

# **WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

## **Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 30, 2020**

Called to Order at 8:39am

### **Roll Call:**

#### **Board Members Present**

Position 1 – Claudia Pratt (via phone)  
Position 2 – Sue Nevotti  
Position 3 – Todd Rumery  
Position 4 – Bill Ertel  
Position 5 – Wes Nevotti

#### **Williams Staff Present**

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter  
Chief – Rick Vetter  
Captain – Nicco Holt  
Lieutenant – Oskar Sundell

### **Public Presence:**

Jon Scaroni – Firefighter, Resident

### **Agenda Additions:**

Discussions of discrimination

### **Announcements:**

None.

### **Agenda Review:**

Additions by Vice Chair Bill Ertel:

- Board Member Access to Active 911
- Discrimination Discussion
- CPA Review Documents
- Deputy Clerk Salary Review, change wording to “Salary Compensation”

### **Public Input:**

None

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

The Regular Board Meeting minutes of October 26, 2020 were reviewed. Vice Chair Bill Ertel suggested the production and distribution of the Board minutes within 7-10 days after the meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt via telephone has acknowledged no changes on her behalf of the minutes review.

- A motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2020 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Sue Nevotti.

In review of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020 scribed by Vice Chair Bill Ertel, the topics of the Special Board Meeting were summarized and briefly discussed. The assumption of discrimination was discussed and agreed by all to be unfounded. Vice Chair Bill Ertel felt that the collection of public donations by the Deputy Clerk should be overseen in relation to the collection of the United Way Fire Relief donations. Vice Chair Bill Ertel also discussed his vote in the hire of Chief Vetter and their interactions prior to Chief Vetter's hire. Chief Vetter stated that he wants to work as a team and to work together. Vice Chair Bill Ertel and Chief Vetter recognized and discussed the differences between their points of views. Vice Chair Bill Ertel has stated that he is pleased with the department.

Board Member Todd Rumery believes that the Special Board Meeting Minutes presented for approval are not representative of any discrimination as the minutes state. Board Member Todd Rumery objects to the approval of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020.

- A motion to approve the Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Wes Nevotti.

**\*\*The Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020 were *not approved* as presented.**

#### **Fire Chief's Report:**

- **Number of calls in August**
  - 15 calls total
    - 8 Medical calls requiring transport
    - 2 Lift Assist
    - 1 Structure fire on Panther Gulch Rd. that has consumed a building used for drying Hemp/Cannabis
    - 2 Vehicle Fires
    - 4 Smoke investigations/Open burn illegal material
    - 1 Power line problem
    - 3 Calls requiring CPR
    - 7 MVA – 2 Mutual aids with Applegate Fire
- **Personnel/Recruitment**
  - 3 New volunteers
    - K.C. Welch – Structural Firefighting and EMS recruit
    - Brook Welch – Structural Firefighting and EMS recruit
    - Bethany Harris – Wildland Recruit
- **Training**
  - Trainings focused on structural firefighting and operational functions on fire ground scenes.

- Vehicle extrication exercises made possible by generous donations of vehicles for the department to train on made by local residents
  - Mandatory Covid-19 Training
  - DPSST Ventilation prop on district property for training
  - RITA trailer is on loan to the department to offer other training props
- **Wildland Grant**
    - Lieutenant Sundell has been utilizing the grant that offers a 50% reimbursement on costs to gear up for the upcoming wildland season
- **Meetings**
    - Rogue Valley Chiefs Association
      - Partnership between Josephine and Jackson Counties
      - Obenchain, Slater, and Alameda Fires
      - Reimbursement Recovery for responding agencies
      - Position Changes in the Association
    - Coffee with the Chief
      - Guest Speakers
        - David Ferguson with USDA (National Resource Conservation Service)
        - Representatives from ODF
      - Topics
        - Fire Prevention
        - Defensible Space
        - Evacuation Procedures
        - Fuel Reduction
    - Meeting with Chief McLaughlin
      - Tightening relationships between both agencies
    - Josephine County Commissioners (zoom meeting)
    - Ops Meeting with Josephine County EMS providers
      - Covid-19 Changes and responses
- **Property/Station/Equipment**
    - Equipment:
      - Communication Grant from 2019
        - Replaced 2 antennas
        - Replaced base station
        - Serviced handheld radios adding identifiers to the radios
      - Hose Testing and Ladder Testing Complete
      - Lieutenant Sundell driving trucks regularly and operating pumps regularly
      - Staff Vehicles are up to date on services
      - Tractor will need service in the future for annual check-up

