

Scappoose Rural Fire District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Board Members and Required Staff met in-person at

Scappoose Fire District Main Station

Also held electronically via GoToMeeting and telephone call-in number

Thursday, September 10, 2020

After due and legal notice, President Sorenson called to order the Regular Board meeting of the Scappoose Rural Fire District at 7:07 p.m. and led the flag salute.

The following members were in attendance: D. Sorenson, A. Kriek, R. Cairns, M. Gift, and D. Graham.

Others in attendance: Interim Chief Pricher, DC Marks, DC Greenup, S. Booth, M. Heath, Lt. Anderson, Lt. Heuer, FF Chaffeur, FF Gandara, FF Booth, Paramedic Quinn, EMT Still, Henry Oberbarnscheidt, Ron Maruska, Steve Stewart

Attending electronically: FD Salisbury

**Public Comment:** FF Chaffeur asked if he could hold his comments until the end of the meeting.

**SRFD Consent Agenda:** Mr. Graham moved to accept the consent agenda. Mr. Cairns seconded. Mr. Graham asked about the work completed at Holbrook. Mr. Sorenson asked for clarification on the purchase of four \$500 gift cards for the conflagration/Niff deployments.

Motion to approve the consent agenda carried unanimously.

**Staff Reports:**

- **Interim Chief-** Chief Pricher asked if there were any questions regarding his Chief's report. Mr. Graham asked about the interest in the Detail Position. Chief Pricher mentioned that there were no applicants for the position. The incentive for the position was not present due to family situations, vacations, and the short time period for which this position may be necessary.
- **Fire Marshal-**Mr. Sorenson asked about PCC updates. Chief Pricher said fire alarm, sprinkler system, and building repeater inspections are required prior to completion.
- **Operations-**We've had many equipment repairs. We used half of our equipment maintenance budget already this year. Medic 3306 "Bertha" has had a number of necessary repairs, costing more than what we expected. The tower truck is back in service. The IT server is on its way out, and that is an unexpected and unbudgeted expense expected between \$10,000 - \$12,000. Mr. Sorenson asked how long it would take to get a new server up and running. Chief Pricher has asked our IT to limp it along. We've been backing up to the "cloud" to save anything necessary. Mr. Sorenson asked about the costs necessary for preparing the surplus brush unit for service. We have a

quote in for signage at approximately \$1,500 for the logo. We are trying to figure out how best to utilize the equipment. Officers have met to discuss the options for its use. The issue is regarding weight once all the equipment is on the new apparatus. Discussion regarding the pump, hose, and weight capacity followed. Options for its use are as the first out squad, a rescue and taking the old rescue out of service, or as a brush rig. The team is still deliberating its best use.

The old ambulance has gone out twice on conflagrations. We are able to bill for this vehicle by the hour, most likely paying for the repairs made to it.

August calls – Mr. Sorenson asked about the possibility of including a chart showing double or triple hits in the board packet. Chief Pricher said he would try to make this chart available for the board in the future.

- **Training** –Mr. Sorenson asked if we are currently training and when the next volunteer academy begins. Applications close October 31. Academy will begin after the first of the year.

Mosier Creek Conflagration went well. The superintendent commended our team on their efforts. They worked hard and learned new things as well.

Meg Schoof is out as a COVID responder. The strike team is going out again tomorrow. We'll send out three with Columbia County strike team on Friday, Sept. 11.

- **Finance-** Transports are down and Chapman station electricity bills have decreased. Chief Pricher said that ambulance revenue is down, and the pandemic has shown us that many people are choosing not to transport. With only two months into the fiscal year, Mr. Gift asked about projections for ambulance revenue going forward. He followed up by saying he thinks we need to be prepared that the trend is down and could possibly stay that way. Mr. Sorenson stated that he thinks it is too early in the fiscal year to make a prediction. Paramedic Quinn said that she thinks there are more refusals for transport since COVID, but recently she thinks there has been an uptick in the transports.

#### **Old Business:**

- **Committee Reports: Management Team** met. Discussion topics included sending a conflagration team on 9.11.20. Chief Pricher said that the board needs to discuss the priorities for conflagration and district coverage. Mr. Gift asked Chief Marks what he hoped to get by deploying. Chief Marks said he would like to get Task Force Leader certification. There are a number of people working on task books for various certifications. Mr. Graham asked if we have to send a Chief on conflagration. Chief Pricher explained the workings of how and who are chosen for conflagrations. Currently, the only certified Task Force leaders are Chief Pricher, Chief Holsey, and Chief Smythe in Columbia County. Training issues are an impediment for every agency in the

county. In order for SRFD to send out engines, we need to have certified engine bosses, as an example. Mr. Kriek expressed the need for SRFD to be careful when choosing to send a chief officer out on conflagration. Using Chief Greisen, Chief Greenup, and either Chief Pricher or Chief Marks to cover SRFD's duty officer position helps. Mr. Gift said he would really appreciate keeping the deployment to two weeks, if at all possible. Chief Pricher and Chief Marks can work out which one goes on the latest deployment.

