

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2023

Call to Order: 10:07am

Roll Call:

Board Members Present

Position 1 – Heather Glass
Position 2 – Brian Barton
Position 3 – Claudia Pratt
Position 4 – Bill Ertel (via phone)
Position 5 – David Applegate

Williams Staff Present

Fire Chief – Rick Vetter
Captain – Nicco Holt
Lieutenant – Oskar Sundell
Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
Firefighter – Devin Brennan
District Fire Marshal – Jon Scaroni

Public Presence:

Allison Cleveland – Williams Community Member and Fire Prevention Community Coordinator

Announcements:

Jennifer Vetter asked to keep in our hearts Lt. Kris Ismaili and Deputy Chief Ismaili as Lt. Ismaili has recently passed. Board Chair announced that we will keep the meeting professional and that Accountant Rick Brewster will be here next meeting.

Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes:

- September 12, 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes - Approved
- A motion was made by David Applegate to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes and it was seconded by Brian Barton.

Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that meetings should have a motion, second, and a vote to adjourn. She also wanted to know where the complaint form came from and how long it was accessible on the website and if the Board was involved in creating it. She stated that the form should have a date and other items listed on it. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired on who it was that did not finish the physical and Lt. Sundell advised that everyone has completed.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired where the MSDS Sheet is located and District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni answered with the location in the apparatus bay.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he is uncomfortable that he does not have access to recorded minutes. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that a policy for this is already in place and asked if the Board Chair could pull the statutes. Board Chair Heather Glass said that she could but spoke to an SDAO representative and stated the conclusion of their discussion with minutes are provided in the manner there are maintained. She also stated that anyone can come and record the meeting if they chose to do so themselves.

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

The motion passed with 4 ayes and one “abstain”

Chief’s Report:

Chief Vetter’s report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the medical calls had in the previous month and if any of the calls are repetitive at the same address. Chief Vetter answered that these calls are not classified as ‘repeat offenders.’

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he was glad Chief Vetter went to the meeting on the proposed fire district and that it is good to keep attuned.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the 3-year employment positions through the grant and Chief Vetter confirmed that they are for 3 years.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired of Jennifer Vetter if the new hires are eligible for the volunteer stipends and Jennifer Vetter confirmed that they are not eligible.

Operations Report – Lt. Sundell:

Lt. Sundell’s report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt asked about how the electric vehicle extrication training that Firefighter Devin Brennan and Firefighter Jennifer Vetter attended. There was a discussion of different cars and what to look for when cutting into cars and that these are another one of those hazards where responders take a risk.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired on the meeting that Lt. Sundell attended on expansion response. Lt. Sundell explained that the meeting encompassed the response to mutual aid and

the types of units dispatched along with how far each district will provide assistance into each district.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the water bags that would have been set up in the fire district and it was discussed that we have reached the end of fire season.

Training Report – Captain Holt

Captain Holt's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired how many people show for trainings. Captain Holt stated that it varies, that for the most part a majority of the people do come through the training, and the current drill schedule of d2 trainings on Wednesdays are held during business hours. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired if stipends are provided and Captain Holt confirmed that volunteers do receive the stipend.

Safety Committee:

District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni stated that things are pretty much finalized for a complimentary OSHA visit. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about when the hole at the bottom of the downspout will be plugged. The downspout at ground level will need to be plugged. It was discussed that it could be patched, however, the downspout needs a place to drain so that it doesn't become slick out there.

Administrative Report

Jennifer Vetter stated that she does not have anything to report and that she had provided the Board with 17 documents to review.

Chair's Report

Board Chair Heather Glass stated the department has received administrative monies from the grant and proposed \$250/month to be allocated to the Fire Chief for and \$750/month to the administrative desk, both with COLA increase, for paperwork, training, documentation, and oversight. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she will not vote for a motion that she doesn't have anything visual. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the grant has money allotted for the administrative side. Board Member Bill Ertel, with Claudia Pratt in agreement, that Board Chair could provide a white paper. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that it can be placed on the next agenda with the information getting emailed to the board members.

Unfinished Business:

Internal Controls: Board Member Bill Ertel asked if everyone was okay with the way the controls were written and he stated that he did not receive Board Member Claudia Pratt's addition. This will be moved to the next meeting.

