

LA PINE RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
51550 Huntington Road, La Pine, Oregon
Meeting Minutes February 13, 2020

Open Meeting Director Cox opened the meeting at 8:57 a.m. and led the flag salute.

Roll Call

Directors Present: Doug Cox, Jerry Hubbard, Joel Witmer, Larry South, and Jim Landles.

Staff Present: Chief Mike Supkis, Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty, Office Manager Bonita Johnson and Administrative Assistant Joyce Engberg.

Public Forum

Present: Mike Lee and Dick Swails from the Budget Committee; Greg Bryant, candidate for Deschutes County Commissioner; Charla DeHate (C.E.O), Dr. Michael Allen, and Courtney Ignazzitto from La Pine Community Health Clinic were in attendance to present their appeal of invoice # 53035.

- Director Cox moved the appeal from New Business to the beginning of meeting. Ms. DeHate made an opening statement, and then Dr. Allen shared their assessment of the medical condition of the patient at time of incident: patient had cardiac history, had been off meds for two days, and was at a high risk for stroke. They requested that a physician complete the final review on clinic transport bills, and that patient history is taken into consideration.
- Discussion followed regarding the use and availability of Cascade Medical Transport. There are conflicting accounts of CMT's availability to La Pine, as well as their response times. In 2016, Chief Supkis send a letter to 911 and CMT absolving them of needing 1st right of refusal from LPRFPD. Ms. DeHate stated that as of January 2020, the C.O.O. at CMT told the Health Center that LPRFPD still has 1st right of refusal and CMT could take up to 4-6 hours to respond. Chief Supkis met with Patrick from CMT on January 10th. At that time Patrick shared they are available for transport, but their response time of 25-35 minutes is being rejected by the clinics.
- Chief Supkis noted that during the response in question, the district does not question the clinics desire to transfer their patient. However, the patient drove himself to the clinic looking for a heart medication refill, no medivac was requested, there was no ALS (advanced life support) procedures done at clinic or during transport, the patient was transported code 1, and the patient was released directly from the ED (emergency department) after receiving the medication originally sought.
- Director Witmer asked if attending physician attempted the vagal maneuver? Dr. Allen responded no, but in his opinion that did not change the need for transport. Director Witmer asked what the patient wanted? Dr. Allen responded the patient was willing to

go to the ER. Director Witmer stated the attending physician should have performed the vagal maneuver as they were the higher level of care. Dr. Allen said they have used the incident as a teaching moment.

- Ms. DeHate stated in 2019 the clinic had 23,400 patient visits. 44 of those were ambulance transports, 81 were by personal transport to ED, the clinic used grant monies to pay for 36 to go by taxi, uber and gas cards.
- Director South inquired if the clinic has a plan in place for when no ambulances are available to respond? He also noted that when both medics are on calls, La Pine taxpayers are left vulnerable.
- Director Hubbard noted that in the month of January 2020, 14 calls were to the St. Charles clinic, 4 to the Community Health Center and 4 to Prairie House. He also noted LPRFPD is not an interfacility transport organization, but an emergency advanced life support service. Ms. DeHate requested that St. Charles and Prairie House be left out of the discussion on the appeal for this call.
- Ms. DeHate shared that St. Charles and the La Pine Health Center met in 2018 but St. Charles decided that the Health Center would not be a part of their transport plan. She also stated the call being appealed fit the ASA criteria.
- Director Landles inquired who made the decision to transport the patient during the call in question? Dr. Allen responded it was the clinic staff's decision to have the patient transported and paramedics agreed to transport. Chief Supkis affirmed to Director Landles that the report agreed with that statement and stated the District does not argue with the need to transport, the disagreement is the method of transport and best use of District resources and then compensation for that use. The La Pine clinics have the higher level of care and release patients to our "lower" level of care. There is a cost to using the District as a clinic resource to transfer to another facility. At the time our paramedics arrived to the clinic for the response in question, the patient was not receiving ALS from the clinic and he was on his cell phone complaining about going to Bend and leaving his vehicle in La Pine. The patient also complained during transport about having to pay for the transport and that he should have driven directly to Bend.
- Director Cox recommended the Board take the appeal of invoice #53035 under consideration. Ms. DeHate stated the District is required to have a medical director and she respectfully requests the medical director review the case in question. Chief Supkis responded the ordinance says the District has the final determination of whether the need was emergent or not and the Board decision has to stay within the ordinance, with two options available: to approve or deny the appeal. Any discussion on this matter and the subsequent decision have to be made in public. Chief Supkis feels the request to have our medical director review the case is inappropriate because it is not part of the ordinance because the medical director develops care protocols which our paramedics follow. This is a resource allocation issue and the patient was cared for and transported. Paramedics followed the protocols. It was not an emergency transport because it was determined as such by the paramedics and the existing protocols. The decision on the appropriation, deployment of and the payment for resources rest solely with the Board.
- Ms. DeHate stated the invoice was based on inappropriate transport and feels according to the District ASA, they were within the scope of an appropriate call, and they feel only a medical doctor can determine if the call for transport is appropriate. She requested the District medical director review the case and be present at our next meeting. She

