

CABINET VIEW FIRE SERVICE AREA
PUBLIC HEARING

December 9, 2015

Commissioner Cole opened the meeting with introductions and stated the meeting was being recorded for the purpose to aid the Clerk & Recorder minutes for accuracy. Official minutes will be completed by the Clerk & Recorder.

Commissioner Larson read Resolution of Intent No. 949.

Commissioner Peck stated the purpose of the public hearing is for the commission to hear from the public comments for and against the proposed fire service area. The commission is here to listen to the citizens so the commission can make an informed choice. Commissioner Peck stated every person will have 3 minutes and each person's comment is important. Commissioner Peck read a portion of 7.33.2401 MCA referring to Fire Service Area – establishment – alteration – dissolution.

Decision process is the commission will take this information, in addition many letters have been received that need to be reviewed. A date has not been set yet, but probably in a couple of weeks, it will be placed on the agenda during a commission meeting. Discussion will take place and a decision will be made.

Commissioner Cole opened the mic up to the public.

1. Gene McGlasson: For -Not directly affected, lives outside proposed area. Makes perfect sense to have people that are well trained to do a job and the location is convenient for people; hope this gets done. Ridiculous the CVFSA was decommissioned.
2. Chuck Brown: Opposed-opted out last time. Boundaries are not the same. Do we go through that process again petition to opt out? Commissioner Peck stated the map is the CVFSA proposal only. Commissioner Cole said as people opt in or out, the map would change accordingly.
3. Donna Rios: For- Summer fires close to her home scared her and she feels there are lots of people in favor. It is important and a lot of people who live in the area feel it is important.
4. Warner Curl: For-Has lived in area for 9 years and is in favor of CVFSA. Will probably see more dry years. Accidents and other things involved in needing CVFSA. Highly supportive.
5. Bob Halvorsen: Where are the volunteers from CVFSA going to come from? A certain minimum of people need to be present for people to leave. The fire dept. from Libby was on the scene before CVFSA responders. Seems to be more practical to have LCRFD incorporate this area rather than start up a new one.
6. Ora Miller: Opposed-Family moved in area in 1992. No real plan other than what we had before. Not more efficient, although intentions may be good, but good intentions don't always turn out to be good. Citizens are well served by the LCRFD.
7. Emmet Mckay: Opposed-already have a good fire department in the area with LCRFD. Establishing another stretches the resources for Lincoln County.
8. John Rios: For- In support of CVFSA. A lot of emotions are tied with this for and against. Resources that are allocated for Libby are for Libby. Right now nobody that I know of in the area is paying taxes for LCRFD. Tax wise, the resources are limited to the areas at which they support. In favor because it makes lots of sense to have trained professionals go fight fires in the area and respond to the area in which they live and serve. Response time is critical to any fire. Train in such a way that CV and LC can be an asset to each other rather than a stumbling block.
9. Dennis Kocher: Opposed- Libby rural does a fine job servicing the area.
10. Jeff Nisbet: For- Firefighters run in his family. Brotherhood like no other, brother hood exists all over the world with the exception for some reason here in Lincoln County. Not sure why that is. Never seen such a concerted effort to get rid of trained safety personnel, first responders. It is ludicrous to say that LCRFD is fine, that's all we need, is ignorant to say the least. The more trained people the county can have is an asset to that county. Need to work, train and get along. Time for the power struggle to stop. We need the CVFSA.
11. Yvonne Luscher: Opposed-Mr. Nisbet is a neighbor as most of these people are. Involved with this fire Dept. for 2 years. My husband was president of the board. Once they (CV) got their ISO, it went out of control. They did not know how to get along with anyone else, and if they did not perform the way they thought the rest of the organization in town were supposed to then it was nothing but chaos between them. CV was instrumental in causing friction in this town regardless what Mr. Nisbet says, he is not willing to work with Libby. Libby is a much better fire company than CV will ever be. The CV fire house is 15' from my fence and if I thought that was such a great fire department, don't you think I would be all for it? After knowing the internal makings of CV is the reason I am against it. What is their ISO number going to be, who are the firefighters, who is the chief? Are the same people who lost this going to be the ones working on it? The people sitting here should be asking those questions.
12. Jeff Koskela: -What happened at the last time around could easily brew up again. Mr. Koskela gave a brief history beginning 1954 when LCRFD supported that whole area. In favor of expanding incorporating the fire district and should be serviced by Libby Rural. Libby Rural has the men, money, man power, and skills. He knows exactly where all his firemen are. There is no way we can get a better service. Let's use a fire service that has been around forever.
13. Lloyd Miller: Opposed-Having lived here over 20 years and original supporter when CV was first formed. But when fire station was expanded and when animosity rose I said nothing as spokesperson for the Amish Community. Painful to see the litigation take place but we said nothing and did nothing and did not raise our voice. Felt like somehow our friendships and relationships were at stake and lost their place from what it used to be. So we just waited. Hoping it would find its proper way even if incorporated into a larger district or corporation. When I have a fire or need fire suppression, I do not care who puts it out. Friends and neighbors, labored together, so I am having difficulty being on the other side of the fence; I don't like that. Reality is, I don't know what is in place to change the way it's been. When I have a fire and I need fire suppression, I do not care who puts it out. Amish community is opposed to reestablishment of CVFD.
14. Coral Cummings: Opposed-My property is at the end of the 7 mile limit Libby fire would have to respond to a fire at my house. Has had ambulance and fire service and LCRFD has provided a great service to her, no complaints. Coral has no trees close to her home and did not fear the summer fires because she has the Forest Service and Lincoln County Fire Dept. Things became so difficult, because she liked the LCRD people. She trusts them and knows their worth. Truly professional in their jobs. Libby Rural would not have the ranking they have carried in the state of Montana without being clearly professional in their jobs.

