purchased, there are 15 left. We are looking at going to notification by cell phone, it comes with the new alert system.
- There are still a lot of snags and widow makers from the October 2013 snowstorm, and watch for pine beetle kill trees.
- **Fire Warden Report**
 - Last fire season created 42 fires with 142 acres burned.
 - The trucks are in good shape, we have our name in for 2 Type 6 trucks and a tender from Campbell County to upgrade our vehicles.
 - SF-46 has removed the language “starts fires in woodlands/prairies that get away”, the defense uses the fire originated in the grounds and got away onto another’s property, then the perpetrator walks. This all came about by a fire started in a garden and burned 450 acres of other people’s property.
 - HB-224 is trying to raise the fine for burning during restriction, but it was thrown out, but if SF-46 passes it will be useful to press charges.
 - The status of the fireman’s retirement is about \$1.2 million including the EMS with the volunteer fire departments. It passed committee and is on the floor now. It will offer cost of living increases. Gari spoke at the House meeting along with a couple other fire wardens.
 - Other legislation – a single family dwelling that is being rented, especially as part of the Sturgis rally has 4 amendments, it hasn’t made the 3rd reading yet. The fire warden will have to inspect these houses for free to determine if they are habitable.
 - The Sheriff’s Office has WYOLINK up and working. The crossover is working as dispatch can hear on analog and digital both. The pages will still be weird as we lost the support on the tower, and it isn’t fixed yet. It will be a different and scratchy tone on WYOLINK, but you will be able to understand the words. We have put the radio numbers in for programming and conversion.
 - We went to Code Red for the alert system, I-PAWS is a 3 year contract at no cost to the county. Other systems can run up to \$5500.00 per year. There are around 3600 phone numbers in the system that can receive notification via text, page, etc. It will hopefully be functional by May 1. The assessor will be sending notices in the tax assessments for owners to provide a working phone number for the alert system.
- **New Business**
 - Powder River Training is expanding training flights from Ellsworth are flying over Crook County. Gari and Emergency Management have been attending meetings in Rapid at Ellsworth about the flights. Many letters have been sent regarding

the flights. If a plane crashes and a pilot ejects, we are not to go within 300', and we must have a full suit and SCBA to approach the crash site if closer than 300'.

- There are 3 Lessons Learned videos for the Safety Training. We have to sit through it and crawl through fire shelters. There will be trainings in Carlile in March, Hulett in April, and Aladdin in May. We can go anywhere at any time to hold a training.

- **Advisory Board Report**

- Tom McDonald thanked everyone for coming tonight and to the other meetings held throughout the year, and introduced the board members.
- The major goal is to recruit more volunteers, which is hard to do. Keep talking to people!
- We now have signs for accidents ahead for our safety.
- There will be signs installed by WYDOT around the curves in the Carlile area, they should be surveying in April, and installation in the summer. Hopefully this will decrease the amount of crashes.
- There are vehicles placed at Dave Ellsbury's, in Beulah and at Gary Luther's. We would like to replace with newer units. We're still looking at a \$19,000.00 vehicle bid at the BLM, but 1998-2000 model years are bidding for \$30-60,000.00.
- We will be getting a new Type 4 from Douglas when they get their new vehicle.
- If you attend a vehicle fire, be very careful as the gas compress shocks on the hood and trunks can become projectile missiles. BE CAREFUL and be aware!!

- **Election of New Advisory Board Members**

- Tom stated there are 2 positions on the board up for election, George Whalen and Dallas Rolf. Doug Leis motioned to re-elect them to the board. John Moline Jr. seconded, passed by unanimous vote.

- **Fire Warden continued report**

- Had a fire call at 10 pm on February 5 about a fire north of Hulett. Turned out it was a 3.2 mile long fire front that started when someone who was burning slash piles on snow let the fire get away. It burned to white ash. We had to call in 1 squad of smoke busters. It burnt almost 200 acres in a canyon, had it been on flat ground it would have been around 690 acres. The temperatures were around 52-60, with 12-15% humidity and 50+mph winds.
- This produced a call to the Predictive Services in Colorado. There is a strong El Nino brewing. It will dump on the East Coast, we will increase in temperature and decrease in moisture. The Pacific temperature has increased .8 degrees to cause this. Our moisture could be gone as soon as April, we will know more in 6 weeks or so.

- **Thank you**

- Gari thanked everyone and the board for all their hard work and dedication. He appreciates everyone! He also thanked and appreciates the relationship we have with the USFS, WSF, and County Commissioners.
- Wayne Garman made a motion to adjourn at 8:03. Glenn seconded.
- Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Wilmer
Fire Warden Secretary