

# WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Special Board Meeting Minutes

### April 5, 2024



Called to order: 14:33pm

#### **Roll Call:**

##### **Board Members Present**

Position 1 – Heather Glass

Position 2 – Brian Barton

Position 3 – Claudia Pratt

Position 4 – Bill Ertel

Position 5 – David Applegate

Lieutenant Oskar Sundell

District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni

Firefighter Devin Brennan

Firefighter Liz Dunlap

Firefighter Charles HooperLee

Firefighter/CRC Ash Martell

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter

#### **Williams Staff Present**

#### **Community Members Present:**

Applegate Fire Chief Chris Wolfard

Wilma Hyde – Williams Community Resident

Allison Cleveland – Williams Community Resident

#### **Zoom Attendees:**

Illinois Valley Fire Chief John Holmes

#### **Announcements:**

Board Member Bill Ertel announced that he is involved in the Rotary Track Meet, has a flyer for the event, and invited people to volunteer.

Board Member Claudia Pratt received a phone call from the realtor regarding the property behind the fire station and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lien holder is a buyer but the realtor would like to offer the property to the Fire Department first with an owner carry. Price is \$307k. This will be discussed at the regular meeting.

#### **SDAO Timeline and Scope**

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the timeline and scope for SDAO with a tentative schedule. The motion was seconded by Bill Ertel.

**Discussion:** Board Member Bill Ertel discussed that the Board would need to decide if there should be a public meet and greet. There would need some kind of mechanism to record public comment for the Board to review. If this is an option, the Board would need to have some public relations in place. Board

Member Bill Ertel also stated that the interview process may be done at an assessment center where an example may be that other fire chiefs do an assessment on their own and provide feedback to the Board. Board Member Bill Ertel asked the Board to consider to allow extra time (more than a day) between the assessment and the conditional job offer. Board Member Claudia Pratt noted that the timeline may need to be adjusted due to the Board needing to complete the Scope of Work and Timeline.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

➤ Motion passes unanimously

### **Interim Support Agreement**

Board Chair Heather Glass asserted that the Applegate Fire District is NOT understaffed and has 5 officers that can be utilized. This would be temporary until a permanent Fire Chief can be hired. Applegate Fire District will work with the Williams Fire District policies and procedures and there won't be any changes. Commitment of 10 hours per week which can change dependent on need, and this will make a stronger mutual aid between the two fire districts. \$2160 per month subject to change based on the hours.

Board Member Claudia Pratt asked if the person representing Applegate Fire will be on site or just available? Applegate Fire Chief Wolfard stated that the idea is for him to be able to attend/represent Williams Fire in meetings, work remotely (not preferred by Chief Wolfard), but mainly on-site.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired if the Applegate Fire District representation will be considered the Interim Fire Chief or will Williams Fire maintain Nicco Holt as Interim Fire Chief? Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Williams Fire wouldn't necessarily need to maintain an Interim Chief when the Fire District will be contracting with an executive management that will be utilized instead. She feels that the staff is very competent although needs guidance. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that there are issues that the Fire Chief would handle regardless of competent staff. She states that without a person present on site that she is unsure that the processes needed to be handled such as complaints, paperwork issues, or a community member will be handled remotely. She also asked, "what if there is a heated issue between two people having a conflict?" Board Secretary David Applegate addressed the question stating that the Board really cannot answer that question because no one really knows what is going to happen and that his feeling is to go ahead and initiate the agreement and change if needed. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton commented that if we have a disaster, the Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt is only present at the station three days a week anyway. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the staff cannot take care of the Chief's duties. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that presently one of the staff currently takes care of things or a phone call is made. Similarly, if a Chief is not on site, a phone call will be made to Applegate Fire to handle the situation. Board Member Bill Ertel envisions that Chief Wolfard has a couple of confident subordinates that will come by 2-3 days per week making a

physical presence, meeting with the staff, and creating a business relationship. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she has confidence in the staff but if paying \$54 per hour, she would like to see someone present with a higher rank at least 1-2 days per week. She asked what will Williams Fire be getting for the payment besides a competent answer over the phone. Jennifer Vetter stated that the Chief's job many years ago was divided into 2 positions (administration and operations) due to the inability to find an administrative side to a chief candidate. Jennifer Vetter provides the administrative side that supports the position of the Fire Chief which are the aspects of the monies, financials, human resources, and communications of supporting information for operations. Jennifer Vetter confirmed that she is confident she could assist in making sure Chief Wolfard is fully apprised of needed information. Board Member Claudia Pratt asked what if the fire station catches fire? She realizes that Williams Fire has staff and Applegate would respond as a second, however, she asked why are we contracting with someone competent that is far away and not on site... why do we need an interim chief?... Can we not handle this ourselves.

Applegate Fire Chief Chris Wolfard stated that the \$54 per hour, 10 hours per week, \$2160 per month... it is simply a starting point to get the paperwork started. He also stated that we really don't know how many hours it will take. The amounts and hours were a starting point and not a proposal on the part of Applegate Fire District. He states that Board Member Claudia Pratt has a valuable point that there really needs to be one person that is held accountable. Chief Wolfard stated that whether it is Nicco Holt (who works part time and lives outside the Williams Fire District) or Chief Wolfard (who works full time and lives outside the Williams Fire District), the Williams Board needs to pick one. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she doesn't mind having a call agreement. Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt has some authority, yet Chief Wolfard has more experience, Board Member Claudia Pratt stated. Board Chair Heather Glass interjected that Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt has made it clear that he does not want the job. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated, "Nicco has not made it clear and said he will fill in the job. He doesn't really want to but he would do that." Board Chair Heather Glass interjected, "Why are we asking him to do something he doesn't really want to do?"

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to enter into an administrative oversight agreement with Applegate Fire. The motion was seconded by Bill Ertel.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Nay (reason stated: no contract in hand)
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- Motion passes 4 ayes, 1 nay

- A motion was made by Bill Ertel that Heather Glass is to contact legal counsel and draft a formal contract to employ the services of the Applegate Fire District. The motion was seconded by Claudia Pratt.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- Motion passed unanimously
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- A motion was made by Bill Ertel that Heather Glass be authorized to sign the legal contract once completed and finalized after the review and approval by the Williams Fire Board. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- Motion unanimously

A motion to adjourn was made by Brian Barton was seconded by David Applegate.

The meeting was adjourned at 15:03pm

Respectfully,

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Heather Glass, Board Chair