

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m. followed by Executive Session

Open Meeting Director Cox opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and led the flag salute.

Roll Call

Directors Present: Robin Adams, Doug Cox, Jim Landles, Dick Swails

Directors Absent: Joel Witmer absent due to travel, he will be back tomorrow for CBA mediation

Staff Present: Chief Mike Supkis, Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty, Office Manager Tracy Read

Open Forum for Public Comment

Name	Purpose for Attending
<i>Vern Walter</i>	<i>Info</i>
<i>Courtney Ignazzitto</i>	<i>LCHC Appeals</i>
<i>Charla DeHate</i>	<i>LCHC Appeals</i>
<i>Jerry Hubbard</i>	<i>Public Affairs</i>
<i>Rex Lesueur</i>	<i>Info</i>

Vern Walter: Asked what constitutes a fire company. Board asked Chief to respond. He stated a fire company is a crew of two to five that makes up a unit that responds and works together depending on what unit is being staffed and what is being responded to. Typical staffing for the District is three crew members. Mr. Walter then asked about a figure of \$1.2 million cost to staff a medic. Chief responded with equipment, personnel and operational costs that is about right. Medics are replaced about every three years and cost about \$230,000 with no equipment. Each crew member costs between \$110,000 - \$120,000 – at starting wage including benefits. By contract, the District is staffed twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. As Jerry Hubbard stated at the Board of County Commissioners’ meeting yesterday, it will cost \$2.6 million per year to add 18 firefighters to the staff which provides two additional crews, or six people per shift for three shifts, to staff two additional medics. Mr. Walter then asked if the firefighter/paramedic crews are separate. Chief replied this is great question, there is currently only one crew for each station. If the crew responds to a fire call, there is no

EMS crew and if they respond on an EMS alarm there is no fire crew. Mr. Walter then asked whether the District has standby crews like Midstate does with linemen paying them standby time. Chief responded that yes, the district has a call back program. Per contract when both crews are out of district a personnel call back is activated, and any staff voluntarily responds and if they are available, are paid an incentive. The District also has the student reserve program, the goal of which is to have up to fifteen - however currently the District has only six. The student reserves can help staff a third unit when they are available, however school is first for them so it averages the reserves are available only about one third of the time. The students have provided the ability to respond quickly to multiple calls on many occasions over the past year. The District has four medic unit vehicles, two of which are staffed and two for mechanical reserve or student deployment. The District's newest medics units are going on three years old and are now already being replaced in December. There have been days recently this past month when 600 miles was placed on an ambulance in a single shift due to the distance of transports.

Mr. Walter asked the Board of Directors why some appeals have been granted and asked for whatever documentation helps guide those decisions. Board and staff responded the checklists can be provided and have been to the medical facilities. However, any other information would need to be reviewed by attorneys due to the continuing legal action by the medical clinics. He asked Charla DeHate to share previous correspondence regarding the process.

Director Cox asked the Chief about the cost to equip the new medics mentioned above. Chief replied it costs about an additional \$100,000 to fully equip a unit and over the next year the District has plans for \$400,000 in Capital expenditures for this. The revenues from ambulance transports do not fully cover the cost of providing the service, and the District is using taxpayer dollars to subsidize that cost which is a violation of the original voter mandate.

Director Adams asked whether ambulance equipment is repurposed for use on new units. Chief responded that yes, the last two ambulances purchased have been new, the previous three the modular ambulance box was refurbished and put on a new chassis. The district alternates between refurbishing and totally new to maximize efficiency. All current medical equipment is transferred and now is at least ten years old and has been used over at least three times.

Director Cox thanked Mr. Walter for his questions.

No other public comment made.

Approval of Minutes

Director Cox called for review of the September minutes. Director Swails noted one error on page 2 with an incorrect last name for one of the new reserves. No other comments made.

Action: Director Swails moved to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2021 Board of Directors Regular Meeting with the noted correction. Second by Director Adams. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Financials

Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Statement. Staff answered Board questions regarding current revenues and expenditures.

- 6305 – Line Staff Half Time – Director Swails asked what this expense details. Staff responded this is mandatory overtime per the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1975 for the regular shifts firefighters worked.
- 5104 – GEMT – Director Adams asked when this revenue can be expected. Staff noted last year was an anomaly as two years' payments were received (one for previous catchup). It is expected it will be received before the end of the calendar year. Staff also advised the board there will be additional GEMT increment reimbursement this year.
- 6050 – Summer Intern – Director Landles asked for clarification – Staff noted there was no summer intern this year so those funds were not spent. Chief Supkis stated the district had hired one of its students for a summer intern but that student got a career position in Portland before they started.
- 6236 – Workers' Compensation – Director Adams asked if this expense was for claims or premiums. Staff responded this is an annual premium, and the additional amount paid this month is the result of more payroll dollars being spent resulting in a higher premium after the WC audit.
- 6100 – Line Staff Overtime – Director Landles asked if overtime is expected due to potential staffing issues created by the vaccine mandate. Chief replied that over 95% of the staff has either been vaccinated or turned in an exemption request, and this will be further reviewed in today's executive session. The District has also experienced additional overtime as a result of staff needing to take time off due to illness and other personal commitments and issues. Over the past couple of years the District has had one additional floating crew member, and that has helped fill open vacancies. That extra person has helped keep needed staffing and reduce overall overtime costs.
- 8000 – Fuel – Director Adams noted this expense is at fifty percent of budget and asked if staff sees that changing. Staff responded this will not change, oil prices are

