



# BEAVER LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Minutes



Date: **Tuesday, March 14, 2023**

Time: **6:00 p.m.**

Place: **Prairie Creek Association Community Room**

Location: **14432 Hwy. 12 East, Rogers, Arkansas 72756**

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86881216917?pwd=c3VHdmRtalRieEI2aDdHaHBtdzJpdz09>

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. Roll Call. All Board Members are present (Smith, Easley, Weber, Gagliardi, Hathcock, Mejia, Tucker, Cauldwell, Hudlow, Kelley).
3. Changes to Agenda. Larry Smith, Chairman, opened the meeting with a summary of how he is going to try to have a period for public comment on issues that require a vote of the board members after open discussion by the board members. The public will be encouraged to comment prior to the vote of the board.
4. Announcements
  - 4.1. 10.1. Public Comment – A period for public comment will be allowed during any period at the discretion of the Chairman of the Board. At least one public comment period should be planned during the meeting.
  - 4.2. Quorum Court Approval for Dues Increase item inclusion on ballot during Special Election. Announcement was made concerning the Benton County Quorum Court's approval to include the proposed ordinance to increase the BLFD membership dues from \$150 to \$200. Discussion
5. Disposition of Previous Meeting Minutes
  - 5.1. Board of Directors February 20, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Larry Smith, Chairman, led a review of the minutes for last month's normally scheduled meeting. No recommendations for changes to the draft were presented. The board unanimously approved the final minutes for last month's meeting.
6. Reports of Officers
  - 6.1. President's Report
    - 6.1.1. New Fire Chief is on Board – Meet Dusty Qualls. Todd Weber, President, introduced the new Fire Chief for BLFD. He summarized qualifications and a short list of accomplishments made since Chief Qualls began working. Curtis Hathcock read Resolution 2023-P-0001 addressing the official board approval for the hire of Dusty Qualls as the Fire Chief for BLFD. **Weber made motion to approved Resolution 2023-P-0001, seconded by Kelley. Vote carried unanimous approval of the Board.**
  - 6.2. Treasure's Report

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- 6.2.1. **Monthly Finance Update.** Gisela Mejia, Treasurer, and Laura Tucker, Vice Treasurer, gave a detailed report of the new format and figures for Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet, and Budget Overview. Emphasis was made on how BLFD would be implementing a cash basis type operation and reporting from this point forward.

Jeff Easley, Vice Chair, asked about signature authority on bank accounts. Mejia, Treasurer, confirmed that no changes were being requested for Resolution 2023-F-0001, Authority to Conduct General Banking. Chief Qualls would be issued a credit card with a \$500 limit to use incidental transactions within his purview.

- 6.2.2. **Social Security.** Laura Tucker, Vice Treasurer, provided clarification of why BLFD would be checking on validity of withholding Social Security Taxes from paychecks to firefighters. Further research is being completed to ascertain “best practices” for this issue.

**Motion made by Gagliardi to accept report. Seconded by Easley. Approved unanimously by the Board.**

### 6.3. Secretary’s Report

- 6.3.1. **Updates on changing Business-related accounts access and signature authority is on-going.** This item was completed. First Security Bank was satisfied that Resolution 2023-F-0001 along with accompanying letters, applications, and other supporting documents fulfilled the banks requirements to complete the update of all signature authorities.

- 6.3.2. **Status on Re-application for 501 (c) (3) certification – Reviewed documents in safety deposit box.** No copies of original application found – next step will be contacting the State. Curtis Hathcock, Secretary, reported finding an original decision letter from the IRS concerning the establishment of BLFD as a 501 (c) (4) organization. Attempts will be made per letter instructions on ramifications of proceeding with re-application for designation as a 501 (c) (3) organization.

- 6.4. **Fire Chief Operations Report.** Chief Qualls provided his first report to the board. A very detailed presentation was made discussing staffing through end of May. Parttime shifts were changed from 0700 (7:00 am) to 1900 (7:00 pm) for improving operations. New shift times are 0800 (8:00 am) to 2000 (8:00 pm).