15. Benjamin Girod: Opposed-spent 9.5 years on the CV fire dept., great people but the politics became an issue, a lot of wrong moves. Duplication of services is not needed. Not against fire departments, but need proper leadership and support. LCRRD probably with the new road can get to the area in 7 to 8 minutes. Appreciate the people (CV) but do not support it.
16. Elvie Miller: Opposed-Wanted more details and have been researching. Represent the views of citizens surrounding the Amish Community. We are petitioning to become a part of the LCRFD. Average number of calls is about 5 calls a year; do not need another fire dept. I am in favor of annexing into LCRFD or expanding LCRFD. Response time from LCRFD is adequate and acceptable.
17. Junior Crismore: Opposed-I had 2 fires out there and both times LCRFD responded and forest service. Do not want to compete against another department for contract firefighting. Would like to see the annexation go through and area to be serviced by LCRFD.
18. Roby Bowe: Opposed
19. Jan Fredrick: Opposed. I am an ER nurse, live in the area, response time of 12 minutes. Would like to see resources go towards other areas such as AED's in officer rigs, training for CPR and more cohesiveness between communities for the best EMS system we can have here.
20. Katie Mast: For-lives in Flathead County. Volunteer with CV for 8 years. CV taught me the skills to transition into Flathead County. I cannot say enough of how much we need the service and volunteers. Thankful to Cabinet View. Had 20 plus volunteers at CV when it was dissolved, the training and people was excellent.
21. Jeff Forster: Opposed- supportive of LCRFD and expansion and annex out. Would love to have a fire station right across the street. Two years CV has been shut down, how many of those volunteers from CV are a part of Libby now? Did any of them step in and try to be a part of Libby, continue to be a volunteer? Where are those CV volunteers? Did they step up and offer to help Libby Fire District? That's the first thing I would have done if I was a volunteer, remain involved.
22. Bruce Witt: For-been involved with CV. I understand how people feel Libby volunteer can take care of this, but we are not paying for them to take care of this. Why can't we have our service area back, and run it the way it should be run. We should all be able to communicate and come together. Feels people in the area need this fire station. Wife is an EMT and goes to Marion once a month 3 to 4 days to keep her license current. Also people from CV are going to Bull Lake. We need to make a new FSA. We got the people, let's do it.
23. Clyde Miller: For-Fire Chief for Bull Lake. Know what it's like to be placed as the underdog in the county. After CV was shut down some of the Commissioners next target was Bull Lake. I don't want to get into that except that I know what it's like. In rural areas in our country it's very difficult to establish a fire department. Town fire departments have more people, money, resources. Look to the little rurals serving these communities where there is no fire department readily available in a timely manner. Bull Lake is far out from everyone else. Bull Lake built up a very good fire department today with an ISO of 6 and an avg. response time 6.5 minutes because we care about the people we serve. Worked with CV for 5 years and it was one of the finest fire departments in the county. Appreciated the partnership we had with CV. We assisted each other and fire departments should work together. Fire departments should work together, we don't need less, we need more. Volunteer firefighters do this because they care. Wildland fires help with the financials. Wish everything could be solved and we would work together. That is my desire for this county.
24. Robert Mast: For-I feel it is always about neighbors helping. Emphasize going forward; mistakes have been made, that was not our intention. It can be a home fire, accidents, or wild fire...what matters is the guy who is closest to it, trained and has the equipment. This is why I am for CV. CV is an asset to the community, but the majority of the community should rule.
25. Russell Bache: For- about 5 years on the CV board. I am a volunteer, not for pay, but for the people. Forget about the past, start new and fresh, work together. The key is working together with Libby. Need to just sit down and talk, what does it hurt to have more volunteers and more resources to call on? If Libby has a bad day, wouldn't be better to have more resources? It hurts to have this back and forth like this. Need to get together and work together.
26. Brad Ward: For-Moved here about 6 years ago. Gave a brief history of his experience with fire departments in Stevensville prior to moving to Libby. All the fire departments are drawing from volunteers and it's hard to put a number on response times and staffing; that happens to all fire stations large and small and that is when you get assistance from other departments. A new organization is trying to form here and desires greatly to establish mutual aid with Libby Rural, Fisher River and all the neighboring agencies to train and learn together which is critical and addresses everyone's concerns here no matter what side you stand on as far as response time and volunteerism. This organization has new faces on all levels, including the board. History is great, but we need to focus on what's ahead, spark new relationships, work together with neighbors and get rid of the bad politics and form a new alliance.
27. Dennis Frank: For-20 miles from LCRFD. Gave of history of his fire service experience in the state of Washington. A structure fire doubles its size every 5 minutes. CVFSA is lot closer. Does not understand the resistance, the more fire people that are fighting a fire, the more equipment, the better it is for the community.
28. Sarah Mast: For-CV is extra special; like family to me and it hurts deeply what has happened.
29. Kate Witt: For- More volunteers make sense to me not less as well as increased mutual aid and training. We need to have more, not less.
30. Tom Wood: Chief of Libby Fire Department. Comments are impressive; folks are trying to do a good job. When original FSA started, met at the JC Club House. A few things need to be known. I said I will build you a fire station; I built a fire station. When the FSA was dissolved, I said I would build a road to get closer; that's about 5 minutes away from being done. I said we need to get the ISO rule changed, I happen to be an insurance agent for 45 years, you cannot believe the work I have put in with ISO to get that boundary changed from 5 miles to 7 miles to service you people and other people in our district. Across the whole United States of America, I have been to the meetings and made the phone calls. We got that done. Not because we have animosity, because we want to service you people out there. Some of you mentioned about volunteers not joining LC. Not one person has joined, we openly asked please. Why have two fire services and duplicate services. Come join Libby Rural or Libby Ambulance. Wonderful Kate goes to Kalispell, but when does she come down to Libby? We got places we can put you to work, we need the volunteers. I just think that things need to be looked at. We are all Libby. My grandmother started the fire department in 1911. I been born and raised here. Family history is in the fire department so it's in our hearts to service people, there is no animosity, and I am tired of hearing that. There is no animosity and it hurts my heart to hear those comments. We have volunteered and we have mutual aid with every fire department in the state of Montana. That is all history. If you decide to put a new FSA together, we will work with them; we are not a bunch of bad people.
31. Patty Rambo: For-Swede Mountain Rd. property is in the CV boundary. I have worked very hard to get it reestablished. It should have never been dissolved in the first place. Thirty signatures against 200 signatures should not have been considered. Regards to response time, I live 5 miles from city limits, fastest I can get to town is 5 minutes. That does not account for placing a phone call, having the

