

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AND FIREWISE BOARD MEETING  
FOR THE VILLAGE OF TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO  
HELD ON OCTOBER 3, 2022 (VIA ZOOM) at 10:00 AM**

The meeting was called to order and notice of meeting announced.

Trudy DiLeo thanked Kathy Bennett, Neal King and Sheila Duffy for their many years of work and dedication to this Board. She then welcomed Ben Pitz, the newest member to the Firewise Board and Public Safety Committee.

All members of the Board were present, including Trudy DiLeo, Jim Woodard, Henry Caldwell, Mitch Daniels, Kent Kiehl and Ben Pitz. Since we have so many new members, each of the members took turns introducing themselves and talked a little about their history and their connection to Taos Ski Valley.

Public Safety Committee:

Public Safety Director and Police Chief Virgil Vigil reviewed the reorganization of the Public Safety Department that was enacted this summer. The Public Safety Director will now oversee the police department, the fire department, EMS and ambulance service, as well as Search and Rescue.

We now have 4 police officers: Police Chief and Public Safety Director Vigil, Lieutenant Robert Salazar, Officer Justin Hutter and Officer James Gladeau.

The village is fortunate to have Officer Hutter, who completed an EMS training, living in the village now, so he will be able to respond to emergencies very quickly. For any emergency, one of our police officers (even ones that live in town) will be able to get up the canyon before an ambulance. These officers are valuable at directing ambulances to residences, along with performing other emergency services.

Mitch Daniels is now the Fire Division administrator and EMS administrator. Eddie Wisdom is the Chief EMS. Mitch spoke of a grant he is working on to get a new transport vehicle, which holds a stretcher, for the village. The village would only transport patients if it was a 'life or limb' emergency. An ambulance from Taos or Questa is called for transport in most situations. In the winter, patients can also be seen at Mogul Medicine in the village. Chief Vigil also mentioned that another paramedic is going to be hired, probably in the next couple of weeks.

Henry Caldwell asked Mitch Daniels about supplies in the transport van that were susceptible to heat and cold. Mitch said he had gone through the unit and anything that was temperature-sensitive had been pulled out and stored properly.

Mitch Daniels and Virgil Vigil also spoke about defibrillators that are in place around the village. The EMS department is working on getting grant money to replace the pads and batteries to the ones we have, and for more defibrillators. He spoke about the idea of using our GIS (Geographical Information System) that the village has to map out where all the AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators). We could, possibly, put that 'AED locator' map on our village website for public education.

Mitch then gave a status of our firetrucks. We have a new firetruck (2021 model) (#316) that was calibrated at 2000 feet elevation originally. It will have another pump test on October 13th. If it proves not to be workable for our altitude, we'll have to sell it and get another one. In this case, Mitch stated that we'll file a grievance against the company we bought it from and the manufacturer. He thought we could probably get all or most of our

\$294,000. that we paid for it.

Another firetruck (#314) is working, but is scheduled to have transmission work done soon. We also have an older fire engine (#312) that could be brought into use if needed. We have a 'woodland' truck that is not used on structure fires. Mitch also talked about several various vehicles that are to be disposed of, through state surplus or through donations.

Mitch assured everyone that there would always be a functioning firetruck in the village at all times to protect the village.

Jim Woodard asked Mitch how he figured out that the new engine (#316) was miscalibrated. Mitch said that specification was written into the 74-page sales contract, and that this detail had previously been missed.

John Avila said that the new firehouse will have 3 bays and Jalmar Bowden said it should be completed in about a year.

We had a discussion about smoke masks in the event of a wildfire evacuation to village buildings. Trudy DiLeo said she'd do some research about what masks would prove to be beneficial in this kind of scenario. Jalmar Bowden also noted that both of the buildings that would be used in a village-wide evacuation (Tenderfoot Katie's and the Phoenix) had very good ventilation systems that would be very beneficial in a wildfire.

Chief Vigil gave a follow-up on the village sirens that would warn of a wildfire. We have 4 sirens spread throughout the village that were being repaired on the day of the meeting, so should be functioning well in a day or two.

Chief Vigil also said that the traffic cameras that were recently installed were working out well. Our officers made 55 vehicle stops in the last month, giving 18 traffic tickets for speeding and failing to stop at the stop sign. He said the cameras were definitely helping with our previous problems with speeders.

Henry Caldwell said that he had spoken with Antonia, the postmaster for Taos, about the package lockers that were to be installed in the post office. She said they were supposed to arrive this week, and then she would have to schedule the actual installation.

