

## DRAFT

### AMWC and Volunteer Fire Department Annual General Membership Meeting July 5, 2008

President Lew McConnell called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Introductions of the Board Members and self-introductions by the attendees were made.

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of July 7, 2007:** Joanne Schneider noted that the draft minutes for the 2007 Annual Meeting had been posted for some time on the bulletin board at the fire house and on the Aspendell.org website. She requested a motion to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Bob Tomko and seconded by Betty Yerxa. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob Tomko reviewed the status of AMWC accounts. He noted that the most recent summary from Van Tassell&Paegel indicated that delinquent payments totaled almost \$7,000. Bob asked that property owners be responsible about their AMWC payments.

**Annual Financial and Budget Report:** Elfriede Geiger reviewed the 2007 financial statement, the 2008 budget that she had prepared, and the first quarterly financial statement for 2008. She noted that the AMWC had incurred large expenses in 2007 with the pipeline replacement project/street repair on White Pine Road (total costs of about \$67,000), and that approximately \$8,000 was spent on fire hydrant replacement. At the close of 2007, the Water Company was about \$74,000 in the hole, while the Fire Department experienced a net loss of about \$3200. Elfriede indicated that the 2008 budget includes basic items and does not account for the line replacement and street repair necessary to address the problem at the Finch home on White Pine Road (about \$6,000). She indicated that the 2008 budget sheet shows a Fire Department loss of about \$5700.

**Fire Chief's Report:** Ken Kuencer reported on the status of the fire engines, which are all in good repair. He indicated that the brakes on the old International engine had been repaired and reported that the new USFS International engine had had some damage due to unexpected, below- freezing temperatures. The damage was to the primer pump. However, the engine is operable.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Maintaining the ISO rating:** Ken Kuencer advised that it is necessary to test the hose and Crown engine pump every year to maintain the ISO rating. He reported that the hose testing had been completed on June 28, 2008. He indicated that the pump would be tested within the next couple of weeks with the help of a person from the Mammoth Fire Department. Ken emphasized the importance of fire training and reminded the membership that training is scheduled for every second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The location of the training is posted in advance on the firehouse door. Joanne

pointed out also that Ken will provide training by special arrangement for those members who are unable to participate in the regularly scheduled training.

**Home fire retardant:** Ken indicated that Barricade could be purchased through the Wilhelms. He reminded the members of the need to shake the Barricade periodically, and to prevent it from freezing. He indicated that members can store their Barricade in the firehouse during the winter, if desired, but noted that such storage should terminate when the weather warms up sufficiently. Ken noted that there is a red book on the desk in the firehouse that includes maps of Barricade storage locations at individual homes.

**Use of Dumpster:** Ken Kuencer emphasized that the dumpsters are for disposal of household garbage only, not for yard or construction/remodeling wastes. He noted that the dumpster is emptied early Monday mornings. He reminded the members that waste oil should not be deposited in the dumpsters.

**Recycling Options:** Joanne Schneider noted the importance of recycling materials such as cans, cardboard, glass, etc, both to optimize use of the dumpsters and to conserve energy and natural resources. She noted some recycling locations and indicated that she will post additional recycling information in the firehouse. It was also suggested that this information could be posted on the Aspendell.org website.

**Clearing around Homes:** Ken Kuencer asked that the members clear around their homes to maintain defensible space in the event of a fire. He noted that a weed cutter is available in the fire house, as well as a trailer for hauling waste. He noted that lots do not have to be cleared to bare ground, but attention must be paid to preventing "ladder" conditions for fire movement. He noted that a list of yard clearing services will be posted at the firehouse.

**South Fork Interest in Joining the Volunteer Fire Department:** Lew reported that further action to bring the South Fork community together with the Aspendell Volunteer Fire Department was on hold pending the completion of the Crown engine pump test, and satisfaction of ISO requirements. Lew stated that he hoped that the Bishop Fire Department would be able to help with the pump testing in the future, once that Department completes a more permanent facility. Once the pump test is completed successfully, then we can ask the ISO representatives to review conditions (water, equipment, etc.) at South Fork and then the Aspendell Volunteer Fire Department. A member asked whether South Fork will have its own engine and whether Aspendell volunteer firefighters would respond to a fire in the South Fork community with equipment or in person only. Lew indicated that South Fork has acquired a Fire Chief's vehicle, which has a small water tank on it. He stated that we would respond with both personnel and equipment. The siren system would be modified to serve both communities. Lew noted that a resident of South Fork, Steve Silcott, is a retired firefighter and is leading the effort for South Fork to join the Aspendell Volunteer Fire Department.

