

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Special Board Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2023

Called to order: 09:05am

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

Chief Rick Vetter

Lt. Oskar Sundell

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter

District Fire Marshal – Jon Scaroni

Community Members Present:

Deanna Ertel – Williams Community Member

Announcements:

Board Member Claudia Pratt appreciated that Board Chair Heather Glass assisted Board Member Claudia Pratt in seeing where the speaking timer was voted in. Board Member Claudia Pratt also wanted that if one person gets timed that everyone gets timed. Board Member Claudia Pratt also recognized the notations at the bottom of the agenda and would like the appendices of the old policy updated from 1991. Board Chair Heather Glass wanted it noted for the record that she did time other people.

White Paper #001: Motion and 2nd on table from last meeting:

A motion to approve White Paper #001 OSFM Grant Admin Funds Expenditures from the October 24, 2023 meeting was made by Brian Barton and seconded by David Applegate.

Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the ‘White Paper’ title was not appropriate and the appropriate title should be ‘OSFM Grant...’ and not ‘White Paper’. She is still confused with the amounts and her numbers don’t figure to the numbers presented and she is not finding it in the grant. Jennifer Vetter stated that the funds need to be divided over 3 years and that if she would have had the questions ahead of time, she could have put together an answer. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she didn’t want to sit down and ask ahead of time and submit the questions in writing as it isn’t a policy. Jennifer Vetter is asking for in-depth questions to be submitted ahead of time so she could develop an answer.

Board Chair Heather Glass is asking to decide on the compensation of the two employees the Board oversees and to adhere to the amounts in the budget. Jennifer Vetter sees a disconnect in understanding. She states that an issue is not knowing what was adopted in the budget. The

Board should know their purview and they don't know it. Secondly, for the numbers that are given that are in the budget that is what you are working with and who cares about other numbers. Board Member Claudia Pratt expects Jennifer Vetter to put the correct number in and Board Member Claudia Pratt is unsure what the correct number is when asked. Jennifer Vetter stated that calculations make the difference in numbers and back in May and June the budget was adopted and the Board had no issues or questions about the budget numbers. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that they didn't have a copy of the grant and Jennifer Vetter confirmed that to be false with the fact that the Board was requiring Jennifer Vetter to submit a copy to disclose the grants that were awarded during the fiscal year. During the time of the budget hearing if one was confused then, one may have brought it up then.

Board Member Bill Ertel states he is confused because of the way the grants were processed last year. Jennifer Vetter created a 3-ring binder for the grants to be filed and reviewed and Board Member Bill Ertel stated it was almost impossible for him to find the time to come by to review them. He feels that he has to catch up on what is buried inside a grant and that our process is somewhat interesting. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired if Jennifer Vetter wrote the grants and when she stated she wrote most of them he stated she had control over handing out the grants and probably administering them and that the board didn't get to approve them and that is the reason, per Board Member Bill Ertel, why the Board is struggling. Chief Vetter stated that it was brought to the Board that the department is seeking grants and the Board puts their trust and pay in someone to manage the grant and won't let them manage the grant, questioning everything they do. Board Member Claudia Pratt recognized it was still Board Member Bill Ertel's time to talk. Board Member Bill Ertel says that the Board is being force-fed the grants and praises Board Chair Heather Glass for developing the White Paper. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he had no idea that the grant had monies embedded for Chief Vetter and Jennifer Vetter. He states that the numbers don't fit. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that the last 3-4 months the grants have been discussed. It has been discussed and decided and Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that the Board needs to trust the people that are writing the grants and administering them. The department is running very well and until we see something wrong to let it run. He clarifies that in order for the grants to be received in a timely manner they all aren't going to be run by the Board. Board Secretary David Applegate stated his interpretation of bringing sought grants before the Board takes time and we may miss out on submission.

