

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2024

Call to Order: 10:01am

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 Fire Chief – Nicco Holt
Lieutenant – Oskar Sundell
Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
Firefighter – Devin Brennan
Ash Martell – Community Relations
Coordinator

Public Presence:

Fire Chief Chris Wolfard – Applegate Valley Rural Fire Protection District
Joyce Johnson – Williams Community Member
Dale Johnson – Williams Community Member
Marilane McLaughlin – Williams Community Member
Matt McLaughlin – Williams Community Member
Gary Evans – Williams Community Member
Al Aspenwall – Williams Community Member
Judy Aspinwall – Williams Community Member

Zoom Attendees:

Allison Cleveland – Williams Community Member
Fire Chief John Holmes – Illinois Valley Rural Fire Protection District
Cheryl Johnson – Illinois Valley Rural Fire Protection District Board Chairperson
Unknown Attendees: one un-named (aka Samsung Phone)

Announcements:

Board Secretary David Applegate stated that he has 2 cars to donate for training and offered them to Interim Chief Holt for department trainings.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that a county position open in the area is open until 5pm tonight. He was also elected to the Sheriffs Taxing District Committee and is hoping to be able to present at Coffee with the Chief.

Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes:

- February 13, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Board Member Claudia Pratt discussed the regulations and rules to adopt regulations and stated that during the last meeting the Interim Chief had inquired if the old policy manual would be suspended and she stated that there was a policy that she would be bringing in and handed out a handout to address the Interim Chief’s inquiry.

- A motion was made by Brian Barton to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2024 and it was seconded by David Applegate.

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

Discussion: None

- The motion was approved unanimously

- February 22, 2024 Special Board Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2024 and it was seconded by Claudia Pratt.

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

Discussion: None.

- The motion was approved unanimously

- February 28, 2024 Special Board Meeting Minutes
 - A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2024 and it was seconded by Claudia Pratt.
 - ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
 - ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
 - ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
 - ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
 - ✚ David Applegate – Aye

Discussion: None.

- The motion was approved unanimously

Chief's Report (Given by Interim Chief Nicco Holt):

Interim Chief Holt attended several meetings during the last month. He has been keeping up with reviewing and initialing financial documents, chief emails, ongoing projects, attended an upstaffing grant webinar, met with Chief Wolfard and read the 3-way trade with the Lifepak 15 being delivered to the Williams Fire District via Jennifer Vetter from Illinois Valley Fire District. The ISO rating is now a 5/10 (previously 7/10). Interim Chief Holt worked with District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni to coordinated the hazard materials reporting for the Fire District.

15 Total District Alarms:

- 9 EMS
- 1 Vehicle Fire
- 1 Camp Fire
- 1 non-injury Motor Vehicle Accident
- 1 Assist to Agency
- 2 Non-emergency found calls

Training:

- Fire Skills including SCBA donning including pre-connect deployment
- Cardiac Emergencies on Valentines Day
- Fire Skills, ladder use and deployment
- Extrication Training

Operations Report – Lt. Sundell:

Lt. Sundell's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the application for Federal Grants for \$5M. 2 phase grants from Biden Administration that bolsters wildland capabilities he is sourcing specifically slip-in units for pickup trucks. The application is for \$35k. Board Member Bill Ertel would like to review the grant report before going forward.

Board Member Bill Ertel addressed the winter storm where the crews worked around the clock. Lt. Sundell stated that staff and volunteers participated and traded off from 9pm Friday and running through Sunday of that weekend. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the tractor was meant for purposes such as this.

Training Report – Interim Chief Holt

Interim Chief Holt's report was provided withing the giving of the Chief's Report. No other discussion took place.

District Fire Marshal Report:

District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni's report was provided electronically before the meeting. He was out on vacation and unable to attend the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel reflected on joint work between Applegate and Williams Fire and inquired of Applegate Fire Chief Wolfard working on the local schools and Ash Martel spoke to that in terms of a flyer being sent out to them and the school is interested on getting on the schedule.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he had chipping done on his property and he was impressed and the place was left "neat as a pin".

Community Relations Coordinator Report:

Community Relations Coordinator Ash Martell's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired if she was maintaining the Facebook. She stated that it is still being managed by Jennifer Vetter but that she coordinates with Jennifer Vetter to simultaneously conduct posts on Facebook. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired if what is posted on Facebook gets posted on the website. Ash Martel stated that Facebook is more dynamic and we don't always use the website for the same information sharing due to platform. Board Chairperson Heather Glass suggested Jo's List for those who don't do Facebook. Ash Martel stated that she has a newly created info email that she will be using to distribute information for those who sign up.

Chair’s Report

Nothing to Report

Unfinished Business:

Museum: Tabled.

By-Laws Discussion: Tabled.

