

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
March 10, 2022 Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m.

Open Meeting Director Cox opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. and led the flag salute.

Roll Call

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

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

Chief Supkis noted that newly appointed Director Mike Thorne is out of town due to a family commitment. He will be sworn in at the April board meeting.

Open Forum for Public Comment

Name	Purpose for Attending
<i>Courtney Ignazzitto</i>	<i>Interest</i>

Approval of Minutes

Director Cox called for review of the February minutes. Director Adams requested a correction to the term "ROS" which should be "ROSC". Director Landles noted one grammatical correction at the top of page 7.

Action: Director Swails moved to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2022 Board of Directors Regular Meeting with the above corrections. Second by Director Landles. 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.

- 5500 – Interest Income – Director Adams asked why there is no interest entered for February. Staff responded those bank statements have not yet been reconciled, so interest has not been posted yet.

Director Adams commended Jerry Hubbard on all his hard work obtaining funds for the District. The current proposed federal budget will be voted on in the Senate today. Congressional directed funding for 2023 will open next week.

Discussion regarding Annual and Quarterly payments.

- 8000 – Fuel – Director Adams inquired about this expense and the District's funding agreement. Chief Supkis responded the District is able to purchase fuel under the State pricing contract. Engineer Lohner stated he has calculated future fuel costs to be about \$8,000 per month and the District will finish the year significantly over budget. Chief Supkis noted the contingency line in the budget allows additional funds to be allocated by the Board to Materials & Services. Director Cox mentioned that many states are eliminating federal and state fuel taxes, which could bring the overall cost of fuel down.
- 6960 – OHA Agency Fees – Director Swails asked why this was not a budgeted item. Chief responded this additional funding line and subsequent required District match back to the state was unanticipated; however, the amount paid out will be 'reimbursed' – meaning added to the payment – by the State when the GEMT funds are received. Budgeting for this item will be addressed for the upcoming year.

Discussion regarding budget line item recap for revenues and expenses so far this fiscal year. Director Swails requested that projected revenues and expenditures be calculated for the remainder of the budget year. This is part of the normal budget forecast process which staff is beginning to work on. Any needed end of year adjustments will be made prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Reviewed, no comment.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Action: Director Adams moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 2/11/22 – 3/10/22 in the amount of \$386,161.53. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4-0 vote.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Discussion regarding the continued rise in alarms, especially for medical calls. Chief Supkis noted the twenty-five percent increase in call volume this year to date and a sixty-five percent increase over the last three years.

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

Building permits continue to increase.

Chief's Report

Director Adams noted eleven clinic transports in February and asked how many of those Cascade Medical Transport (CMT) would have been able to do. Chief replied they could probably have taken a half of dozen calls had they been up and running. CMT came on board last Friday after completing their training and start-up work. While they are not always staged in La Pine, they have been available since coming online and more often than not are in district.

Director Adams asked about the air evac on Sherrie Way on February 27. Staff noted it was for a Stroke 1 alarm.

Board noted where the District provided mutual aid to Sunriver Fire , so the district is able to return assistance.

Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 3387 Report

Engineer Kyle Lohner delivered the report.

Union morale is low with no end in sight, three root causes:

- Time – Call volume, missed trainings, and many other things are creating the perfect storm to create demands on staff's time. Everyone is stepping up to do more – an example being working on apparatus at midnight last night.

- Staffing – Members are testing with other agencies, and one staff member is leaving the fire service altogether. This attrition is a top concern.
- Communication – This still needs work, from the bottom to the top. He pointed out it is not just the Chief, that all bear some responsibility. He referenced one matter recently where consulting with an attorney could have been avoided entirely had better communication taken place. Engineer Lohner also stressed that all parties are working to do a better job of communicating, and it is improving.

Staff routinely works until late in the evening; morale is not good and staff are reporting burnout.

Director Adams asked what other things the Board can do to help. Lohner responded there are other opportunities, and stated Union representatives and the Chief are committed to presenting not just a problem, but also a proposed solution.

Chief reported that in addition to those noted above, additional root causes include call volume, Covid and the associated restrictions/mandates, contract negotiations, and staff turnover and other staffing challenges. Earned time off is of particular concern at this time. It is important to recognize these are all valid concerns and need to be worked through.

