

# **WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

## **Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

**October 26, 2020**

Called to Order at 6:38pm

### **Roll Call:**

#### **Board Members Present**

Position 1 – Claudia Pratt  
Position 2 – Sue Nevotti  
Position 3 – Absent  
Position 4 – Bill Ertel  
Position 5 – Absent

#### **Williams Staff Present**

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter  
Chief – Rick Vetter  
Captain – Nicco Holt

### **Public Presence:**

Chief John Holmes – Illinois Valley Fire Chief  
Jon Scaroni – Firefighter, Resident

### **New Board Member Swear In:**

Claudia Pratt was sworn in as Board Member Position 1 taking the place of recently resigned position holder Dennis Crawford.

### **Agenda Review:**

The agenda was reviewed and the agenda was approved as presented.

- A motion to approve the agenda was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Announcements:**

None.

### **Public Input:**

Chief Holmes stated that if there was a desire to know more about the Slater Fire that he would provide information.

### **Approval to Accept Board Meeting Minutes:**

The Regular Board Meeting minutes of September 28, 2020 were reviewed

- A motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of September 28, 2020 was made by Sue Nevotti and seconded by Claudia Pratt.

The Special Board Meeting minutes of October 16, 2020 were reviewed

- A motion to approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2020 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Sue Nevotti.

**Fire Chief's Report:**

- **Number of calls in August**
  - 15 calls total
    - 4 Medical calls requiring transport
    - 1 Lift Assist
    - 1 Grass Fire on Meadow View; ½ acre caused by an electrical cord to a bug zapper
    - 2 Fire Assists to the public
    - 4 Smoke Investigations/Open Burn & Illegal Materials
    - 3 MVA – 2 Mutual aids with Applegate Fire
- **Personnel/Recruitment**
  - 11 current volunteers
- **Training**
  - Trainings are held twice per week to ensure all members have an opportunity to attend
  - Use of outside resources to train
    - DPSST Flag Training (Flammable Liquids and Gas)
    - TIM (Traffic Incident Management) provided by ODOT
  - Extrication Exercises
    - 4 vehicles were donated for extrication exercises
  - Gas Identification
    - Use of 4-gas meter and fire ground operations
  - Supervision and Leadership Training
    - Held by RITA (Rogue Interagency Training Association)
  - EMT
    - Chief Vetter and Volunteer Firefighter Jennifer Vetter are in the EMT program which will take two terms to complete
    - Other members will be entering during the Winter Term
- **Meetings**
  - Rogue Valley Chiefs Association
    - Partnership between Josephine and Jackson Counties
    - Obenchain, Slater, and Alameda Fires
    - Reimbursement Recovery for responding agencies
  - Coffee with the Chief
    - Guest Speakers
      - Rick McClintok with GPDPS

- David Ferguson with USDA (National Resource Conservation Service)
    - Topics
      - Fire Prevention
      - Defensible Space
      - Fuel Reduction
    - Meeting with Chief McLaughlin
      - Revised Mutual Aid Contract
    - Meeting with Charlie Phenix of Rural Metro
      - Recruitment efforts and school program
  - **Property/Station/Equipment**
    - Equipment:
      - 8701
        - Rep to come out to inspect roll-up doors as one door does not open and close properly
        - Gouge marks from long-term use
        - May not fall under warranty
      - 8761
        - New fuel tank installed and 2 new injectors due to previous tank inner liner breaking apart causing fuel injectors to clog
    - Old Station:
      - Replaced roof screws to stop current leaks
- A motion to approve the Chief's Report as presented was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously

#### **Other Reports:**

- **Chair**
  - Nothing to report
- **Support Group**
  - Williams Farmers Market participation to sell address makers, T-shirts, and promote recruitment and fire prevention.
    - Sold over \$300 in shirts
  - Instead of Christmas party, donate monies to families who lost homes in fires.
    - Christmas party cancelled due to COVID
- **Safety Committee**
  - Chief, Capt. Holt, Lt. Sundell
    - Signage on property for security
    - OSHA Requirements
    - House-keeping/Repairs

