

# BEAR CREEK FIRE SERVICE AREA

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## Board Meeting Minutes

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7:30 PM

October 06, 2020

13105 Seward Hwy, Mile 5

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:** Please be aware that due to the recent Covid-19 Pandemic and based on CDC guidelines, the meeting will not be **physically** open to the public. However, the meeting will remain public and all of the public is invited to participate.

Any member of the public wishing to participate or listen to the meeting may do so by calling the following toll-free number below.

888-788-0099 US Toll-free

877-853-5247 US Toll-free

If you have difficulty dialing in to the toll-free number, please use the traditional meeting number listed below.

907-224-9209

**If you are joining by phone, please dial \*6 to unmute yourself to speak or \*9 to raise your hand during the meeting.**

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94183291377>

Meeting ID: 941 8329 1377

One tap mobile

+19712471195,,94183291377# US (Portland)

+12133388477,,94183291377# US (Los Angeles)

Meeting ID: 941 8329 1377

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ar7yDfnmt>

For a copy of the meeting materials, please use the following web address:

<https://www.kpb.us/service-areas/bcfesa/bcfesa-meetings>

The meeting documents will be found with the Agenda

If you experience technical difficulties, please contact Richard Brackin at (907) 224-9201 Monday – Thursday 7 am to 5 pm.

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A Earl Kloster  
Board Member  
Full Term Expires 10/2022

B James Sheehan  
Board Member  
Full Term Expires 10/2022

C Tanya Lester  
Board Member  
Full Term Expires 10/2021

D Dan Logan  
Board Member  
Full Term Expires 10/2021

E Jena Petersen  
Board Member, Chair  
Full Term Expires 10/2020

Richard Brackin  
BCFSA Fire Chief

BCFSA Fire Technician

Kenn Carpenter  
KPB Assembly Representative

### CALL TO ORDER – 7:31PM

#### ROLL CALL

Board Members – James Sheehan, Tanya Lester, Dan Logan, Jena Petersen, Earl Kloster

Director of Office of Emergency Management – Dan Nelson

Fire Chief – Richard Brackin

Public Attendees – Dave Frixel, Sherrie Frixel, Kim Keeter, Rose Plattnode, Gryffin Stephens, Pat Domiatrovich, Jason Brown

SpitswSpots Representatives- Adam Kiffmayer, McKenzie McCarthy

#### CHANGES / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve Earl Kloster. Tanya Lester Second.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES - 09/15/2020

Motion to approve Dan Logan. Earl Kloster Second.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS & PRESENTATION– LIMIT 5 MINUTES

- Presentation – SpitswSpots –

McKenzie McCarthy stated that viewshed impact is important to Spits Spots and minimizing that impact has been a priority. He also stated that Adam has been working to show that the height of the tower would have minimal impact, utilizing drone footage to show the view from the 100' height at the tower location. McKenzie asked Richard Brackin if he had received the footage and Richard stated that he had two videos and two picture from tower height and was prepared to share them over the zoom platform.

Adam Kiffmayer stated that if you look at the video that Richard is sharing, that the tower will be barely visible if visible at all from most angles. Adam also stated that he had talked to Richard who was unopposed to the idea of the tower and antennas being painted a color that will help it blend in with the environment. Adam followed by saying that in his experience, towers of this size do not stick out as much as most imagine it will.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that in the first video that is being shared, there is a building to the left of the proposed tower site that does not point in a direction that would be impacted by tower visibility. McKenzie stated that in a prior meeting, there was talk about a smaller tower. At this point there is no interest in reducing the height of the tower. The impact to service delivery would be too great. McKenzie stated that his part of the presentation was over and deferred to Adam for any additional comments.

James Sheehan asked if any trees would be removed in the vicinity for the project.

Adam Kiffmayer responded to the question saying that while there may be some brush or lower limbs removed, there will be no trees removed for the install of the tower.

James Sheehan then followed up asking about the fence that surrounds the tower blending into the environment.