Chief Pricher shared his latest deployment evaluation.

Long Range Planning and Awards/Incentives Committees did not meet.

- **Plan to hire permanent chief:** Mr. Gift suggested the board enter Executive Session for discussion of the hire of the permanent chief. The board decided to move this agenda item to the end of the meeting, then move to Executive Session.
- **Lexipol – Sections 1 & 2:** Chief Greenup said the board should be knowledgeable about what is in the first two sections. Section 3 is the union agreement, which the board has already approved. Section 4 is job descriptions. Mr. Sorenson asked if the board was ready to approve Sections 1 or 2. Mr. Gift expressed that he is still confused about verbiage and sections of Lexipol. Chief Greenup explained the shared essence of Lexipol and the combination with CRFR.

Mr. Gift expressed concern over approving Lexipol policies that he may not fully understand. He was not able to immediately locate the sections in question. The board suggested waiting until October to approve the first four sections. Chief Greenup said he would like to get the job descriptions added and the board approve all four sections in October.

- **Scoping Process Results-** Chief Pricher said the data is suspect because a number of respondents are staff/board members. We don't currently have enough data to provide a clear path forward. Chief Pricher recommends we take the time to develop a Strategic Plan that includes a communication plan, and move forward to the public in May 2021. We need to get a larger cross-section of the community to join our scoping process. We may join with the City of Scappoose and include information about the scoping process (video and survey) on the city's newsletter. We can then provide a password protected area on SRFD's website so more people can participate in the process. If the Board says they want to go out in May, we can begin to work backward from that date to prepare the public and include them in the process. Mr. Gift thinks we need to begin the process. Chief Pricher said that as soon as the board gives them the word, the staff will get to work on it.

Mr. Sorenson said he'd like to see a newsletter that reaches a larger audience. Mr. Gift stated he would like to include the ASA in the information effort. Mr. Cairns suggests a sequenced mailing. Mr. Graham asked about the costs associated with mass mailings.

Local 1660 may be willing to help with the costs of this. Administration staff will research the costs involved with sequential mass mailings.

Mr. Sorenson asked if the board is in favor of a May tax measure. The board agreed to this. No decision was made as to which avenue the board will pursue. The staff will provide updated information so they can make an informed decision in January as to which option (levy/bond) they wish to pursue. Mr. Cairns made a motion to go to the voters in the May election. Mr. Graham seconded.

The motion to go to the voters in the May 2021 election carried unanimously.

- **Job Descriptions-** Finance Director job description was combined from a number of different fire districts and is consistent with best practices. Mr. Graham made a motion to approve the Finance Administrator job description. Mr. Gift seconded.

The motion to approve the Finance Director job description carried unanimously.

- **Miscellaneous-** Mr. Sorenson asked about the collection of payments from insurance companies. Ms. Booth contacted a number of agencies regarding how they collect payments from insurance companies. She found that in LaPine Fire District, they are owed approximately \$78,000 in outstanding billables. Our collections agency, Commercial Adjustment, has found that fire districts are not able to seek legal action from insurance companies; only insured may do so. Ms. Booth also contacted Cheryl Engstrom to gather her opinion on how best to collect these owed amounts. Mr. Gift asked if Ms. Booth would reach out to LaPine to see what they do for their collections and if they have gone after individuals rather than insurance companies. Mr. Kriek also asked if she would contact MetroWest to see exactly what they have done about collecting these payments.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Cairns asked if others have been receiving a lot of spam email.

Ken Chaffeur spoke about staffing of conflagrations, specifically career staff. He disagrees with sending career staff on a conflagration anywhere under the current situation with fires across the state. He believes that we need to have complete staffing at home before sending any career staff on conflagration. Chief Pricher said that SRFD has turned down four conflagration assignments in the last week.

**Executive Session: Pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(a) to consider the employment of an officer.**

The Board adjourned to Executive Session at 8:42 pm.

The Board adjourned from Executive Session at 9:29 pm.

The Board resumed regular session at 9:31 pm.

Mr. Graham made a motion to approve a modified version of Option 3 for filling the Fire Chief's position permanently beginning October 2020. The Board offered this position to Interim Chief

Jeff Pricher. Mr. Cairns seconded. This is pending a letter from Chief Pricher stating why he wants the position, his vision and plans for the district, and how he will pare down and delegate his responsibilities. Mr. Sorenson asked if there were any comments from the public regarding this motion. There were none. Mr. Graham asked Chief Pricher for comment. Chief Pricher stated that he was humbled and honored by the offer. Mr. Gift would like to see us fill the Division Chief's position quickly in order to alleviate workload on Chief Pricher.

The motion to hire Chief Pricher as Fire Chief carried unanimously.

**Good of the order:** None

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.