

**Board Members Present:** Lafe Ball, Cecelia Borland, Glenn Borland, Robert Carlyle, Elizabeth Getzoff, Mary Ellen Harshberger (alternate), Rosemary Johnston, John Lesac, Michael Pique, Rigel Rafto, Yvonne Vaucher, Jack Weisgerber.

**Board Members Absent:** Mike Appelman, Elizabeth Tainer (alternate), Linda Thorne, Michael Walsh.

The PMPO Board Meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM at the Palomar Mountain Fire Department, by Glenn Borland, chair. A quorum of Board members was present. It was noted that the Board has one vacancy at this time. Also present were Cliff Kellogg, Keith Ronchetti, Alan Serry, Burt Hulbert, Rosie Lopresti, Walt Johnston, Gary and Lynda Lockhard, Bill Leininger, and Cal Fire Captain Dean Kowalski.

Treasurer Rigel Rafto reported our finances are strong, stable, and consistent from year to year. Our current combined checking and savings account balance is \$50,054.40, up \$514.07 since January 31, 2019. The report was approved.

Secretary Michael Pique presented the minutes of the 2019 February 9 and May 25 board meetings, approved as submitted (August 12 drafts).

### **Old Business**

#### **Palomar Mountain Fire Department (PMFD):**

Cliff Kellogg, PMVFD President and former Fire Chief, says the Annual General Meeting of the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department will be held at noon on Sunday September 1. Two board members will be elected. He reported that the county has replaced the construction manager for our new fire station. Finding contractors willing to work at remote rural locations has been a problem for Palomar as well as for Mount Laguna and Sunshine Summit stations.

#### **Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (PMFSC):**

PMFSC Board President Yvonne Vaucher reported that the Council has \$3910.68 unrestricted funds in the bank. Our Wildland-Urban Interface fire workshop will be August 24, conducted by Tom Shoots. Phil Boczanowski has cleared 15 feet on each side of Conifer Road.

The big news is a county program to build "wildfire-resilient communities" called the CRRP: Community Risk Reduction Program". Gary Johnson, a "go-getter", is heading this. Its base is pre-fire planning: vegetation management, fuels reduction, more fire-hardened new construction, defensible space, evacuation corridors, and education. First year focus locations are Pine Valley and Crest, second year Guatay and Palomar Mountain. We need to know *our* priorities so the PMFSC is asking our local groups to discuss and report back.

The PMFSC has been talking to the California Conservation Corps (CCC) about getting help for improving emergency access along private roads. The CCC is ready but we would need CEQA (California Environmental Protection Agency) approval which is lengthy and often expensive. Eric Just, in charge, is seeing if we could get a partial exemption.

Chipping and dumpster days are underway, funded by the PMFSC's San Diego County Neighborhood Reinvestment Program grant. We have had four dumpster days so far with two remaining. Robert Carlyle and Lee Sylvasy of Stumpmasters have chipped at residents' properties about five days with two and a half days budgeted remaining. Cecelia Borland says we are distributing the Barricade fire-protection gel kits little by little.

We expect to receive \$2500 again this year from SDG&E for community education. Yvonne still needs property owners to pledge fire clearance work, which is credited as "matching funds" at \$28 per hour.

Yvonne led a discussion on preparation. A concern continues to be how to alert residents and vacationers that an emergency is happening and to "tune in". Sirens continue to be mentioned but their practicality in our wooded and hilly terrain is not apparent. Cliff Kellogg says that neither Julian nor Mount Laguna have sirens. Laff Ball asks if there are local ham radio frequencies to monitor. A Baefung radio costing about \$30 would communicate well in emergencies but requires a ham radio operator license. Mike Pique suggests the FRS (Family Radio Service) radios which are readily available and don't need a ham license.

Bill Leininger says all the county CERTS will be enrolled in a Blackboard Connect alert system, which could be reflected to PMPO, Palomar Mutual Water Company, and other organizations' members. Cecelia Borland asks if the two USFS campgrounds have hosts who could alert and awaken campers. Cliff Kellogg says they are only sometimes on duty. Cecelia says a lot is personal responsibility: keep track of what's going on, where the fires are.

Yvonne says we *do* need education on what to do if you can't get out. Cal Fire has a good video "Into the Fire" about the 2018 Paradise Camp Fire. She says our defensible space is different from down below because we live in a forest. Structural hardening is important, especially ember-resistant vent screens.