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October 06, 2020

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Adam Kiffmayer stated that the fence is part of the agreement and discussions with Richard would determine the proper fencing for enclosure. Adam also stated that he had no more to add to the presentation and was prepared to address any questions.

- **Public Comments -**

Dave Frixel – Stated that last meeting James Sheehan talked about going door-to-door to get the word out. He asked if that had happened.

Richard Brackin responded that to a degree that was done, not door-to-door, but as he came in contact with people of the community, he informed them of the meeting, as well as normal posting procedures.

Dave Frixel also stated that they never received any word back on the health risks of the tower.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that there is no health risk.

Dave Frixel asked if they had any documentation to back up the no health risk statement.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that he could provide source documentation if needed, and that they operate in an industry where this question has come up frequently. In all of the information that he has read through the FCC and other sources have shown no indication that there are health risks associated with this type of tower. He followed by saying that the non-ionizing radiation emitted can be blocked by the skin. There is more of a health risk from the cell phone that you put up to your head. The FCC regulates how Spits Spots functions in this industry and there have been no health risks associated with what Spits Spots provides.

Sherri Frixel stated that from the video, it appears that their place was going to be the only one impacted. She asked if the tower location can be moved over a couple of feet, behind some of the larger trees on the property so that they will be less impacted by it.

Adam Kiffmayer stated that he would gladly meet out at the site to discuss an adjustment of a few feet from the current tower location.

Dave Frixel was opposed to Sherrie's request stating that if the top their trees, it would not matter how far they moved it, the tower would still be visible.

Richard Brackin tried to get clarification on the request direction for adjustment. Was the desired move to the North of proposed location, or to the South.

Sherrie Frixel responded that to the North was the direction desired from her.

James Sheehan asked if the report of no health risk was available to the public attending.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that he would look it up, and that the information is publically available through the FCC.

Dave Frixel stated that one of the neighbors who was working on the slope and could not be at the meeting stated that there was a variance that could be applied for that would allow the tower to be put in the flood plain.

# BEAR CREEK FIRE SERVICE AREA

## Board Meeting Minutes

7:30 PM

October 06, 2020

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McKenzie McCarthy answered that the preference was to put it in the flood plain and that that location was shut down by the Borough due to how the money is allocated. Richard Brackin confirmed that it was prohibited by the grant.

Rose Plattnode asked if the environmental impact to the wildlife in the area had been studied, concerning the nesting eagles in the area or the salmon in the stream below. Did they have an expert come and look at it.

Adam Kiffmayer stated that there is an existing tower there. No it will not negatively affect the wildlife habitat.

Rose followed up with the knowledge of the tower emitting a different wavelength and asked again if they have had an expert come out and do a study on the environmental impact.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that they operate a fair amount of towers on the peninsula, especially in the Homer region. The frequencies that are used are found in your WiFi router and probably cars at this point. He stated that a study was not done specifically for the Bear Creek site but he imagined that there would be no impact. He stated that he would be happy to try and find any research concerning 5G's impact on wildlife, but did not feel that he would find any.

Adam Kiffmayer confirmed that there was not study done for the Bear Creek site specifically. He followed up with stating that the household microwave poses much more health risk than what the antennas are putting off.

Dan Logan stated that while the discussion concerning health risks was in progress, he looked up research from the Cancer Society concerning health risks and that it is easy to find those studies.

Rose Plattnode asked if Spit Spots would be hiring local for the project, and who it would be.

McKenzie McCarthy stated local to Seward, No. The timeline for the tower install is short term. The install will be done by borough residents employed for the project.

Gryffin Stephens stated that the type of internet that Spot Spots is proposing is highly susceptible to weather like rain and obstructions like trees, needing line-of-sight for success, asking how was it going to work with the extremes of weather and the large tree cover in Bear Creek.

McKenzie McCarthy responded by stating that Spit Spots has been operating a network similar to what is being proposed for 15 years at this point on the peninsula. Not specifically in Seward, but in Homer, in Seldovia, in surrounding areas. Spits Spots has dealt with issues of rain-fade and tidal fade with success.

