

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**La Pine Rural Fire Protection District**  
**December 8, 2022**

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

**Roll Call**

Directors Present:    Dir. Robin Adams, Chairman. Doug Cox, Dir. Dick Swails, Dir. Mike Thorne

Directors Absent:    Dir. Jim Landles

Staff Present:        Chief Mike Supkis, Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty, Office Manager Tammie Waters, Administrative Assistant Candice Trapp

**2022 Service Awards and Recognition**

Chief Supkis opened the annual recognition ceremony by thanking all in attendance. The District has a special tradition of honoring staff with 15 years of service annually for over thirty years. Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty assisted with the presentation of awards.

The first to receive a custom axe plaque in recognition for fifteen years of dedicated service to the District and community is Firefighter/Paramedic Kyle Lohner. Kyle started his career with Keating Rural in Baker city, ODF summer WFF. He joined LRFPD as a volunteer in September 2002 and later returned in Sept 2007 with his paramedic certification and was offered a fulltime position.

The second to receive a custom axe plaque in recognition for fifteen years of dedicated service to the District and community is Firefighter/Engineer Justin Johns. Justin came to LRFPD as an athletic trainer and Volunteer at in September 2004. He was offered a FT position fall of 2006.

The third to receive a custom axe plaque in recognition for fifteen years of dedicated service to the District and community is Firefighter/Engineer Paul Stevenson. Paul started as a WFF and worked part-time for Warm Springs Fire. He came to La Pine as a volunteer in 2003 as a Paramedic intern. Paul was rookie of the year in 2004 and was offered a fulltime position in May 2006.

Chief Supkis also recognized two administrative staff members for their many years of dedicated service to the District.

Sue Curl received a custom Pendleton blanket for her 8.5 years of service to the District. Her position as an Ambulance Billing Specialist is being eliminated at end of this year due to ambulance billing being outsourced to Tactical. Sue started with the district in March 2014. She has provided dedicated customer service, billing, and support to the district.

Tracy Read received a custom Pendleton blanket for her 12+ years of service to the district. Tracy is retiring this month and came to LRFDP in 2003 as Administrative Assistant. Tracy has an extensive background in customer service and legal support. She served the District 10 years and in 2014 moved over to the La Pine Clinic and then to the City of La Pine. Tracy returned to the District in April 2020 as our Business Office Manager when Bonita retired.

Former Board member Jerry Hubbard was recognized for 13+ years of dedicated service to the District and community. Jerry is currently a volunteer political liaison and grant finder for LRFDP. He is a retired Facilities Manager who previously worked for Portland Electric, Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, and Morgan Stanley. He serves with Upper Deschutes River Coalition as secretary, president, and wildfire grant guru. Jerry has also served on our Fire Board as vice president. In 2022 alone, he was responsible for obtaining \$940,000 in grants to the LRFDP.

Chief Supkis recognized current Board President, Doug Cox for over 35 years of dedicated service to the District and community. He has served as Board President 15 years. He started as a volunteer FF/EMT in 1987 before serving as District Fleet Manager from the 1990's to 1997. He then became a board member in 1993 and has served over 25 years on the Board. Doug is one of the elite few that have been awarded the Medal of Valor Award by the District for the Awbrey Butte Fire in 1990.

Chief Supkis recognized current Support Services Team member Ted Sommers for 60 + years of dedicated service to the District, the community, and State of Oregon. He started his Firefighter career over 60 years ago. In 1961 Ted was a member of the Rockaway Beach Fire Department. The most common rescue call was sea rescue of boats in distress and wayward swimmers. In 1963 he became a fulltime paid firefighter for the Cedar Mill Fire Department in Washington County, known today as Tualatin Valley. Ted was an engineer on the truck company as the Tillerman. He made \$1.56 an hour with no overtime. As Tillerman they often provided mutual aid to Portland on large fires. The driver when in a hurry and going down the winding narrow roads would often forget about the 100' of ladder truck and Ted following. Ted was on one of the first WUI fires in Oregon known as the West Beaverton Hills Fire. He was sent to Seaside with a taskforce of engines by the Governor to hose down riots in the 1960's. He was on the old forestry building fire and was pinned by a burning log. It took four others to roll it off him. He also worked the Portland/Progress Grade School fire. His crew was

sent into the boiler room coal bins with a 2.5" hose when the building collapsed trapping all of them. The remaining crew did not give up on them and Ted is here today.