**Fire Department Assessment:** Lew reported that, in follow-up to the discussion and action at the July 7, 2007 Annual General Membership Meeting, the Board had approved a Fire Department Assessment of \$140/year/property owner.

**Water Line Replacement Fund:** Lew and Elfriede discussed this matter, reminding the membership that AMWC had begun consideration of the need to establish a specific water line replacement fund in 2001. An assessment of \$50/year/property owner was established in 2003. The assumption at that time was that the cost of pipeline replacement would be about \$85/foot. Elfriede indicated that the replacement cost is now estimated at about \$200/foot. She indicated that a goal had been established to assure funds necessary for 20% replacement of the water lines in 2014. Elfriede stated that to accrue these funds at current replacement costs would require an assessment of about \$400/year/property owner. She stated this assessment was clearly impractical and suggested that AMWC needs to reset our goals, employing expert advice. (There was further discussion of this matter later in the meeting; please see **Other: (b)**, below.)

Lew noted that the latest consumer confidence report shows that Aspendell water remains of very high quality. He said that this report was not available at the time of the June billing, but will go out with the statements at the end of the year. Elfriede asked whether the report could be posted to the Aspendell.org website. Webmaster Roy Harthorn confirmed that this would be feasible.

Lew took this opportunity to note that a sign-up sheet was available in the firehouse for members to indicate their willingness to volunteer for painting, carpentry or other types of work that is necessary to maintain the AMWC and Volunteer Fire Department systems. He noted that volunteer assistance is particularly welcomed and needed given the reduction in the number of full-time residents over time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Independent Assessment of Water System:** Bruce Burnworth, a civil engineer with extensive water system experience, provided a brief status report on his assessment of the water system. He indicated that he had collected information and has worked on the assessment to some degree, though not in recent months. He responded to a question about the size of the water lines in the AMWC system.

**Fire engine operation video:** Using the television recently donated to the AMWC, Jim Blankenship debuted the video he produced, with help from Aspendell residents, on the operation of the Crown fire engine. Copies of the CD/DVD can be made and it should be feasible to stream the video on the Aspendell.org website. The video was a hit!

**White Pine Pipeline Replacement:** Lew described the need for the work on the White Pine Road water line. He indicated that, with the addition of the new home on White Pine, a larger line was needed to provide good water service to all the homes. (What was shown on the plans as a 1" line turned out to be only a ¾" line; the line was replaced with a 4" line.) The winning bid for this work was \$35,500, but the cost almost doubled due to unexpected complications resulting from the discovery of a second set of utility lines. SCE confirmed that both sets of lines were still being used. This meant that it was not possible to install the new line alongside the road. Instead, it was necessary to go up the road itself. A rock crusher was necessary, at considerable expense (\$300/day). In addition, it was necessary to re-pave the street once the line replacement was completed. Lew reported that Dave Tanksley had conducted this work and that he did not charge AMWC the usual fee. Dave reported that the road now looks bad

because of the frozen conditions under which the road re-paving had to occur (the line replacement project had been delayed and was not completed until November 2007).

**Replacement of Fire Hydrants:** Lew reported that the two leaking hydrants, one on Cataract and the other on Iris, had been replaced, and that a new hydrant was added at the end of White Pine Road as part of the waterline replacement project.

**Firehouse Upgrade:** Lew discussed the need for and benefits of a new firehouse – to house the third fire engine, to provide adequate room for training, and to serve as an evacuation center in case of emergency. He suggested that a steel building would be the preferred alternative. The estimate he had obtained last year was \$100,000. Lew reported that Ken Kuencer has done some preliminary survey work and has a surveyor friend who will work with Ken (voluntarily or at reduced cost) to do a survey. This is necessary to consider how and whether to proceed with and to design a new firehouse.

**Status of CSA #2 – Sewer System Oversight:** Lew reviewed the basics of CSA #2 and the fact that three Aspendell residents serve on an advisory committee to the County. He noted that minutes of a CSA meeting were posted on the bulletin board at the firehouse.

**Dog Etiquette:** Joanne Schneider reminded the members of the need to pick up after their dogs when walking them around the community. She noted that Paula Coombes had placed plastic bags for this purpose in two plastic canisters located at the end of Cataract and at the junction of Cataract and Columbine Roads.

