

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Regular Board Meeting Minutes with SDAO Board Assessment
November 8, 2022

Called to order: 18:04pm

Roll Call:

Board Members Present

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

Williams Staff Present

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
Fire Chief – Rick Vetter

Public Presence:

Deanna Ertel, Community Member (left at 20:00)
Wendy Giordano, Community Member (left at 20:00)
Teri Dresler, SDAO Board Practices Assessment Representative

Announcements:

No Announcements at this time per Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt. Teri Dresler will perform the Board Practices Assessment (8 sections/topics) and then the regular board meeting can resume.

Public Input:

None. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that two or three people have approached him and are uncomfortable with the Board not allowing public input. Board Secretary Heather Glass stated that public input was put back in and Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt agreed it had been added back in. Teri Dresler will do her assessment and then this can be discussed after.

Board Practice Assessment:

This is not an evaluation or test of the Board. It is an opportunity for a structured discussion for key areas of boards to be aware of and functioning in as much compliance as possible. Special Districts face many challenges from large paid staff groups to small paid staff groups and heavy reliance on volunteers. Teri will take notes and make this an opportunity for the board to discuss the topics and for staff to provide input when needed as well. Once done, Teri Dresler will take her notes and place them in the assessment form and provide a completed form about a week later with Teri's impressions and recommendations. SDAO provides the district a 2% discount on the insurance premium for the following year with the completion of this assessment. Within 60 days the assessment sheet and follow up will need to be discussed during a board meeting.

Board Practice Assessment:

Board Duties and Responsibilities: Adherence to standards of good stewardship

- How do you feel the district monies are being spent, equipment is maintained, and etc.?
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt, Board Secretary Heather Glass, Board Member David Applegate, and Chief Vetter discussed how many conversations have taken place when it comes to large decisions (such as property purchases and uses) and hashing out if the right decisions are being made on their larger decisions, including taking in the input of the Captain and Lieutenant to make or break the reasons to move forward.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated the prior board groups to him have made some poor choices but the Board is in better shape now. Board Member Bill Ertel feels the board could be more responsible. He also recognized that the budget is put together by the Chief and the Administrative Assistant and that it is seldom that people ask any probing questions. He also noted that the he, as a previous board chair, used to prepare the agenda. Now they have Jenny Vetter doing the bookkeeping when previously it was a volunteer.
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler recognized that today the Board is doing things differently and asking for justification for department spending.
 - Board Member Brian Barton stated, using a truck as an example, that the board hashes things out to pay less than the original proposed money talked about. He feels that the Board has been doing a good job with taking care of the public's money
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass disagreed and agreed with Board Member Bill Ertel stating that there definitely were probing questions being asked and that as a board they could always do better.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel's concern is, "How big the department should be in 10 years." Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt stated that it is important to look down the road to attempt to foresee future growth, growing volunteers and the department as people move into the area. Board Secretary Heather Glass stated that a five-year growth plan would be needed.
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler sees no cautionary flags as the Board functions around stewardship and thinks the Board is doing a good job in this category.
- Demonstration of good governance practices: How the board goes through administrative processes
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass feels that the board makes great attempts to take corrective action when necessary and the Administrative Assistant Jennifer Vetter helps to provide the board with information. SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler stated that Jennifer Vetter has the benefit of some of the trainings that board members may not have to aid the board with the information and catching items that need attention.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that having the Administrative Assistant's help in this capacity is a problem and unfair to burden the Administrative Assistant with when the information is at the SDAO where the Board can reach out to get. Per Board Member Bill Ertel, the Administrative Assistant wears lots of hats and feels that this is dangerous to have her help/research. He feels that this should be the responsibility of the Board.
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt states that having the Administrative Assistant is helpful when you are unaware of what to ask.
 - Administrative Assistant Jennifer Vetter gave her input that her position is not a volunteer position, it is a paid position, and it should be her background to know better. When board members are new they don't know what to ask and she is a resource to point them in the right

direction toward the SDAO, requirements/expectations, and to keep them running on track. Jennifer Vetter feels that it is her responsibility to assist the board in any way she can.

- SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler stated that in her experience most administrative assistant individuals do serve the purpose of keeping the board informed and does not see what Jennifer Vetter does as unusual.
- Board Member Bill Ertel stated that there is expertise on the Board and if one member has a question that there probably could help. He states caution in Jennifer Vetter interpreting a statute.
- Board Members Brian Barton, Heather Glass, and Claudia Pratt all stated that Jennifer Vetter does not interpret any of the statutes but points the Board to the statutes to read. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that this is not always his experience and when asked by the Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt, Board Member Bill Ertel states that he has not experienced any interpretations in the last 6 months.
- SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler board members can help each other with questions. She sees a balance and mix of resources taking place.
- Board Member Bill Ertel stated that with a person like the administrative assistant he been seen as a 'defacto chair' when the Chair was not involved. This was not discussed since this is not relevant to any of the current members' tenure on the Board.

Operational Compliance & Resilience: How do you know that compliance deadlines are met?

- Overall regulatory compliance & timeliness of compliance reporting
 - Jennifer Vetter stated that she meets the payroll deadlines for all reporting and this can be seen in the financial reports
 - Chief Vetter presents and monthly Chief's Report with costs, proposals, and training.
 - The accountant and Jennifer Vetter do work together for the annual report and states that she keeps an open door with the Board.
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler clarified the question to be about regulatory agencies such as DPSST
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he is unaware as a board member of what regulatory reporting(s) are taking place
 - Chief Vetter stated that the Board is informed on trainings that are taking place.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he is unaware of what is required
 - Chief Vetter is understanding that the Board may not understand the operational side, however, it is a good faith to know that your Fire Chief is taking care to make sure that the department is running within all the compliances.
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler stated that it can be complicated but may help the Board to understand if a certain topic is highlighted for them to know what is a regulatory compliance.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that in this conversation that he is hearing that the information being discussed is 'secret information' that is being kept from the Board. SDAO Teri Dresler stated that she did not hear that in the conversation. Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt stated that the Board does not micromanage the Training Officer. Board Member Bill Ertel requested if SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler could if training records are prohibited from examination by the Board. Jennifer Vetter stated that she would get the Board the link to the public information site to who holds what certifications and the OHA websites that show public certifications.
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt states that she is proactive to ask about regulatory changes
- Board Member David Applegate leaves at 19:04

- Potential Challenges: How resilient do you feel the district is and have you talked about how the district would handle such and continue to operate
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass stated that the Board discusses wildland aspects, training, and being prepared for disasters, including having other agencies which manage emergency operations come out and speak to the public during community meetings held by the fire station. Chief Vetter concurred and Jennifer Vetter spoke of the Slater Fire in which former Interim Chief Jim Stearns was hired to be a communication liaison so that the Chief Vetter could stay in the district.

Budget and Finance: How prepared does everyone feel about the budget process and information shared?

- Consistency in budgeting to meet needs
 - Chief Vetter states he reviews the needs with his staff and then reviews those numbers with the Deputy Clerk to calculate before the budget is presented to the Budget Committee
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt explained that the district does look at trends and Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he feels a good job is done as a whole.
- Soundness of Financial Practices: How comfortable are board members with understanding where they are throughout the year?
 - Board Vice Chairperson Brian Barton stated that he is comfortable seeing the monthly and annual budget stating that they can ask questions and get them answered.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that grants have been a struggle with ideas changing mid-year of how to represent them in the budget. SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler stated that grants can be a challenge and that this is not uncommon which is why there are seminars held. She agrees with Board Member Bill Ertel that most grants don't anticipate paying for the administrative aspect of receiving and managing grants.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he would exercise caution in the rating and states that the Board Finances are last on the agenda and everyone is weary and thus votes to approve the financial reports because they are too tired and want to go home. Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt disagreed.

Customer Relations: How do you as a district deal with those problems as complaints arise?

- Management of Service Problems
 - Chief Vetter states that an answer is given to the public whenever possible.
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt has asked that her phone number be given out to make the attempt to resolve issues.
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass and Board Member Bill Ertel stated that people have been invited to the meetings to allow the Board to hear matters as a group
- Improvements to Customer Service
 - Board Member Bill Ertel states he gets complaints that people don't know that a Board Meeting is being held.
 - Chief Vetter stated that it is encouraged that people attend and meetings are posted the same as community events, people are made aware as best as possible and seem to attend the community events.

