

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2022

Called to order: 17:58

Roll Call:

Board Members Present

Position 1 – Heather Glass
Position 2 – VACANT
Position 3 – Claudia Pratt
Position 4 – Bill Ertel
Position 5 – Brian Barton

Williams Staff Present

Fire Chief - Rick Vetter
Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
Operations Officer – Lieutenant Oskar Sundell

Public Presence:

Cheryl Johnson, Illinois Valley Fire District Board Chairperson
Harold Pratt, Resident
Dave Applegate, Resident
Wilma Hyde, Support Group Member, Resident
Belinda Northrop, Support Group Member, Resident
Volunteer Firefighter, Jon Scaroni
Volunteer Community Relations Officer, Rosie Faith

Board Member Position #5 Vote and Swear In:

- A motion was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Heather Glass to appoint Brian Barton to the vacant Board Position #5, a two-year commitment. The motion passed unanimously with all Ayes. Brian Barton was appointed to Position 5 of the Board of Directors.

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel thanked both Brian Barton and Wilma Hyde for being good candidates and good community members that have participated in different things around the community. Both candidates came with different backgrounds and skillsets.

 Heather Glass – Aye
 Claudia Pratt – Aye
 Bill Ertel – Aye

Brian Barton was sworn into Position #5 of the Williams Rural Fire Protection Board of Directors effective immediately.

Announcements:

Applications are still being taken for a second vacant board position #2. Board position #2 was discussed and a motion was placed:

- A motion was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Heather Glass to extend the expiration date to submit applications for Position #2 to move the date to February 17, 2022 at noon. The motion passed unanimously with all Ayes.

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

Public Input:

Rosie Faith: Commemorative Partner Program for Vietnam War Veterans. If adopted, the department would participate in lunch with vets, recognize contributions of vets, and more. Commitment would be now until 2025. March 29, 2022 volunteers, support group, and board members can bring potluck items for lunch, Lt. Oskar Sundell will BBQ the meat.

Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes:

The Board Meeting Minutes of January 2022 were reviewed.

- January 6, 2022 Workshop Board Meeting Minutes – Tabled. Board Member Bill Ertel asked to table this since he had questions. No questions were asked, and this item was tabled.
- January 6, 2022 Regular Board Meeting: Tabled
- January 11, 2022 Emergency Board Meeting Minutes: Approved

- A motion to approve the Emergency Board Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2022 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed with 3 ayes and one abstain.

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

- January 11, 2022 Special Board Meeting Minutes: Approved

- A motion to approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2022 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed with 3 ayes and one abstain.

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

- January 18, 2022 Executive Board Meeting Minutes: Tabled
- February 3, 2022 Special Board Meeting Minutes: Tabled

Discussion:

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the AFG Regional Grant breakdown. It was answered that each of the three departments involved would have a percentage (around 8%) to put in if grant were to be awarded. Regular updates may be provided as things progress and information is available.

Chief's Report:

Alarm Reports:

- January Alarm Reports: 34 Calls
- December Alarm Reports: 22 Calls
 - Medical: 29
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents: 12
 - Public Assist: 5
 - Fire Calls: 10; 4 were structure fires
- Total Calls for 2021: 308 active calls

Most calls come from 911 dispatch, although calls can come in as walk-ins or called in by personnel. Board Secretary Heather Glass recognized that we have an older demographic in the community of Williams. Increase in calls is also can be due to mutual aid response as well. Per Board Chairperson Cheryl Johnson of Illinois Valley Fire District, community members are willing to utilize the resources that are available to them.

Board Member Bill Ertel initiated a discussion if we experience violence on our calls and if our first responders have a way to debrief after tragic-ending calls. Per Chief Vetter, we are susceptible to these experiences, and we have resources available to utilize.