All in attendance gave those recognized applause for their dedicated service.

**Chairman Cox opened forum for public comment (five minutes per person)**

**Open Forum for Public Comment**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Purpose for Attending</b>
<i>Stu Martinez</i>	<i>Citizen</i>

**Comment/report by Stu Martinez- Former Board member and Citizen.**

Chairman Cox welcomed Mr. Martinez to the meeting. Stu shared his gratitude for the District including ensuring a safe summer. He noted there were multiple fires our crews worked on which he personally observed from afar. Stu also thanked the District as a citizen for everything done, especially the front office staff as they're often overlooked. He also thanked the Board for their dedicated service as volunteers. He was unaware there was an awards ceremony today but found it to be very moving. He shared Firefighter/ Paramedic Kyle Lohner used to work for him at the garbage company in high school before deciding to dedicate his life and career back to La Pine. Mr. Martinez believes La Pine Fire has a lot to be proud of including a rich history. He hopes the things he has been hearing will be resolved amicably because the community has grown, and all parties need to work together

Chairman Cox shared it was nice to hear Stu on the fire towers this year before proceeding.

**Chairman Cox noted there was to be a report from IAFF Local 3387 President, Kyle Lohner.**

Chief Supkis shared no report had been submitted. Kyle Lohner has emailed to say he had another obligation today and was not able to attend. Chairman Cox proceeded with the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

November 10, 2022 Board of Directors Regular Meeting  
Chairman Cox asked for review, comments, corrections

Dir. Swails noted two corrections, Dir. Adams also noted two corrections.

**Action: Chairman Cox called for the motion. Dir. Swails moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting with the noted corrections; seconded by Dir. Adams. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

Chief Supkis noted the spelling changes needed were on the signature page and he would have an updated copy of the minutes ready to sign by tomorrow.

## **Financials**

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

- 6050 – Summer Intern – Dir. Swails inquired about the summer intern position and noted the amount was over budget 36%. Chief Supkis responded stating the line is for a La Pine fire student during the summer who is hired as an intern to help with admin and academy with special projects. Chief Supkis stated it was due to increased hours worked. Dir. Adams asked if the position was held by one of the District’s students. Chief Supkis confirmed the opportunity is only open to the District’s second and third-year students. The student intern will still have station responsibilities per the scholarship program.
- 7205– Address signs/Smoke alarms – Dir. Adams noted the 14% cost overrun despite raising fees last year. She asked if that was a reflection because the fees weren’t raised soon enough? Chief Supkis acknowledged the cost overrun and stated it was due to the rapid growth of the community which translates to increased demand for address signs. However, the Chief highlighted the corresponding increase in address signs/ miscellaneous income on the revenue side. Tracy Read noted there was a large purchase of metal posts made due to increasing supply challenges. Dir. Adams clarified that the Board should then see an increased revenue for this line at some point. Chief Supkis confirmed and noted the cost of address signs was increased from twenty to thirty dollars six months ago.
- 8454 – Career Staff PPE – Dir. Adams commented on the cost of PPE for career staff and noticed this expense has gone up significantly. Staff noted this is due to all the new hires in the past year.

## **Monthly Expenses by Vendor**

Chairman Cox asked the Board if they had any questions or comments.  
No questions or comments.

## **Monthly Expenses Paid**

Chairman Cox asked the Board if they had any questions or comments.  
No questions or comments.

Chairman Cox called for a motion to pay bills.

**Action: Dir. Adams moved to approve monthly expenses presented from 11/11/22 – 12/08/22 in the amount of \$455,600.83; seconded by Dir. Thorne. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

## **Management Reports**

### **Monthly Alarm Report**

Dir. Swails noted billable transports have increased roughly 9.5% over last year.

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

Dir. Adams noted two-alarms are up 60% in the last year and inquired as to why the increase of multiple alarms was so significant. Chief Supkis explained the measurement of multiple alarm quantifies the occurrence of multiple incidents at the same time, not the size of those events. There are simply more people calling at the same time. We have responded to two or more calls at the same time 555 times year-to-date. Chief noted the pattern of simultaneous calls also appears to happen in groups. Dir. Adams highlighted the solution is to pass the levy so the District can hire more staff.