Chief Qualls updated progress on personnel availability for shift coverage. Currently have approximately 20 persons with another 10 likely to begin participating in the near future. Also, provided update on “Live-in” program changes to include new participant (Braxton Cole) at the Grimes Fire House and potentially adding another participant to be housed at the Cypress Fire House.

Updated equipment status and maintenance. Older equipment not providing value for operations will be considered for sale to recoup residual monetary value. A major savings in operational expenditures has been realized due to changing software for reporting.

Jeff Easley asked Chief Qualls if he could develop a method or system that could be visible by the Board and possibly general members showing service/staffing coverage of the various shifts. He was interested in a report that would show the types of calls that were received and the response

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provided, when applicable. Chief Qualls said we would be willing to work with Jeff and others to develop something that might prove acceptable.

Some discussion was opened concerning a committee that might help Chief Qualls in identifying volunteers that may be able to assist with maintaining vehicles and facilities.

Ex Facto board member, Firefighter Austin Harris discussed rise in morale of firefighter personnel.

### **7. Reports of Committees**

#### **7.1. Finance Committee Report**

7.1.1. Social Security – requesting clarification/change to collection of FICA employment tax

7.1.2. Benefits and Pay Cycle – changes may be coming April 1, 2023

#### **7.2. Advisory Committee Report – No Update**

#### **7.3. Nomination Committee Report –**

7.3.1. Seeking to Fill Vacant Board of Directors position. Larry Smith discussed the need to fill the open Director position that is vacant. He made a general announcement for solicitations. The board wants to fill the position with person having skills in special areas. He has applications that can be filled and presented for the Board's consideration. Aaron Web asked what qualifications were being sought for the position. Some examples included grant writing, fund raising, computer web experience, etc.

### **8. Old Business**

8.1. Communications Improvement Process. Improvements are continuing to be made in information flow to the general membership using the BLFD main website, Facebook, and Nextdoor social media interfaces.

8.2. Updating main BLFD website – in progress

8.3. Membership Database – in progress

The items in 8.1 to 8.3 will drop out of old business reporting unless significant changes or events resulting in a major impact occur.

Larry Smith, informed the board that Randy Aldridge has volunteered to assist with doing long overdue building repairs at the Cypress Fire House.

### **9. New Business**

9.1. Special Election (May 9, 2023). Discussion was opened to determine a method to improve membership voting during the election. Opening statements, as promised in previous meetings, by were made Jeff Easley and Curtis Hathcock. While neither supports the increase in dues at this time, both committed to not introducing motions to rescind request for inclusion of increase on the ballot. Both emphasized the need to get as many members to vote (for or against) as possible.

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Concurrence was made by all board members present to try varying methods to increase the voter turnout. A Taskforce for Special Election Notification will include Todd Weber, Laura Tucker and David Cauldwell.

Jim Mather, member and President of the Prairie Creek Owners Association, stated the POA would help with cost associated with election information postcard mailing. All board members were appreciative.

- 9.2. Discussion was opened by Jeff Easley, Vice Chair, and Jerry Hudlow, Director, concerning the feasibility of having some services of BLFD be obtained through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contract. The idea is to determine if a contract method of providing services might be possible much like the Contract for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) BLFD has with Mercy for the ambulance service. Jerry Hudlow relayed that Chief Jenkins of the Rogers Fire Department would want a resolution from the board asking for a bid. Board members agreed a draft resolution as a Request for Information or Request for Bid will be written for further discussion and consideration at the next Board meeting. Curtis Hathcock will write an initial draft for the resolution.

### 10. Other Business

Members of BLFD queried the possibility of putting together a community get together at one or both of the Fire Stations or possibly the Prairie Creek Community Center where the firefighters and leadership would be available to be met and have questions presented by the membership. Proposed time would be in April.

Jim Mather provided information on a "Coffee with a Cop" meeting sponsored by the Prairie Creek POA set for May 2, 2023.

Due to Curtis Hathcock's inexperience with Zoom, the meeting was not recorded. Hopefully, next time I will remember to start the record function.

### 11. Adjournment

Motion made to adjourn the meeting made at 1955 (7:55 pm). Seconded. Larry Smith adjourned meeting.

### 12. SUBMITTED BY:



### 13. Curtis Hathcock, Secretary