

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
September 9, 2021 Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m.

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, 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>Jerry Hubbard</i>	<i>Public Affairs</i>
<i>Courtney Ignazzitto</i>	<i>LCHC Appeals</i>
<i>Jami Doty</i>	<i>OORFPD concern on patient care</i>
<i>Beylee Provost</i>	<i>OORFPD concern on patient care</i>
<i>Janet Beery</i>	<i>OORFPD concern on patient care</i>
<i>Larry Beery</i>	<i>OORFPD (Chief)</i>

Janet Beery: Stated the fire district responded to an accident behind McDonald's involving a member of Oregon Outback RFPD (OORFPD) and that she has an issue with some of the responders and who brought the patient out of his car. She stated medics did not check vitals or do a pain assessment. The member does have a broken bone and ruptured disc from the accident. Stated medics made him walk to his vehicle which caused more damage. She stated the employee was parked in the parking lot and a McDonald's truck backed into his vehicle.

Jami Doty: Referred to the incident above which occurred on August 19, 2021. She stated a semi "slammed into him and shoved him fifty feet." She said paramedics did not provide a backboard or neck brace, and that he was told to get out of his car. She stated she was a witness. Stated the member told the La Pine medic that he is a first responder and requested the gurney be lowered so he could sit on it. Stated the member has six ruptured discs and a broken T2 from the accident.

Director Witmer asked whether the concerns expressed by Beery and Doty had been brought to the attention of administration. Jami replied they have not and that she was told by others in their department to bring it to the Board. Witmer suggested it be brought to the attention of the Fire Chief so that documentation could be reviewed. Director Cox added that it is always best to bring a concern to the Fire Chief first, and then the Board of Directors if they feel the concern is not adequately addressed.

Chief noted all calls are reviewed by the District's physician advisor and the District would QA this call.

No other public comment made.

Introduction of New Students

Reserve Program Coordinator, FF/Paramedic Luke Jerome, provided an overview of the program and introduced the incoming class. This year's class started with five students and after the first day went down to three.

Rocky Hanes: Rocky is from Vancouver, Washington. His favorite day so far was search and rescue, using blackout masks to rely on other senses in rescue training sessions.

Colton Juenger: Colton is also from Vancouver. His favorite so far was vehicle extrication. He enjoyed using tools to pop doors.

Bradley Jolliffe: Bradley is from Ashland, Oregon. He also enjoyed extrication.

Chief stated the three remaining five-star candidates made it through the toughest days so far. Today they are heading out to train on water rescue, which normally brings snow and cold. Jerome advised everyone that one of the current students who is doing her paramedic internship and has almost completed the paramedic program is currently in Haiti deployed with a disaster relief non-profit organization. She reported her group is helping about 300 people every day.

Director Cox's question on how are our graduated students doing? Luke reported a 100% job placement success rate for students who have completed the program over the past ten years.

Director Swails asked the recruits what made them choose the La Pine program over others. Responses were that La Pine is the closest in representation to their hometown, being smaller but a large geographic area. Also, that the La Pine student program received high praise from other career agency fire service members. Each recruit stated

they had visited other departments including Sisters and Black Butte Ranch, and they felt La Pine would best offer the experience they needed.

Director Witmer thanked Luke and the rest of the crew for their assistance to the small child with complex medical conditions as been reported in the news. The crews have transported this child multiple times over the past year and a half. Luke reported crews have developed a close relationship with the family, and that will continue. Witmer praised the effort and compassion provided to the patient and her family. The family's Go Fund Me campaign has raised \$22,000.00 as of last Monday.

Approval of Minutes

Director Cox called for review of the August minutes. Director Adams pointed out one typo on page 9. The term "Bard" should be "Board." No other comments made.