Chairman Cox inquired about a leak at station 103. Chief Supkis confirmed they discovered moisture dripping from an electrical outlet approximately 1.5 months ago. Both an electrician and a plumber were contacted with no resolution to date. A roofer was also contacted, and they believe the metal roof was compromised when the plumbing air vents were installed. They will be replaced and re-sealed which will hopefully resolve the problem.

Dir. Swails inquired about building permits noting commercial permits are currently at 21 million. Dir. Swails asked how much of the proposed development was in the Urban Renewal District. Chief Supkis stated his guess would be zero, as the new development permits appear to be just north of town. There are permits coming in for an apartment complex next to St. Charles as well as development by Gordy's. There is also proposed development outside the city in Caldera Springs as they're in the third phase and building a resort facility. Dir. Swails shared for those who may be unaware, any new tax revenue generated from establishments inside the Urban Renewal District does not benefit community resources such as schools, police, or fire departments. However, all are still expected to provide service without compensation.

### **Chief's Report**

Chairman Cox called for comment on the report and noted there were many calls. No questions or additional comments.

## Correspondence/News.

- A. Thank you - Bray
- B. Thank you. – Wolcott/Cross Walk
- C. Thank you – Young/ K Bar J Ranch
- D. Oregon State Fire Marshall – 2022 Fire Service Capacity Grant Application
- E. IAFF – Board Meeting Expectations
- F. Daily Dispatch – Oregon insurance coverage, Medford public safety fee, La Pine Fire Chief Announcement

Chairman Cox called for questions or comment. Dir. Adams commented on the Daily Dispatch report counting roughly 14-15 fire departments throughout Washington, Oregon, and California currently recruiting. This shows the problem occurs all over, not just here.

Dir. Swails commented on the article regarding Oregon fire insurance renewal inquiring as to whether this would impact the District. Rex Lesueur (Citizen) confirmed the decision to terminate renewals would likely impact areas like La Pine due to increased risk of wildland fire. Chairman Cox inquired about the difference between living in the country as opposed to the city. Rex shared the difference from an insurance perspective are statistics. If there are trees within 30ft of a structure, the risk of total loss due to fire is much greater.

Chairman Cox called for additional questions hearing none.

## Old Business

### **A. Fire Chief/CEO Search with SDAO, George Dunkel**

Chairman Cox welcomed SDAO and George Dunkel to the meeting via Zoom. Shanta Carter introduced herself on behalf of George Dunkel as he was not able to attend due to weather. She offered to answer any questions the board has and wanted to ensure they approved the adjusted timeline George submitted. Shanta also discussed a request for approval of the salary range or approval for SDAO to initiate a salary survey on the behalf of the Board. Dir. Adams asked if both were accomplished at the last meeting. Chief Supkis confirmed the timeline and job posting have been approved. It is his suggestion the Board proceed with a salary survey to be sure what is offered is comparable to others in the marketplace. Shanta noted the current posting states the salary range is under review by the Board and believes it would be to the benefit of the Board if a decision to proceed with a survey was made today as applicants might be hesitant. Shanta stated they would work with HR Answers to obtain the salary survey and believes it would be a short turn around. Chief stated George plans to attend the January meeting to continue this effort.

**Action: Dir. Adams moved to authorize SDAO to proceed with a salary survey; seconded by Dir. Swails. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

## **B. May 2023 Local Option Levy**

### **SEL 803 Wording**

Chief announced the necessary draft documents for the ballot measure had been filled out and draft copies were provided to the Board. The language states .64 cents over five years which will provide nine Firefighters to handle the increased call volume. The language was taken from both the past and Cloverdale as they just successfully passed a staffing levy as well. The explanatory statement includes call volume data which provides more detail so the community can see why the District is proposing a levy. Chief also provided a list of public discussion points which highlight the importance of the levy and what it will accomplish for the community. Dir. Swails suggested minor edits to the 803 and Dir. Adams agreed parentheses needed to be added on 805 as well. Potential language edits to the explanatory statement were discussed to improve consistency. Staff will make the suggested changes.

