

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
La Pine Rural Fire Protection District
November 14, 2024

Open Meeting

Dir. Michael Vietzke opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. and led the flag salute. He also thanked veterans present for their service.

Roll Call

Directors Present: Chairman Michael Vietzke, Dir. Robin Adams, Dir. Jeremy Johnson, Dir. Dan Robinette

Directors Absent: Dir. Lesueur

Staff Present: Chief Erick Holsey, Asst. Chief Dan Daugherty, Financial Administrator Joshua Billeter. Acting Office Manager Joyce Engberg joined via Zoom later in the meeting.

Staff Absent: Training Officer Lt. Joey Sawyer, Office Manager Tammie Waters

Guests: Union President Paul Stephenson and Jim Fister, board member of Sunriver Fire.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Dir. Vietzke suggested the discussion on security be moved back to the January board meeting. He asked guest Jim Fister if Sunriver Fire had an intruder plan in place. Mr. Fister responded that Sunriver does have a plan that involves keeping staff behind the security barrier and contacting the Sunriver police immediately. The new building's public access is through the adjoining police department.

Chief Holsey noted the AED grant from the City of La Pine has been received and AED's ordered, and item is already in agenda.

No motion needed.

Open Forum for Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes from the September 12, 2024, and October 10, 2024, Board of Directors Regular Meetings

Director Vietzke shared that the directors had learned at the annual Fire Directors Conference that a formal motion and approval of minutes are not necessary if there are no requested corrections.

Financials

Financial Administrator Joshua Billeter shared that the District is 33% into the fiscal year, not 40% as written. Notable tax revenue should be coming in the next several weeks.

6700 - Civil Service at 75% but not anticipating hiring more firefighters this year.

6800 - Contract Services at 41.4%.

32% of overall budget has been spent. The biggest unknown is the yet-to-be received GEMT and tax revenue.

Monthly Expenses Paid

Dir. Adams inquired about when District would receive conflagration income (Line 5600). Chief Holsey stated District was in the process of billing for those events.

Dir. Adams inquired if \$3,350 for Damon signs was for the graphics on the new medics. Chief Holsey answered in the affirmative.

Dir. Vietzke inquired about the funds in Line 6815 - Computer Services. Chief Holsey stated that funds spent were not placed in the correct line item. Line was removed several years ago, and he will have the funds moved to the correct lines.

Dir. Vietzke inquired about Line 6855 - Hose and Ladder Testing. It turned out the District had a lot more hose to be tested than originally noted due to inaccurate historical test logs.

Line 6229 - HRA VEBA. Staff shared the District has two health insurance plans. One is a lower deductible plan and the other is a lower premium/higher deductible plan. For staff that choose the higher deductible plan, the premium savings goes into the individual's HRA for medical expenses. Cost to District is the same for either plan.

Dir. Robinette inquired what was Velox. Chief Holsey responded that they are the District IT company. They deal with all software licenses, computers, and network equipment.

Dir. Robinette inquired what was Vector Solutions. Chief Holsey responded that is scheduling and training software. Vector, Crewsense and Target Solutions are all part of the same company.

Dir. Robinette wants to do the Ethics training. Chief Holsey will send him the information.

Action: Dir. Adams moved to approve check #33939 to #34004 for \$165,788.62; #34007 to #34008 for \$880.92; #34010 to #34017 for \$10,391.03; EFT payments equaling \$106,658.25 and QuickBooks Services payments of \$167,252.20 for a total amount of \$450,971.02. Seconded by Dir. Johnson. Motion passed, 4-0.

Dir. Vietzke noted the passing of former Board Director and Firefighter Doug Cox. The District sent flowers and condolences. AC Daugherty visited with family and there are no current service plans.

Management Reports

Union Report

Union President Paul Stephenson presented a report on some general observations by the union, including appreciation for an Admin team and Board that is welcoming and problem-solving oriented. Several concerns were expressed, with the main focus on the loss of line staff due to higher pay at Bend and Redmond fire departments.

