

**Minutes of the Geary County Rural Fire Board Trustees Meeting  
For February 1, 2012**

**The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by County Commission Chair Florence Whitebread.**

Roll call was taken. Districts present: Richard Witt (Jefferson), Mike Strauss (Blakely), Oliver Schmutz (Lyon), Bob Foreman (Milford), Travis Berges (Smoky Hill), Ron Blomenkamp (Wingfield), Fire Chief Garry Berges and Chairman Whitebread. District absent: Jackson. Also present were Assistant Fire Chief Clark, County Extension Agent Chuck Otte and Milford Township officers Tim Hansen, Cliff White and Luisa White.

Minutes of the December meeting were reviewed. It was noted that under Brian Clark's report it should be one Gator trailer, not plural. Bob Foreman stated that he thought he had asked for publication of subcommittee members and meeting dates. Otte indicated that he would go back and listen to the recording of the meeting to see if that request was made. **Chairman Whitebread declared the minutes approved as corrected with clarification of Mr. Foreman's question pending.** *(A review of the recording of the meeting did not reveal that request during the meeting. There was discussion of obtaining legal counsel opinion, a request of the Chairman for the Chief to form a working committee to receive and act on the legal counsel's opinion, but no mention of publication of the members or meeting dates. All action was dependent upon receiving an opinion from legal counsel. It was also requested by Ron Blomenkamp to have representatives from insurance companies on the working committee.)*

**Fire Chief Report:** Garry reported that long time trustee member Bill Gustafson has had to retire due to health reasons. A nice presentation was done for Mr. Gustafson at a County Commission meeting. Mike Strauss has replaced Mr. Gustafson as Blakely's trustee representative.

The 2011 fire runs were reviewed. Average response time was reduced in 2011. In January 2012 there were 16 fire runs compared to 12 in 2011. A request for surplus equipment has been submitted to the Kansas Forest Service for a 5 ton truck. It is expected that it will be at least 6 to 8 months before we know anything.

Action is being taken with funds received for the radio upgrade grant. The new repeaters are in place and radios are starting to be installed. It is hoped that all will be installed by pasture burning season. If anyone needs pagers, please ask.

The County Commission signed a new mutual aid agreement with Ft. Riley. This agreement is renewed every two years.

The Kansas Forest Service annual volunteer fire assistance (VFA) grant application was just received. Applications aren't due until mid-April. In 2011 grant money was used to install electric spray units on some of the trucks.

**Assistant Fire Chief Report:** Brian reported that the sprayer units mentioned by Garry are being installed. The electric spray units allow one person to respond to grass fires, eliminating the need

to wait for a second person to respond as the driver can control the water. Trucks assigned to fire stations were realigned to take into account use, age and wear.

Friends of Geary County Fire have purchased a circular blade, gas powered saw, useful for cutting through many things very quickly including metal in car bodies for accident victim removal.

Brian shared an inventory report of all rural fire-fighting equipment showing equipment age, equipment and general information and condition.

**County Extension Agent:** Nothing to report.

**Unfinished Business:** It was reported that county counsel Steve Opat was still working on rendering a legal opinion.

**New Business:** Danny Boller has had to resign from the Board of Trustees making it necessary to elect a new vice chairman. **Oliver moved to elect Bob Foreman as Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded and passed 8 – 0.**

Request for proposals for the proposed new fire station in Milford Township are in process, hopefully going out next week. This request will be for the building itself, concrete will be a separate proposal request. The plan is for a 5 bay building approximately 100' by 50'.

Bob Foreman presented Milford Township Officers to discuss the issue of by-laws changes and ownership of equipment. They suggested leaving by-laws alone and developing a memorandum of understanding. Bob asked what the most current version of the by-laws was. Chuck indicated that he had scoured his paper and computer files and the 1998 version was the most recent that he could find. Chuck did find in the minutes from February 2007 that they were changed but he could not find copies that reflected this change.

A question was raised regarding the status of insurance on Milford Township Truck 111. There was concern whether Geary County rural fire fighters were covered if they were on that truck. Tim Hansen explained that Milford Township carried insurance that would cover all fire fighters on that truck.

Chairman Whitebread asked which townships have made major equipment purchases. Milford is the only township that had made a purchase as large as a truck. Other townships have made smaller equipment purchases that were turned over to the Rural Fire Department but were kept on the truck(s) in that township.

There was general discussion of what the desired ends of this issue might be and what might be in a memorandum of understanding. There was further discussion about maintenance of Truck 111. No action was taken. Chairman Whitebread will discuss this matter with county legal counsel Steve Opat.

Bob Foreman asked about the makeup of a committee. Garry indicated that until we hear from Steve Opat we couldn't do anything. Brian Clark asked about a time frame. Chairman Whitebread said that she would instruct Steve to have a memorandum by the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The next meeting will be on April 4, 2012.

**With no further business, Chairman Whitebread adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck Otte  
Recording Secretary