Museum: Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that the external painting of the maintenance shop was taken from the museum budget. Jennifer Vetter will remove that from the Museum budget to reflect appropriately. The \$600 to do the steps was a part of the project where the \$2000 was for the maintenance building. The museum report will be reported on quarterly now to cut back on the number of financial attachments every month.

By-Laws Discussion: Tabled. Board Chair Heather Glass is looking to see if the district needs them. She is awaiting to hear back from SDAO.

5-year Plan: Chief Vetter would like to put together a subcommittee to help build a plan. Board Secretary David Applegate, Board Member Bill Ertel, Lt. Oskar Sundell, Chief Vetter, and Fire Prevention Community Coordinator Allison Cleveland will be on a subcommittee.

Bladder Bag Agreements: Board Member Bill Ertel is in receipt of suggestions to the forms from Board Member Claudia Pratt and will make adjustments. Board Chair Heather Glass inquired if there could be changes to time constraints from annual to 36 months, add clauses, permanent but flexible? Board Member Claudia Pratt would like to have the forms reviewed by the Board.

Board Member Claudia Pratt will text Board Chair Heather Glass on what forms she would like to see reviewed in a workshop.

New Business:

Board Compensation Update: Board Member Claudia Pratt had concerns about the compensation with how it was written and the way SDAO writes it. She states that this could be changed by resolution. SDAO states that it is left to the autonomy of the Board to what type of compensation a board may desire up to \$50. Board Member Claudia Pratt suggested that each board member could decide their own compensation. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that a set amount (or standard) makes it simple. Board Member Claudia Pratt states that she doesn't like that and feels that individuals should be able to set how much they want to set their compensation to. She also inquired about the donation of board compensation to the Support

Team. Jennifer Vetter explained that the Support Team is not a 501c3 or 501c4, however, a 990EZ. She also explained that she would not distribute their compensation to a member's choice of non-profit but accommodates a check to the Support Team from the board members as a convenience to the board members that choose to donate to the support team. Board Secretary David Applegate stated that he would like to keep it simple instead of complicate things. Board Member Claudia Pratt made the point that this should be reviewed since there are new board members since this was addressed. Board Chair Heather Glass agreed that this should be reviewed annually. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton is happy to keep things the way that they are.

- Brian Barton made a motion to keep Policy 2.4 as is for Board Member Compensation and it was seconded by Bill Ertel.

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

- This motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Claudia Pratt stated she will be making a motion next meeting to address the compensation amount.

Mobile Home Update (given by Claudia Pratt):

Board Member Claudia Pratt explained that the dryer is no longer working well and that the washer is on its last leg.

- Claudia Pratt made a motion to purchase a new washer and dryer for the modular home as the tenants do not want to purchase them on their own, the new washer and dryer will stay with the facility unless at the time of leaving they would like to buy them, and the purchase will not exceed \$2,000. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

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

- The motion passed unanimously. This will be paid out of the modular home funds.

Treasurer's Report:

Clerk/Treasurer reports for September 2023 were reviewed by the board members. Jennifer Vetter answered any questions about revenue and expenses for the previous month's expenses previously distributed electronically. Items of review in the financial reports included spending on district credit cards, payroll, regular monthly bills, employee benefits package, station maintenance/repairs items, donations, grants, and reimbursements.

Each of the reports reviewed included:

- District credit cards
- The Umpqua Bank Account
- Profit and Loss Statements
- LGIP Account
- Modular Home Lease Report
- Grant Report(s)

Other Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about an Amazon purchase which Jennifer Vetter provided an explanation that it was a grant expense for administrative purposes. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about the D.O.T. inspections for the fleet which Chief Vetter provided explanations for. Allison Cleveland and Ash Martell are paid as independent contractors through the grant and Chief Vetter explained what services they provide. Jennifer Vetter explained that a training laptop was purchased for the Training Officer so the Training Officer may stop using his personal device. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton inquired about the \$14,000 charge from Rick Brewster's office. Jennifer Vetter explained that she supplied all requested paperwork and facilitated a financial audit that later took place on site. An audit will happen next year as well. Board Member Brian Barton stated that he would like to see Mr. Brewster personally present the financial findings. Board Chair Heather Glass wondered if there is something special about being a local government. Board Member Bill Ertel couldn't remember if he heard about the audit and wondered if CPA's could bid on the account. It was suggested to invite the Budget Committee Members to the financial presentation by the accountant.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about what the Chief initials on the financials. Job descriptions were discussed and to be added to the next workshop.