Board Member Bill Ertel recognized that Jennifer Vetter will receive compensation every month and called it a 'big bump' in her salary and it seems to him that Jennifer Vetter's position is requiring more money. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the discussion isn't about Jennifer Vetter's position it is about grant funds. Board Member Bill Ertel asked if it has to be \$750 or can it be \$100? Board Member Claudia Pratt agreed with Board Vice Chair Brian Barton that the Board shouldn't have to okay a grant before submission but she would like to know what is going on. She also would like to know what Jennifer Vetter is doing for the grant and roughly how many hours it would take. Board Chair Heather Glass interjected with that all is written on the White Paper and unsure if what Board Member Claudia Pratt is asking is the Board's purview. Jennifer Vetter stated that the shelf that broke from the weight on her shelf is all grant information/documentation. She also stated that whether it is an email, financials, or an example

of a weekend where she spent two twelve-hour days on top of her regular time working on grant paperwork. Chief Vetter stated he wanted to make a point of how one board member is asking Jennifer Vetter to show more documentation, more paperwork of what she is doing and another stating why do we have to pay her more and saying she doesn't deserve it. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton asked if the Board is going to ask Jennifer Vetter to justify her time and tell the Board what she is doing, why isn't anyone on the Board asking the Chief to justify his time and what he is doing. "Leave it alone until someone is screwing with it, embezzling, then we will deal with it". Board Member Claudia Pratt says she knows what Jennifer Vetter is doing and wants other members to know. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that he doesn't want to know what Jennifer Vetter does. He sees her car there at the fire department, "there was a fire and the first one there was Jenny... leave it alone."

Board Member Bill Ertel says it is difficult that Jennifer Vetter never reports anything during the board meetings and then to find out she works two days straight and he is caught off guard. He wants to hear a clue of what she is doing, how many hours she works, and in his mind it is a huge black hole. Chief Vetter asked why he has to micromanage her. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that she is central and manages all the books and from risk management this is not good and we need to know what she is doing so the Board is not caught off guard. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that this is unfair to ask of her when this is not being asked of the Chief. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that indeed they are asking this of the Chief with the Chief's single page report. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Jennifer Vetter's report is not only a grant report as it includes the sending of 17 document attachments of what she is doing during the month... "we know what she is doing."

Board Member Claudia Pratt would like to vote on a yearly basis for the next 3 years to manage the COLA adjustment.

- Board Member Bill Ertel made a motion to adopt to adopt Board Member Claudia Pratt's suggestion to modify the way the COLA increase is adopted. No second was made.

Board Chair Heather Glass asked why does it matter? It is not embedded in the grant but part of the motion. Board Member Heather Glass stated that if COLA comes out with a percentage, then Jennifer Vetter would get the same COLA adjustment as the Chief. Board Member Claudia Pratt was under the impression the discussion was only for Jennifer Vetter. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the motion includes both the Chief and Jennifer Vetter. Board Member Claudia Pratt wanted to hear what the Chief does if he is included.

Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that he made a motion, it was seconded and he wanted to vote on it and he was tired of picking it apart.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Abstain (Basis: she doesn't like the COLA part in the motion and would like it for a one year instead of 3 year)
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Nay
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- Motion passes 3 ayes to 2 nays

Deputy Clerk Job Description transition to Human Resources exempt status

Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Jennifer Vetter passes the exempt status and by the standard she is at now, she should be paid overtime. The Board needs to increase her salary to meet the criteria of Exempt. Board Member Bill Ertel praised Board Chair Heather Glass on the White Paper she created.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated he thinks this is the third time that Jennifer Vetter came forward that the Board is in violation of BOLI. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Jennifer Vetter didn't come forward but that the Board Chair is bringing this to the Board. Board Member Bill Ertel says that Jennifer Vetter attempts to intimidate the Board with her claims and the Board gives her more compensation. Board Member Bill Ertel says there is nothing to follow if she is or isn't working any hours and it is a number that Jennifer Vetter produces. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated her and Board Chair Heather Glass sat down and discussed that Jennifer Vetter's hours are flexible. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he would like to hire an attorney to look at the department practices regarding BOLI. Chief Vetter stated that Board Member Bill Ertel is the only who brings this up and is Board Member Bill Ertel thinking the department is violating BOLI? Board Chair Heather Glass recollected that the department had one volunteer and now the department has 15 volunteers, a lot of paperwork, and \$1mil in grants to manage, the workload from before to now... there is a lot more paperwork and a lot more to do and the Board asks for a lot of things. Board Secretary David Applegate stated we are in a heavy discussion back and forth. If we vote and it passes, it is taken care of and we don't need to hire a lawyer.