Action: Director Adams moved to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2021 Board of Directors Regular Meeting with the noted correction. Second by Director Witmer. All in favor. Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Financials

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

- 5400 – Director Witmer inquired what income goes into this line. Staff responded it is made up of rebates, minor grants, fire response fees, address sign fees.
- 6030 – Director Adams asked why this payroll number as a percentage is a bit higher than other lines. Staff will look into this.
- 6465 – Firewall project – Director Cox inquired on this expense. Chief noted this project is complete. Deschutes County 911 no longer provides firewall service and it is now the responsibility of the District. The District's IT provider, Velox, presented and suggested this improvement as part of its annual IT evaluation.
- 6855 – Hose Testing – Director Cox asked about this expense. Chief reported the project is complete. Testing was done on what happened to be the two hottest days of the summer. 29,000 feet of hose was tested over the two-day testing period. Normally 5 – 10 lengths do not pass. Anything suitable is repaired for reuse, other hose not suitable is used for purposes other than firefighting.
- 7150 – Provisions – Director Adams asked about this expense which is at 41% of annual budget. Chief reported that restocking of apparatus was done to replace MRE's used and some that had expired. Also, Chief Dougherty noted rehydration

provisions – water and Gatorade – are purchased from this line and quite a bit is used in the summer.

- 8105 – Breakdowns – Director Landles commented that even with the increase in breakdowns this expense is doing well. Chief reported the two biggest issues now are that the two main medics are running hard, and all four medic units have had recent major repairs. One medic is pending a transfer case replacement and is currently able to run only in two-wheel drive. In addition, fire apparatus issues such as batteries, valves and meters were in need of repair or replacement. The two new medics which were expected in November will likely not be delivered until January per the manufacturer.

Director Landles commended staff, stating he is impressed at how the funds entrusted to the District are managed. Chief reported it goes down the line, and everyone including students plays a part.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Director Swails asked how often the Carson Oil fuel price is reviewed. Chief replied the District follows the State of Oregon’s procurement process, in which pricing is reviewed every couple of years. The District currently uses the State DOT contract fuel price which is the ‘rack cost’ plus bid rate.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Director Adams asked the difference between the various expense reports. Clarification provided by staff – each report covers a portion of the month; the main report is included in the packet and today’s handouts bring expenses up to the date of the Board meeting.

Director Swails asked what the SDIS amount is for. Staff responded it is the District’s insurance cost.

Action: Director Swails moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 8/13/21 – 9/9/21 in the amount of \$349,293.74. Second by Director Witmer. All in favor. Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

State Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson – Discussion with the Board – *moved from New Business*

Jerry Hubbard, Public Affairs Liaison, introduced Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson and asked her to talk about some of her goals and priorities for her District. Following that, he asked that Chief talk about the current status of EMS services in south Deschutes County.

Representative Breese-Iverson began by addressing wildland fire service in her House District, including many rural communities, stating she understands the need for agencies to have the equipment they need to respond to these incidents. She does not feel this need has not been well represented. While she has been successful in securing some funding, she continues to work to raise awareness at the State level. She is attending today to learn more about our community.

Director Swails asked if there are specific funds set aside for this need. Representative Breese-Iverson responded there are so many 'buckets' of money that there is not just one for this purpose. In the past year, more Federal money has been available than ever before. However, there are opportunities and she has been working to identify needs in each community in order to direct those funds. She does work with County Commissioners DeBone and Adair, she has not yet had the opportunity to meet with Commissioner Chang.

Director Swails briefed the Representative on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) and the work and progress to date. He stated that while Deschutes 911 has given the District the go-ahead, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has been unresponsive to multiple attempts to obtain needed permission to implement the PPP. Director Swails also pointed out that the proposed agreement will not cost the taxpayers a dime. He asked the Representative for assistance in moving this forward; she agreed to begin work on it immediately.

Director Adams posed a question from a community member, asking what exactly can the legislature do when we have a need for four ambulance crews and only funding for two? What kinds of things might be available to help with that? Representative Breese-Iverson responded that she does not have a specific answer for that, however she is open to learning more about the District's needs and potential funding sources. She also stated knowing the need exists is the first step. Chief reported that Representative Breese-Iverson was provided today with information assembled by Mr. Hubbard outlining the needs of the District. Jerry gave a brief overview of the materials provided, including the short-term capital and operational needs for the next five years, which is to hire 18 paramedics over the next five years.

