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OCT 11 2018
Ravalli County Commissioners

To: Ravalli County Commissioners

From: Sula Fire Trustees

Subject: Snow plowing of Springer Memorial Road

Dear Sirs,

Sula Fire District Trustee Brian Gartner is also the Fire Captain of the Fire Station located in th Billie Springer Memorial Park. He received the attached document from a long time Park resident. The Fire Trustees have reviewed and agree with the facts contained in the document.

As you are aware, Sula Fire District with four Fire Stations, is one of the largest in the State. The Fire Hall located in BSMP serves the growing Springer/Bonanza community and surrounding area. That area contains about half of the total structures in the entire Fire District. The importance of providing fire protection to those taxpayers is obvious.

Snow plowing of the half mile long SMR ,that also serves as the driveway to the Fire Hall, has been a continuing problem since the County Road Dept. discontinued the more than 20 year precedent of plowing the SMR in the 2000's. There are days when it would be impossible for a fire truck to respond to a fire.

In view of the above facts as well as those in the attached document, the Trustees are requesting that you rescind the unauthorized request made by former Fire Chief Wetzsteon that SMR no longer be plowed. It is the opinion of the Trustees that the best solution for resolving the problem would be to re-negotiate the snow plowing responsibility with the State Dept. of Transportation.

The Trustees thank you for your attention to this matter and would appreciate a meeting with you, at a time convenient to you, to discuss this request.

Sincerely

Roger Friend, Chairman

Roger Friend 381-1397

Gary Palmer, Chief

Gary Palmer

Brian Gartner, Capt.

Brian Gartner 531-6581

Shirley Ehman

Shirley Ehman

Nick Kormanick

Nick Kormanick

SMR SNOW PLOWING

BSMP is a Charitable as well as a Benevolent Corporation. In 1980 the VFW purchased a fire truck, built a fire hall and donated both to the SVFD. They also donated land for the SVFD to build a second fire hall. The fire hall located in the Park furnishes fire protection to the structures in the BSMP/ Bonanza community as well as all other structures located within five miles of the fire hall.

Also in 1980, the County Commissioners acknowledged their responsibility for plowing snow on the half mile of SMR to the fire hall. They set a precedent of plowing for more than 20 years.

In the early 2000's the County entered into an agreement with the State DOT to exchange maintenance responsibilities on the East and West Fork roads. George Swartz, the negotiator for the DOT, when asked about the continued responsibility for snow plowing of SMR, assured the VFW that whatever the Co. did the DOT would continue but that they would do it better because they would also plow on weekends.

For whatever reasons, then Fire Chief Bob Wetzsteon, who was a subordinate of the Sula Fire Trustees, made a personal request to the Commissioners that the SMR no longer be included as a snow plowing route. This request was granted and snow plowing was not included in the agreement with the DOT. The BSMP Board was not aware of that request for some ten or more years. Commissioners Iman and Chilcott acknowledged that the request was made and when confronted, Wetzsteon acknowledged making the request.

Since Public Trust Laws would probably not allow elected officials to terminate an established responsibility, it would be reasonable to believe that the County Commissioners instead, transferred the responsibility for snow plowing of SMR to the SVFD at the time the request was made by Wetzsteon.

Apathy has not improve the problem.

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