also stated if there is another hearing, she cannot pull Dr. Allen from patients and the meeting may have to be another day (presumably other than the monthly board meeting).

- Director Hubbard stated the Board appreciated the Health Center staff coming to meeting. The Board's job is to manage the District's resources and do what is best for the community as a whole.
- Ms. DeHate stated we are on the same page and she appreciated that Chief Supkis had made positive comments about the clinic in past meetings. She stated she had not heard anything from the chiefs in over a year about inappropriate calls and feels the minutes of previous board meetings point to the issue being more about inappropriate calls by St. Charles and Prairie House. She inquired if the District has contacted upper management about Prairie House and St. Charles La Pine in the past year? Director Cox responded yes. Ms. DeHate feels the minutes do not reflect how the ordinance came about and appears to be based on just the number of runs, and no work was done on trying to have a different solution. She stated they cannot afford being billed for these transports, that providers will become upset and leave, and that if the ordinance is not rescinded, changes must be made to the ordinance.
- Director Cox inquired how long had Ms. DeHate known about the ordinance and when did she read the ordinance? Ms. DeHate responded November 2019. Director Cox inquired how many questions did she have that were not brought to the Board's attention when the ordinance was not yet in effect? Ms. DeHate said she did not come because she trusts the chiefs and because the Health Center had not had any issues for over a year. Director Cox inquired when Ms. DeHate received the ordinance and went through it and understood it, did she have questions on the ordinance? She responded yes. Director Cox asked why she did not contact the District with those questions in November or attend any earlier board meetings where it was being developed before it became an ordinance? Ms. DeHate stated she was not available to attend the December board meeting. Director Cox asked why she didn't contact the Chief then and tell him they had some problems with it? Ms. DeHate responded the ordinance was already in place and Director Cox noted it takes three months of board discussion before it is finalized and she didn't have to go to a meeting to ask questions.
- Director South asked why Ms. DeHate didn't contact the District and have a conversation with the Chief earlier so we wouldn't be at this point? We are all working for the greater good of the community and all the organizations in question need to figure out how to make it work for all parties involved. The Chiefs are very trustworthy and the Board will take it under advisement.
- Ms. DeHate also stated the board should be part of the team that meets and there should be meetings other than board meetings to work on it, and stated she and Chief Supkis have both commented in the past that they wish St. Charles had put an Emergency Department in La Pine. That is what is really needed in this community. The 2016 meeting with Commissioner Tammy Baney about transport issues was very hopeful and it's disappointing nothing came from it.
- Director Cox stated the District would very much like to have a non-ALS transport in La Pine and all it takes is funding.