- A motion was made by David Applegate to approve the job description as presented by Jennifer Vetter and move to Exempt status with a pay increase to \$36k per year to be above the BOLI Exempt status which is a monthly increase of \$86 and seconded by Brian Barton.

Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt does not have a problem with the job description itself just that there is a lot of redundancy. She handed out copies of what she received from Monica from SDAO recognizing the potential conflict if a person works in HR and is a volunteer. There is a discussion of the discrepancy in whether a person is employed or a volunteer when it comes to

human resources and more discussion of what human resources manager does. Board Member Claudia Pratt states that her understanding is that items under HR is not managing some of the items listed on the job description. Jennifer Vetter stated that upon achieving her degree those items were touched on in management of Human Resources. There are miscommunications taking place with not understanding/understanding the idea conveyed by Board Member Claudia Pratt. Board Member Claudia Pratt states that she is not picking on Jennifer Vetter just on the form itself.

Board Member Bill Ertel asked if Jennifer Vetter is going to continue to be the administrative assistant and Board Chair Heather confirmed yes and that the job description basically says what she does and her day-to-day job. Board Member Bill Ertel suggested that the Board doesn't have to make a decision today and Board Secretary David Applegate stated that there is a motion on the table. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he went online the day before to see that a HR manager makes \$90k per year and Jennifer Vetter would be eligible for that. Board Member Bill Ertel would like to see the Board take a deep breath and take time to think and hire someone unbiased like Jim Stearns. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she did talk to Jim Stearns who stated that the district isn't paying her enough. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that it isn't about pay and several voices at the table stated it sounds like it is about pay. Fire Chief stated that the Board should give her a 3 month leave and see where the department stands. The Board is constantly in confusion of what does she do, what is her job, what is going on, why are we paying her for this... Chief Vetter would like to see the Board come to a decision and let the unanimous decision happen. Board Member Bill Ertel is having trouble with the title. Board Member Bill Ertel is asking who is the HR Manager in the sister districts. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Board Member Bill Ertel would be hard pressed to find someone that does all that Jennifer Vetter does. Board Member Bill Ertel asked what the title of the HR Manager in IV is called and Chief Vetter stated that her title is a Chief. Board Member Bill Ertel stated he would have to Google what it is called other than the HR Manager. He stated that it seemed to him that with companies he worked for that HR Managers did not do financial reports, yet Jennifer Vetter stated that in her HR degree studies, financial management was part of her studies within her degree. Board Member Claudia Pratt asked what was that person called. Jennifer Vetter stated that it is about asset management, human asset management, worker's comp, business management, liability, etc. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she doesn't want to change that the HR Manager is also a volunteer but in her statement is a potential legality with access to HR files. Board Chair Heather Glass stated if the Lt. is able to handle complaints with Jennifer Vetter that is where it is mitigated. Board Member Claudia Pratt states that she feels title matters and that the Board should come up with a different title. Board Chair Heather Glass stated to vote and see where the Board stands.

Board Member Bill Ertel stated that "this is interesting" and proposes tabling this. Chief Rick Vetter prefers that this moves forward for the benefit of the department. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that this information was out well in advance and it was attempted to discuss this before so everyone should have reviewed this prior to this meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt made her review changes in red and feels that the changes are just in the wording.

