

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
November 11, 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

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

Open Forum for Public Comment

Name	Purpose for Attending
<i>Bonnie Cox</i>	
<i>Jerry Hubbard</i>	
<i>Charla DeHate</i>	<i>Ordinance</i>
<i>Rex Lesueur</i>	<i>Board</i>
<i>Brett Hulstrom</i>	<i>Union 3387/Citizen</i>
<i>Robin Mirrasoul</i>	
<i>Vern Walter</i>	

Chief introduced Captain Ty Miller, who was recently promoted from Firefighter/Paramedic to Captain. Ty joined the District in 2010 and is excited for this new opportunity.

Rex Lesueur: Spoke to express his interest in serving on the District’s Board of Directors, citing his previous experience serving on various boards and his understanding of Special Districts of Oregon. He has served as chairman of the La Pine Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council. He has a keen interest in board and budgeting processes and has completed the Special District’s board of directors training. He also stated his wife is no longer on the board of La Pine Community Health Center, so any potential conflict there is no longer an issue. Rex requested he be considered for any upcoming board position.

No other public comment made.

Approval of Minutes

Director Cox called for review of the October minutes.

Director Swails commented on crew member costs cited in the minutes, and stated the amount differs from amounts as stated and in recently to the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) by Jerry Hubbard. He feels there needs to be consistency in reporting costs. Chief replied this is because the two amounts referenced one is for actual salary only (110,00 - \$120,00), while the other amount, \$2.6 million for 18 additional, was the total personnel cost – salary, benefits, uniforms, PPE, and their operational supplies. Total cost per firefighter/paramedic is \$140,000 – \$150,000.

No other comments made.

Action: Director Adams moved to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2021 Board of Directors Regular Meeting. Second by Director Swails. 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.

- 1220 – Property Tax Revenue – Director Adams asked when revenue is expected. Staff responded some tax money has been received and the majority is expected to come in over the next few weeks.
- 8412 – Instructor – Director Adams inquired about this expense. Chief stated it is for the annual water rescue training this past summer.
- 9925 – Capital Reserve Tax Levy – Director Adams asked if this is an accurate projection. Chief responded that based on the just received Deschutes County tax collection projections the District is on track to meet its forecast and maybe even exceed this amount by about \$10,000. Taxes in the general fund are expected to be about \$50,000 over the budgeted forecast for the fiscal year.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Reviewed.

- Director Adams inquired about the CLIA Certification expense. Chief Daugherty responded this is a required Federal Lab certification which allows paramedics to draw blood.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Action: Director Swails moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 10/15/21 – 11/11/21 in the amount of \$285,270.05. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Director Landles noted there was only one reported brush fire and asked if this was due to debris burning being opened. Chief responded while he cannot speak to the details of the reported fire, it was likely an escaped burn, and was not a naturally caused fire. Director Adams commented that while other call types decreased in October, EMS calls continued to increase. Chief also commented that there are also many “gray area” type calls, and how an alarm is categorized often depends on how it was initially called in or how the report was written up.

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

Director Cox noted multiple alarms have increased dramatically over this time last year. Last year to date saw 380 multiple alarms, compared with 482 this year – meaning 482 times the District did not have the resources it should have to respond – more than once per day. Director Adams commented on the 134% increase in building permits over last year. Chief responded that while there is light at the end of the tunnel, there is no one silver bullet to the current financial constraints on the District. There are many pieces to the solution and building permits “growth” are an important part of it. Infrastructure permits are beginning to be pulled for the new phase in Caldera Springs to include 350 new homes. However, building has not yet begun and the District receives no tax revenue until a piece of property is developed with a building. Interestingly, fire districts are the only taxing districts this restriction is placed on.

This taxation challenge has previously been brought before the State legislature. In 1950, when fire districts were allowed to become an independent government, there

was concern among the timber industry with fire districts being able to tax industry lands. The industry opposed taxing undeveloped land (forest) for community fire protections. The loophole is when forest land is subdivided into development lots, by law it is still forest land until a structure is built on it. The State Fire Chiefs went before the legislature about five years ago, with the District's Board being very active in the effort. It went through the reading process and was set for vote when the timber industry requested one additional year, stating after that time they would come to the table for discussions. That never happened and as a result the opportunity was missed. Additionally, other taxing districts such as counties, municipalities, libraries, school districts, etc. are all able to collect on all lands within their jurisdiction. This was not meant to hurt fire districts, but was an unintended consequence. Any vote to amend this would be a political vote to raise taxes on anyone who owns a vacant lot, making it very difficult to get support. The last calculation was that the District could see an additional \$250,000 per year – this was several years ago before many of the new developments.