Personnel/Recruitment:

- Welcome to Devin Brennan, newest member who served with Greyback as a wildland firefighter. He will be attending the Firefighter 1 Academy hosted by Illinois Valley Fire District.
- Lieutenant Oskar Sundell and Volunteer Firefighter Jon Scaroni will be attending the Oregon State Fire Marshal Fire Investigation Class in March.
- EMR class will be held in-house in the Spring.
- Captain Holt will be purchasing a projector and screen under an approved grant to be installed in the apparatus bay to facilitate future trainings and department functions.
- Lieutenant Oskar Sundell
 - Employment has been upgraded from 35 hours to full time 40 hours to better keep up with the growth of the department
 - Board Member Bill Ertel opposed stating that he was not ready for the department to take this step. Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt stated that the Board does not vote on what the Chief decides on for the employment needs of his personnel. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the board has the right to policy and is very much opposed to the Chief's position stating that the department has always had permanent part time positions and that what is happening here is creeping with the past premise being that part time positions were built around the idea of 20 hours per week.
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass responded to Board Member Bill Ertel that it is her understanding that the Chief is responsible for the employment of personnel under him. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that "Board has a right to set the number of hours of the positions under the Chief and it should not happen by default" to the Chief.
 - Board Member Brian Barton noted the Policy and Procedure Chapter 2 **Board of Directors** page 3 under **Code of Conduct** states that:
 - The *"Board shall strive to understand that their basic unction is policy making only and not administration, and/or micro-management of the fire department"*.
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt recognized that this policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board recently and that verbiage has never changed.
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass stated her understanding is that the Board is responsible for the two employees managed by the Board, the Chief and the Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk. Going on to state that she feels that if the Chief needs to reprimand or give a raise that the Chief is responsible for that portion under him.
 - Chief Vetter responded with his understanding that there is nothing wrong or illegal with moving Lieutenant Oskar Sundell to 40 hours. Chief Vetter recognized that he was approved a budget amount to work with. Board Member Bill Ertel strongly disagreed with Chief Vetter stating that

budget is not the Chief's budget but the district's budget. Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt stated that the Board did not hire and does not manage the Captain or the Lieutenant positions that work directly under the Chief. The only positions that are directly hired and managed by the Board are the Fire Chief and the Admin.

- Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he “disagrees violently” remembering in the past with specifically Chief Vetter and Lieutenant Sundell were hired on a short-term basis and the Board had decision making power over the hiring of their fire season coverage. Board Member Heather Glass recommended that Board Member Bill Ertel find the verbiage that states Board Member Bill Ertel's claim of the Board's responsibility to this.
- Board Member Bill Ertel believes the Board has a right through policy that employees in a certain class are eligible for certain range of money. Board Member Brian Barton stated that this would be micromanaging according to the black and white print. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he is in agreement that the Chief hires personnel, but there should be something that approves how the Chief administers the budget.
- Board Member Brian Barton recognized the Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter 3 **Duties of Board Officers, Clerk/Treasurer, and Fire Chief** page 4 **Duties of the Fire Chief** subsection 1:
 - *“The Fire Chief shall plan, coordinate, organize, hire, fire, promote, demote, discipline, staff control, budget, and expend approved funds, in accordance with the WRFPD Board of Directors orders or directions, the Fire Chief's Personal Service Contract, and Public law.”*
- Per Illinois Valley Fire Board Chairperson, Cheryl Johnson, this is the Fire Chief's purview (recognizing the SDAO handbook/website and information contained) and responsibility and it becomes micromanagement of the Board once the Board begins questioning how the Chief organizes employee hours and responsibilities to those he hires. Once the Board approves the budget, it is then given to the Chief to manage.
- Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter inquired of the Board Member Bill Ertel, “Why hire a professional if the professional will not be able to work within their parameters of their profession?” Board Member Bill Ertel believes this organization should have part-time paid positions and instead of those positions taking on more, hiring another part-time paid position at \$X salary level.
- Lieutenant Sundell inquired what is the difference in adding 5 more hours to his position when no other benefits are being added?
- Board Secretary Heather Glass requested Board Member Bill Ertel to research and find where it states that this specific topic is the board's responsibility.