recently back up and district vehicles are being more heavily used due to increased call volume and transports. Board asked about the new gas medics will make a difference? Chief Supkis stated the current medics run on diesel which is a dirty fuel. Because of all the emissions filters which keep junk in the motor and out of the air, major overhauls are required about every 40,000 miles. The new medics will be gas powered which will not make much of a difference in fuel costs due to similar pricing and mileage but hope to save in maintenance and breakdowns.

- 8105 – Breakdowns – Director Swails asked about the general condition of apparatus. Chief stated that fire apparatus is very good to excellent due to regular maintenance and timely repairs. Medics are good to fair due to heavy use. Chassis are just okay, there have been driveline issues recently which are very costly.
- Director Swails asked about cash balances. Staff reported the LGIP account is at approximately \$279,000 and Capital Reserve is at \$106,000. These funds will cover expenses through the first tax turn although it will be very close. Chief stated there is no more cushion. Next year the District may have to look at borrowing to cover the last part of the year prior to tax revenue being received. The growth and demand for service is increasing faster than revenue. Staff is cautious with discretionary spending at this point in the year.
- Director Landles asked about the District's ability to move funds between accounts, staff responded ten percent can be moved without having to reconvene the budget board. However, the District can temporarily within the budget year move money between funds to cover cash flow but it must be replaced.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Reviewed, no comments.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Action: Director Adams moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 9/10/21 – 10/14/21 in the amount of \$520,416.15. Second by Director Swails. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Director Landles observed that all alarm types have increased, and some have almost doubled over last year at this time, including a dramatic increase in unauthorized burning in September. Staff responded this year campfires were banned, and as soon as

it started to cool off there were campfires in areas not allowed, and also people calling in burns that they were concerned about but were in allowable sites. Chief likened going into and out of fire season to turning a battleship around – it takes two to three weeks for a change in direction.

Chief drew the Board's attention to two numbers on this report. First, EMS calls to date are 1,614 compared to last year's 1,238 – a 25 percent increase over the course of a year. Transports so far this year are at 971, compared to 759 last year.

Jerry Hubbard asked about tracking of Code 99 calls, which is almost double from last year. Part of this may be due to the increase in population, also Covid, and people not getting care and staying sick at home.

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

Chief's Report

Director Adams noted one positive – there was a baby born. Chief responded there was another delivery yesterday, crews typically see a few each year and are great on those responses and it is always nice to bring a life into the world.

Director Cox asked what the average call volume per day is. Chief responded the average is nine. Capacity is eight. There are some days with 6, and some with up to nineteen calls eleven or more transports. So far this year there have been 436 multiple alarms; just under one quarter of all calls. Director Adams clarified this is for all alarms, not just EMS calls.

Chief shared a discussion he had yesterday morning with a LifeFlight crew member waiting at the La Pine Fire LZ waiting for an ambulance transfer, who said at 7 a.m. they were on their sixth flight for the day. Director Adams referenced an article on this topic, where helicopter transports are occurring more often not necessarily because of the seriousness of the patient but that no ground ambulances are available. Also helicopter transports are reimbursed at 100%.

Correspondence/News

- A. Thank you/donation – Meszaros Family
- B. Thank-you – Engebretson Family
- C. Thank- you/donation – Cobb
- D. Thank -you/donation – Midstate Electric
- E. Wise Buys – Sun Forest wildfire

- F. Oregonian – Calls from care facility battle
- G. Yachats News – Desperate water rescue leaves anger frustration
- H. Wise Buys – Thank for Wildfire response; Fire District emphasized need for more resources; City Growth
- I. KTVZ – COVID increases medical flights to/from Central Oregon hospitals
- J. NBC News – Paramedic, EMT shortage – Longer waits

Director Adams referenced the Yachats water rescue and commented on this type of call, where people from out of the area and who may be unfamiliar with the dangers take risks and become injured or require rescue. Discussion regarding rescue calls, training, crews' ability to respond to these types of technical rescue response unit and the limited rescue operational ability of the District in remote and rural areas.

Director Swails asked about calls from care facilities. Additional discussion regarding delayed responses due to senior care facilities' limited ability to provide care for residents. Chief replied it is an unfortunate strain on resources, that the District responds when needed which places the rest of the community in a response deficit. In more urban areas, public private partnerships have been implemented to address those needs.

Jerry Hubbard noted he has reached out to representatives and senators. They would like to set up a phone meeting with two board members and Chief, staff will work to set that up. Jerry let everyone know he will be moving to McMinnville and would be available to continue in his volunteer liaison role for the District.

