



Staff report for meeting date 9/21/2023

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

Email topics (in & out): Van Maddox Sierra County Auditor re: Streetlight budget figure and budget in general, Sierra County Clerk-Recorders office re: Brown Act and remote meetings, Frank Lang re: ambulance MOU, Golden State Risk Management Authority (Insurance Carrier) re removal of one of the vehicles sold last year from the policy and correction of the Pike non-profit's name (their program reverted it back to the old name with the renewal docs), Blain Boden re: audit, Mountain Messenger re: budget hearing notice, Jim Buckbee re: Forest Service Loaner vehicle 6770 (have been trying to return it for over a year, it is still on our insurance until they take it back), NFIRS re system availability, John Pekarek of Banner Communications re: additional siren for Alleghany, Chris Mills and Chief re: Risk Manager Position, Roland Robertson & Denise Ruane re: Russell Davidson as potential person to help with Pike Firehouse analysis.

Agenda item 4. b) 5 Board member/Staff reports

- On August 15th I attended a two-hour webinar hosted by The Rural Communities Assistance Corp. (RCAC) on Internal Accounting Controls. The workshop was geared towards Small Water Utilities, but I did come away with some ideas that can be applied to Pliocene Ridge CSD as well. A few of them apply directly to the Director's Handbook that I am working on.

Agenda item 4. b) 6 Firewise communities

- Update on the Sierra County BOS \$2,500 allocation for each firewise community a couple of years ago: The remaining balances are: Alleghany \$2,172 and Pike \$1,179. The Pike figure is lower because there has been more activity in Pike which takes longer to input in the firewise portal. For Fiscal year 22/23 I did not bill all my time and I split what I did bill 50/50 between both communities. Other things that have been billed to-date are the cost of mailings to residents and printing educational materials (split 50/50).
- As of this writing I have not heard back from the County Forester regarding the list of interested property owners for Planning Grants.

Agenda item 4. b) 7 Firehouse Projects and ADA compliance

- Status of Alternatives Analysis for Pike City Firehouse. Update to be provided at meeting.

Agenda item 4. b) 8 Pending Grants

- ❖ One item under New Business to bring back pursuit of the additional siren for Alleghany.

Agenda item 6. b) 3 Brown Act Rules There was a question last month (not in time for the agenda) about the bylaw changes adopted in June to allow remote meetings. After researching the issue and talking to the Sierra County Clerk Recorder's Office we learned that the Brown Act Previously (pre-covid) allowed for teleconference meetings as long as at least one physical location with access is made available to the public (see attached sheet). The district has the option to go back to the traditional rules OR adopt the new rules for remote meetings which require both visual and audio access among other things. Since the District does not have internet access at the meeting locations it makes sense to opt to go back to the traditional Brown Act Rules.

Agenda item 6. b) 4 Mileage Reimbursement for Directors With the rising price of gasoline it has become a financial hardship for some of the directors to drive between Alleghany and Pike for meetings. Article III of the Bylaws COMPENSATION Currently states the following:

1. Board members shall serve as unpaid volunteers.
2. Board members may receive reimbursement of expenses incurred representing the District as directed by the Board.

Propose adding item 3. Board members may apply for mileage reimbursement at the IRS annual rate for board meeting attendance. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted in writing to the Treasurer and must include at minimum: Date and miles driven. All reimbursement requests for any given quarter must be submitted within 30 days of quarter-end. Older reimbursement requests will not be eligible for payment.

Agenda item 6. b) 5. To-date Pliocene Ridge CSD has not had to purchase accounting software as I (Rae Bell) provide mine at no cost (with the exception of the payroll module cost which is split 3-ways). The version of Quickbooks that I use has been discontinued and the least expensive option that I could find is an annual subscription which runs about \$590 per year including sales tax. I would like to split the cost of this 5-ways with all my bookkeeping clients. The cost to Pliocene Ridge CSD would be approximately \$118 per year. Once the program is actually purchased a receipt will be provided.

Pending items not addresssed on this month's agenda:

(Staff needs more time to work on them before presenting to the board, more info needed, or conditions not right to proceed)

- Water Tender Upgrade
- MOU with non-profits (name changes) We are waiting on documentation from the AVFD non-profit corporation.
- Signage for firehouses (Need signs with updated department names and updated district logo)
- **Repair to west wall of Station 1 in Alleghany. The metal siding was purchased last April, arrived last summer (2022) and is sitting in the County Yard.**
- Proposed changes to Ordinance #1 discussed in Feb. 2023 – Larry Allen found additional code that would allow us to bill for environmental spills & clean-up. More legal research is needed before a new draft will be ready for the first reading. **This will be placed on the October 2023 agenda even if all we do is accept the language that was already developed. The environmental clean-up language can be added later.**
- ISO survey done in 2019 ~ I have not been able to get a copy of our survey docs from 2019. Every time that I contact them, they tell me to create a user account on their website, which I do, and get a message that a confirmation email will be generated but it never happens. I have contacted the person who did the survey and he said that I am not the only one having problems and that he would get back to me, but he never has. **The ISO survey will be due again next year.** It is a very involved process that I spent well over 40 hours on last time, but we did manage to get a better ISO rating for the district as a result of the work.
- Free attorney consult: I was authorized a long time ago, to inquire about the borrowing limits for CSD's to see if there is any additional information (legal precedence) besides the code but haven't done it.