

IN A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION AND THE MCGILL TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON JULY 16, 2019 AT THE MCGILL COMMUNITY/SENIOR CENTER IN MCGILL, NEVADA

The Following Were Present:

County Fire Commission

Richard Howe, Chairman
Travis Godon, Vice-Chairman
Ian Bullis, Commissioner
Shane Bybee, Commissioner
Laurie L. Carson, Commissioner
Nichole Baldwin, Clerk of the Board
Susan Lujan, Deputy Clerk

Mc Gill Town Council

Roxane Ballandby, Chairman
Chris Maestes
Cynthia Angelopoulos
Joshua Miller
Ernie Rivera
Delores Manchester, Secretary

Also Present

Caroline McIntosh, GBC Foundation
Elizabeth Frances, WPC Finance Director
Kay McMurray, Ely Times
Raymond Maestes, Sr.
Stacy Laird, Business Rep./McGill Revit.
Roberta Stein
Mark Poulson
Ricky Garcia, McGill VFD
Hal Hollingsworth
Toby Parsons
Ed Willis, McGill
Elinor Blackham, McGill
Elaine Blackham, McGill
Christine Ronewicz, McGill

Fire Commission Chairman Richard Howe called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Commissioner Shane Bybee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE/SILENT INVOCATION

This was duly observed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ed Willis wished to comment about the streetlights in McGill. He's lived here for over a year, and the lights outside his house and on 6th street keep coming on and going off, very erratic. The entire street is dark at night; he had gas stolen from his truck outside his house, and at least 6 other people had theirs siphoned, too. He felt the problem stemmed from the lack of good lighting. He came here to remind the City Council that they are legally responsible to maintain the streetlights. When he talked to the person in charge of the lights last week, he was told it was due to lack of funding. He wants to know where he's supposed to go from here. Chairman Richard Howe advised that the McGill Town Council should address such issues, but he appreciated Mr. Willis' comments.

Mr. Hal Hollingsworth commented that while bathrooms and showers had been talked about for over 10 years, the McGill VFD still doesn't have any. This needs to be addressed; he pointed out there's nowhere the volunteers can decontaminate other than taking it home to their families. He asked them to please take care of it.

Mr. Mark Poulson advised he's lived in McGill for around 6 years; he cited problems with people not wanting to clean up around McGill, or even to help him to clean up. He was doing some cleanup on a trailer in McGill and there was so much stuff in there, no one else did it; he got the City (sic) trailer and someone scolded him for it. During the discussion Chairman Howe had to halt Mr. Poulson from pointing at people. He continued to ask how many people are in charge of different things in the community? He felt just one person, not a lot of people, should be in charge of cleaning up things. He's helped neighbors and fixed County roads, then when he used the County (sic) trailer he is scolded for it. He added that we all need to get along. What he does is just clean up McGill, he's tired of the junk cars around here. When Mr. Poulson's time was up, Chairman Howe explained that the Town Council has heard him, and they are in charge of the community of McGill, while the Commission is in charge of the County as a whole. When Mr. Poulson told the assemblage he had called the Sheriff's Dept. about this, he got in trouble for calling them all the time. WPC Sheriff Scott Henriod explained that he should report things to the Town Council, and then the Town Council

advises the Sheriff's Dept. He added that the Sheriff's Dept. can't do anything without a complaint being reported by the Town Council.

Ms. Roberta Stein has lived here for 10 years, and he wondered what the protocol was for homeowners having vacant homes and NOT caring for the property? She noted that people also rent their properties out, and they don't seem to care what the renters do.

WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION AND MCGILL TOWN COUNCIL:

DISCUSSION ONLY REGARDING THE NEEDS OF THE MCGILL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND ITS FACILITY AS THEY RELATE TO THE FOLLOWING: STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND/OR UPGRADES, EQUIPMENT, PERSONNEL, AND/OR TECHNOLOGY

Chairman Richard Howe advised that our WPCFD Administrative Coordinator Ralph McClintock was unable to attend today; he reported on-site Fire Commission meetings have been held in Lund and Ruth, McGill today, and Baker on July 31st. He explained that the Fire Commission is here tonight because we care about the Fire District and the fire stations in each community; he added we'll try to answer your questions. While Coordinator McClintock is taking care of many concerns, each station has its own major problems. To fix them will take a lot of money, he continued, and we're looking to do a blanket contract to entice a contractor to help us. The Commission will be interviewing for a new full-time Fire Chief, who will be in charge of the outlying areas; the agreement spelled that out. He continued that while McGill's done a really good job, there's still bathrooms, sidewalks, driveways, etc. to be done. There are funds in the Fire District's budget; so we're trying to prioritize the needs and take care of them. McGill Volunteer Ricky Garcia talked with OSHA and they advised that if we have from 1-15 volunteers, once they enter the building, they become employees of the County, for the Board's information. Commissioner Travis Godon felt the McGill bathroom should be the top item on the priority list for the stations. During the discussion it was noted the Fire District has roughly \$100,000 to get us started on fixing these problems. District Attorney Mike Wheable noted the Commission had approved the construction proposals, and it is hoped to get some things done before winter.

