

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**La Pine Rural Fire Protection District**  
**September 8, 2022 Regular Meeting 9:00 a.m.**

**Open Meeting**            Director Cox opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and led the flag salute.

**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, Administrative Assistant Tammie Waters

**Open Forum for Public Comment**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Purpose for Attending</b>
<i>Ted Sommers</i>	
<i>Karen Sommers</i>	
<i>Robin Mirrasoul</i>	
<i>Oliver Tatom</i>	<i>St. Charles</i>
<i>Rex LeSueur</i>	

Oliver Tatom: Advised the Board and staff that he has resigned his position with St. Charles effective September 30, 2022. He is thankful for the respectful welcome he has received at the board meetings he has attended, and stated he has learned a lot observing how the Board and District professionally conducts business. He also understands the challenge facing rural EMS and offered his assistance in that matter.

**Comment/Report by Kyle Lohner, President IAF Local 3387**

Director Cox stated that since they spoke on Sunday, the Board will take that into account at their meeting. Engineer Lohner apologized for the lack of communication and the bombardment of communication, and asked the Board if they have any questions. Director Cox responded not at this time, and that the Board will get back to him after they have had an opportunity to review and discuss what has been sent to them.

## **Approval of Minutes**

August 11, 2022 Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Director Adams noted that under item 6105 in the Financials section, OFSM should be OSFM. The correction will be made.

**Action: Director Adams moved to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2022 Board of Directors 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.

- 5100 – EMS Income – Director Adams asked about the higher than normal funds received in July. Staff replied this was from GEMT revenue received during that month.
- 6875 – Hose Testing – Director Adams inquired why this line is 40% over budget. Chief Supkis responded that some hose was missed during initial testing and had to be repeated, which took more time by our students.

Director Cox asked if staff has received any comment on the price increase for address signs. Staff responded they have not heard any.

Staff reported cash balance at the end of August was just under \$1.4 million.

Director Landles asked about PERS funding and needs. Chief responded it is stable for this second year in the biennium, however rates will be reset next year and the effect of that is unknown at this time.

## **Monthly Expenses by Vendor**

No questions or comments.

## **Monthly Expenses Paid**

No questions or comments.

**Action:** Director Adams moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 8/11/22 – 9/8/22 in the amount of \$441,206.19. Second by Director Thorne. All in favor.  
Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

## **Management Reports**

### **Monthly Alarm Report**

Director Adams asked what types of calls fall into the “Other Situations” category. Staff responded these are calls that do not fit into any another category such as cancelled in route, law enforcement (LE) requests for assistance, etc. Chief speculated the increase in LE requests could be partially due to new officers, who tend to call for additional resources more often than experienced deputies.

Director Landles noted that while there was an increase in fire calls, there have been actually fewer wildland fires year to date. It was noted the periodic moisture has helped although the Cedar Creek fire has now become a major incident locally. Board asked about the district’s response to vehicle fires, specifically EV fire suppression and the resources required for those fires. Chief responded that to date the district fortunately has not encountered this. As those incidents become more common, the fire service is learning that cooling with low volumes of water is the best tactic to date for lithium battery runaway/fires.

Director Landles inquired on what the new road west of 97 was about. Staff noted it was a new multi-use pedestrian path under construction to connect Wickup Junction to the core La Pine area, and is being built by ODOT.

### **Multiple Alarm & Building Permit/Valuation Report**

No questions or comments.

### **Building and Permit Activity**

No questions or comments.

## **Chief's Report**

No questions or comments.

## **Correspondence/News**

- A. Thank you – Carter
- B. Thank you – Sparks Drive
- C. Thank you – Colfels – Big Canyon Fire
- D. Thank you – Smith – Cowboy Fire
- E. Accuity – Significant Risks
- F. SDAO Awards Program
- G. Bend Bulletin – ODF Wildfire Map
- H. KTVZ – Swimmer Trapped
- I. OFCA/Daily Dispatch– Swimmer Trapped
- J. KTVZ – Fire Damages Sunriver Home
- K. Wise Buys – Rescue for Swimmer Trapped
- L. Wise Buys – Board Meeting Notice, County Population Grows by 29%
- M. NPR – Fireproofing Your Home
- N. KTVZ – Redmond Wildfire Stopped at 10 Acres
- O. KTVZ – Aggressive Attack Stops 204-Acre Cowboy Fire
- P. KGW – Portland Firefighters

Director Adams asked about Accuity's significant risks letter to the Board and whether this is different from previous years. Chief Supkis responded that while the potential risk has not changed, it is now required (by state law) that the Board be advised in writing and the information be presented at a public board meeting. He also stated this common risk has been identified in each audit and is not unique to this district. Most small entities are not financially able to have a Certified Public Accountant as the finance officer on staff, which creates this risk.

Director Landles noted the thank you's to staff sent by members of the community.

