



# SCAPPOOSE FIRE DISTRICT

P.O.Box 625 SCAPPOOSE, OREGON 97056

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## Scappoose Rural Fire District Board of Directors Regular Meeting Thursday, December 14, 2023

- I. Call to Order & Flag Salute- President Reeves called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and led the flag salute.
- II. Roll Call- President Reeves, Vice President Graham, Director Kriek, Director Gift, Director Sorenson, Chief Pricher, Asst. Chief Marks, BC Tim Hennigan, Lt. Anderson, FF Ahlers, FF Mathews, FF Hughes, FF Bernier, Emma Marks, and Member Outreach H. Oberbarnscheidt, FA Heath attended electronically.
- III. Public Comment- None
- IV. Consent Agenda
  - A. Approve Minutes from 11-9-2023 regular meeting- No comment.
  - B. Approve Nov. 2023 Profit & Loss Detail- Directors asked about account 750 expenses. Chief Pricher explained that multiple apparatus needed repair throughout the month, including the Rosenbauer engine. This apparatus is still out of service. Chief Marks spoke to specific apparatus repairs.

Director Sorenson asked if the discussion regarding audit expenses should take place at this point in the meeting or later during New Business. This will be discussed later in the meeting.

Chief Pricher explained that the IT company chose to change their billing practices mid-year. After we explained that changing billing practices in the middle of a fiscal year makes it difficult for agencies that operate on a July 1 to June 30 budget cycle, Centerlogic has agreed to hold off on changes until July 1, giving us time to budget accordingly.

- C. Approve Nov. 2023 Budget vs. Actual- Director Sorenson noted that tax turnovers were coming in.

Director Kriek moved to approve the consent agenda. Director Gift seconded.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

V. Statistical Data

- A. Ambulance Activity Report- Chief Pricher noted that ambulance revenue fluctuates month to month, which is why we budget conservatively. Director Sorenson asked if GEMT revenue was part of ambulance revenue. Chief Pricher explained that it is a separate line item but related to fire service EMS revenue.
- B. Response Activity Report- Chief Pricher noted that our responses are slightly below what they were at this point last year. Director Graham asked for the average run time for a transport. Depending on the facility transported to, the average time is 2.5 hrs. Overlapping call statistics were discussed among the board.

President Reeves asked for the number of active volunteers. There are approximately 22, at various levels of involvement. Member Outreach Oberbarnscheidt explained the number of new applicants, EMS only, support, and volunteers involved in the academy.

- C. Community Paramedic (CP) program- Thanks to CP Nina Kerr-Bryant and BC Hennigan for working to build the data reporting included in November's packet. Board members expressed interest in how this data is reported and how it will impact the community.  
The use of strictly electronic record keeping is new to the community paramedic, so the Chief's thanked staff for helping get this process on-boarded. The entire program was described to the Board, how the CP is dispatched to clients, program funding, and the cost-savings it provides.
- D. UAS Flight Summary- Director Gift asked if maintenance services to the UAS happened at specific hour intervals. Chief Pricher answered that each aircraft has its own service schedule.

VI. Staff Reports

- A. Chief's Report- Director Gift asked about specific meetings listed in the Chief's report. Chief Pricher described the purpose and content of meetings he attended in Nov. Director Sorenson referred to the photo of the water tender during the build process. He asked about water capacity. Chief Pricher answered 3,000 gal. and described its features.

- B. Operations Report- Chief Marks shared news that the Board of Commissioners extension of the current franchise agreements for the Ambulance Service Areas. At the time of this extension, the Board of Commissioners was not aware that the new ASA document had been approved by OHA on Monday, Dec. 11, 2023. This will be official and presented to the Commissioners within the next two weeks. These were extended through December 31, 2024.

Director Graham asked if the Chapman roof project had begun. Chief Marks said it had just begun earlier in the day. Director Graham asked about R431 maintenance expenses. Chief Marks explained the decision to scrap this apparatus due to high maintenance fees and low mileage.

Director Gift asked about transponders on FB43. FB 43 is in service for Christmas Ships but will be pulled again to put the second transducer on the boat.

- C. EMS Operations Report- This report will be combined in Operations Report in future board packets.

- D. Fire Marshal & Training Report- Director Gift asked if those items listed were in priority order. Chief Pricher said yes.

Director Kriek asked about a meeting Chief Bautista attended with the economic development council. Chief Pricher said Chief Bautista attended a meeting as the fire service representative. No details were shared as this is an ongoing project that is still in negotiations.

Director Sorensen asked about two new FF 1 volunteers. MO Oberbarnscheidt will provide an update on the status and number of volunteers in the January board packet.

President Reeves noted the swearing in ceremony scheduled for December 27<sup>th</sup>. Chief Pricher confirmed this ceremony.

The program at Scappoose High School has been fully approved through PCC and the agreement has been signed. There are currently 17 students in attendance. Chief Bautista and Chief Pricher will be at SHS in January 2024 every workday morning teaching the J-Term class.

- E. BC Hennigan's Report- BC Hennigan works in the office on Tuesdays from 0800-1800. President Reeves asked about Blue Card training. Chief Pricher explained that he will be taking Duty Officer shifts in the future.

