

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
April 14, 2022 Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m.

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

Swearing in and Seating of New Board Member Mike Thorne, Position 3

Mr. Thorne was sworn in to Position 3 by Director Cox.

Appoint Vice President

Director Cox nominated Director Swails to the position of Vice President. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 4 – 0 vote.

Roll Call

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

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

Open Forum for Public Comment

Name	Purpose for Attending
<i>See attached.</i>	

Director Cox commented this is the largest public attendance of any board meeting he has seen in awhile and thanked everyone for their participation.

Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Firefighters Council. Karl stated he just finished thirty years in the fire service. He is here today to talk about how to make service better. The four points he wishes to address:

- Communication – He feels the concerns of the firefighters boil down to communication, and that open and honest communication is critical. He also feels the public here today is not here because they are unhappy with the service, rather because they are concerned about the people who provide that service. He encouraged lines of communication be open in a constructive and positive manner.

- Respect – The commitment to be respectful and work through a problem to its end, observing the rights afforded in Oregon as a collective bargaining state.
- Customer Service – He is here to help solve problems, and encourages the use of resources available to the IAFF.
- Follow the Rules – Karl encouraged everyone to follow the rules. He closed by stating he is here to help everyone make this better.

Mary Douglas – She is a new member of the La Pine Community Health Center board. She is here today representing herself. On October 25, 2021 there were three units that responded to her home and saved her husband's life – he had suffered a massive coronary. She stated the public is very thankful for their service. She is also here today as a retired leader and former manager of over 170 support staff with Liberty Mutual. She spoke about her management experience, stating she was known in her position as one of the toughest managers at the company, while also being fair and showing compassion to help bring about successful outcomes with her staff. She feels there is currently there is a lack of confidence, and her hope is the Board and Chief take these comments seriously.

Grants Report

Jerry Hubbard, District Volunteer Public Affairs Liaison, delivered the Grants Report. Over the last several months he has secured \$940,000 in federal and county grants; an additional \$42,00 in grant funds was recently approved by the Oregon Department of Homeland Security to fund the purchase of additional P25 radios. Currently there is \$4.6 million in outstanding requests, including \$500,000 for two medics and \$13 million to hire eighteen paramedics. However, because the rules do not allow for grant funding for staff, this has been shifted to an apparatus request. He has asked Congressman Schrader for \$3 million to upgrade stations 101 and 102 to add additional apparatus and more dormitory space. He has made a request to Deschutes County to fund the District's student program at \$252,000, which is under review. This would be part of the \$19 million in funds the County has received as part of the American Recovery Act. He has asked Congressman Benz for funding for a tanker and a Type 3 wildland engine, however his staff has indicated the Congressman does not wish to be involved in the congressionally dedicated funding program, which is unfortunate for small cities in his District. Jerry has now made that request to Congressman Schrader. Jerry is waiting for letters of support from local politicians, which is due by the end of this week. Outstanding requests total \$4,602,000. Jerry is now looking at three local foundations – MCM, Ford Family, and the Meyer Foundation, to assist with funding for the paramedic positions. Jerry pointed out that philanthropic organizations are cautious when working with agencies where there is conflict that could result in loss of voter support for

funding. He feels it is important to gain community support of local option levies for the long-term interests of the District.

Director Cox asked Jerry to expand on grant funding for personnel. Jerry responded it is very difficult, very few grants for personnel are available and the question is always how will those personnel costs be met after one time grant funds are exhausted.

Approval of Minutes

Director Adams noted one correction to the Roll Call section of the minutes.

Action: Director Adams moved to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2022 Board of Directors Regular Meeting with the above correction. Second by Director Landles. 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.

- 5010 – Property Tax Income – Director Swails asked if there would be another substantial payment this year. Staff responded yes, the majority of the outstanding tax payment revenue will be received in May.
- 5400 – Miscellaneous Income – Director Swails inquired as to what revenue goes into this line. Staff replied address signs, rebates, refunds, and other incidental income.
- 6430 – iPad Maintenance – Director Adams asked why this expenditure is so high. Staff responded that in addition to the P25 units, iPad purchases and support expenses which enhance communication with Dispatch and other units. Director Cox asked whether reports can be written on the iPads during travel time. Chief responded yes, there is the capability, however drops in connectivity have made it a challenge. Staff is working on these challenges and expects a positive outcome.
- 8105 – Breakdowns – Director Swails asked what the year-end expense is projected to be. Chief expects the year to end at about \$60,000. While this line will be over projections for this year, the Maintenance line as a whole is projected to come in within budget. Annual service is being done this week by Hughes Fire, and that expense will be reflected in the Routine Maintenance line next month. Chief reported that the new

medics are gas powered rather than diesel. It took only four weeks to put about 4,000 miles on the first-run ambulance. With the previous diesels there were extensive emissions system repairs, often at a cost of \$5,000 - \$6,000 per repair.

