

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Special Board Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2024

Called to order: 09:00am

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

Williams Staff Present

Interim Chief Nicco Holt

Lt. Oskar Sundell

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter

Firefighter Devin Brennan

Ash Marell - Community Relations Coordinator

Community Members Present:

Wilma Hyde – Community Member

Lori – SDAO (arrived 9:19am)

Zoom Attendees:

Cheryl Johnson – Illinois Valley Fire District Board Secretary

Fire Chief Chris Wolfard – Applegate Valley Fire District

Karen Rogers – Williams Resident / Williams Fire Department Support Team Secretary

Michelle Binker – Illinois Valley Fire District Board Vice Chairperson

Announcements:

None.

Property Behind Fire Station Discussion:

Board Member Claudia Pratt discussed that the person with the 2nd on the property is putting it up for sale. Doug Walker is also talking about it not being for sale and he will be getting a bridge loan. This will be discussed later more in-depth.

Hiring Committee Discussion:

Board Chair Heather Glass would like to discuss and thinks it is a good idea to have a hiring committee possibly made up of staff and volunteers putting in input on job expectations, what is sought after, interview process... all is conceptual and seeking input from the rest of the Board. She states that the Board knows the money and budget, however, when it comes to training and

calls, the Board does not know the procedures to such and feels that staff and volunteers can provide input. The committee will come back to the Board and supply their input. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton added that Board Chair Heather Glass wanted to get more than just the Board involved. Board Chair Heather Glass insisted that this discussion is conceptual to start at this point. Interim Chief Nicco Holt provided his thought is that the committee would look at the candidates / finalists and bring their input back to the Board for consideration. Therefore, there is important input from staff and volunteers, not making decisions, but providing input. Interim Chief Holt stated that it would be great for morale as well. Board Chair Heather Glass asked if the Interim Chief thought that staff and volunteers should have input on some of the criteria and Interim Chief Holt stated that they should since they may bring up something that hadn't been considered.

Board Member Bill Ertel presented an idea and that it was beneficial during the last hiring to have other fire chiefs present during the interview process. Board Member Bill Ertel asked Interim Chief Holt what kind of input would the staff and volunteers provide for this process. Interim Chief Holt stated that they could recognize what is important to them such as interpersonal items or even go as far as to meeting the applicants and provides input into who is their top choice.

Cheryl Johnson stated via zoom that they had several committees formed in Illinois Valley and all interviews were only with finalists and not all applicants. The committees were an only staff committee, community leaders committee (chosen from Chamber of Commerce), fire service colleagues committee, 1-2 citizen committees (citizens at large), and a 1-2 hour Meet and Greet at Station 1 with the public where the public was allowed to come and ask questions of each applicant. All this with the Board having the final decision making with input from each of the committees.

Board Member Claudia Pratt asked how long Interim Chief Holt how long he is willing to hold a temporary chief position. He stated he is not going anywhere and understands that this process takes time. He expects this process is somewhere around 6 months or so.

Applegate Fire Chief Wolfard provided information on their hiring process in which they engaged SDAO to handle the recruitment and organized the interviewing process. The candidates were sourced in-house only. There was an interview with the candidate and 2 fire service professionals. Then the candidate interviewed with the Board alone. He stated that the process was simple and if engaging with SDAO that SDAO will engage with the department's needs and wants and to do it 'your way'.

Board Member Claudia Pratt went over her feeling of the kinds of paperwork and possibly how many should be on the committee from the staff and volunteers. Lt. Sundell interjected he wants to be on the committee. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that if staff is going to be a part of the process that he would like to hire SDAO manage the process. He also thinks in regards to staff participation that Interim Chief Holt should nominate the staff. Interim Chief Holt is okay with

nominating staff and states that he does not intend to be on the committee as he is “wobbling to if he himself will be an applicant”.

Firefighter Devin Brennan inquired, “If Interim Chief Holt puts an application in for the Chief position, is it then inappropriate for him to pick people that will be in on the process from the department?” Board Chair Heather Glass stated that is a good point. Board Member Bill Ertel suggested that these ideas are all good and that in a week the Board reconvene to discuss those ideas. To Firefighter Devin Brennan’s point, Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the value of the Interim Chief’s input of who will be on the committee is because he could gauge who could speak to the judgement of (?). Firefighter Brennan states that his comment is not due to mistrust but for the Board to consider that if the Interim Chief applies and something weird happens that there are questions as to why something happened a certain way.

Board Member Bill Ertel suggested an email go out that the Board is seeking a staff member or volunteer who is interested in the process and at the appropriate time, the Board can choose. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the Board in the end picks who is the Fire Chief. She put questions of: What kind of qualifications, how far out of district can the candidate live for hire, should the candidate live in district, etc. The discussion ensued around Interim Chief sending out a request out to everyone to see who would like to be on a committee. Board Secretary David Applegate stated that he agrees with Board Member Claudia Pratt that they are just getting started and talking about 2 committees. Board Chair Heather Glass stated she is just talking about staff and volunteers at this point and no other committees.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to engage with the Local Government Law Group for advice and to sign a letter of engagement. The motion was seconded by Claudia Pratt.

Discussion: None.

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

- Motion passes unanimously

(Before the beginning of the executive session – there was discussion of if staff should be present. It was advised that typically staff is not present)

All staff has been excused for possible call-back.

Close Special Board Meeting for Executive Session per ORS 192. 660(2)(h)

Special Board Meeting closed at 09:25am for Executive Session

*****EXECUTIVE MEETING IN SESSION*****

Reconvene Special Board Meeting

Special Board Meeting Reconvened at 10:03am

- A motion was made by Bill Ertel to reconvene the Special Meeting at 10:04am. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

Discussion: None.

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

- Motion passes unanimously
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- A motion was made by Heather Glass to send a letter to Rick Vetter to return 2 phones and missing car key fob. The motion was seconded by Claudia Pratt.

Discussion: None.

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

- Motion passes unanimously

RV Space Rental: Ash Martell has paid the first month's rent and deposit. Board Chair Heather Glass was unable to get the appropriate electric usage device and Ash Martell has not moved and decided not to move to the property.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to refund Ash Martell's rent and deposit for not moving to the fire department RV space due to the department being unable to provide her with the proper electrical connection. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

Discussion: None.

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

- Motion passes unanimously

Other Discussion: Board members lulled over the next meeting time for a special meeting to discuss the current topics more. It was decided to have a workshop on the day of the next Regular Board Meeting, March 12, 2024.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12am

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chair