

Friends of Twin Lakes

October 15, 2011 Meeting at Twin Lakes Dance Hall

Board members present: John Kester, President; Rick Altman, Vice President/Treasurer; Carl Wagner , At-Large; and Kelly Sweeney, At-Large.

The meeting was called to order by John Kester.

Rick Altman provided a Treasurer's report: our bank balance is \$635 due to 3 new members and there are 4 additional checks to deposit so we will be at \$715. He estimates that we have around 38-39 members. Rick and John encouraged all of us to get at least one other person to join by the next meeting. It is important to have as many people involved as possible and for them to be heard.

John provided an update on the response submitted to the IRS. One sticking point that we tried to explain was why we have "voting" and "non-voting" members. It is because the people in Southern Lake County have the best sense of what is in the interests of preservation and protection of the area. We hope that there might be a response by the next meeting in November, but it is more likely to be December. If the IRS rejects our 501©(3) application, we will discuss whether or not to change the by-laws regarding voting and non-voting members. The importance of 501©(3) versus ©(4) is to offer deductions for contributions/dues.

John noted that he had minutes from the meeting with Jon Morrissey and asked for questions. Carl inquired regarding the expansion of ATV usage on trails. Unfortunately, this is an area that Jon M. was not aware of, so, John K. provided him with the newspaper articles outlining it.

Kelly indicated that the Board, thanks to time and effort of Larry Marcum, Secretary, is experimenting with a website. The URL is: <http://www.friendsoftwinlakes.com/>, it is still a work in progress and will ultimately be a location to post minutes, events, further information or blogs on certain topics etc.

The heart of the meeting was devoted to the issue of fire protection and reports on recent meetings related to the protection of Southern Lake County.

Anita reported that the Fire Planning Board made progress on their budget. Although not approved, they are 90% through it. They did approve big repairs to replace the center beam in Leadville and address the sewer issue so they can get it done in this fiscal year. They also approved the purchase a used fire engine for between \$18-25 thousand. Chief Harvey wants it to rotate in and ease the maintenance issues on other vehicles. They have approved the use of all firefighters on wildfires and having a helicopter on standby. Payroll must be paid from the service, but any profit will go to capital expenditures (could be around \$60 thousand). The Fire Planning Board agrees that a fire district is a goal for the next couple of years, but they are not currently looking more than beyond 1 year.

Anita described that if the district were approved the money dedicated to the Leadville and County budget would flow over to the fire district. The highest priority for us is to work on faster response times in Southern Lake County. The issue may be where they would put a fire fighting facility as there appears to be a push to develop land owned by the County near Moose Haven—the issue may be hearing our voice in the placement of the facility. Unfortunately, the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) regarding fire protection was changed from saying that the target would be locating it in Twin Lakes to saying simply there would be “another” location.

She explained that our success will be in education of the importance and value of having the station in Twin Lakes. She described the Planning Board as having a management board comprised of a County Commissioner, Mayor and at large member. That management board can hire and fire the Fire Chief.

Bruce encouraged us to get behind the fire district concept.

John Kester reported that he submitted his name for consideration to serve as a volunteer on the long term planning board for the Fire Department.

A discussion was held on using the tax records to support our request for more fire protection. Bruce and John Kester have records from the assessor that appears to indicate that we comprise around 24% of County tax revenue, the true impact of that is greater if Climax is removed and the potential for growth in our area versus Leadville is explored. John will continue discussions with Howard Tritz, Assessor on this issue.

Anita encouraged people to show up to the meetings to help impact change.

Steve encouraged us to move ahead with studying the formation of a fire district, a Southern Lake County Fire District. We need to look to see what the district can afford, what the boundaries would be, goals and what a service plan might be.

Ahmed opined that we should get behind the effort of the County to establish a fire district. Strategically, we could hold in reserve the Southern Fire District to see if they will make Southern Lake County a priority and then we will “secede.” In addition, he mentioned the possibility of exploring consolidating into a district with Northern Chaffee County.

John Kester noted that Crestone is forming a fire district. He will provide the link to their website as it goes through a number of considerations and the process of forming such a fire district. John King suggested that information and other resources be detailed as links so that we are able to become better educated on the corresponding issues and processes of developing a fire district, particularly, those of us who lack the background that might assist in making informed decisions in this process.

Bruce raised the point that even though an additional district may cost more for Southern Lake County, ultimately, it may prove to be a break even as insurance rates may be reduced and the likelihood of preserving property would be greater.

Anita informed that it will be 2012 or 2013 before the issue of a Special District can be on the ballot. Ahmed also reminded that there were additional steps or hurdles involved and expressed concern that we not be viewed as proceeding in an adversarial posture to the Planning Board.

MOTION: Steve moved that the FOTL join with available resources to look at potential Fire District boundaries and the tax base within the boundaries to determine funds available for such a district to determine if we can afford it; what mill levies might be needed to fund it and to work on a service plan for other emergency services. Constance seconded the motion.

Much discussion followed, key points raised were:

- Avoiding an adversarial relationship with the County and making certain they are aware of our interest and concerns.
- Working with other surrounding home owner's groups/subdivisions to communicate the implications of the issues and possibilities surrounding a Fire District.
- Avoiding having the residents of Leadville dictate the services received by Southern Lake County being mindful that in 2008 the Special District was voted down.
- Pursue the Fire District with the County first due the huge amount of work involved in forming our own special district.
- Proceeding in such a fashion that the County will welcome the work that we do so that it can be used in determining the procedure going forward for the development of the special district—showing the County where it is wanted/needed and why.
- Bringing people together through education, showing our financial involvement/investment in the situation.
- Figuring out the path of least resistance and getting entities like CSU to lend support to helping us figure out costs, infrastructure, etc.

A vote was taken with 4 in favor, one against and 8 abstentions. The motion passed.

The next meeting will be at **9:30 a.m. on November 12th** at the Dance Hall.

The December meeting will be at **9:30 a.m. on December 10th** at the Dance Hall.