Engineer Lohner reiterated the experience loss the District has suffered. The Union is currently working on filling those positions from the bottom up. The more people working on this – the better the outcome for everyone involved.

Director Cox asked whether other agencies are experiencing these same staffing issues. Lohner replied that yes, it started in smaller agencies a couple of years ago and now affects larger departments as well. Discussion regarding the importance of getting ahead of continued staffing shortages and coming to the table with solution-based ideas.

Correspondence/News

- A. Thank you – Williams
- B. Letter - Senator Merkley
- C. Letter - False Alarms

Director Swails asked about the District’s communication with the property owner and the related Ordinance #19-01. This is a multi-million-dollar vacation rental property. The built-in barbecue sets off the fire alarm each time it is used. Because the home is in a gated community it is a challenge to get to. While the property owner has not responded, crews report they believe the matter is being addressed. Chief agreed to do a follow-up with the homeowner, and stated he has

communicated with the Caldera Springs HOA on this matter. A response typically takes about an hour of the crew's time, from dispatch to available in quarters. Director Adams asked about the possibility of billing the homeowner for responses. Under the current Ordinance this can be done after providing the property owner sufficient notice. Discussion regarding the amount allowed to be billed is not sufficient to cover costs of response; however, Ordinance #19-02 also allows the District to charge for responses. It is a Board decision whether to revise an ordinance to allow the District to bill a greater amount for violations.

- D. SDIS – Longevity Credit
- E. The Bulletin – La Pine Fire District Asks for Fireworks Ban
- F. KTVZ – OSU Study: Most Destructive Wildfires Start on Private Lands
- G. Central Oregon Daily News – Deschutes County 911 Desperate for Staffing
- H. Wise Buys – Board Meeting Dates; Seeks Budget Committee Member; Seeks Firework Bans
- I. The Nugget – Fires Imperil Homeowner Insurance Coverages
Director Swails drew attention to this article and stated the changes discussed directly impact the 97739 ZIP code. Farmers Insurance among others is currently not writing policies for the three ZIP codes affected. These are considered 'redline' zones due to wildfire activity in recent years. While there are many organized communities in the area that work to create defensible space, many others are not in a position to accomplish this. The majority of recent wildfires have started on private property, which has resulted in more funding by state and federal agencies to provide additional resources to aid property owners. Director Adams asked City Councilor Courtney Ignazzitto whether the City would partner in any effort at community education. The City has taken action in enforcing zoning regulations and other activity to regulate growth in the area, and La Pine has made great strides with fire prevention efforts including the first Firewise community in the state.
- J. KTVZ – OSU Models Show 40% Increase in Extreme Autumn Fire Weather
- K. KOIN – Portland Bans Sale and Use of Fireworks
- L. Central Oregon Daily News – Portland City Council Votes to Ban Sale of Fireworks
Discussion that this concept seems to be gaining momentum statewide, including in Deschutes County.
- M. Gazette – Fire Department Debuts New Response System for 911 Calls
Discussion regarding this new dispatch concept piloted in Colorado Springs.
- N. KLCC- Early Fire Risk Especially Central Oregon
- O. News Times- Yachats Fire Won't Seek New Levy in May, Effort in November
- P. USFS Cooperative Agreement (Mutual Aid) Extension
Discussion regarding changes to the Agreement relating only to contacts. Chief provided an overview of the terms of the Agreement.

Old Business

A. Recruit, Select and Appoint Budget Committee Members

Two members, Rex LeSeuer and Paul Gilchrist, were appointed last month. There is one remaining seat open. Chief encouraged everyone's assistance to filling this remaining position.

B. Firefighter/Basic Classification Staffing Concept

Chief presented the proposed staffing concept. He stated the old normal is twenty-five full-time (FTE) staff. The new normal would use Firefighter/basics to supplement the current shortage of eighteen FTEs. In example while the District plans and budgets for 12 students, currently there are only six as the school year ends. So it will look ot recruit up to 15. He suggested over-hiring to compensate for the new normal of a lot of movement of employees and aim for 28 – 30 positions. There are many operational pieces to be considered. Director Adams agreed with staffing more positions, citing last year's call volume versus this year's making it impossible to predict for the future. Chief also brought forth that just having more calls does not equate to having more revenue. There is currently a shortage of revenue to support the demands on service, and the District has a responsibility to provide that service. He requested the Board's assistance with not only staffing but also revenue.

