

Highland Meadows Homeowners Association

Annual Meeting  
August 19, 2017

Officers Present: Barrie Schwartz

Attendees: Nanette Gray, Kathleen Grenfell, Sandra and Eric Bartlett, Tom Churchill, Rick Singer, Jeanne and Dave Sprowls, Mark and Mary Ann Wood, Becky Sandefur, Joseph Sandefur, Jeff and Tammi Gibson, John O'Leary, Wendy Dillenschneider and Greg Liverman, Rick Hughes, Helen Stoner, Cyd Roberts, Joe Murray, John and Teri Genduso.

Barrie called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM

- 1) Barrie – President, informed us that the HOA website traffic continues to grow. Then introduced new members present: John and Teri Genduso, Helen Stoner and family.
- 2) No report from Chris Christensen – Vice President (not present). A special note of thanks to Chris for his many years of service as an officer of the Association.
- 3) Barrie – Interim Treasurer - treasurer report. We have \$1,454.70 earmarked for our legal defense fund and a general account balance of \$5,914.58 for a total of \$7,369.28. Barrie then brought up the issue of the contributions that we make annually, which have been on hold while he was Interim Treasurer. He asked for a review of the contributions and which ones we should continue to make. Here is the list of our typical contributions and the decision of the membership on which to continue and which to suspend:

4 Mile Fire Department	\$450.00 annually	Continue
Florissant Library	\$100.00 annually	Continue
Teller County Fair	\$ 40.00 annually	Suspend*
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 50.00 annually	Continue
Teller County Search & Rescue	\$100.00 annually	Continue

\*The last check we sent them was returned uncashed.

- 4) No report from Debbie Webb – Secretary (not present)
- 5) Old Business: Yard Sale/Community Gathering a great success but could use more sellers.
- 6) New Business: Storm damage discussed. Road repaired near Sandefur property repaired by Teller County with more gravel, sand and new culvert.
- 7) New Business: Election results: Eric Bartlett (22 votes) is the new Interim Treasurer and Kathleen Nelson (20 votes) is the new Interim Vice-President. Next year we will have a regular election to elect permanent officers.
- 8) Owners Comments: The issue of general road maintenance was raised by Jeff Gibson and discussed by the members. We need more people to call and complain directly to the county about the road conditions when necessary. (687-8812).
- 9) Owners Comments: The current status of the 4 Mile Fire Department was raised by Sandra Bartlett and discussed by the members. The department was recently dissolved and is currently non-functioning. The last fire chief (Tom Hatton) was fired and most of the other

volunteers resigned in protest so the department is asking for new volunteers to join the organization. Emergency services for Highland Meadows are currently being covered by the Florissant Fire District and their adjacent fire stations in Colorado Mountain Estates and Cripple Creek Mountain Estates.

[Editor's Note: I am including below, as part of the Meeting Minutes, a scan of a recent article from the Pikes Peak Courier Extra that appeared on July 5, 2017 and provides some additional details on the 4 Mile situation. I have also included a direct mail piece we all received from the new Fire Chief, Jack Lowe.]

- 10) Owners Comments: The need for a community slash removal project was raised by Mark Wood and discussed by the members. Mark submitted a written proposal for member consideration with several rental prices for chippers that could be rented for a week and I have included a copy of it below for your information. Rick Hughes provided the name of a local company he has worked with, Rocky Mountain Hauling owned by Dave Chandler (719) 684-3692, that property owners could hire for such purposes. I have also added Dave's contact info to the [Important Contacts & Phone Numbers](#) section of the News & Notices page of our website.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM

Submitted by: *Barrie Schwartz, President*

# FOUR MILE FIRE AUDIT REVEALS DEFICIENCIES



The residents of Four Mile were in general supportive of plans for the Fire Protection District and the new chief John Lowe. The room was packed at the public meeting June 21. Photo by Pat Hill

BY PAT HILL  
 pat.hill@pikespeaknewspapers.com

After two months of succinct statements about the sudden firing of the chief and subsequent dissolution of Four Mile Fire Protection District, the directors came out swinging last week.

A report from the Ignis Forensics, LLC, read by Steve Witcher at the public meeting June 21, slams the department for its non-compliance in many areas of firefighting standards, including the station as well as equipment inventory.

