

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
November 10, 2022**

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

Roll Call

Directors Present: Robin Adams, Jim Landles, Dick Swails
Directors Absent: Doug Cox (medical), Mike Thorne (medical)
Staff Present: Chief Mike Supkis, Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty, Office Manager Tracy Read, Administrative Assistant Candice Trapp

Introduction of New Staff

Chief Supkis introduced four new district staff, each of whom addressed the Board.

Firefighter/Paramedic Justin Melling most recently served with Bend Fire. He has learned a lot and is excited to be here.

Firefighter/Paramedic Patrick Summerfield grew up in Sandy. He most recently served with Bend Fire, and Eugene prior to that.

Firefighter/Paramedic Sam Peters grew up in the Bend area. He worked as a reserve with Sunriver Fire for three years and is excited to serve the La Pine community.

Administrative Assistant Candice Trapp was previously employed by Sunriver Service District where she worked with their board. She appreciates the opportunity to work with the District.

Director Swails welcomed the new staff to the District.

Open Forum for Public Comment

Name	Purpose for Attending
<i>Courtney Ignazzitto via Zoom</i>	<i>LCHC</i>
<i>Kevin Leehmann</i>	<i>IAFF VP Member</i>
<i>Rex LeSueur</i>	<i>Citizen</i>
<i>Robin Mirrasoul</i>	<i>None</i>

Comment/Report by Kyle Lohner, President IAF Local 3387

Director Swails noted no report was submitted and Union President Eng. Kyle Lohner was not present. Director Swails called for any questions from the Board. There were none. Director Swails noted that Lt. Leehmann was present and it was his intention to speak to the board. Lt. Leehmann began by stating yes, Kyle could not be there, and he was on duty, but would like to talk about staffing. Director Swails continued his opening comment by asking Lt. Leehmann to keep his comments to within five minutes.

Lt. Leehmann stated that turnover to date is at fifty six percent. Last year at this time there were 25-line staff, right now there are 22 on line. Of the three new hires, two do not yet have their paramedic certification and that basically they were hired without their paramedic degrees. Only four of the recent eleven applicants were paramedics. He stated he has not been to some of the previous meetings and feels there is "a little lack of communication". Leehmann is trying to figure out what staffing is looking like and asked the Board how many staff the District has been authorized to hire.

Director Adams clarified that it was the Board's direction that 27 positions were authorized dependent on the current budget and available funds, with a goal of maintaining 25. Chief responded yes, and because staffing in the industry is in an unprecedented state of flux, the 27 goal that have been authorized the district was recently completed with its last hire. This is in the Board minutes that are available to everyone and which he encouraged Lt. Leehmann to read. Currently there are 26 filled firefighter/paramedic positions, including the three new hires this past week, as the District's recent student to career hire will moving on to a bigger organization tomorrow.

While Director Adams attempted to add her response, Lt. Leehmann interjected, stating those new hires will likely not be on line until January and "we will continue to run short" and to him it is really hard on morale and well-being. He continued stating he feels all four applicants should have been hired, and he thinks we are behind. He hopes that after today the District will reach out and make an offer to the fourth candidate. Lt. Leehmann then asked for clarification on the hiring of EMT basics and that his understanding was that the District will not hire EMT basic firefighters. Chief responded it is not that the District will not hire EMT basics, but that paramedic firefighters are to be hired first, and the EMT basic discussion was that those will be hired if open positions cannot be filled with paramedics.

Lt. Leehmann continued by waving some papers stating right now there are 30 overtime shifts in November, eighteen of which are forced. He stated he has a business to run and family that need his time. Lt. Leehmann stated we have gone a year and nothing has changed – so where are we at. He doesn't know where we are at with the levy, which is another thing he wants to touch on. He continued stating he was almost forced to OT three times last week when he was already on OT teaching OJT (on the job training). In his opinion, once we start forcing OT he will choose – and that if forced to work an OT

shift, he would cancel his scheduled OJT which hurts the student program. It's really taking a toll on staff and during the holidays with two staff off at a time there will be more forced OT. He stated Station 102 should be closed to provide more staffing at Station 101.