Chief Daugherty reported the OSFM grant funds to provide additional staffing during extreme wildfire conditions has been invaluable in allowing the District to provide resources to other agencies when necessary. Chief Supkis added that even when District staff does not respond on Task Force activations, these resources provide backfill for the next event. He noted the recent fire in the Cagle area, where a General Alarm was immediately toned out due to Red Flag conditions. The additional crew was able to hit this fire hard and stop it quickly, even though duty crews were on two transports at the same time.

It is expected this funding program will be renewed next fire season and possibly grow in the future. Chief Supkis also reiterated the additional crews are for fire and sometimes QRT responses; they do not respond on the medics or transport patients.

Discussion regarding the SAFER grant. While the District applies for this each year, it is unlikely it will be awarded. The District received a 4-year SAFER grant in 2015. Many fire agencies compete for this money, and only a handful of the 300 Oregon agencies receive one each year. La Pine was one of the first, and it seems to be awarded to those who have not received the grant previously.

General board discussion regarding high turnover rates among firefighter/paramedics, which is a challenge everywhere. Director Adams commented this District has historically been a stepping stone; and focus needs to be placed on how to recruit staff to central Oregon as well as retain its staff. Chief reported that every transporting agency in Deschutes County, as well as Jefferson County and Prineville, is currently recruiting firefighter/paramedics.

While the District is currently back up to its budgeted 25 FTE firefighter/paramedics (with some still in training), that is still not enough to meet the current call demand. Director Thorne asked if the District has funds for the 30 FTE positions, to which Chief replied no, they are not in the budget. While the Board authorized to recruit up to 30 positions it is contingent on having the money to fill them and/or balancing with exiting staff projections. Director Swails clarified the Board allows the District to recruit up to 30 and can hire up to that number depending on funds available. Each career position costs the District an average of approximately \$155,000.00 annually.

### Old Business

None.

### New Business

#### **A. Resolution #22-03 A Resolution Authorizing an Acceptance of Unbudgeted Grant Revenue and Transfer to the Personnel Overtime Line**

The Resolution was read into the record.

**Action: Director Adams moved to accept Resolution #22-03 A Resolution Authorizing an Acceptance of Unbudgeted Grant Revenue and Transfer to the Personnel Overtime Line. Second by Director Thorne. All in favor. Motion passed on a 5-0 vote.**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Adams: Aye**  
**Cox: Aye**  
**Landles: Aye**  
**Swails: Aye**  
**Thorne: Aye**

**B. La Pine Rural Fire Protection District Operational Needs – White Paper**

Chief Supkis delivered the White Paper. Director Cox confirmed each Board member has read the report.

Discussion regarding the EMS recovery rate and clarification on the amount the District is able to collect due to Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement rates. Director Adams noted Central Oregon’s reimbursement rate is one of the lowest in the country. Discussion regarding how ambulance service would be provided to the area if the District is no longer able. Chief responded it would be the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners of Deschutes County to make that determination. Taxpayers are currently subsidizing the ambulance transport service at the rate of about \$2 million per year and that the District cannot keep up with demand.

Additional discussion regarding the creation of a county/metro ambulance transport agency. Staff noted this does not appear to be a short-range option; it would require substantial changes to the County Ambulance Service Area (ASA) assignments which is a ten-year contract with each provider – thus included in the White Paper. While some agencies may be more open to this option, others would be reluctant to lose whatever transport revenues they do receive (even though it does not cover the cost of providing the service) and are not as open to it at this time.

The four options outlined are to 1) do nothing; 2) continue to pursue current cost recovery efforts; 3) dissolve the transport service and return the ASA assignment to the County; or 4) request additional funding from taxpayers.

It was discussed that while growth and new construction will generate some new tax revenue, those increases will not keep up with the increased demand for services. Additionally, the District does not receive those funds until new properties have been assessed and they go on the tax rolls and taxes paid – a several year process. However, the District is immediately serving those addresses once they are occupied.

Options to increase tax revenues were discussed including requesting a new levy and/or increasing the current levy. Director Swails noted that if the board decides to go in that direction the White Paper presented is the road map for community dialog.

No Board action other than to continue the discussion.

The White Paper was made available to those in attendance.

**Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)**

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

**Special Meetings and Workshops**

Board Executive Succession Planning Workshop – September 8, 2022, convening after regular board meeting.

Board Executive Session – District Legal Update – ORS 192.660(2)(f) & (h) – September 8, 2022 convening after board workshop.

**Good of the Order**

Director Swails advised IAFF Chair Engineer Lohner that he is instituting a policy to verify the information he receives from the union. For example, if he receives a report from a union member that the Union had a 100 percent vote on a particular issue, or a report another department has implemented a particular program, He is going to ask for physical documentation and/or signatures where applicable. Such documentation and verification will help in his decision-making and continuing to move the district forward.

Next Regular Meeting: October 13, 2022, 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

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

*Date Presented to Board and Approval*

*Board Secretary*

*Board President*

OCTOBER 13, 2022  
  