Chief's Report

- On October 14 crews responded to a stabbing. This prompted a question from Director Adams regarding safety measures in place for responders. Chief replied that when there is a known high-threat call, our crews stage until law enforcement arrives and clears the threat.
- There were eight Code 99's in October.
- Crews responded to a water rescue at Paulina Lake. By the time they arrived on scene the person had been brought to shore, the patient was hypothermic.
- Demand is still 50 percent over capacity on most days. This affects morale, an example being the previous night where crews started around 3 p.m. and ran continuously until 5 a.m.
- Engine 123 was brought back yesterday following major pump and electrical repairs. The rig is 23 years old, and the repair bill is \$10,000. The Breakdowns line budget looks to be far over expended this year. Winter tire changeover is done.
- New radios – Chief reported they are working well, better than expected. There is still some programming to be done, and the changeover is expected to become permanent. The legacy system will remain intact. There are some challenges in a couple of big buildings. 911 reprogrammed the system to prioritize portable units rather than mobiles, which routes calls through the network, making it more sensitive. 911 has also budgeted a new repeater for

Spring Butte which will further enhance the system. The dead spots were found in Sunriver Business Park and at Les Schwab. The digital signal is either on or off.

- Director Adams expressed her neighborhood's appreciation for the Chief's Firewise presentation. Chief stated there are several new neighborhoods working on Firewise certification and the District leads in the number of Firewise neighborhoods in the nation.

Correspondence/News

- A. KTVZ – Fire District Seeks PPP
- B. Wise Buys – Board Meeting, End of Fire Season
- C. US Senate – Merkley Announces Key Funding
- D. KTVZ – Merkley: Appropriations Bill Includes Funds for C.O. Agencies

Director Landles expressed appreciation for the work Senator Merkley's office has done for the District. Chief responded this \$660,000 although has passed the House and Senate, and while very promising, it still needs the full budget appropriation. It is not yet a sure thing. He commended Jerry Hubbard's work on this amazing outcome. An important consideration for the funding, beside need, was that the District is responsible with taxpayer money and had a project plan with projects which are critically needed and "shovel ready".

Jerry reported on a wildfire budget allocation currently under consideration, which he will investigate. There is also a potential for state wildfire funding.

Discussion regarding CMS reimbursement rates and that the Senator's office was surprised at how low those rates are for the District. Chief briefed everyone on previous work done to address this. In 2010, board member Conrad Ruel and others worked on attempting to correct this "double whammy". First because the Social Security Reinvestment Act of 2003 redirected rural medical funding. Secondly because Deschutes County is considered a metro county by the federal government, District transports are reimbursed at the lower rate of an area with a hospital and urban transportation distances. Despite years of work to correct this, any change would take place county-wide and the Social Security Administration would not reclassify this area. Should that classification change, the District could see up to a fifteen percent increase in reimbursement rates. The good news is the GEMT program has recognized this reimbursement shortfall and in the process of addressing some of the inequities.

Old Business

- A. Public Private Partnership (PPP) Transportation Resource Agreement – updates.

Discussion regarding typographical errors and dates which still need to be corrected. Chief reported the biggest change since the Board approved the PPP last spring was that the medical facilities were concerned there would be a prejudice and as a result the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) directed all references to addresses be struck from the Agreement. This has been done and does not change the substance of the PPP – That is providing the possibility of additional 911 transportation resources for all calls. Other recent changes include the District agrees to assist Cascade Medical Transport (CMT) by providing two portable radios and two CAD devices. The big change is that the start date has been pushed out to February 1, 2022. When the PPP was not enacted earlier this year, CMT sent staff out to assist with wildfire responses and is now struggling with staffing shortages. As a result, they will not be able to staff a La Pine unit until at least February of next year. Operationally, it will take time to recover from staffing shortages which is a disappointment but a reality everywhere.

Director Adams reported to the medical facilities on her recent meeting with Dr. Absalon, CEO of St. Charles Health System. They met for the benefit of the medical facilities and to talk about ways the District and the medical facilities can better work together so transport calls are more appropriately dispatched. She requested that rather than a receptionist making the call to 911, that a provider phone dispatch whenever possible so that the most accurate information is relayed during dispatch. She stated this for the benefit of the facilities and asked Charla DeHate what the LCHC process is. Charla responded that normally a nurse makes the call to 911. Consensus was this change would be helpful. Chief added that 911 dispatchers are trained in emergency medical dispatching and to assign a response level per established national and medical protocol criteria, however they can only work with the information received from the caller. The District does not screen the calls; that is the responsibility of 911. Additionally, just because CMT may be dispatched on a call doesn't mean that the District does not respond.

Chief reported on events the previous evening where a stroke patient was stabilized by the captain on duty as the medic crews were on another call. About 23 minutes later, crews responded to a chest pain call from St. Charles Family Care in La Pine. As soon as that patient was prepared for transport, a call came in for a high-impact MVA at the intersection of Highway 97 and Burgess Road. Available in district was a student responding with a quick response unit, a captain and Chief Supkis. On scene, district staff waited thirty minutes for Sunriver to arrive after elevating the call due to the patient seizing after hitting the windshield. That's the danger the community is in. While staff did an excellent job caring for the patient, the system is fractured and we are going to fail. People are dying – and crews are responding to this type of emergency every day. That same evening shortly after the Highway 97 crash, there was another MVA on Burgess Road near Station 103 while traffic was being diverted from the first crash. That incident required a La Pine medic unit to respond Code 3 back from Bend. Not only were air ambulances grounded, there was another serious MVA in Terrebonne requiring additional resources.