- F. Finance Report- Director Sorenson asked if there were additional comments on the auditor RFP. FA Heath shared the purpose for going out for an RFP and provided

historical background and reasoning for rotating auditors periodically. The District may have a difficult time finding qualified, licensed auditors given the current statewide shortage.

VII. Old Business - None

VIII. Committee Reports

- A. Management Team- Items discussed during this meeting included LOSAP follow-up and resolution for volunteers involved in . Chief Pricher will research the history of this proposal so the Board can decide how to resolve the issue with LOSAP funds at the February meeting of the Board.

Conflagration revenue over what was spent on personnel will be redirected to purchases of wildland equipment, technical rescue, and training in FY24-25.

Discussion on the letter from CRFR was discussed. See New Business minutes.

- B. Long Range Planning Committee- This committee met and discussed the need for a strategic plan prior to going out for a bond. The amount and timing of a bond needs to be planned out. See New Business minutes.
- C. Awards & Incentives- No meeting in November. There will be a meeting in January to begin planning Awards Banquet. Member Outreach Oberbarnscheidt will be included in these committee meetings.

IX. Miscellaneous- No miscellaneous items.

X. New Business

- A. Board approval to issue Auditor Request for Proposal- President Reeves asked how much work is involved for administrative staff when a change in audit firm takes place. Administrative work with auditing firms is relatively similar across firms. Director Graham moved to do a request for proposals for audit services. Director Kriek seconded.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

- B. Bond Discussion- The Board discussed the need to identify, with the help of an outside firm, the needs, and procedures for going out for a bond. Items discussed included pursuing estimates, use of savings, timelines, and the need for an accurate and detailed

informational campaign. Director Kriek moved to direct staff to investigate options for a bond. Director Sorenson seconded.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

- C. Letter from CRFR- The letter from Interim Chief Erik Smythe which was pushed out to CRFR staff and the media is attached under communications in the board packet pgs. 58-60. Chief Pricher drew the Board's attention to paragraph 2, pg 59. Two items of concern were highlighted for the Board's consideration and discussion.

Chief Pricher read the highlighted paragraph. Chief Pricher stated that with Scappoose Fire being named in the letter, he is unsure of the author's intent, specifically with regard to the phrase 'trying to recover funds'. Chief Pricher said the paragraph is ambiguous and includes false statements. It is unclear what was meant by the verbiage 'Scappoose chief arrangement'.

When the letter became public, Chief Pricher spoke with CRFR Board Chair Kelly Niles asking for a retraction of the letter based on the timeline of events which led to CRFR's current financial situation. CRFR Chair Niles then said the letter referred to former Fire Chief Dennis Hoke. Chief Pricher reminded Mr. Niles that he was a member of CRFR's board that hired Chief Hoke, therefore, he implicated himself. The assertion in the letter that the 'Scappoose chief arrangement' was a partial cause for CRFR's overspending is untrue. This statement, among others in the letter, can be proven false based upon the fact there were no agreements between SRFD and CRFR after the IGA was terminated in May 2020. The spend-down of CRFR's \$4.5 million took place after May 2020. President Niles told Chief Pricher he would talk with Erik Smythe to have a retraction printed. No retraction was forthcoming. On Monday, December 11, 2023, Chief Pricher spoke with Mr. Niles while working in his capacity with ODF, asking for an update on a retraction. Mr. Niles said CRFR checked with their board's attorney who said CRFR didn't need to submit a retraction since the letter hadn't caused any problems and unless there were issues, CRFR did not plan to retract the letter. With this, Chief Pricher reasserted that the information in the letter was inaccurate and the conversation they were currently having indicated that it had caused problems. At 3:00 pm December 14, 2023, CRFR Board Chair Niles and Interim Chief Smythe issued a clarification statement. The statement included the following: 'with reference to the depletion of funds... the previous statement regarding the chief arrangement was not intended to insinuate that Scappoose Fire was responsible for CRFR's financial instability'.

Chief Pricher spoke with SRFD's attorney regarding the letter and clarification statement. SRFD's attorney suggested the following options available to the Board: 1) SRFD can counter CRFR's assertions, 2) respond with a retraction statement of our own that highlights the inaccuracies in CRFR's letter and provides documentation to support the statements, 3) document the discussion in board minutes, and post on our website so the public has access to factual information.

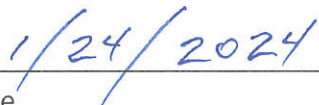
Board discussion focused on maintaining working relationships with our neighbors while also providing the public with accurate information. Directors noted they hope CRFR would be very careful with their statements and report only clearly written,

factual information, especially when including references to other agencies in public statements. Media representatives are responsible for vetting information prior to printing. Board members discussed how this is not about the line staff of CRFR; the Board hopes to ensure good working relationships with the rank and file of CRFR.

The consensus of the Board was option 3. Should the media approach Chief Pricher the board directed him to share factual information.

- XI. Communications- Thank you letter from Mt. St. Helens DAR
- XII. Good of the Order- Thank you to all involved in Share & Care 2023. Distribution Day is Sunday, December 17, 2023.
- XIII. Adjourn- Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

  
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Mark A Gift – Board Secretary-Treasurer

  
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Date

  
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Submitted by Maria Heath