

Prickly Pear Sportsmen's Association
Association Meeting Minutes
East Helena VFW
September 13, 2022

Board Members:

Chairman of the Board: Jason Swant
Assoc. President: Neil Horne
Assoc. President-Elect: Rick Yearry
Assoc. Treasurer: Annette Rinehart
Assoc. Secretary: Sherri Lionberger
Website Mgr: Vacant
Range Mtnce Officer: Kevin Horn

Director: Mathew Bartlett-exc
Director: Cory Olson
Director: Scott Swingley-exc
Director: Kerry Bartlett
Directors: John McLaughlin
Director: Todd Branscum

Meeting start: 7:00 pm Meeting end: 8:08 pm
Roll call: (see above)

There were 9 board members, the range management officer and 7 members of the Association, for a total of 17 present.

Minutes from April 13, 2022 were read:

Motion made to accept minutes as read by Annette, seconded by Rick . Motion passed.

Treasurer's report - Annette: Beginning balance as of 8/31/2022 was \$72,314.11 with revenues of \$7,110.00 and expenses of \$9,045.06. Ending balance is \$70,379.05 with redeposits of \$51,000 we have an available balance of \$19,379.05. The main expense was insurance for \$5,302.00. The two CD's are \$41454. Larry Cole moved to accept the report and seconded by Cory. Motion passed.

Annual Officers' /Directors reports:

Larry – Neil, Kevin and Larry met with the FS to re-engage on our interest in acquiring the footprint that we use under a special use permit. We have the 20 year permit starting 2 years ago. It is a discretionary move on the part of the FS – but we are a burden to them administratively, so we are playing that card to show that it would be a benefit for us to acquire that property. We've gained no ground over the last 20 years (and we met with a couple new folks), but we discussed the changes in laws that might help us. They again directed us to deal with our delegation and have them talk the FS into conveying the property to us for fair market value. Kathy Bushnell came to the meeting and had good input.

Larry also noted that he was still representing PPSA on the Resource Advisory Committee. They've had 2 meetings since our association meeting and Larry brought the group up to date. Annette noted that we have not received the bill from the FS for the permit.

Neil: update on the FWP grant project – the 500 yard range was set back and now we are waiting for Helena Sand and Gravel to get to it. Neil talked to them today and they said middle October would be when they might make it, which is very poor timing. Neil would recommend we put it back until spring when we aren't fighting weather. He will bring it up to the next board meeting. The grant allows us to go out to next year. The generator is here and he is missing one part before he calls Kevin to get it delivered.

Kevin . Security cameras – we have the license plate reader in and all is working well. We have a lot of room on the memory so it isn't riding over it. We changed to Verizon from AT&T and things are working better. We will get a new antennae up and it will improve it more.

Rick – since COvid we cut back on the events but we are moving forward with more now. We've had a sight-in day planned for Saturday October 1 where the public can come as well. We do have gun smith (John volunteered) to help out.

Cory – vests: we haven't been able to find anything cheaper than at Precision Embroidery. He can get the high quality vests for about \$20 and can silk screen them instead of embroidery and it will cost more like \$200-\$350. Annette asked if he had checked Montana Brush and Broom for the vest costs. We had already approved Cory to go ahead on this. Make sure he gets some larger sizes to fit outside coats. He also noted that he has hats for sale from the organization if anyone wants to purchase them.

Cory – Neil asked him about membership checks and he said he had been lacking in that arena, but he will get it going again. Nail noted that in August we had 755 entrances at the gate and in the first of this month there are already 360 people coming through the gate. Cory noted the last 3 times he was there the gate was left open – he thinks it may be laziness, but Kevin noted that people might just think it will automatically close. Kevin has to talk with folks at least once a week about closing the gates. Cory noted that this place is in the best shape it has ever been and thanked Kevin.

