

**Minutes of the Geary County Rural Fire Board Trustees Meeting  
For December 7, 2011**

**The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by County Commission Chair Larry Hicks.**

Roll call was taken. Districts present: Jefferson, Blakely, Lyon, Milford, Smoky Hill, Wingfield, Fire Chief Garry Berges and Chairman Hicks. District absent: Jefferson. Also present were Assistant Fire Chief Clark and County Extension Agent Chuck Otte.

Chairman Hicks thanked everyone for their ongoing participation and assured them that the County Commission considers what they do to be very important to the citizens of Geary County.

Minutes of the October meeting were reviewed. **Travis Berges moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed 8 – 0.**

Garry reviewed the year to date 2011 fire runs. So far in 2011 there have been 185 runs, compared to 146 in this same period in 2010. Since the October meeting there had been 32 runs. (A breakdown of the runs is attached.) Garry reviewed the types of calls that they had responded to in 2011.

Garry reminded the board that every time a volunteer is paged and responds to a run they receive a \$10 stipend from the county. In the past 12 months there were 525 responses by volunteers. They will soon be receiving their checks. The Fireman's Relief Association will have their annual meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Junction City Fire Station #2. Long time volunteer Larry Paquette has tendered a letter of retirement. He has served as a volunteer since 1975.

Garry had visited with Dennis Cox about the fuel. Dennis reported that their fuel contract specifically states no alcohol in the fuel.

Will, Garry and Brian will be going through all trucks, buildings and other equipment working on an upkeep and 10 year replacement plan. Garry has been working on getting a Class A pumper at little to no cost. Truck 103 (a Class A pumper) normally at Spring Valley station has been moved to the town of Milford to provide coverage there while Milford's Class A pumper is in for repairs at Salina.

Chairman Hicks asked Garry about the status of the alert system and whether it was working 24/7. Garry responded that yes it is, in fact new repeaters just went into service that day so the county was in better shape than ever.

There was another question regarding insurance coverage for all volunteers. Garry replied that if a volunteer is paged to a call, they are covered. If a firefighter is not paged but responds they are considered freelance and could be denied insurance including workers comp.

Brian Clark reported that they had replaced the primer pump on Truck #116. They've also acquired a tug to pull the Gator trailer. They also put an electric jack on the Gator trailers. Brian complimented Will for the job he has been doing on vehicle maintenance. All vehicles are running very well at this time.

Chairman Hicks asked when the last time that new vehicles were purchased. Garry responded that it has been at least six years since the last “new” vehicle was acquired. Chairman Hicks requested a full report for the County Commission on vehicles. Garry said that he will get that together. Chairman Hicks feels that it is important to keep vehicles up to date so delays in emergency services are not experienced by anyone in the county.

**Unfinished Business: Bob moved to elect Danny Boller vice-chairman and to appoint Chuck Otte as secretary for 2012. The motion was seconded and carried 8 – 0.**

**New Business: Bob moved that the proposed by-law change to paragraph Article 3, Section 5D be approved. The motion was seconded.** The current wording of that section is:

“The Geary County Commissioners shall have general control and supervision of the Geary County Rural Fire Department, and shall receive, hold, manage, and control any and all property of the Geary County Rural Fire Department as trustees of the same, and shall prepare and approve an annual budget for the Geary County Rural Fire Department. This includes all equipment that is bought for fire protections and/or suppression to include buildings, vehicles, and other property purchased by others, to include township boards and individuals.”

The proposed change would read:

*“The Geary County Commissioners shall have general control and supervision of the Geary County Rural Fire department, and shall receive, hold, manage, and control all county purchased equipment and property of the Geary County Fire Department as trustees of the same, and shall prepare and approve an annual budget for the Geary County Rural Fire Department. Firefighting equipment, property, and structures purchased/constructed by entities/individuals for use in Geary County will remain the property of the purchasing/constructing entity/individual but will be under the operational control of the Fire Chief (less stationing of equipment). Maintenance, insurance, and logistic agreements between the Fire Chief and owning individuals/entities will be prepared separately and held on file by the Fire Chief.”*

Bob presented Milford Township’s rationale for proposing the by-law change. There was discussion of insurance concerns, specifically if Milford Township’s insurance would cover firefighters from other districts.

In the past, when equipment has been purchased by a township, it has stayed within that township. It may go out of township for a specific fire run, but it then returns to the township. The county attorney had been given a copy of the proposed change but had not responded with an opinion.

Concern was expressed over not being able to move equipment to cover down vehicles that are in for repairs. Uniform accessibility to equipment was considered a requirement, which led to a discussion of who currently has keys to the Milford Township truck.

Chairman Hicks felt that until county attorney, and the insurance companies had provided their opinions it would be inadvisable to proceed further. Chuck Otte explained that since the proposed bylaw change was brought forward in the proper manner, that the motion could be postponed and still dealt with at a later meeting.

**Ron moved to postpone the motion until an opinion from the county attorney could be obtained. The motion was seconded and passed 8 – 0.**

**Bob moved** Chairman Hicks asked for a subcommittee of volunteers to help work on trying to find resolution to this issue.