Commissioner Tony DeBone welcomed Representative Breese-Iverson. He stated her presence along with the District Board of Directors, a City Councilor and himself

representing the BOCC, provides an opportunity for good discussion today. He stated this is the perfect opportunity to discuss support of all medical facilities including the clinics, distant transports, and the hospital system.

Chief Supkis reported the elephant in the room is the District has the largest rural population in the State of Oregon with the furthest distance to get to any hospital – everything falls apart from there. With not even an intermediate hospital nearby, transports are now taking as much as three hours – to get to and back from the far side of Bend. The community recognized that over 35 years ago so they developed the first rural fire paramedic program in the state of Oregon, because they knew to save lives it had to happen here. Now that the Newberry Basin has a population of over 25,000, the hospital still being over 35 miles away everything falls from that – resources, cost to provide services, etc. There is not one perfect answer to the EMS transport resource issue. The District hit the 2,000 call mark for 2021 recently, with a multitude of call types. That is the issue – can be attacked from the top, middle or bottom (more resources, more care options). All possible solutions need to be brought to the table.

We are now in a position where we have the growth that the community wanted but not the resources to respond to the demand created by that growth.

Director Cox stated that when two medics are out on a call, there are no fire resources available – similar to Prineville, fire and EMS is staffed with the same crew. Chief stated that other nearby agencies such as Sunriver, Crescent and Oregon Outback are also stretched thin, unlike areas like Bend, Redmond and Sisters where resources can be more readily shared and there are also separately staffed fire and EMS crews. Additional funding was needed in Prineville to meet their increased demand. Director Cox also noted the high fire danger in the area, and no mutual aid options. The closest available resources would likely come from Bend.

Director Landles offered that while more tax revenue could be a solution, any additional tax revenue for the District would mean less tax revenue for other taxing agencies.

Chief noted the District is one of the top taxing districts in the State now at \$2.53 per \$1,000, so the taxpayers are already paying their fair share of taxes to support the District. The paramedic service was chartered to be a fee-based service.

Representative Breese-Iverson thanked the Board for the opportunity to learn about the District's needs. Director Cox thanked Mr. Hubbard.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Transports are at 851 year-to-date, compared to 619 last year, a forty percent increase. Total call volume is just under 1,800 year-to-date (end of August) as compared to 1,500 at the same time last year, a thirty percent increase. Chief reported the transports make it especially difficult when no crews are left in the area to respond to the next 911 emergency call. We are now exceeding capacity. Director Cox noted the increased transport time with Highway 97 becoming busier with more traffic and more accidents. There was one recent day with an accident on 97 when it took three hours to get to Bend.

Director Landles commented on Illegal Open Burn calls, which is the highest it has been all year. Chief reported these are intentional unauthorized burns started by people who for whatever reason do not adhere to or are not aware of the regulations. One example is the recent fire started by a bow hunter who had a warming fire. Director Adams asked whether a person responsible for an IOB financially liable for suppression costs. Chief reported yes, they are; the District does bill for these responses and citizens do pay those fees.

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

- Director Adams noted the increased revenue generated by new building permits will be quite helpful when those projects are finished and taxed.
- Director Swails asked what the two commercial permits are for Newbery Business Park. Chief responded they could possibly be storage or warehouses although he is not sure, the district has not seen the plans or project yet. Discussion as it is uncertain whether this construction is in the Urban Renewal district, but likely is – which lessens tax revenue received by the District.
- Director Witmer asked what percentage of potential revenue increase was budgeted for; Chief responded 5.5 percent was budgeted. Tax revenue reports will be issued mid-October. The building permit reports are a good projection of future revenue.
- Director Landles stated that similar to the housing crunch in '05 builders have not been able to keep up with demand, and are behind by about forty percent.