message sent out that volunteers are needed at the fire station, getting geared up and into equipment, getting to my house is not in 5 minutes. So a response time of 12 minutes is not from the time they receive a phone call requesting help. Emphatically for CV.

32. Tim Newton: For- My opinion is no matter what the differences are, politics, money, CV is available; they got everything they need to do this thing. When it comes to fire and emergency services, seconds count. There is no question in my mind whether or not we should do this...we should do this.
33. Howard Troyer: lives in North Idaho but helped create CV. I want to say something about the comments on the response time of how slow CV was. I got one question. When a 911 call is placed, when responding agencies are paged, how long do you think that should take? There was one instance where it was 42 minutes for our FSA when the 911 call came in before CV was paged. By that time Libby Fire was on the scene and it was in our area. That might explain why they beat us to the call, because they got paged. I called dispatch about that because I heard the sirens as well. I was on the radio, he wouldn't come back, something to do with landlines. He had to call the sheriff before they would dispatch CV in our own area. Those were the things we were up against and why it looked bad for us. This time around we want to start fresh, all the people want to work together with all the agencies and put the past behind us. But I thought I would put that out there that if you don't know there is an emergency, how do you know to go? You have to be dispatched and that falls in the sheriff's department not us. General feeling now is to work together and make this a better place.
34. Dave Deshazer: Opposed- because too close to the Libby District. Libby could not come because they were threatened of being sued but wanted to come. The forest service showed up before CV did. The fire chief showed up without a truck. Said he wanted to look at the fire to see what he needed. They used our water at our ranch to get part of their rating. When they did that and the fire chief at that time said when we got a fire, anybody could come and that it would not be a problem. They should have gotten that in writing. When we got a fire Libby couldn't come and they wanted to come. I would be for this if the Libby Chief could be over this. It would be great to have more volunteers. But we should be volunteers to fight fires, not to go fight forest fires off land in other states. The response time for us was not very good. Why can't Libby be over it too? Why can't we put them together and have the same fire chief over both? We won't have this problem, we won't be in lawsuits later, we need to be brothers and work together. Put one guy over both departments.
35. Alvin Benitz: Opposed-questioned how much is owed on the building and who is it owed to? Is there some money that needs to be picked up there before the taxpayer's pick it up?
36. Michael Agresta: For-More volunteers are better, it's closer to me. People are bringing up ugly past history. We want to start fresh, new and we want to be cooperative.
37. Ron Miller: For- does not live in the district. Chief of CVFD. Thanks to generosity of a doner in the last few days, the fire dept. owes absolutely zero on the building. As far as working together, we are willing to work with Sheriff Bowe, and Libby Rural. I have no axes to grind, no history; my motives are pure. Our goal is for people to be safe. Boundaries are there for financing. As far as working and training together, publicly stating, you have my pledge on that.

Commissioner Cole asked if there were any further comments. There were no.

Commissioner Cole stated his appreciation for everyone in attendance and for communicating their thoughts and ideas.

Public Hearing Adjourned.