- Director Cox stated a follow up discussion on the appeal would be put on the next Board meeting agenda and Ms. DeHate was thanked for being present and participating in the discussion.

Break at 9:50

Meeting was reconvened at 10:02

Guest Greg Bryant introduced himself. He is running for county commissioner and stated he may be able to help with the St. Charles transport issue.

Approval of Minutes

Regular Board Meeting – January 9, 2020.

- Director Hubbard noted that on page 6, the first two digits of the ordinance were missing.
- Director Landles noted that on page 7, the name of the director who seconded the motion was missing.

Action: Director South moved to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2020 board meeting minutes as amended. Second by Director Landles; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

Financials

- A. The Monthly Bills. Staff answered questions regarding expenditures and current revenue and expense statement.
- Director Hubbard inquired about:
 - Line 5600 – Facility Transfers. Inquired is this new category is for the billing income under the new ordinance? Bonita answered it reflects the bills sent out but not amount collected. She will contact our auditor for recommendation on how else it could be recorded.
 - Line 6455 – EMS Monitors. Inquired why there was a duplicate payment? Staff responded that Physio Controls had billed us and then merged with Stryker who also billed us. Overpayment is being refunded to us.
 - Line 6885 – GEMT. Inquired if all GEMT fees were paid? Bonita answered all but \$5k for FY 18-19.
 - Line 8456 – Reserve PPE. Noted PPE costs were already at 102%. Chief Supkis responded that line is \$300 over but the overall Uniforms budget should be very close to target. District is having to buy PPE for the new and many different sizes of this year’s students.
 - Inquired who besides Chief Supkis writes grants? Chief Supkis responded just himself at this point. AC Daugherty does a good job of jumping in and helping if he sees one.
 - Director Cox inquired about:
 - If the District has heard from St. Charles or Prairie House on the bills sent out? Chief Supkis responded that St. Charles had called 20 times in the month of January. After the first three bills were sent their mid-level manager, they basically told District

they are not going to pay those and have made no apparent change in resource demand. Chief Supkis also noted the Community Health Center does try - it is the question of appropriate transport method and then payment when the community's emergency ALS unit is used. Director Cox noted the Health Center did not contact the District until after it became an ordinance, even though they had prior notice.

- Director Landles inquired about:
 - Line 6100- Overtime. Noted and commended that the District was substantially below budget. Chief Supkis responded that it is largely due to staffing the roving position, and life's circumstances have been favorable this year so far. January's amount was higher due to both trainings and illness.
- Director Witmer inquired about:
 - Line 5600 - Facility Transfer. Inquired if there was a way to not have amounts billed show up as income until funds are received? Bonita responded it shows up because it has to be put in QuickBooks as an invoice but she will call our auditor and ask how it could be recorded differently.
 - Line 6845 – FireMed Contract Fees. Inquired if the January amount should actually be in December? Bonita responded yes and moved amount to December.
- Director South inquired about:
 - Line 8205 – Communication Repair. Inquired what the January amount of \$455 was for? AC Daugherty responded there is a lot of activity with the radios right now – some radios are being replaced, some installed, 911 has a new CAD system that is being incorporated. That line item will continue to increase in the near future. Director Witmer followed up, asking if it was a frustrating amount of work or expected with the new technology? AC Daugherty responded a little of both.
 - Inquired if there were opportunities to train other staff to write grants? Staff responded Chief Supkis does a great job and the need to train others hasn't really come up. Some have done a few but moved on to more exciting endeavors and also everyone has full plates.

B. Monthly Expenses by Vendor.

- Director Hubbard inquired what the \$20k to Eagle Tanks covered? Staff responded it was for the new fuel tanks at both stations. There was also about \$4k in miscellaneous costs associated with the project, including solar panels and pumps.

C. Monthly Expense Report.

No comments.