"The board believed the audit was necessary after it saw the state the fire station was in following the April 19 meeting," Witcher said, referring to the date the board fired the chief Tom Hatton, Jr. "On April 20, the fire station was locked up with no access allowed by anyone but the board president (Randy Bruggink)."

Before reading the report, Witcher said the previous board, as of Feb. 2016, authorized the purchase of new masks and oxygen tanks which firefighters must wear when going inside a structure fire. "At

the same time, that board authorized the purchase of six sets of bunker gear," Witcher said, adding that the board inquired three times, in July, January and April about progress on the purchases. "To date, no quotes have been received nor have orders ever been placed," he said.

## EQUIPMENT OUT OF COMPLIANCE

As well, the previous board authorized the purchase of new radios. "When asked about the time

## FOUR MILE FIRE AUDIT

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frame for these purchases, the board was told the report could not be provided," Witcher said.

According to the Ignis report, equipment out of compliance included:

- 11 of 13 helmets
- 20 of 22 shirts
- 16 of 16 jackets
- 11 of 14 fire shelters which means these shelters can be used on local fire only, not on federal fires.

In addition, the audit found no records that the chief had tested the hoses or the ladders. As well, the audit found no records of vehicle checks required within 24 hours of a run.

"While the findings of the audit were not what the community or

the board wanted to learn about the condition of the equipment or the fire station, the board is continuing to do everything we can to ensure the safety of our volunteers and community," Witcher said.

### MORE BAD NEWS

If the dissolution weren't enough, the Florissant fire department expects to be paid for responding to service calls within the Four Mile district. "Since April, Florissant has covered three medical calls, but no traffic accidents or fire," said Irene Drallmeier.

For medical calls or traffic accidents out of its district boundaries, Florissant normally charges \$400 for each response, Drallmeier said.

On the other hand, Four Mile

has not been charging for calls out of its district, but perhaps should start, she added. As well, grants through gaming funds (Limited Gaming Impact Fund grants) are available for calls related to gaming, Drallmeier said. "Four Mile has never submitted claims for these calls," she added.

As of last month, Florissant hasn't submitted a bill, Drallmeier said. "I also learned that their chief does mandatory drug testing at the time of application for firefighting," she said.

On a positive note, the new fire chief, John Lowe, is scheduled to start work July 10 and from there, assemble a volunteer crew of firefighters and replace the outdated equipment, Witcher added.

### DISTRICT ASSETS AND POTENTIAL SAFETY ISSUES

The district has \$489,00 worth of rolling assets, said Stan Bishop, new board member, who reported on defects such as the emergency lights, pump and ladders. As well, the engine in front of the station does not run.

In addition to being appointed to the board, Bishop was recently named Commander by Sheriff Jason Mikesell, who was in the audience. Deputy Eric Hellman was on duty, checking for weapons at the door.

While a resident expressed his support for the board, he took umbrage at being disarmed of his knife by Hellman. "By what au-

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thority are you disarming us and suspending my 2nd Amendment rights?" he asked.

Because there are safety issues, said Jean Webb, the board's secretary. "The weapons' ban is only temporary and the reason is because several members of the board have been physically threatened," she said. "We want to be safe."

Mikesell added. "There have been concerns and the board has the right to say 'no weapons on the premises'," Mikesell said. "They have the authority to do so. It's a private building."

The man threatened to sue if he didn't receive a satisfactory answer to why he was disarmed.

Other than the complaint about the knife, public comment after the reports was generally positive. To a question from the audience about purchases that weren't made, Witcher replied that the money is still the fund to replace the outdated equipment.

#### HATTON RESPONDS

Still bruised over the firing, Hatton refutes much of the audit report. One of the auditors, Dianna Taylor, is a neighbor of Witcher's, Hatton said.

As far as the equipment goes, the items were discussed at a meeting, he said. "Bunker gear is outrageously expensive and we tried several sets on loan, as well as the wildland gear," he said.

As the sizes vary from each company, Hatton said he saw no need to buy custom-fit gear and was in the process of checking prices before he was fired. "You try these things out first," he said.

Hatton was derisive about the fire shelters. "Those were practice shelters and would never have been put in a pack and used," he said.