Jason – he was contacted last Friday by a rep from the Master Hunter Program asking to use the short range for muzzle loader hunters sometime in October. He told him they couldn't take up range space in October, so they modified the request to be Friday or Saturday this week, but they haven't confirmed. Jason told them they couldn't exclude a member during this time. Otherwise it fits within our mission and desire to promote shooting sports.

Annette – scholarship application: We award generally 2 scholarships per year for high school graduates and part of their application is to write an essay describing what the range means to their family and what the 2nd amendment means. She read the one application we received.

Kevin – range improvements: biggest thing is we didn't have steel gongs in the pistol range for a while because we were getting ricochets from it. He put up a barrier to prevent this from heppening. He also set posts and moving dirt to help. Mike Cannon cut all the timber for the 500 yard range and Neil had a crew come take the wire fence down. He built the backers and gong holders for the 500 yard range. The berm on the right side of the 100 yard range keeps washing down, so we will put some barriers in there when the 500 yard range is being done. Jason asked about the wall if it is effective or getting pock marks from more ricochets.

New Business –

Kevin – the suggestion box said there should be a red line so people don't touch their weapons while other people are down range. When there isn't someone there all the time to watch, it's hard to enforce. People think its ok to fiddle with guns when someone is downline, when it isn't. Cory suggested that if our website has

the ability to run video, we could put up a short video about safety reminders. Rick noted that some ranges require people to review those for safety before they shoot. It would be minimal cost.

Kevin had a person who was shooting a shotgun under the sign that said no shotguns – the person said they had a slug in, not shot.

Member participation: Larry Sickerson thanked us for time to speak. (He read from a letter which is in our files.) He and Joe Weigand are not new members, been a member since 1996. His son received the scholarship in 2018. Joe has raised 3 kids using the range. They are not outsiders asking for whole sale changes. They would like to hunt in weapons restricted areas and a slug gun is approved for these areas. Sighting in these weapons is no different than a rifle for sighting in at the range, but these guns are not allowed at the range. Firing the weapons create the same results at the backstops and gongs as other centerfire rifles. The footprint from their time at the range wouldn't be any different than centerfire rifles. They respectfully ask to be able to use these at the range. Joe noted that he took his son/grandson up to the range and had shot his slug gun once when Kevin approached him to tell him it wasn't legal to use that weapon at the range. He did ask Kevin to tone down his approach as it put him on the defense right away. He did understand that he has a different approach/thought process on just what it means. Neil noted that we have discussed this at length, and have had some damage done in the past. Cameras have done a lot toward helping with this problem.

Jason noted that there needs to be continued board discussion based on the discussion tonight. He disagrees a bit about the size of damage from the projectiles from slug guns as opposed to normal centerfire weapons. He asked about opening it up for a period of time to site in slug guns. Technically, a slug gun is a shot gun capable of firing shot. Joe noted that he would usually want to shoot his slug gun in August. If he can't shoot at the range, there aren't a lot of options such as the North Hills area with the high heat and potential for fire starts. He asked about having a small added fee to cover wear and tear on targets – he fully understands the concerns from the range perspective. Rick asked about what ranges they typically use and it is 100 yards and less. Larry disagreed with Jason's thoughts about the size of holes from their weapons v.s. centerfire. Neil asked how we are supposed to tell the difference between a shotgun with a slug v.s. one with shot. Cory noted that the problem we have as the board isn't people like Larry and Joe who came in to ask permission respectfully. As a board, we have to deal with the "lowest common denominator" – we still have folks trying to throw out clay pigeons while folks are shooting on the 100 yard range. Cory asked if they would be willing to meet with him and try to get something figured out to perhaps build what could be used. They were very willing and Neil agreed. Joe noted that with the cost of ammo, it dictates them to shoot as few rounds as possible as well.

Christmas Party and Date: December 13 on Tuesday evening here at the VFW, starting at 6. We will request the same caterer.

Annette moved to adjourn and Rick seconded.

Respectfully submitted by

Sherri Lionberger - secretary