## Unfinished Business:

- **Employee Benefits Package**

- Presentation given by Capt. Nicco Holt.
  - Re-explained the benefit package with a power point
    - Specific plan parameters that employees receive
    - Employee co-pays
    - Employee costs per visit depending on services received
  - Premiums are less than what was budgeted and mid-cost compared to other plans
  - \$7k+ under-budget set by the District back in June
  - Employees (via paycheck deferrals) and the SAFER Grant pay into the plan to reduce district overall costs
  - Plan commitment is per year and no further commitment unless renewed
    - District is **NOT** required to continue benefits if not renewed
  - Great retention package to show District commitment to employees
  - Net Cost to District is \$3,436 per month – well under the initial budgeted amount that was approved

- **Questions:**

- Claudia Pratt:
  - How many districts provide insurance?
  - Four years ago this was not available?
- Bill Ertel:
  - Can this be taken away from the employees?
  - What are your specific costs for different visits, per dependent, family, in-network/out-of-network?
  - How much does the district pay per employee?
  - Does this include dental?
  - If a new employee comes on board are we going to pay benefits for them?
  - Are there plans to reduce paid staff?

- **Answer (by Capt. Holt):**

- Most districts provide benefits for employees
- Four years ago, there were not employees at this District
- The District does not have to renew the benefits package, yes, the benefits can be removed from the employees
- The different co-pays were explained
- The district pays \$1,273 per qualifying employee per month
  - Each employee pays costs above the \$1,273
  - For a family, the employee contributes \$800 per month
- Yes, dental is included

- There is no intended plan this budget year to add any more additionally paid personnel
- A reduction in staff would hurt the district (Chief Vetter)

➤ **Comments:**

- Claudia Pratt:
  - “We cannot change insurance policies/drop/add, let’s proceed with the session”
  - “When this comes up for renewal next year that is when we need to look at this. I don’t know if it is the Board’s place.”
- Chief Vetter:
  - “Did we satisfy what the Board is curious about? We are within budget. If we are going to run an effective department, we researched our plans and made a professional decision. The employees put their lives on the line and we have to take care of them.”
- Table discussions until all board members are present
- A motion to table the discussion of the employee benefits package until all board members are present was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti.
- Chief Evaluation by Board (2 months past due)
  - Schedule 6 month review in the next 21 days
- A motion to evaluate Chief Vetter in the next 21 days was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously

**New Business:**

- **Deputy Clerk Salary Review**
  - Last review was August of 2019
  - Bill Ertel suggested to discuss the Deputy Clerk salary review along with the Chief’s review and hold a special board meeting
  - A motion to evaluate Jennifer Vetter’s salary in the next 21 days was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously
- **Payroll Direct Deposit**
  - Paychecks will be deposited via direct deposit.
  - It has been challenging to have paychecks signed in a timely manner

- A motion was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously

### **Clerk/Treasurer Report:**

Clerk/Treasurer reports for October 26, 2020 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, and the interest in supporting local businesses.

The SAFER Grant paid a \$17k reimbursement where expenses took place in the previous fiscal year. These funds are now surplus to this fiscal year. It is recommended that the Board allow the possibility of re-allocating these excess funds that are not accounted for this fiscal year, if needed, in case a situation arise later during this fiscal year that warrants an expenditure of these excess funds.

Each of the reports reviewed included:

- The Board Chair's credit card
- The 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 Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously

### **Internal Controls:**

Internal controls were reviewed with the change from 2 to 3 business credit cards.

### **Closing Remarks:**

New Board Member Claudia Pratt was given an electronic copy of the policy and procedure manual by Vice Chair Bill Ertel. She was encouraged to spend time with the employees to familiarize herself with the department and its internal operations.

Chief Holmes appreciates Williams Fire's participation in the Slater Fire. The fire is currently contained to 87% and changed over to a local team from ODF that is figuring 4 months before the fire is completely out. Agency participation shows commitment and the State Fire Marshall's office likes to see that.

**Good of the Order:**

Welcome back to firefighter Jon Scaroni that was dispatched to areas of California and Oregon as a wildland contractor.

**Announcement of Next Regular Board Meeting:**

Monday, November 23, 2020 at 6:30pm

**Motion to Adjourn:**

- A motion to adjourn was made by Claudia Pratt and seconded by Sue Nevotti at 8:38pm.

Attachments: Board Meeting Agenda, the Chief's and Clerk/Treasurer's reports for October 26, 2020, and Minutes of the previous Board Meetings.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Wes Nevotti, Chairman