Chief's Report

August saw 277 calls. Capacity is eight calls in twenty-four hours, and last month was above that two-thirds of the time, with the highest call volume being sixteen calls in one day. August 16 had eleven transports in a twenty-four-hour period. There were ten Code 99s during the month. This is a marked increase with double the average number from last year, which was drastically higher than prior years.

Director Witmer asked how the recruitment process is moving. Chief Daugherty reported three applications were received; all applicants will be invited to test. There are many agencies hiring now, and many educational institutions did not offer paramedic programs due to Covid, thus reducing the pool of qualified candidates. Testing will take place the end of September to fill a position which will open when the captain's position is filled. There are nine in-house candidates for that position. This testing process will take place in October. Director Cox stated many paramedics are being hired by hospitals due to the shortage of nurses. This shortage will likely increase with the vaccine mandate recently issued in Oregon.

Correspondence/News

- A. Thank you – Benitez
- B. Thank-you – Berling
- C. KTVZ – St. Charles Capacity Issues - Opens Urgent Care
- D. Wise Buys – Current Fire Restrictions, Wildfire Risk Reduction Projects
- E. Keizertimes – KFD Enduring Busiest Summer in History
- F. KTVZ – Construction Crew hit La Pine Natural Gas Line
- G. Wise Buys – FFs Respond to Gas Leak, Judge Rules Ambulance Fee Policy Invalid
- H. KTVZ La Pine Firefighters Help Family of 2-year-old
- I. KTVZ – Man Killed, Women Seriously Hurt – Hwy 97 Crash
- J. KTVZ Wildfire Prompts Evacuations SE of La Pine

Old Business

- A. Public Private Partnership Transportation Resource Agreement – updates.

Director Cox asked Commissioner DeBone to speak on this matter. DeBone opened by stating the BOCC met in executive session yesterday. He stated the underlying layer is the billing that is going on, pointing out that facility representatives are in attendance today. While it sounds very simple, there are many layers of other things going on. Yesterday's outcome was that BOCC staff will reach out to Chief regarding the business of it, are they asking that the right assurance is in place regarding a public agency contracting with a private agency, also that radio systems are compatible, and

requesting information regarding who is the medical director for Cascade Medical Transit (CMT) and how does that relationship work. If a public hearing is held, is the BOCC asking for a thumbs up or thumbs down from the clinic? The answer is the District is not going to ask the Board to deal with the clinics' billing issues, the BOCC will have to. If it is determined the two issues are separated that's fine, but that is yet to be determined. Director Swails commented the issue is very simplistic but seems to be getting murkier and murkier with the County. All the District is asking is that the Deschutes County Ambulance Service Agreement (ASA) allow CMT to be added to the District's run card. 911 has given its approval. CMT will be responsible for all billing, and the District will have no part in that. At this point, DeBone stated the BOCC does not have this information yet. He stated that another letter is being sent to the District in response to its request that the Board of Directors meet with the BOCC. Chief responded the information has been sent to the Commissioners, every concern of the BOCC is legitimate and has been addressed in the contract and in the District's correspondence to them. All requested information has been provided. They were provided with CMT's Certificate of Insurance, the contract including how billing will work, the medical director's information. He further stated the same questions continue to be asked and staff is frustrated that information is being provided and not being read. Director Cox commented the Board of Directors has requested to be placed on the next BOCC meeting agenda to help address and clarify any remaining questions.