Action: Director Hubbard moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 1/10/2020 – 2/13/2020 in the amount of \$571,291.98. No further discussion or comments. Second, Director South; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

Management Report

A. Monthly Alarm Report.

- Directors Cox and Landles noted EMS calls were up. Chief Supkis noted transports were up as well - there were eighty-eight transports in January. During the month of January, there were nine times the District had three simultaneous calls and seven times with 4+ simultaneous calls with only two crews.
- Director Cox inquired at what point does the District add another crew? Chief Supkis responded the District is at that break point now. If a third crew is added in the future, one crew has to stay in District in order to respond to EMS calls and fires.
- Director Cox stated that if both medics are out of district, then there is no one left in the station to respond to emergencies/fires.
- Director Landles agreed with the assessment that more staffing is needed and stated the District is right on the edge of needing additional resources. He knows the Chief's plan has always been to not go to the voters for additional funds, so how far away are increases to pay for additional staffing? Chief Supkis responded the District has been able to add one firefighter a year the last four years but at this rate of growth is not able to keep up with the need, even though the hiring was accelerated. He noted La Pine already has one of the highest tax rates in the state for fire districts. The difference between La Pine and Bend is of course the size of the tax base and the physically large size of our rural district and distances traveled to the hospital. In addition, taxing our way out is not really possible since La Pine is already near the top of the combined tax cap limitation for our area.

B. Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report.

- Valuation for building permits in January 2020: Commercial \$18,000.00 and Residential \$811,214.92.
- Director Cox noted commercial building was slow and residential continues to be steady.
- Director Hubbard inquired how many homes were going to be built on new Russell development? Director South answered 195 homes are going in. The Urban Renewal District ends at Bi-Mart.
- Director Cox inquired what is happening at Wickiup Junction defunct bypass? Chief Supkis responded he has heard that traffic management involving signals and adjustable speed signs are being considered with the remaining funds.

C. Notable Incidents

- Director Hubbard inquired about two calls on 1/25 call to Rainbow Drive 30 minutes apart. Chief Supkis responded that in the EMS world, legitimate health issues will often crop up in same neighborhoods, same day. Hard to say the science behind it, but it does happen fairly often. Director Hubbard also noted the two calls to same address on 1/26, as well as one just down the same road. Director Cox also noted two other dates with calls in close proximity.
- Director Hubbard inquired about the fire on Rainbow Drive. Chief Supkis responded that the crews arrived to find two men trying to empty out a burning garage and both

were overcome by smoke and fumes. The gentlemen were lucky to make it and both Sunriver and Crescent provided mutual aid.

- Director South inquired about details on the water rescue on 1/24. Chief Supkis responded a golden retriever jumped into the river and couldn't get back out over the iced-up banks. The DCSO got there first and actually did the rescue, the District assisted.

D. Equipment and facilities

- Director Cox inquired about the snow leaks at Station 102. Chief Supkis responded there was heavy snow blowing up and under two flashing areas around the bays. When those areas are shoveled, the leaks go away. It also happened in previous years with heavy snow and we had roofers look at it.
- Director Hubbard inquired what is a new "shore line"? Chief Supkis responded a "shore line" is a 110 volt drop line coming from the station to the trucks to keep them response ready and they are replaced about every six months.
- Director Hubbard stated the next Strategic Planning meeting needs to be scheduled. Chief Supkis reminded the Board we are current tabulating the board priority worksheets (that have been turned in) and the process will take up to a year to complete to final document.

Correspondence / News

- A. Letter –Thank you – Dean and Gloria Elliot
- B. Letter –Thank you – Schematen
- C. Letter –Thank you – Resignation - Pichler
- D. Letters - (x3) – St Charles; District Response
- E. Letter – La Pine Community Health – Appeal Invoice #53035; District Response
- F. Blunk Law/State Farm – Bridge Drive Fire Settlement
- G. KTVZ – Garage fire – Smoke Inhalation
- H. Central Oregon Daily News – Garage fire
- I. My Central Oregon - Fire Breaks out in La Pine
- J. Bend Bulletin – Fire District Charging for ambulance rides to bend
- K. WFCA Daily Dispatch – Fire District now charging for ambulance trips to Bend

