

Snowden Community Council 05.03.2023 Board Meeting

Council Members present: Robert Conner, Roger Gadway, Chuck Kliesh, Lloyd Olson, Jenne Patterson, Jenn Sharp. Absent: Tom Montag, Dan Spatz, and Chris Stein. There were six additional Snowden Community members present; and two guests: Fire District #3 Chief Wes Long, and WA. State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) representative Sharon Frazey.

With thanks to Fire District #3 for the use of the Cherry Lane Fire Station, Chair Roger called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. After introductions all around, Sharon Frazey made her presentation. The DNR is committed to building forest health and protection from wildfires on the landowner's property, and with a greater goal of working on the community level for forest and community health and resiliency. The programs' goals are to work with property owners to create management plans and help with implementation for forest health on non-federal lands from ½ to 5,000 acres; and to create safe spaces of 100 feet around structures. All landowners are encouraged to use common sense fire safety habits including removing leaf litter from gutters, clearing vegetation from around structures, and keeping woodpiles away from the house. Property owners are encouraged to contact the DNR at <https://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov/> to sign up for a free home Fire-Ready assessment that will also include evaluating canopy and understory density on your property, and various grants or cost sharing programs available to help pay for getting the work done. Grants are available for the landowner to receive 50% cost sharing. A DNR project is underway to create a White Salmon Fuel Break, which will create a fire protection buffer around the City of White Salmon, including the hospital, high school, Hwy. 141 Alternative, and Hwy 14; affected landowners are encouraged to participate.

Charles Landsman, DNR project manager for Community Resiliency was unable to attend the meeting but has a Firewise Community program where for 1 hour of education or 1 hour of community service, a community is eligible for grants. The deadline for completing the \$3000 community grant is coming up on June 15. Discussion included what to do about neighbors who create a risk by not managing their properties, and less than fire-wise management practices by large land owners such as timber companies and the PUD. Sharon said that we can call her about fire-risky neighbors – and she will begin the often long process of persuading cooperation by going to talk to them. Bob said that the DNR has been an excellent group to work with, and others agreed.

Sharon Frazey concluded by saying she and the DNR welcome and encourage landowners and community groups to invite assessments, and to suggest ideas for projects that will add to forest and community health and resiliency.

Our next guest Chief Wes Long gave us an update on Fire District #3. An issue arises when timberlands not within the FD boundaries get logged then "improved" to residential. These properties outside the FD are often denied fire insurance, and by law, owners must be charged for fire district services provided. The FD cannot force people to join the District but can only educate them as to the many advantages to joining.

The District's Survey and Ratings Assessment is coming up on May 31. Ratings are based on 1) 911 dispatch and performance; 2) water distribution, including number, location and capacity of tanks, and 3) the Fire Department, including number, type, and maintenance of trucks, and training of staff and volunteers. Properties along Snowden Rd. are currently rated at "8 "; fire hydrants and improved muster time would lower rating. Chief Long's goals are to get the rating to "6" near town, and "7" on Snowden. FD#3 currently averages around 300 calls a year (nearly one a day) and have already had 100 calls this year. Facilities: At Cherry Lane Station appliances are being installed, and maintenance-free landscaping will be completed. (Chuck is a big help as volunteer!) The new fire engine will arrive by mid-2024. The Husum Station will have new bathrooms

and ADA access. The District is proud to have completed its Bond Improvement goals, and done so under budget.

The recent Citizen's Study (including Lloyd, Eric and Sandy) of FD#3 was very well done, can be seen on the FD website, with recommendations for improvements.

FD#3 supports the plan to blend the White Salmon and District #3 Fire Departments to create a Regional Fire Authority (Bingen is not participating). Among other benefits, consolidation would support training of volunteers locally, will help District plans to have a Fire Cadet program in the high school, support EMS training in the Community, and support improving recruitment of long term volunteers. Lastly, the Fire District has filed a complaint with Century Link, because the District is paying for services that are not being provided. The Chief repeated his commitment that transparency is vital to FD #3.

Meeting Minutes for April were approved as corrected. Chuck gave the **Treasurer's Report** : The balance is \$1,369.14, which includes much appreciated May Meeting donations, and a \$0.04 increase from the bank.

Correspondence: None. **Additions to the Agenda:** None.

Website Committee: Jenne reported that populating the website is continuing, especially in the Committee pages, and in the About Us page, where there is a new article on the Origin of the SCC. The last payment due to website consultant Aaron Kemp has been sent.

Broadband Committee: Jenne (Co-Chair of BB Committee) reported on the Broadband Action Team (BAT) meeting in Lyle on April 15. The BAT determined that they must make an intense public education effort to encourage rural Klickitat County residents to take the State Computer Speed Test. Accurate information on internet accessibility is crucial for federal funding to be available where it is most needed. The deadline for the speed test is May 12. Outreach efforts will include radio interviews, the dissemination of post cards, and whatever else we can do.

Tank Restoration Committee: Chief Long says that he needs cost numbers from the Committee, and Roger (Chair of Tank Committee) reported that they are still working on getting the Chief the estimates. Issues include: type of primer to be used, amounts and colors of paints, the availability of a sprayer and compressor, and also availability of a cherry-picker lift (as opposed to using more dangerous scaffolding.)

New Business: None.

Good of Order : None

Upcoming Meetings/Events: Not reported.

Roger **Adjourned** the meeting at 9:26 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Bea Lackaff

Secretary (Pro-Tem)