Bill Leininger suggests all residents keep on-hand a sign "notified and evacuated" to post on their house or driveway when they have left. Rosie Lopresti notes that addresses on roads are all mixed up, and, unlike Crestline, Bailey's area has no numbered easement road signs. Laff Ball suggests we put up signs showing the directions "to fire station" or "to East Grade Road", since we've been discouraged from putting up signs saying "emergency exit" or similar. Bill suggests "in an emergency, go to the Post Office". He also points out that portable A-frame signs with EXIT arrows could be set out rapidly and flexibly in emergencies, guided by law enforcement.

For PMFSC info, see <http://www.mypalomarmountain.com/firesafecouncil>. Notices and information are also regularly placed on the community bulletin board outside the Palomar Post Office. Yvonne urges everyone to sign up for emergency alerts:

(<https://www.readysandiego.org/alertsandiego>)

### **Traffic Safety:**

Burt Hulbert says the accident statistics are better, much better, than a year ago, on the South Grade and East Grade "largely because of the speed limit signs": 30 MPH on the South Grade (S6) and 40 MPH on East Grade (S7). He's happy to say that the CHP has done a rather good job, even being up here on weekdays with multiple units, sometimes including a motorcycle officer. Jack Weisgerber noted the CHP responded quickly, within two hours, to a report of a rash of ATVs buzzing Bailey Meadows Road. Elizabeth Getzoff says she saw kids skateboarding on the Highway 76 hairpin curves – apparently this is called "street luge". Cecelia Borland asks if we can have a 'Reduced Speed Ahead' sign where S6 curves up from Highway 76 since the 30 MPH limit starts very close. Burt assures us that's not an issue; it's OK to break the speed limit some.

### **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):**

CERT program manager Bill Leininger says Palomar CERT is participating in the state-wide CERT grant responding to lessons from the Paradise fire. Palomar CERT will be getting a trailer to centralize and protect support equipment such as signs, radios, and batteries. Along with the other 160,000 California CERT members, Bill is asked to collect signatures from those reached by CERT activities, so drop by the CERT booth at the Labor Day weekend picnic.

### **Resident Stickers**

Laff Ball pointed out that Palomar Mountain residents sometimes need evidence of that, such as during snow days or certain road closures. He will investigate ideas like vinyl stickers or rear-view-mirror hangers. Possibly these could be tied to State Park access.

### **Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM):**

Rosie Lopresti and Jack Weisgerber say the next event will be on Saturday, August 31 (Labor Day weekend), a community picnic and potluck from noon to 4 PM at the US Forest Service Crestline Picnic Ground, next to the fire station. The Fire Safe Council, CERT, and Fire Department will have tables; there will be children's games, an opportunity drawing, and a "free: take me" table.

Elizabeth Getzoff suggests asking people at the picnic what they'd suggest doing with the little house once the county builds the new fire station and returns the house to the community. Rosemary Johnston asks if there are plans to expand the house. Cliff Kellogg says that he and Earl Walls, who repaired and renovated the house around 2008-2010, talked a lot about that. Earl

had sketched a plan for an adjoining 30x50-foot building without water or sewer lines, connected to the existing house by a breezeway. A problem with expansion is that grant money comes in too small a piece usually. We also would need more money to maintain a larger structure.

**Palomar Mountain State Park:**

Rosemary Johnston, President of the "Friends of the Palomar Mountain State Park" board, says the amphitheater renovation will be starting at the end of September, with materials in hand and a contractor hired. The Executive Director of the Palomar Christian Conference Center, Micah Beard, has joined the Friends' board of directors. The interpretive ranger, Will Meyst, hired by the Friends has been busy lecturing and conducting the Junior Ranger program.

The State Park administrators have expressed concerns about the Apple Festival access, parking, and shuttle operations occasioned by the overwhelming public attendance at the October 2018 festival. The Friends board has decided, reluctantly, to cancel the 2019 festival so that these public safety concerns can be adequately addressed.

**PMPO Web Site:**

Katie Michelmores has said she cannot carry on managing the [www.pmpoinfo.com](http://www.pmpoinfo.com) web site. Rosemary Johnston says that the State Park Friends are paying Charity Hartley to update their web site; Rosemary will send Charity's contact info to Katie to see if she would like to do the PMPO's as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Next meeting is Saturday November 16, 2019, 10:00 AM.

Michael Pique, Secretary (email: [secretary@pmpoinfo.com](mailto:secretary@pmpoinfo.com))

Minutes approved by PMPO board November 16, 2019.