Board Member Bill Ertel acknowledges that the Board has its bumps and grinds and finds it hard to come to a board meeting to be attacked by the Fire Chief. He states that what is going to happen is that the job description is not written by a professional... Board Chair Heather Glass reminds Board Member Bill Ertel that the Board asked Jennifer Vetter to write her job description. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that what the Board wants to do is “ram-rod through making Jennifer Vetter the Human Resource Manager and giving her additional abilities and compensation”. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the compensation is very minimal and that the Board has been talking about this for 5 years. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that it seems to him that there is no openness to modify, change, and appreciates the Fire Chief’s thoughts and probably wasted his time attending the meeting as this will be approved. With one minute left, Board Member Bill Ertel wishes that he could vet. Board Member Claudia Pratt recognized that the Board Chair Heather Glass had written in email that in terms that the job Jennifer Vetter holds, it does not need to be broken out in order to find out the aspect of HR and the form we have suffices. The Board all has experiences to come up with a job description if needed. It is cruel to come up with a description and then take a job away from them. She acknowledges that the board members are not the voice but the voice of one and that they do not write job descriptions. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that as a board they don’t write job descriptions. She is not changing what Jennifer Vetter does but how it is worded. Now that we are going to vote on this Board Member Claudia Pratt states that discussion is not considered. Board Chair Heather Glass is stating that discussion is considered and happening. Board Secretary disagrees and states that this is about transitioning Jennifer Vetter to exempt and let’s vote. The vote includes the job description, the pay increase, and the exempt status. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she is unopposed to what is written by the Amin, Deputy Clerk, HR Person, she can put in as many hours as she wants... she is the voice of one... let’s vote. Board Member Claudia Pratt would like to amend the motion to vote on the exempt status and pay increase. First clear the current motion and second....

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

➤ Motion passes 3 ayes to 2 nays

Board Chair Heather Glass acknowledges that every year the job description can be evaluated.

Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that out of the 32 times Jennifer Vetter’s job description was discussed, they were before the majority of the Board sat as only Board Member Bill Ertel was on the Board. She went over why some of those times that part of those don’t apply from emails, salary increases, budget meetings, motions, pay increases, evaluation, budget meetings, board

evaluation, and an upstaffing grant. Fire Chief Vetter states that it seems that by reading the increases that it sounds to him that Jennifer Vetter points out her existence is addressed because it is an issue. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that her name was brought up 6.4 times on average per year, whether negative or positive.

Board Member Claudia Pratt referenced old policy page 27 that the Fire District comes first that it is understood that the district has first call on all its employees regardless of any effect of secondary employment.

Board Member Claudia Pratt received a phone call from Steve Thomas (the realtor) about his ex-brother-in-law stating that he will be foreclosing on the property behind the fire station. He is willing to foreclose and clean the property of people behind the fire station. Chief Vetter stated if it is reasonable, it is an investment. Lt. Sundell stated it was an investment and dependent on price. His question is "Can it be supported in the long run?" The question is how much. Board Member Bill Ertel states it is probably a good investment and states that he is unsure where Lt. Sundell is going with personnel. Lt. Sundell stated that he has no intention of increasing his fleet or that without the budget could the district's budget support hiring personnel. Lt. Sundell confirmed to Board Member Claudia Pratt that the addition of the grant personnel is a huge benefit to the district. Board Member Bill Ertel would like to know what our income stream looks like to pay off a mortgage and Board Chair Heather Glass asked can we really come up with that without a price? Board Member Claudia Pratt does not have a price discussed and Board Member Bill Ertel stated to let the reposessor know that the fire district is interested in knowing a sales price.

District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni is asking the Board to release \$2874 out of the grant to put a hitch, trailer brakes, and plug to tow the new equipment with 8762.

- A motion was made by Claudia Pratt to approve the installation of trailer brakes, hitch, and plug on 8762 in the amount of \$3,000 and seconded by David Applegate

Discussion: Chief Vetter is okay with this and the maintenance of 8762 will be a grant expenditure.

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

- Motion passes unanimously.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41am

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chair