James Sheehan asked if the tower could be painted camouflage.

McKenzie McCarthy stated that he did not feel that painting the tower camouflage would be appropriate for the tower but confirmed with Adam that the intention is to paint the tower a color that best blends with the surrounding environment. Adam stated that he is open to any suggestion on color.

McKenzie McCarthy state to Richard Brackin that he had just emailed a link to the FCC safety statements regarding radio frequencies, and Richard shared the link in the chat function of zoom for those wishing to read for themselves.

# BEAR CREEK FIRE SERVICE AREA

## Board Meeting Minutes

7:30 PM

October 06, 2020

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Kim Keeter stated that she did not move from South Carolina to look at a tower.

Pat Domiatrovich asked for clarification concerning the variance for flood plain allowance and wanted to know why the Borough said no.

Richard Brackin stated that Dan Nelson from the Office of Emergency Management would be speaking at the end of the public comments section and would cover that question then.

Jason Brown stated that he liked the idea of seeing more competition for internet services in the area so that a more reasonable price for service can be available.

Sherrie Frixel stated that she agrees with Jason's comment, just not at the expense of their view.

Dan Nelson introduced himself and addressed the following.

CARES Relief funding and how communications/internet came into the picture, stating that the impacts that Covid had, particularly in teleworking and children's education moving to web-based platforms showed that there was a need for more internet accessibility in the peninsula. A request for proposal was issued out to help solve the problem of providing reliable internet services to the communities of the Borough. Spits Spots as well as Alaska Communications were awarded and provided different internet delivery systems. Spits Spots providing wireless delivery technology.

Dan addressed viewshed impact and that the Borough has taken the best approach that they feel they can to both provide reliable internet to the community and minimize viewshed impact.

Dan Nelson address Pat Domiatrovich's question concerning flood plain allowances. He stated that the CARES Funding comes from a Federal source and the rules strictly prohibit flood plain use.

Dan spoke on the benefits to the Bear Creek Fire Service area siting the very costly independent link for dispatching that can possibly be eliminated through Spits Spots, as well as benefits to other agencies like the Flood Service as the partnership with Spits Spots grows. Dan referenced the benefit that the tower will add for warning siren signal delivery to the area.

Dan Nelsoon address the health effects of tower like this and stated that while he is no expert on all things radio, he does do quite a bit of radio work and has found no indication that there will be any health concerns. He also stated that his office is directly under one of these tower and there is no worry about the health effects.

James Sheehan asked if the benefits would include emergency announcements. Dan answered, correct. Dan did clarify that there would be no siren going on the tower itself but that the tower would provide redundancy for signaling the siren in town.

Sherrie Frixel stated that it seems that overall this will be a positive thing for the community. Sherrie felt like the decision was being rushed to put this tower up and that money should not be the driving force. Dave Frixel stated that if it was any of the other attendees' houses impacted, they would have the same view.

Jena Petersen asked if there was any benefit that could be provided to the residents behind the fire station as compensation for the viewshed impact, citing the Frixel household.

# BEAR CREEK FIRE SERVICE AREA

## Board Meeting Minutes

7:30 PM

October 06, 2020

13105 Seward Hwy, Mile 5

McKenzie McCarthy said that he would be happy to discuss internally with the company and not speak for them as a whole. He also stated that he was unsure if the Frixel household would be interested in compensation.

Jena stated that the Borough needed the BCFSA Board to provide a recommendation to the Assembly.

Tanya Lester asked that more internal discussion be made before voting and that she felt that there needed to be more information gathered.

James Sheehan stated that the decision needed to be made by the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Jena corrected that the reason for the BCFSA meeting being held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October instead of the regular 13<sup>th</sup>, is because the recommendation needed to be issued prior to the assembly meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>. She said that they need to make a decision tonight to recommend, yes or no on approval. Jena reminded the attendees that the vote from the BCFSA Board would be a recommendation, not a final ruling. It would be up to the Borough Assembly to approve the tower.