Station / Land / Equipment:

- Old Fire Station
 - In the process of getting 3 bids for the roof
- Manufactured Home
 - ¾ done with inside paint
 - Looking to furnish
 - Will be used to house firefighters overnight
- Wildland Apparatus 8763
 - Getting prices on paint
 - On schedule for being in service
- Creek Pump Project
 - Awaiting delivery from manufacturer to Quinn's
 - May be done in March
 - Electrical bid presentation from Pro Electric
 - Costs are 50/50 with Three Rivers School District

Meetings:

- Coffee with the Chief:
 - March 2 at 10am
 - Rob Brandis to be a guest speaker
- Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association
 - Looking to develop a sub-committee on seasonal burning
- Operations Meeting:
 - Communications and Operations Discussions
- Lexipol:
 - Policy and Procedure Manual Development
- Applegate Valley Fire District:
 - Met with Chief Wolfard to develop regional grant for radios
 - \$990k Grant; \$180 will be allocated to Williams Fire communication needs

Support Group input:

- Chairperson, Claudia Pratt
- Vice Chairperson, Wilma Hyde
- Treasurer, Rosie Faith

Safety committee

- Addressed need to wearing masks and the requirements
- Keeping grounds salted with cold weather and ice

Discussion:

Blood Drive will happen in Williams on February 14th in the near future with the fire department as one of the locations.

Lieutenant Oskar Sundell:

Update on 8763 type 3 engine, it would take \$24,415 to outfit for federal deployment. For local district needs, this can be less than half to outfit the engine with the needed supplies. Paint expense could be as high as \$9400. Roughly \$10k (without paint) can get 8763 ready for local fire defense within the Williams Fire District. When purchasing a fire engine, they are sold stripped of some of the necessary equipment needed to place the apparatus into service. This apparatus was purchased for roughly \$20k and is a former member of the Forest Service fleet. Buying outright any apparatus turnkey would have cost 6 figures. This apparatus has 5 seating positions, dual purpose between wildland and structure with three seats in the back are SCBA seats, and a tank capacity of 700 gallons. Williams Fire currently has 3 operational wildland apparatus with 8763 being able to perform both wildland and structural. One of the current wildland engines is looking to be phased out in the future.

Board Secretary Heather Glass would like to know the benefit of having an engine to federal standards. Lieutenant Sundell stated that the government paid the Williams Fire \$10,000 for the use of an engine on the Slater Fire.

- A motion to approve the Fire Chief's Report was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Heather Glass with the caveat that the Chief's Report is given 3 days in advance. Chief Vetter added with time permitting. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

-  Heather Glass – Aye
-  Claudia Pratt – Aye
-  Bill Ertel – Aye
-  Brian Barton – Aye

Chair:

- Fallen Volunteer Firefighter from St. Paul – died from barn explosion
 - Collect signatures in a card and any donations to send for support
- Wes and Sue Nevotti
 - Waiting on information to return from family to plan to honor them and their service with the fire district

Discussion:

Board Member Bill Ertel announced the SDAO conference in February that runs for 3 days, can be participated online, and he will be representing Williams Fire.

- A motion to approve Board Member Bill Ertel representing and voting on behalf of Williams Fire at the SDAO Conference was made by Heather Glass and seconded by Bill Ertel. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

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

Old Business:

- Policies and Procedures Handbook are still in process with Lexipol
- Employee handbook tabled
- Kuntz Workers Comp in Mediation
 - Per legal counsel, if a discussion is desired, an executive session can be called
- Janitorial Position (presented by Board Member Bill Ertel)
 - Board Member Bill Ertel cleaned over 2 different days and stated that the bathroom is already kept pretty clean, the board meeting room needs a deep cleaning, and the stairs are difficult to mop.
 - The board room should be left the way it is found
 - The public should work with the staff on how they could contribute
 - Consider a deep clean once in a while, it is long overdue
 - Cleaning considerations would exclude offices and apparatus bay
 - Community Member Wilma Hyde stated she didn't want her tax payer money to contribute to clean up when the firefighters can clean up after themselves
 - Community Member Belinda Northrup: "yes the guys can clean up better the areas that they use... you will need a professional to help with the deep cleaning and it cannot be done just by the firefighters cleaning up after themselves".
 - Lieutenant Sundell added that we have a much larger organization now and it takes much longer each day to perform cleaning duties. Calls can interfere with drills that were intended for company clean-up day.
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass inquired, "Is this the best use of Lieutenant Sundell's time?"
 - There is no time schedule decided on how much time should be allocated (weekly, monthly, quarterly)
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt stated that volunteers already give so much of their time
 - This has been tabled

New Business:

- Operational Checking Account ending in *9256:
 - Remove Wes Nevotti and add signer
 - A motion to remove Wesley Nevotti as a signor from the Williams Rural Fire Protection District Umpqua Business Checking account ending in *9256, add Heather Glass, and continue with Claudia Pratt and Bill Ertel was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Brian Barton. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

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

- Umpqua Bank Lock Box:
 - Remove Wes Nevotti and add another access
 - A motion to remove Wesley Nevotti from access to the Williams Rural Fire Protection District Umpqua Business safety deposit box, add Brian Barton, and continue with Bill Ertel and Jennifer Vetter was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Heather Glass and to remove any other names not mentioned in these minutes. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

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

- State Pool Account:
 - Remove Wes Nevotti and add another to receive State Pool account *5210 statements
 - A motion to remove Wesley Nevotti from the State Pool account and add Heather Glass as a recipient to receive State Pool account statements was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Brian Barton. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye

- Employee Benefits (Presented by Board Secretary Heather Glass):
 - 3 employees on salary; 1 Hourly
 - All have options for medical/dental benefits
 - Sick time must be given
 - Sick time is paid for more than 9 employees; unpaid if less than 9 employees
 - 1 hour for any 30 hours worked
 - Benefits don't change with any increase in hours
 - Why give benefits:
 - Jobs are more demanding than other jobs
 - Need healthy employees
 - Employee retention and recruitment
 - Should consider vacation package
 - Employees can take time as needed
 - Does not impact payroll spending
 - Need to be competitive to retain employees
 - These benefits are already in place

- Employee Evaluations
 - Admin/Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter:
 - Hired January 2019
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt and Board Member Brian Barton will evaluate Jennifer Vetter
 - Chief Rick Vetter:
 - Hired February 2020
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass and Board Member Bill Ertel will evaluate Chief Rick Vetter

Clerk/Treasurer Report:

Clerk/Treasurer reports for February 7, 2022 were reviewed by the board members. Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter answered any questions about revenue and expenses for the previous months' (December and January) 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:

- 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

Discussion:

There is a line item for income to show how much has come from grants or donations. Election fees for ballot measures utilized by the district are paid by the district. The accountant does cost extra to utilize the expertise/advise from Brewster's office outside of his review. Personnel expenses are a main expense of a business. Personnel expenses have increased since five years ago since the district has been active in the community. Williams Fire receives reimbursements/offsets by the SAFER Grant and other grants that have been awarded to cover weekend response coverage and other items.

- A motion to approve the Clerk Treasurer's Report was made by Heather Glass and seconded by Brian Barton. The motion passed unanimously with 4 ayes.

 Heather Glass – Aye
 Claudia Pratt – Aye
 Bill Ertel – Aye
 Brian Barton – Aye

Next regular scheduled board meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2022 at 6pm.

- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Heather Glass and seconded by Brian Barton. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at: 20:03

Respectfully,

Claudia Pratt, Board Chairperson