Chief Vetter discussed the CWRR Grant and the purchase of two dump trailers. Jennifer Vetter is awaiting an invoice from the supplier. Board Member Bill Ertel suggested the write up of a White Paper and bring it to the next meeting to ratify. Jennifer Vetter stated that she would like

to see financial expenditures appropriately discussed to reflect in the minutes so that they can be captured in documentation. Chief Vetter stated that he will also make a White Paper for the flat bed trailer. He also asked if the Board would approve the expenditure for \$19,680 for the 2 dump trailers. All the purchases will be insured and licensed by Williams through the grant.

Chief Vetter stated that he received an invoice for the Fireside Newsletter for over \$5,000. He would like to get approval to pay for this invoice and will handle this differently next time. Board Member Claudia Pratt recognized some of the discrepancies in the newsletter and it was recognized that half of the cost was postage and that it could have been done differently.

Chief Vetter let the Board know that Jon Scaroni as the Prevention Officer will need a device and a cell phone will be added to the cell account for his professional use.

Chief Vetter stated that he receives feedback from those outside of the district and from the other chiefs that there is expression of amazement with the quality of our service, the engagement with our community, the direction of the Williams Fire Department, and the leadership that has led to this. He states that he wants to recognize people quarterly. At the last Coffee with the Chief, Chief Vetter recognized Allison Cleveland, Devin Brennan, and (presented by Board Chair Heather Glass) Jenny Vetter.

Board Member Bill Ertel said that it seemed to him that Jennifer Vetter fits into an unusual cottle. She works for the Board and it would seem to him that if she is deserving of an award a path would be that the Fire Chief should make a recommendation to the Board and the award should come from the Board and not the Fire Chief. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she understood that the award came from the department not from the Chief. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that this was a fiasco with the department chatter ensued because of this. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she received a phone call from Board Member Bill Ertel requesting a policy on how to award Jennifer Vetter. Chief Vetter apologized for the confusion but sees that when attempting to honor someone we are spending more time discussion 'why didn't I know'. If the Board wants to give recognition to someone, they should be able to do it. If the department wants to give recognition the department shouldn't have to get permission to recognize someone. For this to be the outcome that someone does outstanding work, is always there, a medical call, a form needs done... this person does it. She takes on a lot of responsibility, a lot of heat from people, and does this with a smile. Not everyone shows up to the coffee event and the awards are a surprise.

Board Chair Heather Glass stated to Bill Ertel that she doesn't feel that there should be a policy to give Jennifer Vetter an award. If the department feels that Jenny deserves an award the department should be able to give it, if the Board feels that Jenny deserves an award, the Board should be able to give an award. She doesn't feel there should be a policy and that it should be a beautiful thing. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she just wanted to know where the award came from as she didn't know about it. Board Chair Heather Glass felt apologetic and responsible for not informing the Board that Jennifer Vetter was receiving an award.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he “hates to be blind-sided, especially about Jenny Vetter, she is getting an award, it would have been nice to have gotten an email since technically she reports to the Board.” Board Vice Chair Brian Barton agreed with Chief Vetter that Jennifer Vetter reporting to the Board should have nothing to do with her getting an award. Chief Vetter also recognized that Jennifer Vetter was being singled out because her chain of command came from a different direction while the other two awards didn’t get questioned.

Allison Cleveland, speaking from the Support Team side, she feels that even the Support Team should be able to award members of the department for how well they work with the Support Team. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that “we shouldn’t over complicate this!”.

Announcement: Lt. Sundell announced that he made a recommendation to Chief Vetter that the department is going to promote Firefighter Jennifer Vetter to Engineer. Lt. Sundell stated that the promotion was completely based on merit, skills, and time put in and she deserves it. Lt. Sundell stated “It is time. It is a roll un-had since Engineer Kester left.” This is a necessary role and FF Vetter is over-qualified for the role.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired to who does the annual evaluation of Firefighter Jennifer Vetter. Board Member Claudia Pratt recognized the Lexipol policy. Lt. Sundell said it may be done by him or the Chief.

Board Member Claudia Pratt asked what is an Engineer and Chief Vetter stated it is a leadership role.

Next regular board meeting is November 14th at 10am with a Board Workshop at 9am.

- Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Brian Barton and seconded by Claudia Pratt. Unanimously approved.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:03pm

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chairperson