Director Swails called for questions from the Board. There were none. He referenced previous discussions at open meetings where it was determined the District will go out for a two-tier bond levy designed to bring on nine additional paramedics. Director Adams added this is not a secret; it was discussed at the workshops and October board meeting where Union President Eng. Kyle Lohner was present, and there has been transparency throughout the discussions. She encouraged Lt. Leehmann to share this information with other Union members and added that any ballot measure funding requests must be made in a thoughtful, uniform manner. There are no secrets in the decision-making process, and public announcements will be made once ballot measure language is decided on. The expectation is that by this time next year the District will have nine more paramedics.

Lt. Leehmann again expressed that due to the lack of communication they don't know this, and that his discussions with Union President Kyle Lohner led him to believe it is still up in the air. He said the Union is just waiting and they all want to help. Director Landles added that Deschutes County has one of the highest tax bases in the state, and the measure must be done right – not everyone is on board with authorizing more money, that it must be promoted properly.

Lt. Leehmann said it is at the point where the Union has had a lot of meetings – there is fifty-six percent turnover and guys are tired – they have held it together with tape and bandaids. Director Swails offered there is no question that staff is overworked however the Board is not sitting around; they have many things they have been and are working on. The new levy issue is extremely critical. If it does not pass the game is over – literally. [unintelligible Lt. Leehmann speaking during Director Swails comment]. The Board wants to be sure it is done right – if the first levy passes it brings on the new nine people, then the next year the current levy would be renewed. There is also a new grant opportunity available which will be discussed later in today's meeting. The end game is that if it doesn't work the District will be a firefighting organization and will be unable to continue its ambulance transport program. The current levy which expires in 2024 will be placed on the May 2024 ballot for renewal. Lt. Leehmann stated if it doesn't say it, it is not said. Director Swails noted the Board has encouraged conversation and appreciates the Union's efforts, but there is only so much that can be done. Director Adams noted again that the request must be done correctly, if it doesn't pass, the District cannot go back and ask again.

Lt. Leehmann asked to address one more issue. Director Swails relented but asked that it be quick. Leehmann stated to the Board that over the past two months with staffing shortfalls, student reserves are being forced to work to keep Station 102 open. He feels

if this is to continue, student should be hired as career staff or close station 102. Per contract there should be three at that station and there were not three career staff available recently. He also added that in October there were a couple of unqualified people pulling shift at 102 – and the District is choosing to keep that station open with unqualified people. Student reserves are being used as career staff. Director Swails stated the District is aware of the staffing challenges and while he feels there should be a dedicated staff member assigned to the students, it is not currently budgeted. Director Adams asked if the reserves could be compensated differently when they are assigned a position to complete a full shift.

Chief Supkis stated that some disingenuous statements are being presented. Lt. Leehmann attempted to interject and was reminded by Director Swails that Chief Supkis currently has the floor. Chief Supkis asked Lt Leehmann to please yield and the Lt.'s response was - only if I get to speak again.

Chief Supkis reminded everyone that students fill a certain number of pre scheduled shifts, (when they are not in class) as part of their scholarship agreement and they can also volunteer for additional station time. They are assigned to whatever stations per the duty officer that day and where needed. The duty officer – per CBA – has the ability to also use on duty students to fill an empty spot when needed and career staff have been offered the overtime. Chief stated that the newly agreed to CBA now also allows two shift members (up from one) to be off on scheduled leave at one time. That new benefit has added more new overtime pressure, and that was expected by all. In addition, although the fire district did this month hire up to the 27 firefighter paramedic positions, that total as of tomorrow will be 26, still one over “normal full and budgeted staffing”. Four of our newest members are still completing their FTO with a couple of those waiting for their completed paramedic certifications to arrive. They are not counted for staffing minimums and OT needs, nor are the students. Also, as life happens, there are currently two staff out on family leave and at least one on extended medical leave.