Dir. Vietzke asked where LPRFPD sits in the range of area wages. Chief Holsey responded that the District wage is not low but could be more comparable to Bend and Redmond. They are in close enough proximity for our firefighters to be well aware of their wages and make the switch without changing their residence. As long as there is a shortage of paramedics and District has to compete with west of the Cascades and bigger towns, it will continue to be an issue. La Pine is the third largest district in central Oregon, but probably number one for "time on task," meaning the most hours worked during shifts, largely in part to the length of transport to hospital. The wear of this schedule could also be a deciding factor for employees moving on.

Dir. Vietzke suggested the board members go on ride alongs to better understand the work of the line crew.

Dir. Adams noted that the post-retirement health care which was a focus on the last round of union negotiations took a chunk of money away from what would have been available for wages.

Dir. Robinette asked if the staff moves to Bend/Redmond were for lateral or higher responsibilities. Staff answered usually lateral and sometimes even lower entry with less responsibilities. Chief Holsey also noted that after 5-10 years, the disparity evens out and the overall wear and tear on bodies for our district is less than towns with more building fires. School reputation is also an important factor in getting and keeping staff with families.

Dir. Johnson thanked Paul for sharing the union's perspective and asked if losing a younger crew member opened up a position for someone with a more experience who values the culture of the District and place that we live. Eng. Stephenson responded that in general the District's new hires are less experienced. Several years ago, there was a mass exodus of line crew to Redmond that had an average of 10 years' experience. In that situation Redmond gained experienced crew members and our

replacements were less experienced. Lateral hires are a goal and hopefully a draw for more experienced individuals in combination with our improving culture and recreational area. Chief Holsey noted that the focus of the most current CBA (union contract) was the post-retirement health care to help and keep our longer-term employees, which is better for our community in terms of breadth of medic experience. The focus on the next negotiation period may be on keeping the wages more competitive. The District is tied to the CBA and cannot offer merit-based incentives.

Regular meeting was suspended at 10:05 am for a brief break and meeting resumed at 10:10 am.

Training Report

Lt. Sawyer is on vacation and will present at next board meeting.

Chief's Report

Correspondence/News:

- Public Service Announcements sent to media, posted to reader board, and South County Shopper.
- Thank You from the NW incident management team 3 Bachelor Flat Complex.
- Letter to Knox to change how our name is represented to make it easier to find and order.
- Notes on EMS Modernization discussed at last EMS section meeting of the OFCA.

Chief Holsey is tracking the current changes to balance billing, which some states are already doing and there are several bills coming up in the state legislature. Balance billing, which is already law in Oregon, means if a provider accepts the Medicare billing rate, that they cannot bill patients for the difference. Chief Holsey will be attending a legislative meeting that will address the need for additional funding to cover new regulations and restrictions.

Old Business

- Sunriver Fire Collaboration- Nothing to discuss
- Strategic Planning Process- Mission Statement
- Sick Leave Policy- Union has sent new draft to legal counsel for review
- Security Discussion - tabled until January 2025 meeting
- Fleet Update:

The two new medics have been placed into service, and the new water tender from the state is in process. The District has reached out to Vandervert Ranch to see if they are willing to house the oldest water tender and possibly one of our oldest medics.

Support Services will be moved to the other older gas medic, which allows the District to donate the old SST medic to a HAM radio group near Coos Bay, for use for major events such as a Cascadia earthquake. Chief Holsey participated in a FEMA table talk and learned that those who ask first, get first. The District does not have a lost communications plan, so he is looking into solutions and funding for that. One possibility is to have our local HAM group, which is already set up in an old medic, plug into the tower right here so resource requests can be made during a major event.

The two oldest diesels are not eligible for remounts, and the medic with the catastrophic engine failure is being evaluated to see if rebuild is possible at an overall savings versus having to replace. At a minimum Chief Holsey would like to store it to maintain the box so it could be remounted and save funds. Dir. Johnson has suggested some ideas as regards to repairing it so it could be a 5th medic on hand for major times of need, if budget will allow.

Dir. Johnson stated older medics need maintenance soon if District is going to keep them around, and it will be a bigger cost than in the past. The District is in good shape with medics right now, and he suggested funds may be better used towards increasing staff pay or improving a building, rather than buying a new medic.

Funds will continue to be earmarked for a new tender since the state-loaned tender can be taken back. If the state eventually gives permanent possession to the District, those reserved funds can be reallocated to another need.