John Avila talked about the work that has been done recently involving burying overhead power lines by Kit Carson. Though a lot of work has been done lately in the village, Kit Carson is having extensive problems with getting supplies. A recent major hurricane in Florida is only going to make this shortage of supplies worse, at least for a while. Work to be done on Upper Twining Road will be delayed until next spring. Work along Highway 150 involves multiple entities and continues to be moving along in the process of getting permits, paperwork, etc. He spoke of various projects in the village that have been completed this past building season. Henry Caldwell and John spoke about getting private easements for some of the work to be done.

Anthony Martinez reiterated that the sirens were being installed this week. He also told us that the fire hydrants would be tested today. He added that he would look into improving the signage on the trash dumpster that explains how to compress the garbage when the front area gets full.

#### Firewise Board

Mitch Daniels spoke of the work being done to complete the 5-year update for our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Scotney Blackburn has been working on this project for several months. Her contract with the village ended about a week ago. She gave Mitch her incomplete draft of what she got done before she

left, and Mitch sent this out to the board members a few days ago.

Mitch assured the group that he and Chief Vigil could probably get it finished by the end of this week. Some of the incompletions involve certain maps that need to be added.

Trudy DiLeo brought up concerns that she had about the best way to keep up with all the information that needs to be included in the CWPP moving forward. It was suggested that we include the CWPP in our meetings every 3 months, to help keep everyone involved current in the effort to stay up-to-date with this project.

Jalmar Bowden stated that the CWPP is a living document that will constantly be added to through the years. He also stated that he'd like to set up a folder in the village "SharePoint" (a group work platform) where the CWPP will be posted for staff and board members to view. He would like to set up a second folder that would be open to staff and board members for entering updates. This way, at the end of 5 years, all the information will be ready for the CWPP recertification. He said he would start trying to get that set up.

We didn't get an update on the Non-Federal Land (NFL) grant from Jalmar Bowden as we lost contact with him over the Zoom meeting.

Trudy DiLeo mentioned that she contacted Senator Martin Heinrich's office about establishing a one-lane passageway from Taos Ski Valley over to Red River in the case of a wildfire blocking Highway 150 and approaching the village, so that residents and visitors could drive out to safety. She had been in contact with Rita O'Connell, a field representative for Senator Heinrich. Although initial contact had been made with Rita months ago, Rita had been extremely busy during our wildfire season, and had put us on the 'back burner'. Rita said she would investigate any possibilities for an evacuation route for vehicles to Red River and get back to Trudy.

It was mentioned that this idea has come up several times in the past, with no action. Kent Kiehl mentioned that he had put forth some effort for this in the past, and would look into it as well. Jalmar Bowden stated that the buildings that will be used for evacuation during a wildfire (Tenderfoot Katie's and the Phoenix) would be very safe and he didn't think any effort should be put forth in trying to cross the mountain during a wildfire. Trudy DiLeo said that if Jalmar's statement meant that the village would not back such a plan, if possible, that she would cease her efforts. John Avila said that it wouldn't hurt to see if it was possible.

Mitch Daniels reported on a meeting he attended with the Taos Valley Watershed Coalition. He spoke of money available through a program called "Green Corridor" that will clear dead and down trees along Highway 150 in 2023, along with many other projects to thin forests in our general area of New Mexico.

We talked about another program that is provided by Taos Soil and Water Conservation available to property owners for clearing trees. It will "cost-share" the costs of clearing dead and down wood and thinning trees on one's property, up to 80% or so. Sheila Duffy said she had trees cleared twice on her property using this program. We talked about sending out blast emails to all property owners so that the residents are aware of this valuable resource, and also placing it in a more obvious place on the village website.

Trudy DiLeo reminded residents to register with the Taos county mass notification messaging system (called 'Regroup') which can be done online at [taoscounty.org](http://taoscounty.org). This will enable the county to send emergency alerts to residents easily. Residents can also install the "AlertMe - Regroup" App on their phone as well.

She also wanted to remind residents to read the very informative articles on the village website concerning fire safety inside the home. Click "Village Services", then "Public Safety", then "Fire" to find multiple articles on fireplace safety, how to eliminate fire hazards in the home, safety in the kitchen, smoke alarms and escape plans.

She also wanted to remind residents to review and post in a conspicuous space in their home, the current village evacuation plan, which is posted on the home page of the village website. On this same homepage under “Wildfire preparedness” is some good information about the ‘Ready, Set, Go’ program which provides tips and tools for wildfire preparation and help to create a personal action plan during a wildfire.

The next meeting will be November 7, 2022 at 10:00 AM via zoom.

The meeting was adjourned.