- Director Hubbard noted the nice letter from departing reserve student Shayna Pichler. Chief Supkis responded RV Pichler has been hired by Seattle Fire and RV Persons has been hired by Jackson County District #3. The District is hosting an open house this weekend for our next prospective students.
- Director Hubbard inquired about the \$9k check from Blunck Law, LLC. Chief Supkis responded that it was from the insurance company of the gentleman responsible for inadvertently starting the Bridge Street fire. Our portion is ~\$2k and the District mailed the rest to the other responding agencies.
- Director Landles inquired if St. Charles had responded to Chief Supkis' letter? Chief Supkis responded that their approach has been silence since our response letter to their refusal of their first three bills for transports.

Old Business

A. District Ordinance #2019-04, Adopting 2019 Oregon Fire Code, dated December 2019.

- Director Hubbard stated that in Section 1 after the “T” the period needs changed to a comma, and the word “devises” needs to be corrected. In Section 2, the “and” after Fire Code needs to be deleted. Chief Supkis noted the ordinance was produced and copied from the state template verbatim but staff will update.

Action: Director South read the Ordinance into record and moved to adopt Ordinance #2019-04, An Ordinance to Adopt the 2019 Edition of the Oregon Fire Code for the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District and Prescribing Regulations to Govern Conditions Hazardous to Life and Property from Fire or Explosion and Other Pertinent Provisions; and Repealing Ordinances #2014-01, #2004-01, #2004-02 and #99-01 of the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District and All Other Ordinances or Parts of Laws in Conflict Therewith, with corrections made as noted above. No further discussion or comments. Second, Director Hubbard; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

B. Minimum Daily Staffing Discussion

- Chief Supkis noted that currently each shift is staffed at 8 crew members with one floater. With 25 crew members the vacations, sick time and injuries usually result in at least one crew member out at any given time, which results in an average of 7 crew on shift. The policy currently states we must have a minimum of 6 crew members on shift for the whole district, split between two stations. Below 6 we have to bring in OT staffing. The question is should the District bring this minimum up to 7 to ensure better staffing? It will increase expenses.
- Director South inquired if this would reduce the overtime line? Chief Supkis responded it will increase the OT budget line substantially because of requiring more staffing at all times. Director South asked why don't we just hire someone and increase the payroll instead of the OT? Chief Supkis responded that can achieve the same result but it doesn't always guarantee the minimum of 6 or 7 on duty.
- Director Landles inquired if the next FY budget allowed for a new hire? Chief Supkis responded that is being looked at as next year's budget is being built. We could consider using the savings in OT this year to bring in a new crew member.
- Director South also noted that last year OT was at \$110k and the prior year was \$150k. If the District has a strong fire season, that could burn through the overtime quickly as well.
- Director Landles stated the need is there and he leaned towards hiring a new crew member. If we bring new crew on, overtime is more likely to stay lower.
- Chief Supkis noted he may be able to apply for a SAFER grant to hire someone to oversee the student program. The stabilization of patient is more important than transporting them, and having that person as backup when both medics are already out would be helpful.
- Director Cox inquired how the union felt about a day-time crew member? Chief Supkis responded he approached the union and he hasn't gotten a lot of feedback from them but the wage will have to be the same as all firefighters at the District who work a 48-

hour shift. There is some history going back 25 years where hours were cut back, so union now makes sure the same thing does not happen again.

- Director Cox mentioned Bend Fire. Chief Supkis responded Bend Fire asked for a levy override for non-union BLS and they had room under their tax cap. Redmond is putting calls on pending if too many medics are out. We allow our paramedics to put calls on pending if needed and propose to make clearer in the current Board policy.
- Directors Landles and Witmer noted and Chief Supkis agreed that having a new crew member should reduce OT but increasing the minimum staffing will increase OT costs.
- Chief Supkis noted the District growth rate has exceeded revenue rate. We need new personnel and new vehicles to keep up with the growth.