Director Witmer asked whether the BOCC is more concerned with the overall health of the community or the District's ordinances and billing practices. He stated it sounds like the two issues are becoming intertwined and the BOCC is not allowing itself to separate which is the most important thing to address. If the financial side is seen as more important, the BOCC is not allowing itself to deal with the overall health needs of the community. The District is trying to add additional resources, but those additional resources are being held up. DeBone stated a public hearing will be held on this matter. He stated he gets hung up on four facility addresses being responded to by PPP resources possibly dispatched from Bend from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. and asked if that is a done deal. Director Swails commented this arrangement is no different from any other mutual aid agreement and asked if there are other influences holding up progress on approval of the partnership. Director Witmer commented that what the District is looking for is something to help bridge the gap of the challenges that the District is facing. While the proposed agreement is not a total problem solver, it does provide an additional resource to help crews that are being over-stressed. DeBone agreed the partnership will provide this, however there may be legalities which must be considered.

Chief stated the District is currently in conversations with Prairie House. Staff at Prairie House reached out to the District – they understand the Ordinance, the needs of the community, and the needs of Prairie House. The Ordinance allows the District to work with Prairie House to get the best possible care for their patients within the District's current resource allocations. Prairie House engaged with the District when Ordinance

#2019-03 was being drafted as a willing participant in discussions. The facility calls CMT and uses their own transportation resources whenever possible. They know they own it and are willing to be a part of the solution. The partnership will make it easier for Prairie House as well by providing the needed resources while meeting the ASA requirements.

Chief stated the PPP would be held to the same response time standard, and asked Commissioner DeBone if the BOCC is proposing to change that standard? DeBone replied no, that in fact he is an advocate for the proposal. Chief then responded that when response times become part of the discussion and the District is directed how to staff its response locations, that is not in accordance with the ASA. Per the ASA the District is allowed to manage its own resources as long as response times follow the ASA requirement, so bringing that distraction into the discussion is not helpful. The PPP has every intention to comply with the ASA requirement, and this is just one partial solution to a transport issue caused by transporting patients to a hospital 35 miles away.

Director Cox again requested the BOCC meet with the District's Board of Directors. He reiterated that mutual aid resources which used to be available are no longer an option most of the time, as Crescent and Sunriver are normally staffed with only one ambulance. This forces the District to call for aid from Bend or Redmond, which puts response times beyond the ASA requirement. Commissioner DeBone stated ASA Administrator Tom Kuhn will be sending a letter clarifying staff issues, and also there will be a public hearing on the matter. The BOCC is requesting the clinics engage and tell the BOCC what's going on and is this an appropriate emergency response in the community – or whether it is out of the domain of the clinics. Director Swails offered it makes no difference to the clinics whether the ambulance responding has CMT on the side, and Commissioner DeBone stated he wanted to hear that from the facilities.

Courtney Ignazzitto stated if there is a public hearing and the BOCC would like them to engage, they would be willing to; however, she said La Pine CHC still needs to see the details of the contract. DeBone stated the proposed contract is a public document and has been shared with the BOCC and asked does it really matter what resource shows up at the door when 911 was called. Chief stated the document has been provided immediately when requested through the records request process. He further stated that La Pine CHC actually hosted the first meeting on the PPP discussion, which BOCC members and CMT attended. He further stated it appears the District's cost recovery policy is being tied to the proposed PPP, and they are completely separate issues. The PPP clearly defines how billing will be done. Chief also asked why wouldn't more medical ALS resources at no cost to the taxpayers and at no additional cost, at least, to the user in the community be desired?

Charla DeHate stated for the benefit of all that La Pine CHC actually started this conversation in 2016. She asked for the community group last year. She asked for the contract stating she had not seen it. A copy of the draft PPP was handed to La Pine CHC.

Director Witmer stated that the transportation needs of the District are being overshadowed by the financial ramifications of an Ordinance dealing with billing. Commissioner DeBone responded yes, this is the case and it gets murky. Director Witmer reiterated that the need has not changed, and the Board is eager to help separate the two issues. Commissioner DeBone stated there are also alleged ASA violations made by the clinics which have been received by the BOCC through the ASA, and there are several moving parts here. Director Cox asked whether other agencies which are part of the roadblock would be willing to respond if La Pine has no ambulances to respond to emergencies. He referenced earlier conversations with La Pine CHC and St. Charles regarding the increasing demand on resources. Once the St. Charles facility was built, they were no longer part of any discussions and they have done nothing to help with the resource burden created by facility transports. The District does not have the finances or equipment to support the demand of facility transports and the new Ordinance has simplified that by placing the financial responsibility back on the facility.