**Bob moved to approve proposed bylaws change Article IV, Section 1 concerning changes to the bylaws. The motion was seconded.** The current wording of that section is:

“Sec. 1. This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting of the Geary County Rural Fire Department. Amendments shall be submitted in writing and may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of those present, providing that the proposed change was discussed at the previous regular meeting, and that notices of such proposed amendment be given by U. S. Mail to all Fire Districts at least ten days prior to such meeting stating proposed change to be voted on.”

The proposal would change it to read:

*“Sec. 1. This Constitution may be amended at either the June or December regular meeting of the Geary County Rural Fire department. Provided that amendments are submitted in writing, were transmitted via U.S. Mail to all Geary County Fire Districts at least ten days prior to the April or October regular meeting, and were discussed at the previous regular meeting [April or October], and are approved by two-thirds of those present at the June or December regular meeting.”*

Bob felt that restricting changes to just once a year made for an unduly long period between changes that might correct potentially bad errors in the bylaws. By allowing changes twice a year it made it easier and quicker to change perceived problems.

Chuck requested permission from the chair to address the topic. As a parliamentarian and being involved in many organizations, Chuck felt that bylaws should not be easily changed. Bylaws are a foundation, not a policy manual. You don't want to be able to change that foundation too quickly.

There was general discussion of pros and cons of being able to change the bylaws once versus twice a year. It was asked when the last changes to the bylaws had occurred. Chuck indicated that the last date on the bylaws were in 1998 so that would have been the last time that there were changes.

**The chair requested a show of hands for the vote. Voting in favor of the motion – 2. Voting opposed to the motion – 5. Abstentions – 1 (the Fire Chief). The motion failed.**

The next meeting will be on February 1, 2012.

**With no further business, Travis moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:33 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck Otte  
Recording Secretary

# Geary County Rural Fire

## Incident Type Period Comparisons

**Alarm Date Between {01/01/2011} and {11/30/2011}**

Incident Type	01/01/2011	01/01/2010	01/01/2009	01/01/2008
	to 11/30/2011	to 11/30/2010	to 11/30/2009	to 11/30/2008
100 Fire, Other	2	2	1	0
111 Building fire	6	8	3	12
112 Fires in structure other than in a building	1	0	1	0
114 Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or	1	0	0	0
121 Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence	0	0	1	1
130 Mobile property (vehicle) fire, Other	0	1	0	0
131 Passenger vehicle fire	12	6	6	6
132 Road freight or transport vehicle fire	4	2	3	4
134 Water vehicle fire	1	0	0	1
137 Camper or recreational vehicle (RV) fire	0	0	1	0
138 Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire	2	4	0	0
140 Natural vegetation fire, Other	0	0	2	0
141 Forest, woods or wildland fire	0	1	0	0
142 Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	35	23	14	6
143 Grass fire	32	13	19	8
150 Outside rubbish fire, Other	0	0	1	0
151 Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	0	0	2	0
160 Special outside fire, Other	0	1	0	0
161 Outside storage fire	0	0	2	0
162 Outside equipment fire	1	0	0	0
170 Cultivated vegetation, crop fire, Other	1	1	0	0
171 Cultivated grain or crop fire	3	1	1	0
311 Medical assist, assist EMS crew	47	34	45	45
322 Motor vehicle accident with injuries	2	2	2	0
324 Motor Vehicle Accident with no injuries	1	0	0	0
381 Rescue or EMS standby	1	0	0	0
400 Hazardous condition, Other	0	1	1	1
411 Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	1	0	0	1
412 Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	0	1	0	0
413 Oil or other combustible liquid spill	3	5	1	0
421 Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	1	0	0	0
444 Power line down	1	0	0	1
445 Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1	0	0	0
4451 Arcing, Shorted Lightning Suppressor	0	0	0	1
460 Accident, potential accident, Other	0	1	0	0
462 Aircraft standby	0	0	0	1
463 Vehicle accident, general cleanup	3	7	7	6
471 Explosive, bomb removal (for bomb scare, use	0	0	1	0
500 Service Call, other	0	0	1	3
531 Smoke or odor removal	0	0	0	1
550 Public service assistance, Other	0	1	3	0

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Incident Type	01/01/2011	01/01/2010	01/01/2009	01/01/2008
	to	to	to	to
	11/30/2011	11/30/2010	11/30/2009	11/30/2008
551 Assist police or other governmental agency	1	0	0	0
553 Public service	6	10	11	12
571 Cover assignment, standby, moveup	0	0	1	0
600 Good intent call, Other	1	1	4	0
611 Dispatched & cancelled en route	9	12	13	7
622 No Incident found on arrival at dispatch address	1	3	2	1
631 Authorized controlled burning	1	1	5	0
632 Prescribed fire	0	1	1	0
650 Steam, Other gas mistaken for smoke, Other	0	1	0	0
700 False alarm or false call, Other	1	0	0	1
733 Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	0	0	2	0
735 Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1	1	1	0
745 Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	0	0	1
813 Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	184	146	158	121