- Posts are made to social media and the website. Social media posts from the department are shared to the local pages. The web page states the consistent holdings of regular board meetings.
- Board Secretary Heather Glass sees posts from the District about fire prevention, calls, and other information to keep the public informed.

Personnel Administration: What is your perspective of the work climate?

- Staff Morale and Work Climate
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass and Board Vice Chairperson Brian Barton state they feel the climate is good
 - Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt states morale is good but listens when she is approached
- Management of Employee Performance
 - The Chief and Deputy Clerk report to the Board and receive a yearly evaluation by different Board Members each year.
 - The Chief evaluates his employees' performance and reports back to the Board.
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler stated that evaluations in writing with expectations and goals give an employer something to speak to when there are issues.
- Alignment of Positions and Work Assignments
 - There are positions descriptions for each paid position
 - SDAO Rep. Teri Dresler went over pay equity with the Board. Each position is only held by one position and is reflective of ongoing duties.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel is unclear if there are position descriptions. Board Secretary Heather Glass confirmed that the Chief description was looked at recently by evaluating Board Members. Jennifer Vetter stated that each paid employee does have a position description, including the seasonal employees that have worked during the issuance of the State Fire Marshal Upstaffing Grant.

Policies and Procedures:

- Soundness of Administrative Policies
 - Chief Vetter stated that Lexipol was hired to write an updated policy and procedure manual and that internal SOPs are also being updated by Operations.
- Consistency Between Practices and Policies
 - The policy book is newly updated and personnel are still reviewing the policies
 - The workplace is in process of implemented the new policies and procedures
- Efficiency of Staff and Work Systems
 - Per Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt, during the remodel, growth was not considered and there are two offices with now four employees sharing the two offices recognizing that physical office space is an impediment to efficiency.
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the original design didn't include the two hired staff outside of the Fire Chief and Deputy Clerk

- Jennifer Vetter stated that our systems to complete tasks are highly accessible for the staff and volunteers citing a recent fire call to serve as an example of how time was shortened from start to finish of apparatus restoration and reporting.

Board Assessment Finished at 19:58

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Announcements:

Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt reviewed a letter written by the SDAO regarding a nomination for Outstanding Special District Award for Jennifer Vetter for recognition and presented Jennifer Vetter with a Certificate of Excellence.

Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes:

The Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed and any questions discussed.

- October 11, 2022 Regular Board Meeting Minutes: Approved
 - A motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2022 as presented was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Heather Glass. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel commented that Brewster's 3% is based on assessed valuation and inquired about Personnel and Recruitment asking if Lower Divide was reimbursed and Chief Vetter stated that due to the upstaffing grant, there was no reimbursement provided.

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

Chief's Report:

Alarm Reports (total of 23 calls):

- Medical – 8
- Open Burns – 7
- Fires – 3 Grass Fire
- Vehicle Fire – 1
- Public Assists – 3
- Move Ups – 1 (Applegate RFPD)

Discussion: Chief Vetter commented on how exciting calls can be with the citing of a medical call that resulted in an amazing turn around

Personnel/Recruitment:

- Currently have 11 volunteer firefighters and 2 support volunteers
- Potential one volunteer locally

- Shifted to winter schedule which will lessen the number of firefighters to staff the station
- OSFM up-staffing grant was able to keep firefighters during needed times

Training:

- Chief Vetter and Lieutenant Oskar Sundell completed Company Officer 1 Course (DPSST Certification with Task Book)
- Firefighter 2 has 5 firefighters enrolled
- 2 Firefighters enrolled in RCC NREMT Basic Program
- 1 Firefighter enrolled in RCC Paramedic Program
- Training is offered twice per week

Meetings:

- Meet and Greet with 2 Sheriff Candidates and County Commission Candidates
- Chief Vetter and Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter attended the OFDDA Conference
 - During the conference opening, a tribute was given to former Board Members Wes and Sue Nevotti for their service to the Williams Fire District and the Williams community.
 - Attendees gained knowledge of grant writing and opportunities

Operations / Station / Land / Equipment:

- Museum (old fire station)
 - Chief Vetter and Community Resource Officer Rosie Faith are gathering information to post letter to public regarding why donations are being sought.
 - 1936 Engine 1 will remain in her bay until the museum is completed.