- 9925 – Capital Reserve Revenue – Director Swails inquired regarding this revenue, Chief responded it is from the sale of the two oldest medics to Marion County Fire District .

Director Swails inquired about the District's cash balances. Chief replied combined funds equal \$1.4 - \$1.5 million in cash; this is significant because the District desires to keep one third of its budget available in cash in order to meet expenses from July to November. That will not happen in the next budget year. Chief continued that the cost reimbursement system is broken with revenue not keeping pace with demand and expenses. Director Thorne asked for more information on GEMT. Chief replied that this federal system was designed to recoup part of the revenue shortfall created by reimbursement rates not keeping pace with the cost to provide service. Costs and expenses are increasing at a rate that exceeds revenue – including an increase in transports of about twenty-eight percent. The District's transports are the longest distance with the largest population in the state of Oregon.

Monthly Expenses by Vendor

Director Cox asked how fuel prices are affecting expenses. Chief replied the current high fuel prices will exceed budget.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Action: Director Swails moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 3/11/22 – 4/14/22 in the amount of \$495,823.12. Second by Director Landles. All in favor. Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Management Reports

Monthly Alarm Report

Director Thorne thanked the crews for their work on recent structure fires and cardiac arrest saves.

Chief Supkis noted the District is at 300 transports versus 250 last year, and last year was up thirty percent from the year before. The increase in EMS calls is not slowing down. Director Swails asked Eng. Lohner if he senses a pattern in the increased demand for service – Lohner stated no. Karl Koenig stated the confidence of the public knowing that someone will be there builds confidence in the community, possibly being a piece of the increase in demand.

Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report

Director Cox noted the continued increase in multiple alarms. Chief expanded on this, noting that so far this year 138 times there was a delayed response because both crews were already deployed elsewhere. Additionally, neighboring districts' availability is reduced due to lower staffing in those agencies.

Building and Permit Activity

Director Landles noted current year building permits are ahead of last year by about \$5 million, though the District will not see any of the tax money for two years or more.

Director Swails asked how much of the commercial building permit activity is in the Urban Renewal (UR) district. Chief responded this year the UR district has swept \$26,000 in tax revenues. City Manager Geoff Wullschlager stated most of the urban renewal funds are directed to the new transit center, which will assist residents with transportation from La Pine to other areas of central Oregon. Director Swails noted the District could stand to lose over \$1 million to urban renewal over the next several years.

Chief's Report

Chief noted six Code 99's in March. People seem to be sicker and often waiting longer to call 911; and unfortunately, Code 99 patients waited too long to make the call for help.

Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 3387 Report

No written report submitted. Lieutenant Kevin Leehmann asked to address the Board.

Lt. Leehmann stated that all issues are in-house, they do not affect the crews' response to calls. He is not here today to discuss the details of the letter sent to the Chief, and is requesting to meet regarding that.

Director Cox stated there was a meeting, which all board members attended, and only one representative from the Union. Eng. Lohner stated that meeting was not about the

letter. Director Swails stated the Board had requested and the Union had previously agreed that three Union members would attend that meeting. Lt. Leehmann stated he was not aware other matters were being discussed that day. It was agreed that communication does not always make it all the way through the channels and requested another meeting to discuss the letter.

Leehmann thanked everyone for attending today. He said the Union has reached a point with the Chief where they feel they can no longer be ignored. Director Cox stated this is not the forum for this discussion. He stated he has received no communication from the Union.

Director Swails stated he received an email regarding a vote of the Union containing an undated, unsigned letter. He also stated he has seen no documentation which backs up the claims of the Union, that the accused has a right to documentation regarding the claims and the right to face his accuser. He requested documentation of the eight claims in the Union's letter.

Director Cox closed this discussion by stating a meeting will be set to further discuss the Union's allegations.

Captain Gary Young addressed the Board, commenting to Director Swails that he has been with the District for twenty-six years and none of the Board members know who he is. He feels very frustrated by this. He stated he is on shift two of every six days, and encouraged Board members to come in and meet with him. Director Swails stated he will take Capt. Young up on that.

Mary Douglas asked for a window of when this meeting will take place. Director Cox stated a timeframe cannot be set at this time, until the executive session and budget meetings are complete.

Director Cox stated on previous boards, the board was not permitted to talk to the staff and he feels staff is fortunate that they can be heard by this Board.

