



Staff report for meeting date 9/19/2024 Note: The regular August 2024 Board meeting was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum and no meeting was held in July per the regular meeting schedule. Yellow highlights show additions to the August report. Report prepared by Secretary/Treasurer Rae Bell Arbogast– disclaimer: any opinions expressed in this document belong to the author and do not represent the official stance of the district.

#### Agenda item 4. a) Correspondence since last meeting.

**Incoming.** Conflict of Interest Code docs from Sierra County Clerk Recorder **Outgoing** Letter to the IRS explaining why form 944 was filed for Calendar Year 2023 and requesting a refund for the penalty and interest that was paid in May 2024, Letter of intent to participate in Golden State Risk Management Authority's Risk Management Assessment Program (RMAP) for fiscal year 24-25

Note: I could find no requirement for emails to be listed under correspondence. I put an inquiry on the CSDA Forum and got only one response from a special district secretary who stated that her district lists only emails that are pertinent to the board's business. That seems like another "can of worms" because who decides what is and is not pertinent? For this reason and reasons explained in my June Staff report, I am not listing emails under correspondence. The board could always adopt a policy regarding this to clarify the definition of "correspondence" if they choose to.

#### Agenda item 4. b) 5 Staff Reports.

**Status of request to Sierra County BOS for funding from Service area 2 for medical supplies.** Thanks in large part to the advocacy of Supervisor Lee Adams, the BOS voted on 8/6/2024 to allocate \$1,000 for this fiscal year, to PRSCD help pay for medical supplies. This will be tracked in a separate fund and a report will be made to the BOS next year. The hope is that we will be able to establish this as an annual allocation from Service area 2.

**Streetlights:** After the June meeting, I realized that I did not fully answer the question about why the streetlights' portion of the county management fee has risen over the years. As stated at the meeting, it is true that the percentage charged by the County has increased, but the revenue amount has also increased, so it is a combination of both things, that has caused the amount to increase.

After the June meeting, I looked in Quickbooks and the billing for the lights in Forest City got reduced to only 2 lights in 2015. BUT according to Forest City resident Cheryl Durrett, three lights are currently on and an additional fourth light that was never upgraded to a LED went out just a couple of years ago. This is the light that they want back on, Badge #5. There is another one that is on that they want turned off.

I reached out to PG&E at the end of June 2024 to establish a new contact in the streetlight division but I never got a call back. In July I remembered that I had some email addresses from the LED upgrade was done in 2015. By searching my emails, I found them and sent out an inquiry. Three out of four addresses responded back! PRSCD now has a streetlight rep Ryan Gibbs, who is working with me. We will be working to get the billing side straightened out and the light in Forest badge #5 upgraded and turned on.

I had a phone meeting with Ryan on July 18<sup>th</sup> and I also spoke to Forest City resident Cheryl Durrett. On July 21<sup>st</sup> Ryan had me fill out a request form to turn badge #5 in Forest City back on and to add it to the bill. Ryan said this is the first step, then we can have it upgraded to LED. I sent a follow-up email on 8/8/2024 and on 8/9/2024 I got an attachment that I can't open, but the message was that I will need to make a phone call. The light has been added to the billing. On 9/7/2024 Cheryl informed me the light is off again (after it was on briefly). Multiple follow-ups with PGE on 9/9/2024, 9/10 and 9/11. Work ongoing. My newfound confidence that we could get this taken care of is quickly waning.

**Status of Fiscal Year 23/24 bookkeeping close out.** I followed up with Sierra County Auditor Van Maddox on the status of the final tax payment for Fiscal year 23-24 and he said that it will be mailed no later than August 16<sup>th</sup>. The amount of that final check is not predetermined. Once we get the check (or the amount of the check anyway) I can close out the books and update the Funds accordingly. Then everything will be mailed to Boden, Klein and Sneesby CPA's for the independent audit. (Final tax check deposited in September, funds updated)

**Risk Management Accreditation Program (RMAP)** Golden State Risk Management Authority offers insurance premium refunds of 1 to 10% for participants in their RMAP program. The letter of intent to participate is due the first Monday in September for each fiscal year. Cameron and I submitted a letter of intent for PRCSD. The next step is a meeting with a representative from GRSMA. Cameron and I will be doing that on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

The district has participated in this program in the past. With the recent insurance cost increase, it makes sense to try again. Getting everyone caught up on required trainings (Ethics and Harassment Prevention) is one way to earn points. Reminders for the Ethics training have been sent to the board.

**Agenda item 4. b) 6 Firewise** On July 27, 2024, the following email went out to the Pike and Alleghany residents who expressed interest in participating in a fire prevention grant last summer.

*My name is Danielle Bradfield and I am the consulting forester working with Sierra County on various fuel reduction projects throughout the County. Rae Bell Arbogast provided me with your contact information as part of a list of folks potentially interested in fuel reduction within your community.*

*Sierra County now has funding to put together potential community-level fuel reduction projects. In late August, myself and my staff foresters are preparing to take a look at properties of those interested in an effort to get a Alleghany/Pike project "shovel ready". This status would provide the Sierra County Fire Safe Council with the necessary information (total acres, treatment types, treatment prescriptions, and permit type needed) to write a grant to fund implementation of fuel reduction in the community. Having this information makes for a much more competitive grant application with a more accurate anticipated budget.*

*The initial information we would need to gather is:*

- general fuel types and extent (trees, brush, how much, how tall, how dense etc).*
- presence and abundance of watercourses*
- slope, topography*
- is obvious archaeology present (visible to the naked eye).*

*In order to gather this information I would need permission to access your property strictly for these purposes. For most properties, I would need access for approximately a half to 1 day. If preferred, I can have my foresters also meet you on site when they are there.*

*If you remain interested in this effort and would like a site visit, please let me know by responding to this email. You can also text or call me at (530)927-7095.*

*If you are no longer interested, that would be great to know as well, and if I don't hear from you, I will not include your parcel(s) in the project and will not access your property(s).*

*Last, if you know of others that are potentially interested, please feel free to forward this email and/or my contact info to them and I can add them to the list should they desire.*

*Thanks for your time and please feel free to reach out with any questions,*

*Danielle Bradfield RPF #2808 P.O. Box 1411, Quincy, CA. 95971 (530)927-7095 (cell)*

I posted the email on both of the firewise community facebook pages and the Alleghany outreach Facebook page. As of this writing (Aug-Sept) I haven't heard anything else.