Director Adams asked for clarification on what the requirement is for students. Chief replied that each student is assigned to a shift to intern on and also that school always comes first so they can be in class during the day. Students cannot be required to be in station more than their scheduled shifts. The District cannot and does not force a student to pull shift when they are not scheduled.

Director Swails asked the board if they were ready to move on.

Approval of Minutes

October 13, 2022 Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Director Swails asked for review, comments, changes.

Director Adams noted two corrections, Director Swails noted one correction.

Action: Director Adams moved to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting with the noted corrections. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 3-0 vote.

Financials

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

- 6510 – Board Miscellaneous Expense – Director Adams inquired about this expense. Staff responded it was for lunches provided for the recent Board work sessions.
- 6310 – Audit Expense – Director Swails asked if we have heard anything on the current audit, staff responded it is still in progress at the auditors would hope to see a final or at least a draft by December.
- 6855 – Hose Testing – Director Swails asked about the additional \$1005.00 expense which is over budget. Chief responded some testing had to be repeated, as we missed some hose this year, resulting in additional expenditure, but noting our student do the hose testing the first days of their academy and this direct payment for that work.
- 8130 – Tires – Director Swails asked if these expenses were for winter tires, to which Chief replied yes, it is. The line is still under budget.
- 8830 – Administrative Assistant Training – Director Adams inquired about this expense. Staff responded it was for Tammie Waters' attendance at the Oregon Fire Service Office Administrators annual conference.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Director Swails asked the board if they had any questions or comments.
No questions or comments.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Director Swails asked the board if they had any questions or comments.
No questions or comments.

Director Swails called for a motion to pay bills.

Action: Director Adams moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 10/14/22 – 11/10/22 in the amount of \$424,023.65. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 3-0 vote.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Director Landles noted year-to-date alarms again exceeds the previous year-to-date. Most of the increase is due to medical calls. Director Adams asked about the marked increase in structure fires. Chief responded this year has been notably higher, with a normal year seeing 9 – 13 structure fire alarms. This year, about half of the reported structure fires resulted in significant losses.

Director Landles noted the rise in unauthorized burning. Chief stated some of this is likely due to debris burning by those who think fire season was over and that outdoor burning had opened (when it had not yet).

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

Director Swails noted building permits are considerably higher. Chief responded while October was not a record month, it was very close – only about \$100 less than the record month of June this year. Director Adams noted the considerable rise in commercial permits. There are two new storage facilities being built as well as new construction in Caldera Springs Phase 3. Both storage facilities will have cisterns, and the Caldera Springs building is fully sprinklered. Board asked about the city zone and tax sweep. Chief confirmed all new construction, including the new apartment building on Finley Butte Road, will be outside the Urban Renewal Zone.

Chief's Report

Director Swails called for comment on the report. Director Adams noted the rise in motor vehicle accidents. Facility transfers are consistently high. Director Landles commented that Code 99 calls are trending downward.

Director Swails asked about the condition of equipment. Chief responded the fleet is holding up, lots of little things come up due to the run volume but there has not been anything major recently, and Capt. Rigney our fleet mgr. and our vehicle maintenance vendors, mainly Hughes and Integrity are doing a good job.

Correspondence/News

- A. Wise Buys – (x2) District Board Meeting
- B. Central Oregon Daily – House Fire Prompts Evacuations
- C. KTVZ 21 – Fire Destroys La Pine Home

- D. KTVZ 21 – Highway 97 Rollover Crash
- E. KTVZ 21 – La Pine has Grown, More on the Way
- F. KTVZ 21 – Three La Pine Teens Escape Serious Injury in Crash
- G. The Bulletin – Editorial: Keeping Bend Fire Response Times Down Requires More Money

Director Swails referenced the KTVZ article on the growth in La Pine and feels it was well written. He suggested City be approached to voice support for the upcoming funding efforts, and that possibly the news media be contacted to request an opinion article. Director Landles agreed.