### **Marketing Proposal**

Chief Supkis noted the Board asked staff to reach out to a marketing firm suggesting Sage Brush Marketing. Copies of the correspondence have been provided to the Board. Jennifer attended via Zoom and has provided a document which highlights the strategies that worked for Redmond's successful campaign.

Dir. Swails inquired about a list of previous clients and asked if staff had started the vetting process. Chief shared there was not a list of previous clients provided but is aware Jennifer worked for Redmond Public Safety on their new public safety facility which was successful. Jennifer shared she has worked on both local and state campaigns for over ten years. She has most recently worked on candidate campaigns here in Deschutes County. She has not specifically worked on a fire levy, facilities, or school bonds other than in volunteer capacity.

Dir. Swails asked about the success rate of her campaigns which are most comparable to the District in terms of win-loss ratios. Jennifer stated she doesn't have that quantified but shared the public safety facility in Redmond won by ten points.

Dir. Adams noted much of the proposal highlights working with candidates and inquired if any of that experience applies to working on a levy such as setting up PAC and fundraising? The proposal given to the Board mirrors the one given to Redmond Public Safety. Jennifer shared as a government entity, you can give facts about the campaign and the details about what the levy is for, but she would oversee the advocacy portion of the campaign.

Chief Supkis clarified the District can provide facts such as details, data, and what the funds would be used for but we are not able to advocate for the communities vote in support of the levy. If the Board would like to encourage the community to vote in favor of a public measure and/or fundraising is required, the District can contribute to an independent PAC which must be disclosed. Taxpayer resources can't be directly used to ask for support of a levy.

Jennifer offered to send information for the PAC which Redmond created and noted the talking points and content created were used by the campaign to advertise ballot measure language. The police department provided informational videos on why new facilities were needed which were shared on the PAC website to endorse a vote in favor of the request.

Dir. Swails asked how much Redmond Public Safety contributed to the PAC. Jennifer shared the Police Association donated 5,000 and the remaining amount was donated by local businesses. Dir. Adams inquired about budget line item 8500 for campaigns which has \$2,500 dollars budgeted and asked if the District has money in the budget to apply towards marketing as the current budgeted amount would not cover Jennifer's services. Chief shared there is a \$100,000-dollar contingency which can be moved by Board motion based on District needs such as marketing fees.

Chairman Cox called for any additional questions and thanked Jennifer for her time.

Dir. Swails was surprised Jennifer did not have a win-loss ratio quantified and feels the data is necessary when presenting a proposal to a new client.

Dir. Adams shared she doesn't have any frame of reference for knowing but \$12,000 dollars for six months of work doesn't seem like a lot of money and yet, she has no idea how that compares to industry standards.

Chief Supkis suggested the Board file the measure by January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as it is the first date possible for the May 2023 ballot. Historically, this District has passed levy(s) with 70-80% approval rates which are the highest in Oregon. He offered to contact Chief Riley in Bend to see which firm they may be using for the proposed Bend Fire levy and hopes to mirror the message due to similar staffing issues as a result of rapid growth in the community.

Dir. Swails asked if the Board has enough time to re-strategize.

Dir. Adams feels uncomfortable one, approving a proposal to work with someone who has never worked on a levy before and two, without knowing how this compares otherwise.

She stated if staff are willing to contact another firm who can bring forth another proposal, the Board can hold a special session ten days from now to discuss it. Chief Supkis noted the Board could make a final decision at the next public meeting in January. He believes there needs to be a coordinated effort with all parties on the same page.

Dir. Swails is in favor of looking into marketing firm options. Chairman Cox agreed. Board consensus.

Dir. Adams asked to address the explanatory statement noting some editing suggestions and offered to make adjustments improving the statement and voters' pamphlet.



Chairman Cox called for additional questions hearing none.

## **New Business**

### **A. Draft Audit Report FY 21/22**

Chief Supkis shared a copy of the draft audit was received last Thursday. Accuity will attend the meeting in January to present the full audit report. A draft copy was provided for each Board member to review. Per the draft, tax revenue was slightly less that projected by a few thousand dollars. However, medical transport revenue was higher than anticipated by roughly \$200,000. The audit shows even though a deficit was expected the fund balance has increased by approximately \$150,000-dollars. This is due to one of the grants Jerry obtained from the American Rescue Fund in the amount of \$280,000 which was received to the general fund and has not been paid out yet as equipment is on order and has not arrived. Chief also stated there were a few minor issues with lining up purchase orders to invoices or payments made from estimates rather than invoices which are noted in the audit and have since been fixed. There are no major deficiencies or disagreement with management on the audit.