Commissioner Richard Howe read the 16 points on the McGill VFD's list of needs/repairs and advised these are some of the issues being brought forward to be addressed. D.A. Wheable advised that public comment on these items will be accepted by the Board.

List of needs or repairs to McGill volunteer fire department building and equipment

- 1) Restroom with a shower/ bunk room
- 2) Door seals on all bay doors need replaced
- 3) Ice machine for rehab replaced or repaired
- 4) Internet for report writing and training
- 5) The fire hall (American Legion hall) bathroom that flooded a couple years ago this buildings purpose is for bigger training classes
- 6) Radios and pagers minimum of 10 each
- 7) Shelving for supplies in both buildings
- 8) Tablet for report writing
- 9) Sign for the building showing it's a fire dept
- 10) Better computers
- 11) Find out where the crate of scba masks are at that were shipped to LN CURTIS for repair
- 12) Stipend for volunteers
- 13) New foldable porta tank for water tender 221
- 14) Thermal imager
- 15) Electric combi tool
- 16) Ez load system installed in medic 2

Ms. Elaine Blackham asked if the Commission has looked into CDBG funding for the bathroom? Not having one is a health hazard as well as a safety issue.

Mr. Mark Poulson asked the Commissioners to drive around McGill and look at the abandoned houses. By the time the Fire Dept. gets their truck fired up, the houses could be burnt down. Clean up the rubbish. Has anyone ever written a letter to the Governor telling him we need some money for these things?

Volunteer Ricky Garcia asked who is responsible for the Fire Hall (the American Legion Building). He was told different things by different people. District Attorney Mike Wheable felt that the Fire Hall isn't County property; it's a Volunteer Fire Dept. and not a separate entity that can sue and be sued. The County, on the other hand, is. During the discussion, the grass/weeds are also an issue there. Chairman Richard Howe noted that the building is in disrepair, and the Board will talk to Public Works Director Bill Calderwood regarding the kitchen and plumbing issues.

Secretary Delores Manchester explained regarding the ownership of the Fire Hall; the McGill Town Council didn't pay any money for that; the McGill Town Council purchased the entire lot and then signed the property over to the County before CDBG funding could build the Fire Station. So D.A. Wheable agreed it's complicated, but the bottom line is that it is the County's responsibility; he will try to locate the deeds. If the building is not maintained, it would revert; the VFD could do fundraising, for example, to help raise money for that.

Chairman Richard Howe reiterated that WPCFD Admin. Coordinator Ralph McClintock is doing a good job; we're finding out much of this stuff heretofore unknown to us. Commissioner Travis Godon asked about the stipend for volunteers; Volunteer Garcia would request that they would receive the same as for the City of Ely. He noted they're running with Ely and "working out some bugs" on calls. The City, he added, has no idea as to how to do the billing for that for the County. Commissioner Shane Bybee spoke with Coordinator McClintock, who is getting that worked out.

Commissioner Laurie Carson asked about the internet; Volunteer Garcia advised there's never been internet at the McGill VFD. He asked about it last June, and was told he'd have to wait for this fiscal year to get any funding. So, they went to Station 1 to write their reports, which he noted was sometimes "inconvenient at 3:00 a.m." Elizabeth explained that the internet company is doing work with the School District to get more service up here so we would be able to utilize it along with other governmental entities. She's working with that company, but there are other alternatives if that doesn't come to fruition. She added that the government office, along with Ms. Caroline McIntosh, who is actively involved with that, is working to bring the broadband into the outlying areas. We're looking at this as an overall broadband upgrade, and seeking Federal assistance with this. During the discussion, Commissioner Ian Bullis felt we should be able to provide some connectivity; "Choice Splash" does, plus Verizon just put in a tower, it was noted.