Engineer Lohner stated the Union has reviewed other agencies' staffing and created Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). He stated most line staff is on the same page with management and agrees with the Firefighter/Basic staffing concept. Director Adams related it to the medical profession's trend of moving toward physician assistants to provide care in a more cost-efficient manner than an M.D. Part of any agreement to the proposed MOU is a minimum paramedic staffing level.

Chief stated that while these positions are less costly than a paramedic position, there will be guardrails implemented to ensure adequate paramedic staffing. The goal is not to cut costs, but to be more efficient with staffing. This is an important consideration for staff. He stressed that this is only one piece to the revenue/capacity challenge, much like the public private partnership.

Action: Director Adams moved to authorize staff to increase the FTE cap from 25 to 30. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4 – 0 vote.

New Business

A. Disposition of Worn and Surplus Fleet Vehicles

Chief requested Board direction on the two old medics and asked that they be declared surplus. He stated the value of each vehicle is \$12,000 - \$15,000. The emissions systems are very poor in those vehicles and they cost about \$10,000 per year to maintain. Options presented would be to (1) keep them and do nothing, (2) put up for public sale/consignment, or (3) donate to a small department. A request has been received by Kevin Leehmann to possibility donate one of the medics to the Lake County Range Fire Protection Association.

After Board discussion regarding the three options there was consensus to offer the medics for sale first, then offer them for donation, giving Lake County first right of refusal.

Action: Director Swails moved declare the two vehicles as surplus, and further moved to authorize staff to first list the medics for sale for thirty days, then offer for consignment for a period of forty-five days, and third donate them, giving Lake County Range Fire Protection Association first right of refusal. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4 – 0 vote.

B. Preorder Quick Response Unit (QRU) per County American Rescue Act Funds

The District has received commitment to \$280,000 in funding from Deschutes County as part of the American Rescue Act, which will be used to purchase four new Stryker gurneys and one new QRU. Gurneys are readily available. However, under the District's State contract, a chassis cannot even be ordered until 2023. Chassis manufacturers are currently not taking any orders. When the previous two medics were purchased, staff was authorized to pre-order them. Chief requested that authority to pre-order this unit as well, which will save several months' time in delivery of the new unit.

While this purchase needs to be approved by the Budget Committee, the funds are stipulated to be used only for this purpose. There is no pre-payment required, and the unit will be fully paid for on delivery. Chief reviewed the various ways this QRU will be utilized.

Action: Director Adams moved to authorize staff to pre-order the new QRU. Second by Director Swails. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4 – 0 vote.

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

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

Special Meetings and Workshops

A. Set IAFF/Board/Staff Brainstorming Date on Recruitment and Retention

Chief encouraged this take place as quickly as possible. New Board member Mike Thorne is expected to be in attendance and has great experience to bring to the discussion.

Scheduled for Friday, March 18, 2022, 9 a.m. at Station 101 training room.

Good of the Order

A. Recruitment Updates – Firefighter/Paramedic, Student Reserves

Staff provided an update on current recruitment. Chief Daugherty reported there will be a testing process this Saturday. While the District could be back to full staffing, it would still be minimal – the ‘old normal’.

B. Grant Efforts – Upcoming Volunteer Firefighter Assistance Grant, SDAO Intern Grant, 2023 Congressional Directed Funding

- VFA – This forest service grant is normally received and was used last year to purchase turnouts.
- SDAO Intern – Staff will hold off on applying for this grant this year and consider hiring for a full-time position instead.
- Congressional Directed Funding – this process for 2023 will begin next week. Staff will review the guidelines for this to ensure the District’s needs are in compliance with available funding opportunities.

Discussion regarding the Omnibus bill being voted on by the Senate today.

Next Regular Meeting: April 14, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

APRIL 14, 2022

Board Secretary



Board President