5-year Plan: Tabled.

Modular Home Update: Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that he contractor is unable to find 12foot material needed for repairs and will use 10foot material instead on the outside of the home.

Property Behind Fire Station: Board Member Claudia Pratt presented information that the property will need a Phase 1 Report, Title search, to hire an attorney to remove people living on property or other issues, investment to get into usable shape, a survey, that former Fire Chief Rick Vetter after being placed on Administrative Leave resigned stating in a letter that he was forced by the Board which could have caused financial impact, and a loan correlation would be on the current fire department building and apparatus. The Fire District would have to invest much to get the property into usable condition and then having a commitment to the bank. The bank did not consider the Fire District for a loan to obtain the property.

Board Vice Chair Brian Barton thanked Board Member Claudia Pratt for all the work she has put into the project. He would like to abandon the idea of obtaining the property.

- A motion was made by Brian Barton to abandon the property behind the fire station with many thanks to Claudia Pratt and it was seconded by Bill Ertel.

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

Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt will attend the auction of the property. Board Member Bill Ertel expressed his thanks for the hard work put in by Board Member Claudia Pratt. Interim Chief Holt stated that he feels that the currently owned acreage needs to be surveyed.

- The motion was approved unanimously

- A motion was made by Claudia Pratt to support Interim Chief Holt to look into and get a survey of the back 8 acres of the Fire District property before the sale of the property in the back and it was seconded by Heather Glass.

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

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel stated that this process was started several months ago and perhaps this information can be retrieved. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton inquired if the survey will be done at the sale and Board Member Bill Ertel stated that it seems it would, however, not wait and begin moving forward.

- The motion was approved unanimously

Other Discussion: 5-year plan will be added to the workshop on Friday, March 15, 2024

New Business:

Employee Review of Jennifer Vetter: Board Chair Heather Glass would like to do the review using the SDAO template and inquired if someone would like to do this with her. Board Secretary David Applegate stated that he would participate. Board Member Claudia Pratt would like that all the Board have review and input as well. Board Member Bill Ertel asked if the Board would source input from staff. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that no one answers to her and she doesn't answer to anyone, however, as Board Member Claudia Pratt stated, there is interpersonal interactions that they can inquire about. She will not be reviewed on firefighter skills, only administrative.

Treasurer's Report:

Clerk/Treasurer reports for February 2024 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
- Grant Tracker Worksheet

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the Grant Tracker and the 2 new additions of grant entries. He requested a copy of the grant submittal and Jennifer Vetter stated that she could send it out. Lt. Sundell addressed the Rural Readiness Grant that was applied to through BLM. Lt. Sundell will send the link to Jennifer Vetter to send out to the Board. Board Member Claudia Pratt would like the Grant Tracker to show completed/done grants that the District is no longer utilizing noted as such.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about the Community Relations Coordinator expense distribution and Jennifer Vetter answered that she is paid out of two grants for administrative work and the budget for assisting the Chief. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about employee payroll that can be discussed privately Other expenses were inquired about such as apparatus maintenance which a resolution of recategorizing will take place on a resolution later in the fiscal year.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about an eDispatch charge that was clarified by Interim Chief Holt.

The Safer Grant funds are now finished and a report was initiated and completed by Jennifer Vetter which was submitted last week.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about a charge which were payroll tax expenditures. She also asked about cell phone expenses and it was confirmed that the phone line is suspended, yet a small fee is charged for an inactive line.

Next regular board meeting is April 9th at 10am.

Public Input (2 minutes) with a response at the next board meeting:

Mr. & Mrs. Aspenwall: Mrs. Aspenwall stated she wanted to know why her and her husband were requested to attend the board meeting? She stated that she received a phone call from a Matt McLauchlin (who she didn't know was in the room) to attend to discuss the situation on China Basin on this day at the fire station. Matt McLauchlin answered that it was him who made that phone call to discuss a couple situations in the China Basin area, however, Matt McLauchlin went on to discuss the former Fire Chief and his resignation instead of the topic they were told. He said that he told people that he didn't understand how the department had lost 2 chiefs in 5 years. He also stated, "He he isn't there in Chief Vetter's defense", but wondered why he

resigned when, in Mr. McLauchlin's words, "He gave half his salary to have an employee and further secured a grant for a vehicle saving the tax payers considerable amounts of money..." He praised Former Chief Vetter for things the former chief did for the department and went on to offer criticism to the Board of Directors stating that the Board is not at liberty to discuss the former chief, however, accused the Board of racist comments, accusations of embezzlement, and asked where is the department going moving forward to secure a new chief.

Board Member Claudia Pratt clarified that this current board is made up of all new members with the exception of one member who has had anything to do prior with any other chief as the rest of the board was not present during any other fire chief tenure.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 10:46am

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chairperson