- Station Water Supply Pump went down
      - Serviced and fixed by volunteer firefighter Jon Scaroni
      - Pump is now up and running
    - Tree Trimming around the station to allow truck clearance
    - Volunteer Firefighter Jon Scaroni donated grass seed to the station for planting at the mobile
  - **Miscellaneous**
    - United Way Donations
      - Jennifer Vetter worked with Dee Anne Everson, CEO/Director of the United Way, to put this together
      - 2 week drive
      - All proceeds go to the victims of the Alameda Fire
      - Raised over \$3500
      - Covered by local news/media agency
      - Checks/Monies raised were paid to the order to the United Way from the community
        - No monies mingled in with the department funds
    - Decorated the station for Christmas'
    - Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus visited the station
      - Put together by Rosie Faith
      - Toy give away
      - Covered by local news/media agency
    - Extra OSHA compliance cleaning for COVID
    - Captain Holt is the COVID Compliance Officer
      - Vaccines to be offered to the department personnel/volunteers
      - 2 series vaccination
- A motion to approve the Chief's Report as presented was made by Todd Rumery and seconded by Sue Nevotti.

#### **Other Reports:**

- **Chair**
  - Nothing to report
- **Support Group**
  - Meetings are not being held at this time due to COVID
  - United Way Donations to the Fire Relief Fund
    - Support Group kicked off the donations with \$500
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel interested in who the leadership is in the Support Group
    - All positions are voluntary (no compensation)
    - Chief Rick Vetter is the president
    - Jennifer Vetter is the Treasurer
    - The Support Group has its own funds/bank account

- The Support Group is its own entity
  - Many of the department members wear multiple hats and volunteer in multiple ways
- Christmas party cancelled due to COVID
- **Safety Committee**
  - Not Held

#### **Unfinished Business:**

- **Finalization of Employee Benefits Package**
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel discussed his reasons for signing/not signing the benefits package check
  - Board Member Claudia Pratt interjected that not signing a bill payment can place the Board/District into a position of non-payment
  - Chief Vetter stated that time sensitive payments need to be dealt with in a timely manner
    - Reached out to the secondary signer with no response in return
  - Chief Vetter inquired that if a signing board member refuses to sign a check, is there another board member that can sign in place of the board member that is refusing to sign bill payments?
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated he is ready to sign the benefits check after withholding his signature for over two weeks.
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated he wants to be certain with what he signs and has had technical questions before feeling comfortable to sign the insurance benefits payments.
  - Board Member Claudia Pratt expressed her feelings of importance towards the payment providing health benefits
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed that the Board needs to have appropriate controls in place.
  - Captain Holt discussed his understanding that feedback from the previous meeting was that all questioned were answered and the reason why the Board had not voted on the package was to hold off due to the onboarding the new board member.
  - Captain Holt stated that conceptually, the Board approved the package but was just waiting on the swear-in of the new member for her participation in the approval process. If the Board has approved this, why is there a problem getting a signature for payment?
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel stated that Captain Holt's take is a fair enough and that this is a fair discussion.
    - A motion for the Board to approve the proposed health care package as presented on October 26, 2020 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Sue Nevotti.
    - Approved by majority:

- 🗳️ Claudia Pratt – aye
- 🗳️ Sue Nevotti – aye
- 🗳️ Todd Rumery – abstain
- 🗳️ Bill Ertel – abstain
- 🗳️ Wes Nevotti – aye

- An amendment to the aforementioned motion for the Board to approve the proposed health care package to be paid by ACH (electronic payment)
- Approved by majority:
  - 🗳️ Claudia Pratt – aye
  - 🗳️ Sue Nevotti – aye
  - 🗳️ Todd Rumery – abstain
  - 🗳️ Bill Ertel – abstain
  - 🗳️ Wes Nevotti – aye
- **Chief Evaluation by Board (past due)**
  - Chair Wes Nevotti did not bring his notes from the prior discussion to present at this meeting
  - Chief Vetter is willing to hold off his evaluation and make it a one year evaluation if the Board is okay with doing so

**New Business:**

- **Deputy Clerk Salary Review**
  - Last review was August of 2019, compensation adjusted to \$1000 per month
  - Jennifer Vetter was hired to do the bookkeeping, general administration, and the board minutes and agenda
  - Original agreement of \$500 per month based on 2-3 hours per week, per Vice Chair Bill Ertel.
  - There was no job description or agreement in writing
  - After 3 months of performance, the job was found to take more than 2-3 hours per week
  - The books were not up to date, upon hire the District had minimal volunteerism and staffing, previous recordings of business were not adequately taking place and had to be caught up
  - After 6 months employed, this position was reevaluated to taking more than the original assumed time to complete
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed that he was not understanding if I was an employee or a 'fee for service' contractor.
  - Jennifer Vetter has from the date of hire has always been paid as an employee for the District and never been paid as an independent contractor.

- Vice Chair Bill Ertel states that he read and understands that Jennifer Vetter's job has grown as the organization has grown.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel is exploring how to be fair in compensation with the bookkeeping and administrative duties that are required to do perform in Jennifer's position.
- Jennifer can work at her own pace and only requirement per Vice Chair Bill Ertel is to attend the board meetings
- Jennifer provided time sheets that give an average of how much time is taken over the course of three weeks that averaged to 28 hours per week not including time spent working on the SAFER Grant.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel gave an hourly rate that he found online starting at \$14-24 per hour as compensation for a bookkeeping skills. Administrative work \$15-17 per hour.
- Jennifer Vetter also tracks the SAFER Grant and is paid separately by the grant for performing duties specific to the grant.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed the Board's awareness that Jennifer was not being compensated according to BOLI employee guidelines.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed that Jennifer Vetter should allow the recruitment officer to recruit for the district.
- Jennifer Vetter clarified that recruitment for support group members has no affiliation with recruitment for the fire district
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel's view of the position of Deputy Clerk is that of a fee for service and expressed the values of being fee for service
- Jennifer Vetter explained that she has been compensated as an employee from the date of hire and wishes her current status to stay as an employee to the District
- Chief Vetter expressed the functions that the other paid staff are full and there needs to be a skilled person in the Deputy Clerk's position as opposed to dividing the Deputy Clerk's skills among the operations and training positions.
- Chief Vetter stated that the position of the Deputy Clerk is a huge responsibility and even if Jennifer Vetter is willing to take minimum wage to be above BOLI requirements, that the Board at least pay her what is fair as this is not a position that is done for minimum wage throughout the fire service.
- Jennifer Vetter explained that the position requires a level of expertise. She is not requiring more than minimum wage and just wants to be compliant with BOLI laws by at least being paid minimum wage.
- Jennifer Vetter explained that accounting expertise is not what most employers or people understand the fine workings behind good work.
- Jennifer Vetter expressed her position of enjoyment to work for the District. Being intermediate level, being fast does not mean that one should earn less to make a living when providing an expertise.
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel is suggesting a written agreement for each employee to be employed just as the Fire Chief has a written agreement

