



## **Draft Minutes**

### **Upper Susitna Seniors Center, Thurs., Sept. 3rd, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.**

- I. Establish Quorum:** Kimberly, Peter, Bill, Robert, Gary, Trevor
- II. Call meeting to order**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. Minutes and Treasurer's report** (Tabled until next meeting) Trevor / Peter
- V. Approval of meeting agenda** (Trevor / Peter)
- VI. Persons to be Heard (5 minutes suggested)**
  1. Doyle Holmes - money still good for DOT plans, Borough in process of setting aside land - possible to take place next Summer, 2016
  2. Eric Chappel - 17 years of emergency responding in this area; Capt. of the local dept and has been acting chief when Ken Farina not available. MatSu Borough and fire department - dysfunctional relationship. Accident at Mile 98, Advisory that road was blocked paged. Doesn't feel he was being a borough responder at that time. He was not wearing required PPE and was in his personal vehicle. In order to get the hwy open, he helped a driver with an overturned trailer after getting verbal permission from the driver. Ken Barkley told Eric not to help in this situation in any way, including offering a tow strap. A trooper and others on scene were assisting. Ken continued to tell Eric he was not allowed to help and then said Eric was not to respond to any call until a meeting could be called. The response team are standing behind Eric at this time and are not responding until Eric is allowed to once again to be an emergency responder. There is concern about the borough being liable and possibly sued for Eric responding on his personal time. A letter of termination is alleged. The resolution proposed by Eric is when does the borough have rights and when Eric has personal rights. A clear cut answer is requested; like a special shirt that clearly represents the borough and therefore, would follow the boroughs rules, while wearing said shirt. Talkeetna Fire Service area is taxed and Mile 92 through 204 of the Parks. Willow and Caswell has their own fire service areas. This is not an isolated issue. Others include: Lack of vehicle maintenance, retention of employees, difficult process to recruit new responders, local control versus rules made with Palmer and Wasilla only in mind.
  3. Jim Gamble - Certain rules, not only borough rules but also federal procedures for responders, must be enforced. He supports following chain of command. Deteriorating situation must be addressed and fixed. Maintenance issues are not unique to Talkeetna. One of the glaring examples of the federal rules is having no facial hair so the masks fit properly; without following this the borough would be liable for harm to the responder. QUESTION posed: What is the policy, procedure or rule for personal time versus responder/ employee time? Jim was not clear on his answer and said it would be investigated. Retention has been an issue for YEARS; it is a constant cycle of recruiting and training.
  4. Ken Barkley - As he came to the borough position of deputy director, he got a call from the State who said Talkeetna Fire Dept was losing their certification because paperwork for funding was not done. Eric Dinkwalter doesn't know computers, but his wife and Eric Chapel got some training and the necessary forms were completed so certification was completed before deadline. Ken has respect for Eric Chappel and his experience. Ken and others happened to be in the area for a debriefing for another vehicle accident. Ken discoursed details of the accident from his point of view. He states he directed Eric Chappel not to put hands on as there would be borough liability, but that he could give advice. Ken wanted to debrief directly after the incident at the fire station with the chief (Eric Dinkwalter) and the responders. If there are differences at a scene,

then we must follow chain of command and then, huff and puff later at the station. Eric Chappel has NOT been terminated at this time.

5. Gary of the board - Eric's specific issues - do you train your people as a matter of policy? Ken stated in this instance, it became a trooper scene. Eric Chappel said he wasn't in this training for 16 years and has seen no policy manual. Sounds like this has been an accumulation of things over time. Ken didn't want Eric to take the risk and let the trooper to take control of the scene. Special negotiations should be taken with so much at stake for taxpayers, training and equipment. Ken is working on several options to ensure emergency coverage for our area. Ken states the definitive policies are a priority for him to ensure clarity for responders as to when they are on duty and under borough jurisdiction or not. Robert: Address the severe staffing shortage ASAP - recruitment and retention. Gary stated full time paid positions should be pursued. We've lost the trooper and we don't want to lose our first responders. We want to see you resolve the differences, set the policies, address maintenance and training and then look into full time positions.
6. Larry Dearman - was asked to mediate the problem. Volunteers are diminishing exponentially in today's culture. He researched with plaintiff attorneys when is Eric Chappel working for the borough - only when he is being paid. No one can stop a lawsuit. The main issue, and the only thing that matters, is we need our fire department back. Two jurisdictions are effected by this incident. 23 years with Eric Dinkwalter and 17 years with Eric Chappel are valuable assets and vital to our community's emergency team. Larry wants to mediate to ensure no clear winner so the final decision will be abided by. His goal is to have resolution by evenings end.

**Correspondence Received:**

None

**VII. Committee and Governmental Reports**

- a. Road Service Areas (15 & 29)
- b. Borough Assembly update
- c. Bylaws Committee
- d. Grant Expenditure Committee
- e. Trails Committee
- f. Ways & Means Committee
- g. Election Committee - Patty has nominees and will email. Looking for board volunteers

**X. Old Business**

**XI. New Business**

**XII. Board Member Announcements**

**XIII. Announcements** -- Donations are welcome of up to \$50 per calendar year to help defray administrative costs of carrying out council business.

**XIV. Adjournment** (Trevor and Peter)