Tanya Lester stated that she felt like she could not provide an unbiased opinion due to the Frixels being like family. She stated that she feels for the Frixels and the impact that the tower would have, but also sees the benefit that Spits Spots would provide to the community.

Earl Kloster recommended that the BCFSA Board vote to recommend the approval of the tower at the Bear Creek Fire Station.

Dan Logan seconded the motion.

There was some discussion concerning the ability to some of the board members to cast a vote due to them admitting that they could not give an unbiased vote due to family and friendships being directly impacted.

Dan Nelson helped to clarify what could be grounds for recusing oneself from voting, stating that if you cannot vote fairly due to a conflict, that you have an argument for recusal.

There was some discussion on how to proceed with the voting and it was decided to have a roll-call vote on the issue. Jena asked for Richard Brackin to run a roll-call vote.

Seat A, Earl Kloster voted "Yes" to recommend approval for the tower.

Seat B, James Sheehan voted "Yes" to recommend approval for the tower.

Seat C, Tanya Lester voted "No" to recommend not to approve the tower.

Seat D, Dan Logan voted "Yes" to recommend approval for the tower.

Seat E, Jena Petersen voted "No" to recommend not to approve the tower.

The vote passed three (3) for and two (2) opposed.

# BEAR CREEK FIRE SERVICE AREA

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7:30 PM

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There was discussion following the vote on whether to recommend or to not make a recommendation toward the project given that there was not an overwhelming approval from the board. It was decided to follow through with the recommendation.

### CORRESPONDENCE

- BCFSFA Expenditure report to date: Currently working on SCBA bottle replacement with standard billing and payroll being the only impact to the budget this month.
- KPB Assembly Representative Kenn Carpenter – Not in Attendance.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Lowell Point Fire – Automatic Aid – The agreement has been routed to the Mayor's Office for signing and will be implemented upon receipt of his signature.
- Possible Ambulance Replacement. – No new news on possible ambulances.
- Cistern Project for Camelot – CAP FY21 – Looking at a parcel that is owned by the City of Seward for an easement that is nearby.
- CAD Display/Rip-n-Run – Display is in. Mounting and running of data cable is next.

### NEW BUSINESS

- Hiring for BCFSFA Fire Technician – The position justification has been sent to finance. We should see an announcement soon.

James Sheehan asked for clarification concerning why the Administrative Assistant position was changed to a Fire Technician Position. Richard Brackin provided that clarification.

### TRAINING REPORT

- Driver Training – Is still in motion but is moving into an evaluation stage where the members will be allowed upon request and under the direct supervision of an Officer or Engineer as we move into the winter months and the driving difficulties that winter driving bring.

James Sheehan asked if the volunteers had been showing up for training lately, mentioning some concern from others that the turnout was low.

Richard Brackin stated that during this time of the year, there is always responder fatigue due to it being the end of the summer and it being during hunting season. Richard continued by stating that Bear Creek, in the past, has seen 10-14 volunteers each training session, and that though there was a sharp decline during the initial Covid timeline, the attendees to training had come back to the numbers seen prior to the Covid outbreak.

### CHIEF'S REPORT

- Run Report 104
- KPB East Tentative roll-out date of November 1.

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---

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- Radio Replacement Looking to start replacement process based on unit replacement in an effort to drive forward a unit based response platform from the volunteers.
- Door Access Replacement KP. The door locks that are currently installed at the station seem to be compatible with the door code plan for station access. This will reduce the cost to BCFA in replacement.

There may be an option to receive SCBA Bottles from CES or Nikiski . They received a grant for SCBA upgrades and cannot use their old SCBAs.

### **ADJOURNMENT** 8:35

*The next regular meeting of the Bear Creek Fire Service Area Board of directors scheduled for Tuesday November 10, 2020 at 7:30 pm*

DRAFT



n Flight (GPS)

H

GPS 16 5.8G 60%

H 100 ft D 1 ft V 0.0 mph



n Flight (GPS)

GPS

17



5.8G



58%

H



H 99 ft D 0 ft V 0.0 mph