

Land's End Homeowner Association

Minutes of Special Homeowner Meeting

September 14, 2003

A Special Meeting of Owners was held at The Link's real estate office on this date for the purpose of discussing the creation and financing of a fire department for Land's End. TJ opened this special meeting at 3:00 p.m. by telling those owners in attendance (22) "Welcome to the new LE VFD", followed by an introduction of the officers and directors as follows: Arlan Jaeger - Vice President, Jim Saegert - Director, Dave Kaesheimer - Director, Cathy Jaeger - Treasurer and Barb Henshaw - Secretary.

TJ then introduced Gary Simpkins, Quitman Fire Chief and turned the meeting over to him. Chief Simpkins told the audience he has been a fire chief for 23 years and that Wood County had a total of 11 departments all of which operate under a mutual aid agreement. He commented on how many new homes were being built in this area and how much a fire station was needed here. Gary said that response times, although departments try their hardest to be fast, were long because first it takes a while for volunteers to get to the fire station, fire stations were so far away and that the poor quality of the roads and so many curves made driving fire trucks even harder. We really needed a fire station in this area and he was very happy to see so much progress already being made towards that goal. Gary also told the crowd that several volunteers from Land's End had already been to one fire class held in Quitman and he was looking forward to them coming to more. He said he had been working with TJ and he was sure we were in good hands. Gary spoke on some of the costs involved with starting a new department and that he knew how hard it is to raise funds, but he said we were ahead of the game with the fire truck TJ had gotten from the Forrest Service. He offered any support they could provide and knew other departments would help also. Chief Simpkins ended his talk by saying "We are here to help".

TJ then asked Jack Essex (the HOA treasurer) to speak to the group. Jack began by saying "Fire is our greatest risk here in Land's End". He spoke about the reasoning behind the Board's decision to start our own fire department. Hydrants, hoses and a cart to carry it all from one place to another would be very expensive, and would not solve our problem. He spoke of the actual distance from hydrants to homes and said the water pressure wouldn't have enough force to fight a fire, even if every homeowner had their own hydrant. Jack informed the group of the benefits of a 501 c (3) and that contributions to a fire department would be tax deductible, whereas Owners would not be able to claim a deduction on their taxes if the Homeowner Association were to make an assessment. He also stated that fundraising could be carried outside of Land's End to all areas covered by the new fire department. The VFD would be exempt from sales, use, excise and property taxes and would qualify for grants from both state and federal agencies. There was also free equipment and gear available from the Forest Service and more fire trucks would likely become available because of the passage of Proposition 10. Matching grants for vehicles, equipment, training and dry hydrants, plus the possibility of county funds in the future made a new fire station the right thing to do for Land's End. The only disadvantages were that trucks from the Forest Service had to be housed and the initial startup costs would be high. With that, Jack turned the meeting back over to TJ.

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TJ started his presentation by telling the group that the goal was to be up and fully functional in 6 months. That meant a fire-station; trucks, full communications capability and 15 to 20 trained and equipped volunteer firemen. Our primary response area would be this peninsula south of FM 515 and west of Hwy 154. Yantis would remain the primary responder in our area but we would work with them. TJ said "we are getting excellent support from surrounding fire departments like Gary's". He noted that Gary had already given him over 1000' of hose. Yantis city council and fire chief Mike Kenny had already given their permission for us to station Yantis' pumper truck "Old Yeller" at our station. A military 1-Ton truck was given to us by the Forest Service and will be converted into a brush truck used to fight off road fires. Bunker gear (28 sets) were donated, 15 helmets, some boots/gloves and 4 SCBA w/extra tanks were also donated, some from as far away as Canton. TJ has already signed up 12 firefighters and expects more to come from outside Land's End. Two firemen had over 30 years fire fighting experience, another had over 6 years. Jim Goodbread (who teaches at Texas A&M fire school) from Wolf Creek Bay had already agreed to be the training director. Four firemen came from Land's End, 3 from Wolf Creek Bay and 5 from The Link's staff (2 of which live in Red Bird Cove). TJ went on to say "Best of all, Joe Munsch has donated the land for our fire station. It will be outside the construction entrance facing CR 1970. Joe has also agreed to host a golf tournament for our benefit and he really deserves our gratitude and support for his contribution." TJ ended his presentation by saying that area meetings were already in the works for Wolf Creek Bay and the rest of the area to let the public know about the new fire station and to raise funds. He then turned the meeting over to Arlan Jaeger.

Arlan began by reviewing the fire station design. The all metal building would be dark green and beige (exactly like The Link's buildings). It would have an extra strong reinforced slab to support the heavy trucks, room for 4 trucks and be 60 x 60 expandable. Storage for extra equipment would be upstairs and have a cooled/heated training room with kitchenette that could double as a community center, used for fund raisers or be rented out to other groups. It would also have a chief's office and handicap restrooms. Arlan reviewed the site plan and pointed out the drive around and parking spots. He then went over some of the cost estimates as follows:

Building shell (installed) - 30,000
Dozer and dirt work - 6,000
Foundation - 14,000
Driveways & parking area - 10,000
Interior finishing, electric, plumbing, AC etc - 25,000
For a total of - 85,000
The meeting was turned back over to TJ and Jack.

TJ told the group that over \$1,600,000 in grants had been given to Wood County fire departments in 2003 and that, although the grant process was very competitive, he was sure we would eventually be in line for some of them. He also said he had already applied for several. A short Q & A period followed. Bob Anderson asked what a dry hydrant was. Someone mentioned the volunteer fire fighters advancing ages and TJ replied that the Holly Lake fire team had an average age of 65. Gary Simpkins stood to assure everyone the firemen would be put

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through enough tough classes to see if everyone was capable of handling their assigned duties. At this time, Mike Kenny of the Yantis Fire Department joined the meeting and TJ introduced him to the owners.

Next, the total cost estimates for the fire department were described by TJ as follows:

Building \$85,000

Our share of grants for 2 trucks, fire fighting equipment, protective gear, radios (with grants of 116,000) - \$18,000, Insurance \$5,000

Miscellaneous & unknown – \$2,000

Total Startup estimate– \$110,000

Projected sources of these funds were as follows:

80 Land's End owners @ 1,000 each - \$80,000

40 Wolf Creek Bay owners @ 100 each – \$4,000

80 other area residents @ 50 each – \$4,000

Total from neighborhoods - \$88,000

Business sponsor's were estimated at 12 @ \$1,000 each – \$12,000

The remaining \$10,000 must come from fund raisers to be held this fall.

TJ said many financing options and different ways to raise money had been discussed but that it really boiled down to one central point. "Land's End will have to do all the heavy lifting if we start a fire department". The benefit would be that house fires might be put out fast enough to save them, brush fires could likely be put out before they engulfed the entire neighborhood and property values would immediately go up with a fire department so close". TJ closed the meeting by asking owners to "please, get out your check books and make your contributions of \$1,000, or if you're able to, then please go up to the \$2,500 level". He stated that "every HOA and VFD director had already made their contributions". With that, the Yantis fire department received a call and left. Gary Simpkins followed and the meeting ended.

The presentations are attached and incorporated into these minutes.

Recorded by Barb Henshaw