Director Cox discussed air ambulance responses and how drastically their responses to calls for service have changed. Currently air ambulance medics are not even able to perform CPR.

Director Adams congratulated everyone on getting the PPP across the finish line. Chief commented we will work the six months to get it operational, which is going to be a challenge with limited qualified employees out there. The BOCC approval for the La Pine PPP runs for two years at which time it will be reviewed by the BOCC.

Action: Director Landles moved to accept the PPP between La Pine Rural Fire Protection District and CMT, with noted corrections, to go into effect on February 1, 2022. Second by Director Adams.

Roll Call Vote:

Swails:	Approve
Cox:	Approve
Landles:	Approve
Adams:	Approve

B. Fireworks

Chief Supkis reported on work to date on this important community issue. The restriction if approved would affect only personal use fireworks and would not affect public displays. A draft letter was presented to the Board for consideration; with Board approval this would be sent to City officials and County Commissioners. Chief reminded the Board that the State of Oregon, the State Fire Marshal's Office and local fire agencies cannot enact a ban on fireworks, rather any such action must be taken by city and county officials. There was a fireworks ban in place this past summer due to the high fire danger. As a result, calls and complaints were down 70% - 80% with no fires coming from fireworks. While some groups do use fireworks sales as fundraisers, there are other opportunities for those groups to raise money. Chief reminded everyone that this is a fire safety issue. In response to Director Swails' inquiry, Chief reported that Bend, Sisters and Sunriver have already enacted permanent bans on personal use fireworks. Redmond is the only city that has not, and the more rural communities of La Pine, Cloverdale, and Alfalfa have not yet put restrictions in place.

Director Adams noted a couple of corrections which need to be made to the draft letter and asked what is needed to move forward. Chief replied options available are to do nothing; or agree to submit the corrected letter and send the letter to the City, the County, or both. Discussion regarding whether this would be a full-time ban, or if it would be only during fire season. Chief replied the district is looking at this as a fire safety issue only. Director Landles stated he feels the letter should be sent to City and

County officials. Director Swails suggested waiting a month or so to make the request. Chief stated that is reasonable and we need to look at it long-term. Also, there are only two fireworks stands in the area last year.

Director Adams suggested the letter be revised and reviewed at the December meeting. All Board members agreed.

New Business

None.

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

Packet 1

Director Adams restated her concerns with the Ordinance and that she will abstain from voting on the pending appeals.

A. A. St. Charles appeal to the Board – Invoice 120 – Call 01897

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:

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

B. St. Charles appeal to the Board – Invoice 120 – Call 01918

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:

Swails:	Deny
Cox:	Deny
Landles:	Deny

Adams: Abstain

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

C. St. Charles appeal to the Board – Invoice 120 – Call 01927

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:

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

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

D. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 120 – Call 01932

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:

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

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 2

E. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 121 – Call 01956

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:

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

F. St. Charles appeal to the Board – Invoice 121 – Call 02023

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:

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

G. St. Charles appeal to the Board – Invoice 121 – Call 02024

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:

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

H. St. Charles appeal to the Board Invoice 121 – Call 02026

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:

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

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 3

I. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board Invoice 122 – Call 01939

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:

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

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Packet 4

J. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board Invoice 124 – Call 02113

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:

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

K. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board Invoice 125 – Call 02134

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:

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

L. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board – Invoice 126 – Call 02155

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:

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

M. La Pine Community Health Center appeal to the Board – Invoice 127 – Call 02156

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:

Swails: Deny

Cox: Deny
Landles: Deny
Adams: Abstain

Appeal denied on a 3-0 vote.

Director Swails referenced the appeal letters from St. Charles and La Pine CHC stating they are claiming the ordinance number is not reflected on the District's invoices and asked if it should be changed. Chief responded he will check with counsel and follow their guidance.

Special Meetings and Workshops

None.

Good of the Order

Fall Facility and Equipment Inspections Report.

Chief briefed the Board on the results of the semi-annual inspections which took place on October 27. Crews did really well, the focus was on recently completed remodel areas. There is one pending county inspection at Station 102 following a signage change on the restroom.

Nothing major was found, only little things such as lights. Chief reminded everyone that all maintenance is done by the crews from cleaning carpets to winterizing vehicles, washing windows, checking gutters, etc. The District does not have a cleaning service – all work is done as part of regular duties. Student dorms were also checked. Carson started delivering winter fuel in October. District also uses diesel treatment as some vehicles do not get enough mileage to always refill with winter diesel, so fuel is treated with the additive which has been working well.

Chief thanked Jerry Hubbard for his work on grants.

Next Regular Meeting: December 9, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

Board Secretary

Board President
