

**Minutes of the Geary County Rural Fire Board Trustees Meeting
For June 4, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Fire Board Vice Chairman Bob Forman.

Roll call was taken. Districts present: Nate Seward (Jefferson), Oliver Schmutz (Lyon), Bob Forman (Milford), Chris Ross (Smoky Hill), Ron Blomenkamp (Wingfield), and Fire Chief Garry Berges. Chairman Larry Hicks was absent. Districts absent: Blakely and Jackson. Also present was Assistant Fire Chief Curt Janke and County Extension Agent Chuck Otte.

Minutes of the April meeting were reviewed. Bob expressed disappointment that more details of the hiring process were not included in the minutes. Chuck apologized for this but also pointed out that minutes are kept to record actions taken, not a transcription of everything that was said. Bob further commented that he felt that there were going to be rural fire fighters involved in the interview. Garry explained that John Moyer and Rick Rook were both involved in the interviews. Bob stated that he thought that the interviews were going to be open to all rural fire fighters. Garry explained that he had said if a second round of interviews was done that it would have been opened. As it was, the interview committee was unanimous in their decision after the first round of interviews and a second round of interviews wasn't required. Garry explained that after the County Human Resources office had forwarded the qualified applications, five individuals were selected for interview and after the interviews there was one candidate that clearly stood above the rest. It was a unanimous decision of the interview committee to offer the position to Curt Janke. There being no further discussion or corrections to the minutes, they were approved.

Fire Chief Report: Garry reported that year to date there have been 120 fires in 2014 compared to 64 last year in the same period. There were 42 in April and 12 in May. The materials for new Station #7 have been delivered and they are now waiting on the concrete work to be completed so construction can begin. Oliver Schmutz has retired after 31 years as a volunteer fire fighter. The county commissioners will be recognizing Oliver on June 16 around 3:15 p.m. and everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

Assistant Fire Chief Report: Curt reported on truck maintenance. The pump and motor have been replaced on trucks 102 and 112. Truck 115 has a new rear end. Truck 104 at Pleasant View is in service. The pump is good but the ladder bracket was out of square which caused some problems. Oliver reported that truck 114 has a rattle in the door. Curt indicated that it is on his list but if anyone else has a truck with rattles in the door, be sure to let him know. New t-shirts for county fire fighters are available to be ordered. If anyone is interested, contact Jennifer in the Emergency Management Office. Curt said that Donnie Whitebread had asked him about basic medical training for volunteers. Curt is working with some of the trainers in the Junction City fire department to provide that training.

County Extension Agent: No report

Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business.

New Business: Garry discussed that two budgets have been proposed. One has 50% of staff salaries in it, as has been the case in the past. The second budget has all salaries in the county general fund. By law, rural fire districts are capped at 5 mills of appropriation. If salaries are moved to the general fund it will allow increases for equipment. There were questions about some of the budget lines which Garry answered. There was concern that enough money be budgeted for propane due to rising costs.

Bob expressed concern that Station #8 needs more volunteers. They hope to have an open house in the future to invite residents in to see the station and hopefully perk interest in volunteering.

Bob indicated that Brian Clark was interested in staying on the Rural Fire Department as a volunteer. Garry explained that Brian had been informed as to the steps and that he (Garry) would not discuss it here as it is a personnel matter.

Bob would like to see after action reviews of fires. He felt that they needed to have training on dealing with multiple jurisdiction events. Curt said that he would be responsible for working on trainings and was more than willing to work with the districts on their training needs.

Bob asked about a first responder program. He wondered who can be a first responder and when can they be called out? Garry explained that a letter was sent to those firefighters in the Milford District (the only 1st Responder Program) that outlined the first responder's situation. The protocol outlined in this letter was authorized by the County Commission after being developed by county insurance carrier, county counsel, etc. This was put in place in January of 2014.

Oliver expressed his desire to see a fun get together like was done a few years ago. He felt that it would help keep interest in the rural fire fighter program and give the fire fighters a chance to gather just for fun. There was a general consensus that it was worth doing again.

Curt reported that there were four new volunteers; three at Spring Valley and one at Clark's Creek.

Next meeting will be August 6, 2014.

Oliver moved to adjourn the meetings. The motion was seconded and passed 6 – 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Chuck Otte, Secretary