

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2021

Called to Order at 9:15am

Roll Call:

Board Members Present

Position 1 – Claudia Pratt
Position 2 – Sue Nevotti - Absent
Position 3 – Todd Rumery
Position 4 – Bill Ertel
Position 5 – Wes Nevotti - Absent

Williams Staff Present

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
Chief – Rick Vetter
Lieutenant Oskar Sundell

Public Presence:

None

Announcements:

None.

Agenda Review:

The agenda for May 17, 2021 was reviewed.

Jennifer Vetter created a separate agenda for a regular meeting and a separate agenda for an executive meeting if such should take place. It was discussed as to whether it was appropriate to have a separate agenda or to mix regular agenda and executive agenda items and whether to have an executive session in the middle of a regular board meeting.

- A motion to approve the agenda for May 17, 2021 as presented was made by Todd Rumery and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input:

None.

Approval to Accept Board Meeting Minutes:

The Regular Board Meeting minutes of April 5, 2021 and the Executive Meeting minutes of April 5, 2021 were reviewed.

- A motion to approve the Regular and Executive Board Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2021 was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Todd Rumery. The motion passed unanimously

General Discussion:

In the Williams Fire District, 2 car accidents took place over the weekend. Both accidents involved drinking and driving.

Vice Chair Bill Ertel proposed the idea of having a Special Meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 3pm. Chief Vetter advised that the department has training from 2pm – 4pm, a vaccine clinic from 2pm – 5pm, and a budget committee meeting at 4pm.

Vice Chair Bill Ertel inquired why the previous months minutes were not completed within 10 days of the last meeting. Jennifer Vetter advised the Board that this was not agreed upon as a standard but agreed upon if availability allowed such.

Budget Committee Meeting members are Rebekah Hinson, Lyndsey Hayes, Dorothy Butts, John Kester, and Mike Connor. Vice Chair Bill Ertel suggested alternates for the budget committee. It was discussed that it was not typical or common for members to have outside alternates. Prior commitment was verified by all members currently listed on the budget committee roster.

Fire Chief's Report:

- **Number of calls**
 - 18 calls total and 1 mutual aid outside of district
 - 5 Medical calls
 - 1 Structure Fire with mutual aid from Applegate Fire and AMR
 - Fire contained to a single cabinet due to an air fryer
 - 1 Flue Fire
 - 7 Smoke investigations
 - 4 Motor Vehicle Accidents
- **Personnel/Recruitment**
 - 3 new volunteers engaged the physical part of the Firefighter 1 Academy
 - Several applications have been handed out and are still outstanding
- **Training**
 - Trainings focused on wildland fire evolutions and helping candidates with the Firefighter 1 Academy
 - Trainings are held with more real life settings thanks to RITA and their training props and simulators
 - WRFPD hosted the Instructor 1 Class that was open to all agencies
 - Battalion Chief Randy DeLong of Grants Pass Fire to assess future trainings on WRFPD grounds for a wildland school
 - Captain Holt (with input from Lt. Sundell) has been working on several grant opportunities and Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter has helped in supplying

needed information to submit the grants. The below grants have been approved.

- Volunteer Firefighter's Association Grant
- Wildland Urban Interface Grant

- **Operations**

- Volunteers firefighters Jon Scaroni and Jennifer Vetter have submitted applications to Illinois Valley Rural Fire District
- Looking at expanding wildland capabilities by expanding the fleet
- Vacations have been taken before hotter weather takes place
- Transitioning/training volunteers Jon Scaroni and Jennifer Vetter into shift leads and are being evaluated by the Chief Vetter, Captain Holt, and Lieutenant Sundell as they progress to develop a 3rd shift

- **Meetings**

- Coffee with the Chief with Sheriff Deputy was last held on a Saturday
 - Weekend public attendance was about the same as a weekday public attendance
- NCRS Fuel Reduction Program continues to grow into the Illinois Valley area

- **Property/Station/Equipment**

- Attempting to get a bid to extend the fence between the library and fire department
- Investigating the cost of a camera system
 - Attempting to divert people from sleeping and misusing district property

- A motion to approve the Chief's Report as presented was made by Todd Rumery and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Reports:

- **Chair**

- Not present to report

- **Support Group**

- Has the potential to help with fires (cold zone only)
- Farmer's Market
 - Address signs
 - T-shirts
 - Fire safety
- Garage sale to take place soon

