

**Minutes of the Geary County Rural Fire Board Trustees Meeting  
For February 4, 2015**

Garry informed the trustees that Chairman Ben Bennett was still in meetings in Topeka and would not be present for the meeting. **The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Fire Board Vice Chairman Bob Forman.**

Roll call was taken. Districts present: Wayne Adams (Blakely), John Poole (Jackson), Oliver Schmutz (Lyon), Bob Forman (Milford), Chris Ross (Smoky Hill), Ron Blomenkamp (Wingfield), and Fire Chief Garry Berges. District absent: Jefferson. Also present were Assistant Fire Chief Curt Janke and County Extension Agent Chuck Otte.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the February meeting were reviewed. It was pointed out that Weis was misspelled and that Curt's title should be capitalized. **John moved to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded and passed 7 – 0.**

**Fire Chief Report:** Garry reviewed the 2014 fire runs (copy attached). 9-1-1 Board is looking at an upgrade to e-Dispatch. They are trying a 30 day free trial and they are going to keep it. Pages and call outs are sent over cell phone to an app on a smartphone. It gets to the phone in 20 seconds – also a text. It is often much clearer audio than over the pager.

He and Curt are still working on the 2015 training schedule. Are still getting materials for the training classes.

Tim Hansen, Milford TWP, retired January 31<sup>st</sup> after 40 years of volunteer service. They are planning a recognition event at an upcoming county commission meeting.

The county is into a new budget year. Salaries are moved into general fund freeing up funds for equipment. They are getting a ladder for Truck 105. It currently only has a short ladder.

**Assistant Fire Chief Report:** Curt reported that Truck 105 has a new transfer case. Age of the truck made finding parts difficult. A new pump has been acquired for Truck 104. Probably still 2 to 3 weeks from having it installed. They are looking at replacing some trucks. General thought is to get flat beds with rails around and place equipment on it but no compartments. Truck 115 has some compartment door issues. A pipe on it had also rusted out and had to be replaced.

**County Extension Agent:** No report.

**Unfinished Business:** Jackson, Jefferson and Lyon townships need to get a list of officers in to Garry. Station #7 (McDowell) is now operational. They are still getting lots of applications from people in town. There was general discussion of occasional lack of addresses as well as challenges from law enforcement personnel being at a fire scene but not helping with fire control. Garry and Curt are aware of the issue and trying to work with the Sheriff's Office. Curt discussed the fact that they now had a Standard Operations Guidelines.

Ron referred back to the December minutes and asked under what authority Captains were appointed. Ron then expressed concern that this is not discussed in the bylaws. Chuck and Curt explained how going back several years, to when the township fire boards started being appointed by the county commission, everything has changed. Much of this was driven by needs to assure county insurance would cover the rural fire districts. Ron expressed concern whether

the bylaws were still functional or not. Chuck explained some of the history of rural fire districts and how they started in the 1960s as a way to provide rural fire protection but were almost totally outside of the county government system. Since that time the rural fire districts have started coming more and more under county control. With the establishment of the County Emergency Management Office the Rural Fire had been brought in under it and was now totally a function of county government. However, it is still highly dependent on volunteers to make it work. Chuck stated that he and Garry for several months have been discussing the need to totally rewrite the bylaws to show these changes. In reality, the Board of Trustees has become an advisory board that is needed to communicate needs from the districts in to the emergency management office and training from the emergency management office back out to the districts.

**New Business: Bob moved that the Chief, Curt, and Chuck work on examining the current bylaws and update proposal functions of a board of trustees, organization of the department, limits of authority, ownership of equipment, interaction of board/Chief/County Commissioners, etc. Given the time of year, the committee should have a draft recommendation back in 6 months for the board to review and discuss. The motion was seconded and passed 7 – 0.**

Bob asked if we had gotten the fire grant application for the air pacs submitted. Curt said that they had and Bob thanked them for the work on that.

Oliver asked Curt about whether anything had been submitted for Lyon Fire District. Curt said that Lyon was one that had not submitted paperwork yet.

Next meeting will be April 1, 2015.

**John moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed 7 – 0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Chuck Otte, Secretary