Old Business

A. Fire Chief/CEO Search with SDAO, Draft Announcement

Director Swails called for comment on the announcement, drafted by Chief Daugherty. Chiefs Supkis and Daugherty reviewed the timeline and requested Board approval to forward the announcement to the recruitment firm.

Director Landles noted one correction; the term of board members should be four years rather than five.

Director Swails commented on the paragraph regarding the budget process and suggested adding language regarding public input. Director Adams noted a correction to Membership – it should read Oregon Public Employees Retirement System.

Chief Daugherty drew the Board's attention to the compensation package and stated this will be a topic of discussion in negotiations.

Board consensus to forward the announcement to the recruitment firm, with the above-noted corrections.

New Business

A. Student Stipend Increase

Chief Supkis delivered the report requesting an increase from \$200 to \$300 for student monthly stipends. The current student stipend has been \$200 for many years, and the fuel expense for students driving back and forth to Bend for classes has risen dramatically, among other rising costs. The financial impact to the District would be \$900 per month. Because the District budgets for twelve reserves and currently has nine, this expense will still be within budget. Next year's budget would need to increase by \$14,400. While the proposed change does not require any budgetary action this year, changes to compensation are brought before the Board.

An exit interview with FF/Paramedic Jackson Bushnell, who went through the District's student program, brought forth the need to review the stipend amount.

Director Swails called for a motion.

Action: Director Landles moved to increase the student stipend from \$200 per month to \$300 per month. Second by Director Adams. All in favor. Motion passed on a 3-0 vote.

Stipend increase to take effect January 1, 2023.

B. OSFM Fire Service Capacity Grant

Chief Supkis delivered the report. He stated grants for personnel are extremely rare, and the District was fortunate to be a recipient of last summer's OSFM 2022 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant. Recently, the State Fire Marshal's office opened the Oregon State Fire Capacity Grant. The intent of the grant is to increase staffing across the state in small and medium size organizations to create a pivotal role in prevention and suppression of wildfires in order to protect Oregon communities.

This grant opportunity differs from previous grants offered by this office. The Fire Marshal wants to use this grant opportunity to promote thoughtful, transformative community discussions on future fire staffing capacity and how local agencies address the WUI problem in Oregon. The intent is to foster thoughtful discussion, rather than a quick application turnaround timeline.

The capacity grant is a 3-year lump sum matching grant, which will provide up to two full-time firefighters and two full-time fire prevention staff. The funding is a competitive grant with a set amount of funds available.

Fire prevention staff must work only in fire prevention, they cannot work on an engine or a medic. Hiring of entry-level staff is also encouraged, to bring firefighters to FF1. Fire prevention staff are also expected obtain their fire prevention certification and to attend fire marshal training. Smaller organizations are allowed to split a position 50/50, however must commit to split the duties accordingly.

Options are to seek one or two firefighters and one or two fire prevention personnel, for a total of four. Chief suggested to seek three employees, each split as half-time firefighter and half-time fire prevention, one for each shift. Prevention duties would include public relations, codes, building inspections, fire reports, preplans, IOB follow up, etc.; being a second-hand person for the captains.

Chief has approached the three captains with this proposal. Due to current staffing shortages, they feel this would not benefit them and staff as it would offer no

immediate relief with EMS transports. However, with the current need of eighteen total firefighters, Chief asked for board discussion regarding the community's needs with regard to fire prevention and fire suppression, what type of functions does that position should require, and how does the District get there. Chief then proposed considering adding two firefighters the first year and seek additional funding to fill the remaining nine firefighter/paramedic positions through a levy. The second year, should the levy pass, would allow three split positions of half prevention and half fire, for a total of twelve additional staff. The chief indicated the captains felt if the levy passes and twelve additional positions are filled, it would then make sense to have a fire prevention staff member on each shift. The end result is a transformative growth plan for the District with the addition of prevention personnel to provide the much-needed services discussed above.