- **Safety Committee**

- OSHA compliance, signage, and safety
- Cleaning debris around property and old buildings

- Hazmat storage reports

Unfinished Business:

- **Chief's Evaluation by the Board**
 - TABLED
- **Chief's Salary**
 - TABLED
- **Update Policies and Procedures Manual Chapter 3 (Presented by Board Member Claudia Pratt)**
 - TABLED
- **Compensation Packages and Employment Agreements**
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel handed out a statistical sheet for the fiscal year through April 11, 2021 using FTEs that he developed of the permanent part-time employee compensations
 - Informational review of the salaries, benefits received, and proposed wages if the part-time employees were actually being paid for full time work
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed his confusion as to where is Lieutenant Oskar Sundell's employment agreement
 - Chief Vetter stated that he does not hold and does not prefer to hold employment contracts with his subordinates
 - Jennifer Vetter referred back to the policy and procedure manual and inquired if this is an attempt at micromanagement instead of the basic function of policy making and administration.
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel's presentation expressed what each paid personnel could make if they were paid as full time employment
 - Jennifer Vetter expressed that the employment mentality in the fire service can be counter-productive when fire service personnel and their salary packages are scrutinized
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel offered the example that jury settlements pay based on the value of life being how many more years of productive life expectancy is left and a jury would equate the income, pain and suffering and pay such out based on economic damages.
 - Lieutenant Sundell expressed that he is satisfied to be currently here working 35 hours per week with the presumption that his pay should be based on 20 hours per week that Vice Chair Bill Ertel was comparing.
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel's presented a mock employment agreement for Jennifer Vetter and asked if she wanted to have this discussion in open or executive session – Jennifer Vetter requested that this be discussed in open session
 - Discussions included how many hours Jennifer puts in from month to month and during special spikes in her work load such as during budget season

- Vice Chair Bill Ertel would like to see that Jennifer Vetter works 20 hours as opposed to the average of 28 hours that she currently puts in
 - Jennifer Vetter stated that when there were only 2 responders/2 employees 20 hours would be feasible, however, with 4 employees and as many responders and new volunteers, administratively this would not be feasible and problematic to accomplish the needs of the district.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel's mock agreement would like to make Jennifer Vetter's status "Exempt"
 - Jennifer Vetter advised that to make her position exempt, she would need to be paid no less than \$684 per week. Vice Chair Bill Ertel noted that he would change his mock agreement to be non-exempt
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel's mock agreement was discussed line by line and Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated he was going to seek legal advice on how to write Jennifer Vetter's employment agreement
 - Jennifer Vetter with the support of Board Member Claudia Pratt advised that the board must act as a group and not one single member on his own without Board consensus.
- Oregon Saves mandatory deductions were discussed and explained that this is a mandatory deduction that the employee pays into unless the employee opts out
- Employee benefits were discussed in terms of the SAFER Grant and that when the Recruitment and Retention Officer is no longer being paid by the SAFER Grant that all other personnel must forfeit their receipt of benefits
 - Jennifer Vetter advised the Board that to remove benefits based on the loss of one employee would be discrimination
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel's mock agreement stated that Jennifer Vetter must state what she does on her recreational time and if she decides to be employed/volunteer outside of district time
 - Jennifer Vetter discussed that this could possible cause her to be discriminated by the District for not being able to make income when her part-time job does not pay enough to live
 - Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that one cannot live on \$18,000 and "is there a statute stating that?"
 - Jennifer Vetter stated that as long if she is not discriminated against for having other jobs to make financial ends meet she may be open to disclosing what she does during her extracurricular time.
 - Chief Vetter stated that it doesn't apply since her schedule is set by her anyhow
 - Chief Vetter is concerned that the Vice Chair Bill Ertel's mock agreement, if implemented, will work against an employee as a way to destroy employment with a technicality
- Board Member Claudia Pratt addressed that she did not receive the same board presentation paperwork as the rest of the present members.