McGill Town Council Member Ernie Rivera advised that when we shut down the County Fire Dept. we had 7-8 Fire Chiefs; yet, these problems with McGill are very old. So now we have in the McGill VFD an ambulance that won't start, there's no seatbelts in a 1966 water tender, and other issues which the outlying stations have. He felt that the Commission should have informed the community what was going to transpire. Instead, he continued, "we had a civil war", the Commission was making promises again, and the volunteers weren't responding to calls. Chairman Richard Howe halted this line of discussion.

Commissioner Laurie Carson noted that the radios, pagers, eTexts, and communications have been a big problem, and now we're trying to ensure our radios will be fully compatible with the Sheriff's Dept. and the City of Ely as well. Coordinator McClintock is also looking into this and working with the volunteers to find out different things. She is very glad the people in the towns are being specific about what their needs are.

A newcomer who didn't identify himself advised he had suffered loss of property. He had wondered if insurance claims were filed. He added that he didn't even know there was a Fire Dept. in McGill until this meeting tonight. Commissioner Bullis noted it is unknown about the insurance, but this Board does have some answers. D.A. Wheable advised the County is still conducting inventories to find out what we're missing. He emphasized that we do have insurance, so the "big ticket items" that were here and now are missing, we should be able to replace. When the "civil war" occurred, he continued, people took things and moved them around, so we just need to locate them and give the Fire Chiefs back exactly what they need. Yes, he continued, audits are being done; we KNOW there are pagers, radios, etc. and prosecution will be done if necessary. The newcomer was assured there will be no blaming or pointing fingers regarding these issues, the civil war is OVER.

Volunteer Garcia advised the McGill VFD has 10 volunteers, working Monday through Friday at their regular jobs. He needs to be able to depend on paging, the volunteers, etc. in any instance, on any day for incidents! Commissioner Carson explained that Coordinator McClintock, Ely Fire Chief Ross Rivera, and the Sheriff's Dept. are working to nail the communication issue down and get the inventory completed. D.A. Wheable commented that McGill has had the best VFD in the County in the past, and they'd like to see that again; but it will take everyone agreeing on getting stuff fixed, providing full support (including the Sheriff's Dept. and Dispatch), and understanding the issues that the volunteers are going through now. Volunteer Garcia continued that he will not stand down; they are not NOT answering pages, etc., and furthermore McGill was never going to rebel. Council Member Rivera noted there were from 12-15 volunteers in each Fire Dept., and they would back each other up as needed. When everyone started talking about money, "the fire protection went out the window." Commissioner Carson stated that hashing the past won't help, and asked everyone to address the issues that are important right now, "because we can't go back. We're trying to move forward." Chairman Howe reiterated the meetings the Fire Commission has held with Lund, Ruth, and McGill tonight, with Baker coming up as well, and that we're behind the VFDs 100%. We are committed to supplying them with everything they need, that's why we're doing the inventories; if there are people obstructing this there WILL be some action taken. We're in transition, he continued, and just since July 1st this Fire District has begun to change over.

Discussion morphed back onto the McGill VFD needs list: The Commission was asked what computers and tablets they have; the response was 1 old Dell computer, which was at Station 1. Tablets were purchased before all this happened, with the purpose of going into the ambulances. One tablet in McGill is available now for writing reports for

EMTs enroute, etc. People are trained on how to use it, it was noted. Commissioner Shane Bybee added he felt there were also 2 laptops.

Commissioner Travis Godon appreciated everyone being here this evening; the Board is aware of what needs to be fixed, and the key is with our current Coordinator and the new one to be hired. He continued that the new Fire Chief “will have to have a heart for the volunteers and to be able to work well with the outlying communities,” giving them the attention they need. People will be appreciated for once, and their needs WILL be met.

Commissioner Ian Bullis commented that people shouldn’t expect to believe things when we say it, but “the proof will be in the pudding.” When you request stuff that you need, his focus isn’t on how we can’t afford it, but rather how we CAN.

Commissioner Carson asked about shelving; it should be simple to fix, and that’s something Director Calderwood could look into. Volunteer Garcia advised they would need 6 sets of sturdy shelving, as there’s currently lots of equipment just lying on the ground. Commissioner Bybee felt the shelves should be at least 2’ deep to accommodate the equipment he’s seen. Volunteer Garcia added that his wife is training and certified to do so, so the EOC stuff has also been moved here; a VHS, books, etc. on training stuff, taking up lots of room and any kind of shelving would help.

Commissioner Bybee asked about the SCBA masks, as to when those went to the company for repairs; Volunteer Garcia recalled a big crate of them went for repairs and cleaning. Commissioner Bybee will contact the company.