Director Swails asked if the prevention position would be full-time. Chief responded yes; however, it would be a split position, one for each shift, and that person would not respond on medical transports except maybe to help to staff a QRU. These would be very new and transformational positions. Chief noted the challenge with the process of how discussions that take place in board meetings are communicated from Union executive staff in attendance to the rest of the line staff and what the current CBA has in it. This was illustrated earlier in today's meeting when Lt. Leehmann's concerns mirrored the same discussion that took place at the October board meeting which was attended by the Union President Kyle Lohner. It will be important to work through communicating this staffing concept in order for all staff to know exactly what is being proposed.

All new positions would be fire related, boots on the ground, not administrative. Director Swails asked what prevention activities staff is currently responsible for. At this time, Chief performs most prevention-related functions, such as community development, wildland, water supply and access development with some duties taken on by line staff. FF/Paramedic Nat Adams is responsible for public relations such as station tours and FF/Paramedic Joe Schumacher responsible for preplans.

The OSFM is responsible and had jurisdictional authority for the State Fire Code and for fire prevention overall. There is currently a deputy state fire marshal working from the Bend office, who is dedicated to Deschutes County, is very detail-oriented and does an outstanding job. This deputy performs functions such as plans review, sprinkler systems complying with code, etc. Chief feels those responsibilities should remain with that office. However, the District under this proposed staffing would be better equipped to manage community fire prevention efforts such as Firewise, at risk community members, addressing dispersed camping, working with forest service and BLM, fire investigations, fire reports, IOBs and more.

Director Adams stated the proposed staffing would allow that extra person on shift and resolve some of Lt. Leehmann's current concerns. It would allow budgeted money to be

used for needed firefighter/paramedics. Chief cautioned it will not fix the minimum staffing requirements, because that person would not be able to respond on a medic. The grant requires hiring new staff; the District cannot use the grant funds to fund a current ff/paramedic position. Under the current CBA, OT positions must be filled with ff/paramedics.

Director Swails opened discussion regarding what the current tax rate. Chief replied that the district base levy is 1.53/1000 to fund fire protection and per the 1987 voters' decision the paramedic ambulance service was to be fee supported. The second .64/1,000 was to fund additional ff/paramedics. While the intent initially was that the levy fund fire only, staffing demands have resulted in that money also being used to subsidize EMS service.

Director Landles confirmed that three positions would need to be created with the grant funds, and that prevention is an extremely important piece of that staffing. It is crucial that all aspects of proposed staffing and funding be accurately communicated to the line staff, which has not previously been done – as shown earlier today. This is a failure of within the District and a challenge to overcome.

Director Swails asked for opinion from two members of the public who are very involved.

Robin Mirrasoul responded, stating she agrees that staff will feel as if they weren't heard because they will feel the District is fixing a community fire problem when that is not the issue with them. It may be beneficial to add two ff/paramedics the first year. She agrees that adding prevention personnel would be a huge benefit for a community such as this.

Rex LeSueur commented it is unfortunate that communication between management and employees has gotten to a point where anything that is offered becomes a major issue. It makes sense to him that if the grant allows funds to be used to pay staff to do things that other personnel are currently doing, that the union would embrace that. Rex also feels that the best way to resolve this is to be 100% sure that the levy passes; he feels the District is already behind the gun in this process. Director Adams responded to Rex by stating that he cannot know what discussions, work, and preparation have taken place thus far. Rex stated that one of the issues brought to him today was that the Chief will be using vacation time through June, and asked who is going to ramrod the levy effort and how that will happen. Director Adams responded that once the ballot message is created, it will be brought before the public. The need for more firefighters has been a topic of discussion for several years. Chief stated that the ballot measure message is being written and the plan was to have drafts before the board at the December meeting, so if and as approved, the district could file by Mid-January – the earliest filing date and then undergo an educational campaign.

Robin Mirrasoul suggested professional marketing is needed for the levy. She also feels the union could tank the entire effort if they don't correct their messaging. Director Adams stated that to date the union has not done a good job of putting their message out to the public, and she has communicated to them the importance of the message being delivered in a thoughtful, coordinated manner. She reiterated there is no coordinated method of communication among line staff, pointing out that there are no Union staff in the room (since the beginning of the meeting). It does not appear they make an effort to read minutes or attend meetings.