Director Swails requested a date to be placed on the BOCC agenda. Commissioner DeBone replied the goal is to set a public hearing although that has not yet been done. At Director Witmer's request DeBone stated the meeting would be held whenever the time is right. Chief again stated all requested information has already been provided. Director Swails expressed his concern that following a previous meeting between himself, Director Cox and Commissioner DeBone, where the BOCC was provided all requested information, and no decision was made – rather the BOCC requested yet more information.

Chief Supkis reported that at this very moment La Pine has its only two medics responding to 911 calls from St. Charles La Pine which were both dispatched in the last fifteen minutes. Once the medics are now transporting, there are no resources left for the next emergency with no backup.

Director Adams offered the call volume has increased 29 calls over last year, and 13 of them were at a medical facility. She stated it is a resource issue, and the facilities are not the only cause of the increase in demand. It is a community issue, not a medical issue. Director Witmer agreed, stating the proposed PPP is the result of the increase in demand on resources. Were the PPP in place today, the District would still have resources available.

Director Cox, addressing Commissioner DeBone, stated this is about the community and this additional resource is needed. The current ASA and County is prohibiting the PPP and forces the District to operate without additional needed resources. Commissioner DeBone suggested the October 13 BOCC meeting and stated they need input from all parties.

Jerry Hubbard stated this matter does not need to be turned into a political debate; the Board is elected and represents the public and should be allowed to enter into the agreement as it would any other contract. All that is required of the BOCC is a majority vote to approve the PPP per the County ASA. Commissioner DeBone will report back with a time, and Director Witmer expressed his appreciation for the work DeBone has invested.

New Business

A. State Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson – Discussion with the Board

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

Packet 1

A. La Pine Community Health Center Appeal to the Board Invoice #110 – call 01579

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.

Director Adams stated she was not a member of the Board when Ordinance #2021-01 was adopted, and it contains positions that she cannot in good conscience accept. She is therefore inclined to vote to grant the appeal but that would not support her legal duties per the ordinance. Director Witmer offered that rather than vote to grant the appeal, Adams abstain. Chief stated he has consulted with SDAO and legal regarding this, and he agrees the best action is for Director Adams to abstain, and work within the process to make possible changes in the future. He stated Director Adams' declaration was well put and appropriate.

Action:

Roll Call Vote:

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

Appeal denied on a 4-0 vote.

Packet 2

B. La Pine Community Health Center Appeal to the Board Invoice #111 – call 01573

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
Witmer:	Deny

Appeal denied on a 4-0 vote.

Director Witmer stated this has been a very challenging time for all parties involved. He thanked La Pine CHC for their efforts in coming to the table even though an agreement was not able to be reached. To St. Charles, he stated he would like to say something positive but there have been many unsuccessful efforts to get together. Any effort to establish a working relationship have fallen by the wayside. His hope as a Board member is that the parties can once again make efforts to come together in cooperation. He referenced St. Charles' working with other agencies such as providing Prineville with funding for new ambulances. Whether driven by the circumstances of the Ordinance, there has been no effort to come together. Witmer went on to say he is not totally happy with the Ordinance, however this is a board discussion.

He suggested an executive session be scheduled within the next two weeks to discuss where we are headed as an agency including the Ordinance and ongoing negotiations. He will not be able to attend the upcoming BOCC meeting. Chief noted with Director Witmer that ongoing union negotiations should also be discussed in the next executive session.

Special Meetings and Workshops

None.

Good of the Order

- A. FF testing process – September 26
- B. Captain testing process- October 5 & 6
- C. Veterans Wall – September 28

Next Regular Meeting: October 14, 2021

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

Oct 14, 2021

Board Secretary

Board President

George A. Coy