- Captain Nicco Holt, Chairman Wes Nevotti, Board Member Claudia Pratt, Board Member Sue Nevotti, and Chief Vetter expressed that a written agreement is not required to be employed.
- Board Member Todd Rumery stated that he understands that Vice Chair Bill Ertel may be asking what the definition of Jennifer Vetter's job description is so we can move forward with the meeting.
- Jennifer Vetter explained that receiving employment compensation in the form of a salary does not mean that employment is waived and the employee is being paid fee for service.
- Jennifer Vetter expressed she is not trying to take advantage, just stating to be paid above BOLI requirements so she is paid a legal wage and paid fairly.
- Board Member Todd Rumery is asking what duties are operational that Jennifer Vetter performs.
- Jennifer Vetter stated that the website, Facebook, and the secretary aspects related to the board are removable from the job description.
- Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired "Who hired Oskar Sundell? Who is responsible to hire employees for the district?"
- Chief Vetter stated that he, hired as Chief, is the responsible person for hiring employees and managing operational decisions.
- Board Member Todd Rumery is asking for a course of action to take regarding Jennifer Vetter's compensation as Deputy Clerk.
- Chair Wes Nevotti asked what minimum wage is
- Jennifer Vetter advised the minimum wage is currently \$12 and in July 2021 goes up by \$0.50. She works an average of 28 hours per week excluding time spent on the Safer Grant.
- Jennifer Vetter workload may vary at the beginning of February and the end of November due to the nature of the job requirements due dates. The budget process is now being managed all year long.
- Jennifer Vetter has been in the past paid separately for budget work
- Vice Chair Bill Ertel expressed that he would not like to see Jennifer work more than 15 hours per week. He also explained being an employee vs being a fee for service and what benefits I would keep or have removed from the position.
- Chief Vetter stated that the position of the Deputy Clerk is not a position that a volunteer is going to fill and that Jennifer Vetter has gone over and beyond the call of duty for the department for what she is currently compensated for.
- Board Member Todd Rumery and Chief Vetter are in agreement to fairly compensate Jennifer Vetter
- Jennifer Vetter asked to be compensated at least minimum wage of \$12 to include \$0.50 BOLI increase of \$12.50 as it will go up to that in July per BOLI laws.
- Board Member Todd Rumery referenced a pay scale provided by Vice Chair Bill Ertel as a starting compensation for Jennifer Vetter.
- Chairman Wes Nevotti reviewed and compared 28 hours at different wage amounts of \$12 and \$17 per hour. Chairman Wes Nevotti encouraged that the Board trust that the hours given are the hours worked as Jennifer could state she



works more but does not. The district is seeing a benefit from her performance as to what the district has received in service of this position in the past.

- Todd Rumery stated that the bottom range of compensation in the county is \$14/hour. Almost \$400 per week working an average of 28 hours per week. This is Board Member Todd Rumery's recommendation
- Chief Vetter stated that all employed positions are part time. Chief Vetter feels that she is worth more than the entry level compensation and recommends that the Board conclude their review to place Jennifer Vetter at a comparable wage.
- Board Member Todd Rumery asked Jennifer if she is comfortable with them moving forward with \$14 per hour
- Chairman Wes Nevotti calculated the compensation of \$14 per hour with an average workweek of 28 hours to be \$1568 per month.
- Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired when there would be a performance evaluation.
- Chairman Wes Nevotti and Board Member Todd Rumery referenced an email from Jennifer Vetter and a Special Board Meeting on November 11 where Jennifer Vetter's duties and compensation were discussed.

➤ A motion to increase Jennifer Vetter's compensation to \$1500 effective January 1, 2021 was made by Bill Ertel and seconded by Todd Rumery. The motion was open to discussion. The motion passed unanimously

➤ Unanimously Approved:

- 🗳️ Claudia Pratt – aye
- 🗳️ Sue Nevotti – aye
- 🗳️ Todd Rumery – aye
- 🗳️ Bill Ertel – aye
- 🗳️ Nevotti – aye

➤ **Motion to Adjourn:**

A motion to close the recess the regular board meeting and reconvene next week was made by Wes Nevoti and seconded by Sue Nevotti at 11:37am.