When it comes to testing the hoses, there is no "use-by" date on them, he said. "And this year is our year for ladder testing," he said. "The board is acting like they didn't know about the equipment and testing. They're being disingenous."

While Hatton acknowledges that the board approved some purchases, many of them were beyond the district's budget. "You can budget for purchases as long as you have a surplus. You also have to keep back 3 percent for emergencies, so we

had less to work with in 2016."

According to Hatton, the board, previous or current, did not follow procedure. For instance, when the district goes beyond its budget provided by the mill levies, the board is required to submit an emergency resolution to the Department of Local Affairs, he said.

"I told the board they had to pass a budget resolution but they never did," he added. "Part of my frustration is that these are statutory things that go back to 2014."

Because the struggle for funds has been going on for nearly a year, Hatton cites a personality conflict between some members of the board with a few firefighters. "This issue is doing down a legal path because it's getting to the point of being ridiculous," he said.

#### COMMENTS FROM ROBERT BOWERS, A RESIDENT

"The department has always been a bit disorganized as compared to a paid department. I cannot believe the recent claims that funding was made available to Tom for equipment purchases and they weren't made. That sounds like nonsense to me. I know, from personal experience, Tom put his men's safety first and foremost in every respect, as he should. To claim he refused to purchase the latest and greatest is beyond belief and comprehension.

When you only have four to six volunteers trained, you don't fire anyone without cause. Please, fire a volunteer that has an impeccable record for personal reasons?

The only important issue is Tom was always the first on scene within minutes of a call. Whether that was a gas leak, fire, car wreck or a medical emergency, Brad as well. While I am a resident of the Four Mile district, I want firefighters, EMTs, Tom, Brad or anyone else that can and will save lives and property. Steve Witcher and his cronies do neither. How dare they fumble the ball as bad as they have. They are poor administrators, not fire fighters.

I will cooperate and volunteer with any group or individual for the coming recall of these board members. I would hope all Four Mile District residents will do the same. The residents must make a stand to combat stupidity wherever it is found."