Dir. Swails addressed Tracy Read and inquired about inadequate software such as QuickBooks which was noted on the management report. Tracy Read shared there have been many issues post 2022 update which came with significant challenges. Tammie will continue to explore other options with Velox. Chief noted La Pine Fire has essentially outgrown QuickBooks which was not specifically designed for a governmental agency with 48 hours shifts. Admin staff make manual corrections often and Accuity has suggested the District consider a different financial management software/system. The challenge is the very substantial cost for subscription for this size organization which has postponed a much-needed change.

Tammie Waters shared there are systems available which are comparable in cost to QuickBooks. The desktop version we currently have will be completely obsolete in 2025 as they move online which comes with an increased cost. Tammie will continue to research options which will fit the needs of the District and satisfy the auditors.

Dir. Swails noted there were other issues listed on the management report which he believes look familiar from last year. Tracy Read noted there was no request from the auditor for clarification or additional documentation. If there is reference to bills being paid from an estimate rather than an invoice, there was no request for clarification. Dir. Swails shared he was speaking to the non-compliance with Oregon Budget Law which appeared to be a repeat from last year. He was seeking clarification on whether this was fixed or misquoted. Staff confirmed those corrections have been made. Dir. Swails also addressed the notes on lack of documentation and review on approval of bank statements. Chief confirmed previously there was not more than one person reviewing the incoming bank statements and corrections have been made to fix it.

Dir. Swails stated the financials are reviewed extensively by the Board monthly and noted the process issues raised are not big ones.

Chief spoke on the importance of an audit and wanted to provide the Board with a draft as soon as it was received. The full report will be presented at the Board meeting in January. Dir. Swails stated the financials look great and highlighted the District is debt free.

### **Appeals (Ordinance 2021-01)**

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

Lucas Carter addressed the Board from the audience and asked what St. Charles considers an emergency and why they call the ambulance. His horseshoer's hand was injured and was not able to get stitches while at St. Charles Urgent Care in La Pine so he drove him to Bend. He raised the question as to why La Pine has an Urgent Care if they call the ambulance and ultimately residents must go to Bend to receive care.

Dir. Adams explained the differences between urgent care and a hospital. Mr. Carter expressed that the public doesn't know about the differences and asked why there is no emergency center in La Pine with the growing population.

Dir. Adams explained that there are laws which define emergency room services and St. Charles La Pine and La Pine Community Center are not hospitals. Dir. Adams stated it was ultimately about money and the inability to adequately staff a hospital here.

Mr. Carter expressed frustration with the illusion of being able to go there in an urgent situation or emergency when they will likely be sent to Bend.

Dir Adams asked that the discussion be taken off line and would speak with Mr. Carter after the meeting.

### **Special Meetings and Workshops**

#### **District – IAFF Local 33787 ERB training 12/14 and 12/15.**

Chief shared the District is going to participate in training with the Employee Relations Board and IAFF local on December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The training is facilitated by the State of Oregon Bureau of Labor and teaches protocol and communication techniques so all parties can work through any discrepancies to find amicable resolution. Chief encouraged Board members to participate alongside the management team.

**Good of the Order**

Chief shared orders to purchase two medics will take place within in the next month. This will be funded by the grant money Jerry obtained for the District. Assistant Chief Dan Daugherty asked if Board authorization was required to move forward. Because the two medics were approved in the budget this year, there is no requirement for additional Board approval. Additionally, the chassis are out 18 months meaning it could be up to two years before the medics are delivered. Dir. Swails inquired about the cancellation policy without penalty. Chief Supkis was unsure of the exact timeline but the district has a long-term relationship with this vendor and right now medic vehicles are in short supply so an open slot would quickly go to another in this market.

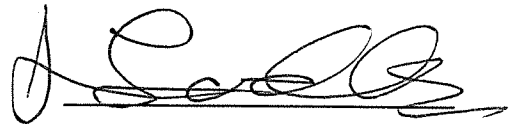
Next Regular Meeting: January 12, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

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

*Date Presented to Board and Approval*

Board Secretary



Board President