\*\*\*\*\* Meeting Recess \*\*\*\*\*

**Break between meeting sessions**

\*\*\*\*\*Meeting Reconvened\*\*\*\*\*

Called to Order at 8:39am

**Roll Call:**

**Board Members Present**

Position 1 – Absent  
Position 2 – Sue Nevotti  
Position 3 – Todd Rumery  
Position 4 – Bill Ertel  
Position 5 – Wes Nevotti

**Williams Staff Present**

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter  
Chief – Rick Vetter  
Lieutenant – Oskar Sundell

**Public Presence:**

Jon Scaroni – Firefighter, Resident  
Wilma Hyde, Resident

**Announcements:**

None.

**Agenda Review:**

Update Policies and Procedure Manual - Chapter 2:Board of Directors  
○ Tabled due to the presenting board member being absent

**Public Input:**

None

**CPA Representation Letter**

- All letters of the annual review by the CPA have been signed by the Fire Chief and Board Chair and returned to the CPA
- Discussion items
  - Donations
    - Wilma Hyde had a complaint that donations are not anonymous according to what she had heard from an unidentified person and stating hearsay from another community member
    - Chief Vetter addressed Ms. Hyde’s concern that we do not approve of behavior that is unbecoming of the Fire Department and also that the fire department itself does not put the names of those out there that don’t want their names publicized.
  - FY ending June 30, 2020
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel is interested if the health care plan was discussed with the CPA
    - Chief Vetter and Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter verified that the approved budget that the CPA helped develop is aware of a health care plan

- Regular reconciliations
- Grant Income and Expenses
  - Pass through monies are recorded on a separate spreadsheet per the request of the accountant
  - The grant reimburses the district for expenses incurred in relation to grant specific parameters
  - Vice Chair Bill Ertel requested a copy of the grant

**Clerk/Treasurer Report:**

Clerk/Treasurer reports for December 30, 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.

Vice Chair Bill Ertel suggested getting a whole month's snapshot of the finances sent to the board members close to the beginning of the following month as reported as opposed to looking at the reports from the last meeting to the next meeting. Vice Chair also suggested that perhaps the board meet in the second week of the month as opposed to the fourth week of the month.

The credit cards were discussed and Deputy Clerk Jennifer Vetter has a sign-out sheet if the cards need to leave the building, keeping the cards from accidental misuse or being lost.

Each of the reports reviewed included:

- The Training (aka Chair's) credit card
- The Operations (aka 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 Todd Rumery and seconded by Sue Nevotti. The motion passed unanimously

**Revisit of the Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 11, 2020:**

Discussions were held as to the atmosphere of the Special Board Meeting and what may have been perceived or understood. The board members discussed the unapproved minutes from November 11, 2020 and voted to amend the minutes to what the board members agree to for verbiage to reflect the content of the meeting as the whole views the meeting. In an email, Board Member Claudia Pratt expressed her disagreement to accepting the Special Board Meeting minutes as presented.

- A motion to strike “discrimination” from the Special Board Meeting Minutes of November 11, 2020 was made by Wes Nevotti and seconded by Todd Rumery. The minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.
  
- Approved:
  - 🗳 Sue Nevotti – aye
  - 🗳 Todd Rumery – aye
  - 🗳 Bill Ertel – abstain
  - 🗳 Wes Nevotti – aye

**Announcement of Next Regular Board Meeting:**

Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30pm

**Motion to Adjourn:**

- A motion to adjourn was made by Wes Nevotti and seconded by Todd Rumery at 10:05am.

Attachments: Board Meeting Agendas, the Chief’s and Clerk/Treasurer’s reports for December 30, 2020, and Minutes of the previous Board Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Wes Nevotti, Chairman