Old Business

A. Public Private Partnership (PPP) Transportation Resource Agreement – updates. Chief reported on the meeting with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) yesterday. The District is seeking an endorsement vote by the Commissioners, which is required by the Deschutes County ASA. The BOCC has placed this on their agenda for October 27, at which time they could vote on it. The biggest thing is that the Board has previously answered all questions. The County ASA board held a meeting last week without the invite or knowledge of District staff. Chief Daugherty sits on that board as an appointed member and was not aware of or invited to the meeting. Several more questions came up during this meeting which could easily have been answered had the District been allowed to attend. As a result, the BOCC claims there may be still unresolved issues. When Chief brought this to the attention of the BOCC, there was no response. Chief has received calls from two area fire chiefs stating they do not understand why the meeting was held without the District being represented, that it was uncomfortable and inappropriate. There were important questions posed with

simple answers that could have been provided. It was discouraging that not everyone is going in the same direction. Director Swails commended La Pine Community Health Center for their presence and input during the BOCC meeting.

Director Adams expressed her surprise that the BOCC needed another two weeks to address this issue. Chief stated the COFC was not aware of the BOCC consideration of this issue until two weeks ago, even though every fire district in the greater central Oregon area was contacted and given the first opportunity to enter into an agreement with the District. While they were aware of the pending PPP, they did not have a response to provide to the BOCC when asked.

In response to Director Cox's question, Chief stated Redmond is currently using a PPP although they do not call 911. When Redmond is not available, St. Charles uses Cascade Medical Transport (CMT) by calling them directly. Director Adams offered this is used for routine transfers and not emergencies. Bend requires the patient to phone CMT directly for non-emergent transports. The transport business under the current ASA has become a monopoly, and a PPP may be a downstream concern to those agencies.

Director Cox noted from past studies there may not be sufficient call volume to support it with the long transport distances. Director Adams stated a conversation regarding putting a hospital in La Pine is a solution but not likely to happen.

Chief Supkis asked the Board for any direction. Discussion regarding contacting Commissioner DeBone again to move this forward. Discussion regarding response time requirements seen differently by outside parties. However, this is set by ASA mandate until 2028 contract period renewal and cannot be changed arbitrarily. Additionally, the ASA rural response time of 45 minutes applies to only the first unit out 90% of the time.

New Business

None.

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

Packet 1

A. A. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board Invoice 115 – call 01698

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by La Pine CHC and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 2

B. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board Invoice 119 – call 01811

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by La Pine CHC and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 3

C. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 107 – call 01534

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

D. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 108 – call 01495

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

E. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 112 – call 01574

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

F. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 112 – call 01592

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

G. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 113 – call 01599

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

H. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 113 – call 01649

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

I. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 113 – call 01655

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 4

J. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 117 – call 01714

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

K. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 117 – call 01735

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

L. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 117 – call 01765

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams: Abstain
Cox: Deny
Landles: Deny
Swails: Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

M. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 117 – call 01774

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams: Abstain
Cox: Deny
Landles: Deny
Swails: Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 5

N. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 118 – call 01805

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams: Abstain
Cox: Deny
Landles: Deny
Swails: Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

O. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 118 – call 01821

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

P. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 118 – call 01835

Director Cox confirmed the appeal packet information provided by St. Charles and District was reviewed by members of the Board and asked for any further questions. There were none.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

Adams:	Abstain
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny
Swails:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Special Meetings and Workshops

None.

Good of the Order

Chief reported the CBA mediation is tomorrow. Director Witmer will be in attendance. The Union has engaged their attorney, who has a good working relationship with Todd Lyon. Staff is hopeful this will improve negotiations which have been slow in progress.

A. Fall facility and equipment inspections 9 a.m. Wednesday, October 27.

Chief briefed the Board on this upcoming semi-annual inspection, and welcomed anyone interested to attend.

Fire season will end this weekend, and open debris burning in the Deschutes County portion of the District will open next Monday.

Chief reported on the P25 radio system which has been in use for the past week. So far crews and staff are pleased with the performance and also the responsiveness of Deschutes 911 staff. The P25 system operates on the State radio system backbone, which started as radio towers for snowplows and state police on highways and has been expanded and improved over time. Recently the system has been optimized for fire /EMS portable radios which was to improve in building coverage. The District is still operating through the one-month trial system, and will continue to also use the legacy system in the future in order to communicate with other all the other agencies which have not converted to P25 such as state and federal forestry, Walker Range and fire agencies outside of Deschutes County. Currently scanners are not able to pick up on radio transmissions once the initial tone-out occurs, this will be addressed during the final conversion. Chief thanked staff and all involved for their hard work on this project which entailed an amazing amount of detail. The 911 improvement plan does include a new tower at Spring River which will further enhance the system.

Next Regular Meeting: Board consensus to hold the next regular board meeting at its normal time, November 11, 2021, which is Veterans' Day.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

Board Secretary

Board President

November 11, 2021