The porta-tank for Water Tender 221 was explained; it’s like a big swimming pool and is used in wildland fires. It holds 3,000 gallons, it was noted.

The electric combination tool; there was one located at Station 1. D.A. Wheable advised it was reappropriated to a different Dept., but we would probably need some in other stations. They are like the Jaws of Life—spreaders—and they operate on a 24-volt battery. In reply to a query from Commissioner Carson, it was noted there’s at least one and the City of Ely was interested in using it to respond out in the County. It has been planned to order 1 or 2 for the County; they cost roughly \$5,000 each. Coordinator McClintock had advised that he had located the 24-volt battery for it.

For the EZ load system, it was noted that Lund has the gurney but not the system for it; they just need the lift portion, to assist the EMTs with lifting the gurney into the ambulance if needed. D.A. Wheable noted that POOL/PACT used to have a grant for these, but they no longer offer those.

District Attorney Mike Wheable asked about the apparatus, specifically the “weakest link.” Volunteer Garcia advised that would be the old Water Tender. The tender from Station 1 won’t fit, he clarified. Perhaps raising the door, some modifications needed, etc.; it would be good to be able to get both tenders into the covered bay. D.A. Wheable noted Eureka was willing to do some maintenance for us so we can coordinate with them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Richard Howe thanked Vol. Garcia and everyone for their participation this evening. He invited the citizens and Town Council to attend the July 24th Commission meeting, and noted that we had received some CDBG funding for the slag ditch, in the amount of \$35,000 for that. He emphasized the Commission is working diligently for the town of McGill and the Fire Station, here and throughout the County.

Mr. Mark Poulson advised no one ever brought up the problem of cleaning up all the dry weeds; they’re a fire hazard. He asked if we could write an article in the paper to warn people about cleaning out the rubbish, weeds, old woodpiles, etc. that are all fire hazards. Commissioner Laurie Carson reported that the Central Nevada Water Authority administers grants and they could help with spraying the weeds; people can do that themselves. She felt that could be done in the future as a preventative measure. Chairman Howe added that is a question that should be addressed to the Town Council.

McGill Town Council Member Cynthia Angelopoulos asked about the Building Inspector sending out letters to people on the north end of town having to do with the EMTs; D.A. Wheable was unaware of that. Chairman Roxane Ballandby explained that the entities had to know all the addresses in McGill and maps had been done to provide that information to the emergency fire/EMT offices, etc. Now she advised that all the maps have to be redone and they’ve already spent a fortune having them done the first time. Commissioner Bullis thanked the Council for bringing this to their attention, and they will look into this.

There was a question regarding a fire control Ordinance; D.A. Wheable advised that it falls under our County Nuisance Law. It’s a nuisance to have a fire hazard around your home. He explained that the Council needs to prioritize the abatements that would need to be done, and then they can go forward with those. He requested that the Town Council send the Commission specific information on those, after which the Board looks at their budget and can ascertain what can be done. He continued that Ordinance also allows the D.A. and the Sheriff’s Dept. to prosecute criminally if people don’t clean up their properties. He emphasized that the protocol is it must be done through the

Town Councils. He recommended the McGill Town Council set a list of the top 10 properties for abatement, prioritize the list, and then send it to the County Commission. As the weeds come down, he added, the properties would come off the list. Mr. Poulson pointed out that most of the people who own those properties don't even live here. D.A. Wheable advised that his primary focus is on avoiding liability. He and his family are depending on the 10 volunteers in the McGill VFD; he can't wait for Ely or the Station 1 engine to respond; we should have a system in place to protect the community and the motorists. Things are having to be done differently now; he reiterated the invitation for the VFD to do a recruitment drive and to do whatever they can "to get the life back into the (Fire) Departments."

The newcomer thanked the McGill volunteers and advised that he understands everyone is doing their best, and it sounds like people are trying to do the right thing. His question is, could there be a volunteer day set whereby people could go to the elderly and help get rid of the weeds on their properties? It could be a community effort. There followed some discussion, during which Chairman Howe halted due to the need for the Town Council to be hearing these concerns from their citizens.

ADJOURNMENT: THE JOINT MEETING MAY BE ADJOURNED BY AN APPROPRIATE MOTION OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION

There being no further business to discuss, at 8:20 p.m. Fire Commission Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Shane Bybee made the motion; Commissioner Laurie Carson seconded. Motion carried.

WHITE PINE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSION
STATE OF NEVADA

BY: Richard Howe
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

J. Salducci
WPC CLERK OF THE BOARD