Rex suggested inviting members of the union and the community to be involved in levy discussions.

Director Swails asked to get back to the OSFM capacity Grant and Chief to restate his opinion on needed staffing under the grant. Chief replied that while he feels the best thing for the greater community fire safety is to hire three split fire and prevention positions, he is also sensitive to line staff concerns and hiring two firefighters and then creating split positions once the nine new staff are hired may be a better alternative at this time. This will show that the District has asked for, received and responded according to staff input. Chief feels the District's staffing discussions, levy proposal, and grant application illustrates to OSFM the transformative ideas they are looking for the future.

Director Swails called for a motion.

Action: Director Landles moved to approve the Chief's recommendation for the OSFM capacity grant memorandum dated November 3, 2022, and to move forward with the process. Second by Director Adams. All in favor. Motion passed on a 3-0 vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Adams	Aye
Landles	Aye
Swails	Aye

Chief will prepare a letter for Board President Doug Cox's signature to be submitted to the OSFM along with the grant request to first seek to firefighter positions then seek three .5 FF and three .5 FP personnel for a total of three actual new full-time positions as outline in the second bullet point under District Options in the OSFM Capacity Grant Memorandum dated November 3, 2022.

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

Paused per Tolling Agreement January 26, 2022 Sussman Shank LLP/Hart Wagner LLP

Special Meetings and Workshops

Good of the Order

Chief asked the board to consider a workshop and executive session for discussion on insight of where the organization is and how it can be improved. Additionally, Chief Daugherty recently received a request for a new MOU from the Union secretary requesting a change to the board approved lateral hiring process and that recent lateral hire MOU. This is a result of a new employee stating he has recently received a “better offer” from another agency which is under consideration. Chief Daugherty has requested a copy of that offer. What was received to date was a job offer but contained nothing documenting the total compensation package or advanced placement other than top placement would be considered. The district has nothing to make true comparisons to and from. A request at last spring’s recruitment and retention workshop, and again by management this past September, had been made to the union leadership, if they or their state firefighters council to provide recruitment and retainment comparable for other agencies – as it would be in their firefighter’s best interest, and be a big help. The request has not been responded to date. Chief thinks the District is competitive for its size and place and but still requests a conversation with the Board regarding whether to opening up bargaining on lateral hire compensation and then if so, how far back in the hiring processes would it go.

Director Adams concurred and requested the executive session take place within the next couple of weeks.

Board consensus to meet in executive session on November 22, 2022.

Robin Mirrasoul asked whether the students are unhappy with their staffing schedules. Chief Supkis stated no, they do go on a lot of calls and work hard and long, but want to be involved, to do, and to learn. That is why they are here – to go on calls. Robin stated that what she thought. Chief noted the concerns brought forth today came from a career member and the union, not the students. Stated it is apparent Lt. Leehmann is being overwhelmed balancing his duties her at the district and other demands, and that is an important concern. A condition of the scholarship and internship is that students are required to be in station ten days per month. There are options, however less desirable, for stations to operate even without a fully staffed engine or medic crew available for response as all strongly desire.

Robin will follow up in providing suggestions for marketing firms for the Board’s consideration. Rex again stated the importance of including union staff in these discussions. Chief replied they have been made aware of all meetings – both work sessions and executive sessions. Additionally, union president Kyle Lohner attended the September work session and participated in the levy and staffing discussions at that

time. Chief is hopeful that the upcoming labor relations training will be beneficial for both the union and administration finding processes and pathways for working together.

Next Regular Meeting: December 8, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

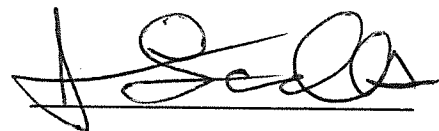
Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

DECEMBER 8, 2022

Board Secretary



Board President