Correspondence/News

- A. Thank you – Donation - Mealy
- B. Letter – Deschutes County BOCC – Fireworks
Robin Adams asked about this letter from the BOCC and whether the District needs to act on the request in the form of Board action prior to next January. Chief stated yes, this needs to be addressed. The matter will be placed on a future agenda.
- C. Letter – Firefighter/paramedic Dickson
- D. United States Senate – Merkley/Wyden – Congressional Funding
- E. SDAO 2022 Membership

- F. Letter – IAFF - Chief
- G. Source – Firefighters feuding
- H. KTVZ – Firefighters quickly stop blaze
- I. KTVZ – La Pine area family escape fire
- J. Central Oregon Daily News – 2 La Pine homes on same street catch fire
- K. Central Oregon Daily News – Shop fire spreads to La Pine home
- L. Wise Buys – District board meeting (x3), Fire Free (x2)
- M. The Nugget Newspaper – Cloverdale FD asks voters for funding
- N. Polk County Observer – Changes and Challenges PCFD #1
- O. Baker City Herald – City’s plan to cease ambulance service
- P. KDRV -12 – Overdoses, deaths on rise
- Q. Daily Dispatch – Jobs page

Director Adams commented on the Daily Dispatch job listings, stating there are eight districts in Central Oregon recruiting firefighters. As of this morning there are fifty-eight job postings. Karl Koenig stated community college cycling has also been a problem, creating a huge backfill problem as current staff retires or leaves the fire service. There are currently 1,200 firefighters in Oregon able to retire. Attrition and increased demands on capacity, much of which is a result of Covid, create a very difficult environment. Director Thorne commented he spent ten years trying to get hired in the early 1990s’ when he began his career, and it was very difficult to get hired on with an agency.

- R. U.S. Drought Monitor – April 2022

Old Business

- A. Appoint Budget Committee Member Position #5, Dan Duncan

Director Swails nominated Mr. Duncan for this Budget Committee position. Mr. Duncan’s background is in finance with Fred Meyer. Director Adams asked that Chief provide the Board members with information on Mr. Duncan’s background, noting she is not prepared to vote on a potential committee member without reviewing the person’s experience.

Scott Asla asked how budget committee members are recruited, and stated he would like to be considered for the open position. Chief responded it was publicly noticed in three issues of the Wise Buys. Director Adams asked whether budget committee members are required to live within the fire district, Chief responded yes, they are. Chief Supkis stated the budget committee currently does not have a person with large retail experience, and he feels Mr. Duncan’s different perspective and experience could be beneficial to the process.

Chief advised Scott of the time and place for the next budget meeting, and stated everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

It was determined that the Board can vote to fill the open committee position prior to the next budget meeting.

Jerry Hubbard asked the Union to draft a letter of support for the district's effort to raise \$3 million for the expansion of stations 101 and 102 and \$850,000 for the purchase of an engine and a Type 3 tender. The deadline to submit the request is tomorrow at noon.

New Business

A. District EMS Billing – Non-Transport Fees

Chief Supkis reviewed the District's current District non-transport policy. A non-transport, if billed, is typically at a rate of \$125. Prior to 2016 almost all non-transports were billed. In 2016, the District placed an emphasis on providing the right care at the right time, assessing and directing patients to the most appropriate care – most times at no cost to the patient. The District has been advised by both its physician advisor and GEMT consultant that the District could potentially see an increase of \$74,000 annually using the model of non-transport billing in the attached model. Staff recommendation is that the Board and public have input on this proposal. Director Adams commented that paramedics are increasingly becoming the first line of care for patients. While the District is not yet at the level of paramedicine, they are increasingly called on to use the paramedics' higher level of training and skill sets, and the District should be reimbursed for those services. Staff requests the board consider this proposal.

Director Cox reviewed previous efforts to provide this higher level of service.

Karl Koenig brought to the Board's attention HB 2397 – Senior Care EMS. This \$9 million fund was created specifically to assess patients with the goal of directing them to the most appropriate care or enable them to stay at home. The funds are only available to public service agencies such as fire districts. He encourages the district to explore this potential revenue source, which is funded by nursing home non-compliance fines. The goal of the program is to add capacity within the system without impacting the current service – it would expand that capacity by adding a position of a nurse practitioner or similar, much like that of a single-role paramedic.

B. Annual District IT Review

Chief reviewed the recent review completed by Velox. The report contains a couple of action items including computers in line for replacement. Much of this expense has

been budgeted for. The District overall does very well in the area of IT security and upgrades with an A to A- rank on the audit.

Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)

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

Special Meetings and Workshops

- A. Budget Board Meeting FY 22/23 Proposed Budget – April 21, 6:30 p.m.
- B. Annual All Staff Training April 23 - 24

Good of the Order

- A. Recruitment Updates – Firefighter/Paramedic, Student Reserves

Chief reviewed the process and reported on two new hires, which puts the District at twenty-four full time positions. This is a dynamic process due to staff moving around, with eight firefighter/paramedics hired in the last 120 days. The hiring and training process is both expensive and labor-intensive, and results in a positive outcome for new hires.

The District recently completed its joint recruit process for new students and offered four scholarships to date. In past years the process has resulted in 5-6 new recruits and has always benefited the district.

Next Regular Meeting: May 12, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board and Approval

Board Secretary

Board President

May 12, 2022

[Signature]
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