**Status of Aspendell Website:** Webmaster Roy Harthorn presented the Aspendell.org website, noting that it was the fifth anniversary of the site. He reviewed the available links, including a link to photographs of the Aspendell area and Sierra. Roy indicated that photo submissions are welcomed, via e-mail and/or CD. He shared site statistics and noted that the site has been visited by internet users all over the world. He stated that he is thinking about setting up an internet camera that could be tied to the website. He noted that having the website improves property values. Roy made special note of the link to fire information (inciweb.org). Dave Archer indicated that Schat.net is investigating options to provide high speed internet service to the Aspendell and South Fork communities. He noted that a permit from the USFS would be required for a part of the requisite installation. Roy Harthorn suggested that AMWC write to the USFS to encourage USFS approval of any permit required for access/installation. The letter would not need to identify any specific provider, but should point out the advantages of high speed internet capability in the event of an emergency.

Lew requested feedback on the newsletter that is sent out with the billing statements and asked whether the members felt it was worthwhile. The consensus was that the newsletter should continue.

**Election of Directors:** Roger Wilhelm reported that 31 ballots had been returned and that Elfriede and Bob were re-elected to the Board. The number of ballots mailed out was 114.

**Nominating Committee:** Roger Wilhelm, Jeanette Schneider and Roy Harthorn volunteered to be members of the Nominating Committee.

**Other:**

- (a) Owen Helm asked for an update on the status of Tract 2 joining the AMWC Volunteer Fire Department. Lew reported that there had not been progress, though the offer remained open. The offer was the same as that given to the South Fork community, i.e., pay the same as the AMWC members. Lew welcomed help from anyone to resolve this issue, as it is desirable to have Tract 2 join the Fire Department.
- (b) Tom Morgan raised the issue of the waterline replacement assessment. Elfriede reiterated that the current assessment is \$50/year and that \$400/year per property owner would be necessary to provide sufficient funds to meet the replacement goal previously established (replace 20% of the system in 2014). Bruce Burnworth commented that he did not believe that it would be necessary to achieve this goal; it would not be necessary to replace 20% of the system in 2014. Concerns were expressed about the possible devastating effects of an earthquake that might necessitate this level of repair/replacement. Bruce indicated that pipelines are not typically a problem in an earthquake as the ground shakes much less underground than above-ground. Roy Harthorn, who is a building code expert, indicated that the geology of Aspendell is wonderful with respect to earthquake safety. The soils are dense and ground acceleration during an earthquake is limited, so there would be relatively little shaking. It is much more likely that repairs of above-ground connections and seals rather than underground lines would be necessary. Jeanette Schneider asked what an appropriate line replacement goal would be. Bruce Burnworth indicated that this would be part of his assessment of the system. John Kimball indicated his support for reliance on Bruce's assessment. He noted that Pasadena is just now replacing lines that were installed in 1908. Dave Tanksley asked when the assessment will be completed. Bruce responded that the completion date was contingent on his other commitments, but that he expected to be able to look at items of specific interest, e.g., waterline replacement, within the next few months.
- (c) Lorin Soderwall inquired about the contract with the South Fork community and whether the AMWC members have an opportunity to vote on it before it is finalized. Lew responded that the AMWC attorney, Peter Tracy, will prepare the contract. Lorin indicated that the AMWC Articles of Incorporation would have to be changed. Lew advised that he will investigate this.
- (d) Betty McConnell suggested that Lew should explain about the acquisition of the television set. Lew stated that the TV had been donated by the McConnells' neighbors in Banning.

**Adjournment:** Lew made the motion to adjourn and John Kimball seconded. The meeting was adjourned at about 10:30 a.m.

**Announcements:** After adjournment of the AMWC meeting, Lew reminded the members of the dedication of the Gayle Truxler memorial fire hydrant on Cataract Road. He also reminded the members of the APOA meeting at the firehouse at 11:30 a.m., and the annual picnic at 5 p.m. Finally, Lew reminded the members of the fire training to begin at 1 p.m. Lew reemphasized the importance of this training. In response to a

question, Lew reported that that USFS has not committed to provide chipping service. He suggested that property owners place chipper materials out by the road, and indicated that it might be necessary for AMWC to make separate arrangements for chipping or hauling service.

After the meeting, the Board members conferred and decided that Officer's positions would remain as follows: President – Lew McConnell; Vice-President – Paula Coombes; Treasurer – Bob Tomko; Secretary – Joanne Schneider; Board member at large – Elfriede Geiger.

Joanne Schneider  
Secretary

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