**Agenda item 4. b) 8 Pending Grants** Volunteer Capacity 50/50 grant. The district applied for two Bendix king radios with accessories and two minitor VI pagers, estimated total cost \$7,322 grant would be half of that or approximately \$3,661. I followed up and we should be getting word any day now.

**Agenda item 5. b) 1 Biennial Review of Conflict of Interest Code.** This is required every two years. The pertinent policy is on pages 9-10 of the Bylaws included in the online meeting docs. Because PRCSD requires all board members, officers and fire chiefs to report on form 700, as far as I know there is no issue and the policy does not need to be updated. (It is a potential issue if reporting isn't required).

**Agenda item 5. b) 2. Establish terms of employment for Rae Bell Arbogast** At the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting an urgency item was added to the agenda because of feedback from the insurance pool regarding my contract for services. The board voted to make me an employee. Since my contract ended on June 30, 2024 I went ahead and submitted a final invoice through that date.

From my most recent contract: Compensation *District agrees to compensate Contractor at the rate of \$200 per month and to reimburse contractor for actual expenses incurred upon presentation and Board approval of an itemized statement with supporting receipts. [For Secretary and Treasurer Duties plus other administrative duties] Contractor shall be compensated for the performance of tasks for which reimbursement to the district either is, or becomes available at a rate of \$20 per hour. This includes: Mutual Aid billings and the related payroll processing, billings to individuals and other agencies (for example Ordinance #1 non-resident billings and Title III billings), Grant Administration and Administration of the Firewise efforts. Contractor shall be paid in the capacity of a Red Cross Instructor at a rate of \$25 per student per day for district personnel. (Classes are either one-day or two-days). District shall cover the cost of Red Cross fees and class materials in addition to paying contractor as outlined above. Contractor shall seek reimbursement to the district for training expenses whenever possible via outside funding sources. Contractor shall invoice other agencies for all class expenses when personnel from other agencies attend classes taught under the district's AP agreement.*

I would like to propose an hourly rate equal to minimum wage in place of the above terms. Currently minimum wage is \$16 per hour (it is raised by the State on a regular basis). I will continue to seek reimbursement for my wages whenever possible. I am proposing this change for a few reasons: 1. It simplifies the payment terms and will take pressure off for me to "earn" that \$200 per month. 2. It will facilitate splitting my position into two positions (as explained in June I would like to retain the "Treasurer" position and pass along "Secretary"). 3. It complies with State Law but won't prevent me from continuing to donate time as well. 4. Hopefully it will help the district recruit other administrative help in the future.

**Entire Section below is new.**

Time sheets from the last two fiscal years are included in this month's meeting packet. Based on the history, the board should expect to pay more per year at minimum wage. I have also attached Policy #1020 Administrative Duties. Currently I am handling the positions of Secretary/Treasurer and Administrative Assistant. There are notes on the time sheets regarding items that I won't bill. Additional pay has been incorporated into the final budget to accommodate minimum wage (see detail sheet).

Some years will require more hours than others, but usually there is income, or some other benefit tied to additional admin hours. The insurance rating survey is a good example. I spent about 40-hours working on that in 2019. This benefits all district residents with the best insurance rating we can muster (we did very well last round). I recently sent them an inquiry because in the past we did it

every 5 years. They said that it can take up to 7 years for us to come up on their list. Grant applications are also very time consuming (see FY 22-23) but don't always pay off. The standby and mutual aid calls create more administrative work, but the cost is more than offset by the income.

**Agenda item 5. b) 5 Appoint Project Manager** In August I explained to new Risk Manager Cameron Shay that the district lacks an ADA compliant space in Pike to hold board meetings. A simple solution was identified several years ago: make the downstairs bathroom ADA Compliant and hold meetings on the ground floor. That project was put on hold pending the firehouse options analysis and decision. Chief Dorn and/or Cameron can speak to this, but the crew was on standby at the Pike Firehouse recently and they decided to "get er done!" They started the project. Money is included in the final budget to have the volunteer crew make the bathroom in the rescue bay ADA compliant. A project manager needs to be appointed, and board authorization is needed to apply for the permit. Chief Dorn and Ned Cusato are confident that they can do the required drawings for the permit application. It should be noted that whatever the final decision is for the Pike Firehouse, it will take years to fully execute. In the meantime, the district is out of compliance with State Law for not having an ADA accessible meeting space in Pike. More importantly (in my opinion), there have been times when the stairs have been a problem for board members, staff or members of the public.

**Agenda item 5. b) 6 Bylaw revision**

Per the ethics workshop provided by the Fair Political Practices Commission that I recently completed, it is a violation of open meeting law to require complaints be in writing. For that reason, the following should be removed from the Bylaws:

*Article II of the Bylaws Item #15 Complaints. No oral presentation by any person in attendance shall include charges or complaints against any District employee, or director regardless of whether or not the person is identified in the presentation by name or by another reference which tends to identify. All complaints shall be directed to the Board in writing*