# Benefits

Personal satisfaction and pride in helping others

Make a difference in your community

Training and education opportunities

New friendships and lasting bonds

Free uniforms and protective equipment and gear

## Contact Information

**Chief Jack Lowe**

**Office Hours: 9am - 5pm**

**Address: 8437 Teller Rd 11**

**719-689-3417**

POSTAL PATRON

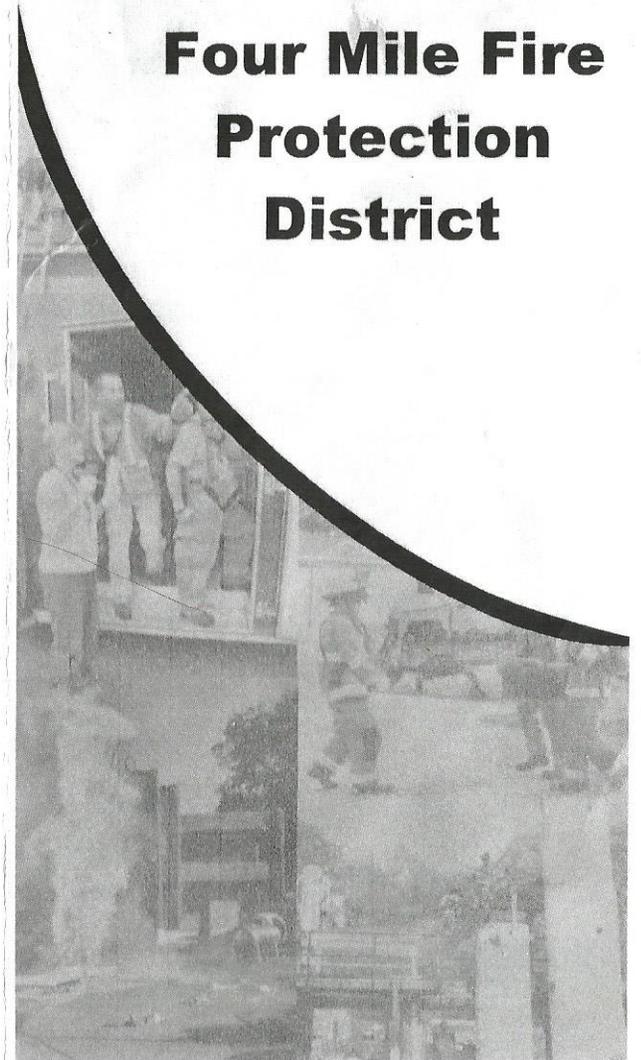
HCR 70

Florissant, Colorado 80816

# Become A Volunteer



## Four Mile Fire Protection District



## Recruiting

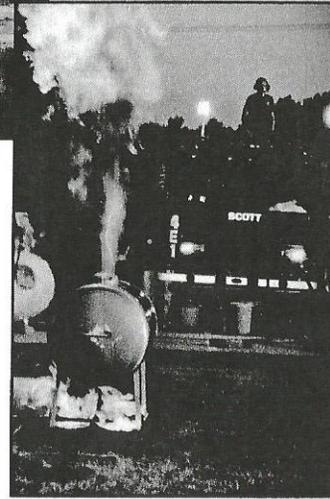
- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Live or work in the district covered by the department.
- Hold a valid driver's license.



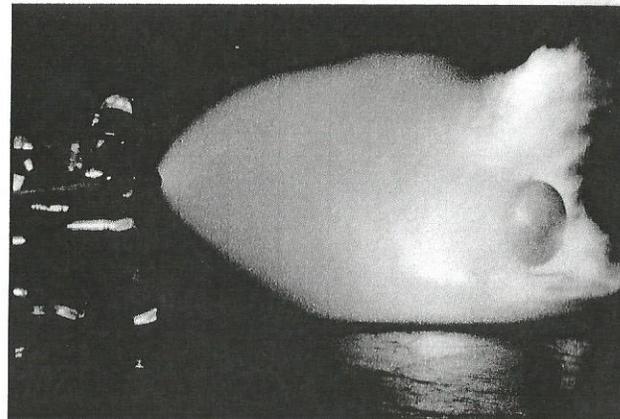
- Commit a minimum amount of time to volunteer and train.
- No experience required.
- Help with department's functions.

## Volunteer Firefighter Gains:

- New challenges and obstacles
- Training
- Equipment

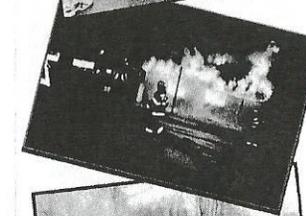


- Personal reward
- New friendships
- New skills



## Mission:

- Prevent the loss of life
- Fire prevention
- Public education
- Protect the environment



**Attn: All former volunteer fire fighters:** Please return equipment you may still have, including radios, pagers, gear, etc. which belong to the taxpayers of our district. Equipment may be dropped off at the station or with any member of the Board.

Monday, July 17, 2017

## Community Slash Removal Project

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### Cost of Chipper Rental for Community Slash Removal

#### - Rental Options Reviewed

- Home Depot - 7120 N. Academy Blvd. - Colorado Springs (719) 593-7482 (chipper not available at closer Southgate Store in the Springs)
  - 6" Chipper (only size available)
    - Daily Rate: w/o tax \$259.00
    - Weekly Rate: w/o tax \$777.00 (4-days counts as weekly rate)
    - Deposit: \$300.00 & will be applied to rental total
    - Reservation not available, first come/first serve
    - Delivery is not available
- Bill's Tool Rental - 125 Chestnut St. - Colorado Springs (open 7-days week, M-F 7am-5pm; Sat/Su 8am-12pm) (719) 634-4190
  - 6" Chipper
    - Daily Rate w/tax \$209.00
    - Weekly Rate w/tax \$838.00
  - 12" Chipper
    - Daily Rate w/tax \$462.00
    - Weekly Rate w/tax \$1,972.00
    - Deposit: Prepay; daily or weekly
    - Optional: Delivery is \$360.00 (\$180.00 each way)
    - Notice required: 4-day for reservation

Pickup of chippers will require a 2" trailer ball and 1/2 ton pickup or other appropriate towing vehicle.

**Respectfully submitted by Mark Wood, Lot 65, Highland Meadows.**