- Chief Vetter addressed that this topic of the paid personnel comes up almost every meeting.
 - Chief Vetter stated that the paid positions are important to the functioning of the district to keep responses up and the district equipment maintenance and operating
 - Board Member Claudia Pratt is inquiring who is in charge of the administration of the operational staff...the Board or the Chief?
 - Board Member Todd Rumery is considering that the contracts will reflect the budget more accurately
 - Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the Board can be concerned with what happens operationally (or what is going on in the department) but the Board does not have to be involved in what the Chief does with his employees.
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel states that he feels that employment agreements are important
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated that the Board has had employment agreements with the Fire Chiefs
 - Chief Vetter is asking what the Vice Chair is trying to propose. Chief Vetter will discuss how his staff feels about having employment agreements drawn by the Board.
 - Lieutenant Sundell pointed out that other departments do not practice employment agreements with the entire staff but just their executive officer.
 - Jennifer Vetter clarified that the Board only had agreements with the Board's direct subordinates and not all staff beneath
 - Discussions continued regarding who has administrative abilities over the operational staff outside of the Board's direct subordinates
 - Jennifer Vetter inquired if the end goal is to make sure that Chief Vetter is delegating his authority appropriately or if this is an attempt to micromanage the operational side of the department as opposed to the Board sticking to policy administration
 - Board Member Claudia Pratt is asking "is this not the Chief's job?"
 - Chief Vetter stated that he will see about getting job descriptions from each of his subordinates and that he will be reaching out to other departments to see their model of administration along to see what Captain Holt had in place at Rogue River.
 - Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated that the Board needs to wrap up an employment agreement with Jennifer Vetter
 - Board Member Todd Rumery stated that what Captain Holt had in place or his previous experience in another organization is irrelevant as we are trying to get something in place to move forward.
 - Board Member Todd Rumery and Chief Vetter agree that all positions need position descriptions.

- **2021-2022 Budget Items**
 - Appointment of Budget Officer
 - The WRFPD Policy states the Chief is the Budget Officer

Clerk/Treasurer Report:

The Grants that were awarded were discussed and how they will affect the budget between payments and reimbursements. Jennifer Vetter is working on closing the books for this fiscal year to get ready for the next fiscal year. Budget books were handed out.

Clerk/Treasurer reports for May 17, 2021 were reviewed by the board members. Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter answered questions about revenue and expenses for the previous month's expenses. Each line item was reviewed in each financial report. Discussions included spending on district credit cards, payroll, regular monthly bills, employee benefits package, station maintenance/repairs items, donations, grants, reimbursements, and the interest in supporting local businesses.

Each of the reports reviewed included:

- The Training (aka Chair's) credit card
- The Operations (aka Chief's) credit card
- The Admin's credit card
- The Umpqua Bank Account
- Profit and Loss Statements
- LGIP Account

- A motion to approve the Clerk Treasurer's Report was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Todd Rumery. The motion passed unanimously




Before the motion to adjourn, Chief Vetter addressed the Board regarding the potential purchase of a 2002 International type 3 fire engine (formerly with the US Forestry) that holds 500 gallons with a larger capacity pump than our type 6 engines. This apparatus will increase response capability with the seating of up to 5, able to be used outside of district during conflagrations, and will be an asset during fire season. Chief Vetter and Lieutenant Sundell advised that this unit will put more 'boots' on the ground and that our first out engines can stay in district while this engine can respond to wildland urban interface situations whereas our larger apparatuses are mainly structural and seat less. This engine is located in Klamath Falls and the owner is asking \$22,500.

Board Member Claudia Pratt verified with Jennifer Vetter that the District does have the funds to purchase this engine.

In regards to housing the engine, during wildland season, it will be inside one of the bays.

Board Member Claudia Pratt proposed to have someone go look at the engine. Jennifer Vetter replied to Board Member Todd Rumery's concern about having enough district staff with the possible addition of this engine... at this time the district does not have enough seats for as many responders as we have to place on a scene for effective fire management. Board Member Todd Rumery and Board Member Claudia Pratt expressed interest in the possibility of the District purchasing this engine.

- A motion to consider the purchase of the 2002 Type 3 Fire Service engine was made by Todd Rumery and seconded by Claudia Pratt. 2/1 yes vote

 Claudia Pratt – Aye
 Todd Rumery – Aye
 Bill Ertel - No

Announcement of Next Regular Board Meeting:

Monday, June 7, 2021 at 9:00am

Motion to Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Todd Rumery at 11:58am.

Attachments: Board Meeting Agendas, Chief Evaluation, the Chief's and Clerk/Treasurer's reports for May 17, 2021, and Minutes of the previous Board Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

Wes Nevotti, Chairman