Support Group:

- Dressed up 1936 fire engine for event and along with firefighters participated in the 3rd annual Trunk or Treat and handed out popcorn and candy
- Awards Banquet – Tabled
- Christmas Party
 - Support Group to meet next week
 - Board Secretary Heather Glass stated Santa will be in town on the 18th and she may attend the Support Group Meeting

Safety Committee:

- Elected positions:
 - Chairperson: Volunteer Firefighter Jon Scaroni
 - Vice Chairperson: Lieutenant Oskar Sundell
 - Secretary: Chief Rick Vetter
 - Safety Member: Firefighter Devin Brennan

- A motion to accept the Chief's Report as written was made by Brian Barton and seconded by Heather Glass. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Chair:

- 115 & 137 East Fork Road
 - Tax lots are tied to one title and will need to be researched to divide the two properties. If this research is to be done it will cost the seller \$800 to \$2500 to divide the lots.
 - Possible outcomes
 - Seller pays to separate tax lots
 - Seller sells both parcels
 - Buyer backs out of purchase

Old Business:

- 115 and 137 East Fork Road - Tabled
- Museum Building Update (by Brian Barton)
 - Electrical not finished, county deems property commercial and electrical panel to meet permitting is 6 months to a year out to get
 - \$600 to put new light on pole over diesel tanks and to finish work done so far
- Policies and Procedures Manual - Lexipol
 - Cost to renew online subscription \$3,400
 - Online subscription will be cancelled by Chief Vetter and policy printed instead
- Station Pick-Up – Vehicle Purchase – Tabled
- Water Master Contract to Dig Test Holes
 - No expense to the Fire District
 - Documents have been returned and District will own well in 30 years
 - Water Master waiting to find contractor to dig/drill test holes

- A motion to discontinue Lexipol's online subscription was made by Brian Barton and seconded by Heather Glass. The motion passed unanimously.

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

New Business:

- Office Space – Tabled

Clerk/Treasurer Report:

Clerk/Treasurer reports for November 8, 2022 were reviewed by the board members. Deputy Clerk 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:

- The Operations (aka Chief's) credit card
- The Admin's credit card
- The Umpqua Bank Account
- Profit and Loss Statements
- LGIP Account
- Modular Home Lease Report
- OSFM Staffing Payroll Report

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel commented that he liked the reports presented for the seasonal hires and mobile home. He will discuss questions he has at a later date. Board Vice Chairperson inquired on the credit card accounts. Board Chairperson Claudia Pratt inquired on the S.O.S. Sanitation garbage service.

- A motion to approve the Clerk Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Brian Barton and seconded by Claudia Pratt. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Next regular scheduled board meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2022 at 6pm. Any public questions can be submitted in writing to WRFPD, PO Box 81, Williams, Oregon 97544.

Discussion Regarding Public Input: Board Member Bill Ertel stated that a citizen is concerned why the agenda is not posted on the website. Board Member Bill Ertel confirmed it is posted on the website. This person also asked why public input is not being taken at meetings and only accepted by mail, the minutes are not available for 2 months, and no audio available. Board Member Bill Ertel confirmed that the meeting minutes are up within 30 days. Public comment/input is not a right by law, however, Board Members discussed that they would like to add public comment/questions (2 minutes each) back onto the agenda to take place at the end of the meeting with a response given at the next board meeting if needed.

Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter stated that there is a form on the website for the public to make a submission. Also, per the Department of Justice, it is not a legal mandate for public commentary, however, the Board stated that they would like to hear from the public.

- A motion to implement public input/comment on the meeting agenda to provide the opportunity for the public to have two minutes at the end of the meeting with a response given at the next scheduled regular board meeting (if needed) was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Heather Glass. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Discussions ensued that a Zoom conference call number will be added to the agenda going forward for people to call in and listen via speaker phone.

Motion to Adjourn:

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

Attachments: Board Meeting Agenda, Previous Board Meeting Minutes, SDAO Board Practices Assessment, Addendum to Real Estate Sale Agreement, Fire Chief’s Report, Clerk/Treasurer’s reports for November 8, 2022.

Meeting adjourned at: 20:52pm

Respectfully,

Claudia Pratt, Board Chairperson