Upgrades will be needed to cardiac monitors and will be costly.

The need for a ladder truck exists with the new clinic building. Regulations require a ladder truck in districts with buildings four stories or taller, and funding should have been built into clinic building approval but was missed. New ladder truck orders are 3-4 years out. Chief Holsey is looking for funding and feels that asking our residents to pay more than they already are is not feasible.

New Business

Deschutes County Litigation Letter - the county is being sued because when they sold off properties in foreclosure, they did not give the funds received in excess of taxes owed back to the landowners. The county followed current Oregon state law so the case may never make it to court. County legal is encouraging fire districts and others affected to communicate with legislators about the issues with this. Cost appears be less than \$10k to the District if litigation is successful, but clarification is needed.

Technology Upgrade Capital Project - District is starting to move ahead with technology updates and replacements. Currently, cloudkeys and switches are being replaced, and we will be adding multi-factor authentication and replacing several failing desktop computers as District moves towards the cloud-based migration.

Policy # 300.03 Retired Employee Workback. Allows employees who are retiring to work for District while they are on PERS. Would help when exiting employees leave a void that retired employees could fill during periods of hiring and training new employees.

Dir. Adams addressed Section 2, Part C ii, regarding health insurance, and suggested inserting wording that if retiree is 65 or older that insurance is not provided. Chief Holsey will follow up on that issue and the Board will revisit in December.

Special Meetings and Workshops

Ops/Management meeting on November 19, 2024, at 8:30 am at Station 101. Ops meeting focuses on operational guidelines, captains will be asked to address fleet component at beginning of meetings so Dir. Johnson can be there. Management meeting is with upper administrative and mid-level managers. Directors are welcome to attend both.

December 2nd, 2024, 0900 Holiday Breakfast at Moose Lodge

December 4th, 2024, 0900 Holiday Breakfast at Moose Lodge

December 5th, 2024, 0900 Holiday Breakfast at Moose Lodge

Good of the Order

AC Daugherty shared that a Reserve student, Colton Juenger, has been hired as a FF/Paramedic, and starts November 25, 2024. He will be on a 12-month probation.

The District has not participated in Toys for Tots. Local community organizations already do some of those types of programs, but the District can look further into it.

Dir. Vietzke asked if the District in the past has been regarded as involved in the community. Dir. Robinette responded yes, but the Sheriff's office has more of a presence, partly because they have a dedicated staff member for that. The District does National Night Out, parades, Parks & Rec requests, and this year did Jack Pine cleanup. Chief Holsey shared that the Covid years removed fire districts from some participation, and now things are opening back up. AC Daugherty shared it has been frustrating to have the schools not show as much interest as hoped for career days and fire safety programs.

Dir. Robinette had three comments in regard to what he learned at the Oregon Fire Chiefs' conference:

- The Board should have a policy in place within 21 days to give both Chiefs authority to respond if the District was ever cited by the Oregon Ethics Commission. Dir. Adams noted a special session could be called to meet the deadline.
- Follow up on the \$30 million federal funding that went to Deschutes County. Chief Holsey responded that because special districts are not federally

recognized, the county did not feel obligated to earmark some of those funds for them, even though in reality those districts took the brunt of the work the funds were designated for. This also happened with federal Covid reimbursements. Chief Holsey feels it will be mentioned at the next legislators meeting.

- The need for an emergency response plan should the area experience a 9.0 earthquake. Chief Holsey responded the District does not have a specific earthquake policy but has plans to work on one. The focus will be on loss of infrastructure and communication since there are qualified federal teams to deal with specific issues such as structural integrity of buildings.

Dir. Vietzke noted that the conference had addressed that employees should not use miles or rewards credit cards for District purchases. Discussion followed about who District cards should be issued to, and if District should use a card with rewards like Amazon, which District purchases from. Perhaps issue a card to Board secretary with a set limit, or just use the office manager card for board purchases. Financial policy will need to be adjusted for card spending limit. Dir. Adams suggested it be brought to ethics portion of future strategic planning.

Next Regular Meeting

December 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at Station 101.

Regular Board Meeting Adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

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

Date Presented to Board: December 12, 2024