C. Review District Policy #600-02, Emergency Medical Services.

- Chief Supkis noted the staff asked him to update policy to show that a patient in higher level care can be put in a pending status if we only have one medic left in the community. Redmond is already doing this.
- Director Cox inquired if our crews still have to clean up the medic after they return to station? Chief Supkis responded usually not unless it was an all-out working code and medic needs a full restock and decontamination. They are usually reset at hospital and crews report as returning to service at top of Lava Butte 90% of the time.
- Director Cox inquired how Prineville is affected by this situation? Chief Supkis responded they are struggling similarly to La Pine. They often transport once to the Prineville St. Charles (which does receive patient from EMS) and then 20 minutes later from the Prineville clinic to St. Charles in Bend. The call center was supposed to resolve this issue but it hasn't. Jefferson County has the doctor and patient sign a form before they will transport that they will pay (because Medicare and insurance will not) and no one likes that model.
- Chief Supkis stated we would add a paragraph to current policy stating when the patient is at a higher level of care, our medics have the option of putting a call in pending. There can be times where the call truly is urgent and incoming information can change our response.
- Director South inquired how soon can serious call be determined? Chief Supkis responded 911 has call screening and paramedics are good at triaging because they work with patients in critical condition every day. The medical facilities staff only knows the condition of the patient at hand. The District however has to make its decisions based on providing the most good for the most people. It is not just about the patient in front of us but the next patient that comes up.
- Director South inquired if District can ask CMT how much it is being used for transport from La Pine? Chief Supkis responded we had a meeting with them last month and are waiting on CMT to get figures back to us. But they are being cancelled more than being used.
- Guest Charla DeHate inquired if transport issues could be addressed with St. Charles at the March board meeting.
- Director Witmer inquired if District can triage and if appropriate call CMT? Chief Supkis answered yes, we can and we have.

- Director Witmer stated to meeting guests that the District policies are not about gaining monies, but how to meet community need. He suggested work meetings instead of waiting for monthly board meetings.
- Director Hubbard stated that St. Charles La Pine, La Pine Community Health Center, Prairie House, County Commissioners, and CMT need to all meet together.

New Business

A. Billing Appeal per Ordinance #2019-03 – La Pine Community Health Care Center – Invoice #53035. Appeal was moved to beginning of meeting.

B. Appoint 2020/2021 Budget Officer

Action: Director Hubbard moved to appoint Chief Mike Supkis as the 2020-2021 Budget Officer. Second by Director Landles; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

C. Adopt 2020/2021 Budget Calendar

Action: Director Hubbard moved to adopt the 2020/2021 Budget Calendar as presented. Second by Director Cox; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

Special Meeting and Workshops

None

Good of the Order

- Director South will be out of town on day of March board meeting.
- Director Landles inquired if there was an update on the DEQ weather station at Station 103? Chief Supkis responded the agreement was signed and finalized. Work is yet to be done.
- Director Hubbard inquired if there should be a policy in place for bidding on projects over \$10K? Chief Supkis responded the District already has a budgeting policy in place, we now understand better how to implement and/or document that.
- Director Witmer inquired when the Strategic Planning paperwork was due? Chief Supkis responded anytime but it was not urgent. Director Witmer asked for email reminders.
- Director Hubbard inquired on the status of the plans to update restrooms and showers at Station 101? AC Daugherty responded he has a meeting next week with the only architectural firm who responded to our requests for service. He is still reaching out to other firms.

Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting Station 101 – Thursday, March 12, at 9 a.m.

Action: Director Hubbard moved to adjourn the board meeting. Second by Director South; the motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

Adjourn Regular Board Meeting

Director Cox adjourned the board meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully Scribed and Submitted
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
Administrative Staff

Date Presented to Board and Approval

Board Secretary

Board President
