

LEBANON FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 12, 2023

Robert Taylor, Board President
 Dale White, Vice President
 Wyatt King, Secretary/Treasurer
 Allen Forster, Member
 Tim Mueller, Member

Joseph Rodondi, Fire Chief
 John Tacy, DC of Operations
 Ken Foster, Fire Marshal
 Mark Fitzwater, DC of Training
 Desiree Barker, Chief Administrative Officer
 Michael Perkins, Recruitment Lt.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order and the flag salute was led by Fire Chief Rodondi at 5:30pm.

MINUTES: APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023 MINUTES

- Minutes were reviewed.
- **Member White made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Forster 2ND, all in favor, motion approved.**

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

AGENDA ITEM #1 – AUDIT REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023

Kori Sarrett, CPA Accuity, LLC, reported the good news. It was a clean audit opinion with one recommendation to add documentation to one process to increase strength. The general fund ended with a deficit, though there were funds in the debt service to cover it. This was not a concern but was notable by OR law. Budget and contracts are in compliance. Purchases are being handled efficiency and within the laws. OR law recognized the necessity to increase the purchasing limits from \$10,000 to \$25,000 to increase efficiency. Chief Rodondi will provide an update in January. CPA Sarrett noted a negative net position of 1.2 million, 7.5 million is in PERS liability, if that is disregarded, we were really in a positive position. The general fund ended with just over a negative 1 million, 2.8 million in the reserve fund carryover, and debt service is just over 11 million. The ambulance fund had a positive net position.

Chief Rodondi addressed the policy for hardship write-offs has been informal of late, but we are tightening that up. There were 2 in the last year. The deficit can be attributed to COVID overtime and supplies, construction, and impacts from Measure 5 and 50. The structural deficit is continuing despite continual limits on spending. In previous years bridge loans were necessary until taxes were received. This shows the importance of our pursuit of a local option levy to continue providing quality services. Kori agrees. Jeanette Denos commended the choices being made by the district to maintain balances.

- **Member Forster made a motion to approve the audit. Member King 2ND, all in favor, motion approved.**

AGENDA ITEM #2 – SURPLUS EQUIPMENT SALE

Chief Rodondi mentioned our two new ambulances are in service. The ambulance mentioned in last month's meeting was slated to sell, but fell through, so two will go to auction. Battalion Chief Suing reported one ambulance has 167,000 miles on a gas motor with a 2011 box chassis, the second ambulance has 164,000 miles on a gas motor with a 2015 box chassis. The minimum bids are \$10,000 and \$20,000 respectively.

- **Member White made a motion to approve the ambulance auctions. Member Taylor 2ND, all in favor, motion approved.**

AGENDA ITEM #3 – FINANCIAL REPORT

As mentioned last month, Desiree is the Finance Director and Office Administrator all-in-one known as the Chief Administrative Officer. The main two things we wish to accomplish with the changes is to highlight purchasing and expenses, and to create a budget document that any citizen could understand. We are still updating the report. Chief Rodondi would like to align the financials with standard business practices, that doesn't require Board approval. Purchases do come to the board for larger purchases for the construction, once construction is complete the limit will revert back to normal. CAO Desiree Barker pointed out percentages were returned to the report for a snapshot view. More updates are coming. Revenues and expenses are in-line with the timing of the year. The early ambulance purchase put us over budget, but we've received 85% of the taxes and we've received a large payment from GEMT. Things are moving in a positive direction.

Chief Rodondi expanded on the unexpected ambulance purchase. The purchase was \$235,000 and required budget realignment FY 2023/2024. Purchases for Station 31 are continuing. The furniture from the prison, appliances, radios, fuel tank and a system that will link to a rig for fuel monitoring, among others. January 2nd or 3rd will see deliveries to the station. Battalion Chief Savage is doing a wonderful job.

Member King noticed a typo in the financials on page 3. Noticing the election budget expense was high, he questioned the amount. Chief Rodondi explained this was for elections and currently the levy.

- **Member King made a motion to approve the financials. Member White 2ND, all in favor, motion approved.**

AGENDA ITEM #4 – LEGISLATIVE UPDATE(S)

Chief Rodondi noted the white paper was sent to Special Districts and members of legislation. A member of Representative Chavez-DeRemer's staff contacted Chief Rodondi and requested the 3 primary subjects. His response was, 1. EMS sustainable revenue; 2. Special Districts recognized in the Federal Code to receive funds; and 3. Recognize EMS as an essential service.

We are encouraged by the delay in the VA's changed plan to align payments with Medicare. This would have a \$500,000 impact to our budget. Being politically active has had the positive result in delaying the decision to 2025.

The No Surprise Act is moving forward. Ambulance committee members voted for recommended protections for providers like us to prevent price gouging. It is now up to the legislators to decide next year.

Chief Tacy listened in on the Fire Chief's meeting on the wildland fire topic. The state is looking for support in funding during this legislative session. The recent major fires brought attention.

AGENDA ITEM #5 – NON-REPRESENTED STAFF ADDRESS THE BOARD

There were no non-represented staff comments.

AGENDA ITEM #6 – UNION ADDRESS THE BOARD

Secretary/Treasurer Adamson mentioned the upcoming elections for President, Trustee and Secretary/Treasurer. The Union is poised to help with the levy effort.

AGENDA ITEM #7 – VOLUNTEERS ADDRESS THE BOARD

Lt. Perkins is seeing new volunteers at events. The MCI drill last week had over 70 participants from Halsey shed, Sweet Home and others. It went very well. Thank you to all involved. Holiday events went very well. Toy events have surpassed last year.

AGENDA ITEM #8 – FIRE CHIEF REPORT

Local option levy has a treasurer identified and is beginning to form. Instructions on what we can or cannot do is coming. Training on best practices is next month along with the ballot language. Late January is the kick-off meeting. Talking points will be provided to the Board to assist with questioning. Crystal Patterson, Administrative Assistant, has been very helpful in developing the talking points.. The focus on assessed value, not appraised value is an important distinction. Levy terms versus bond terms were loosely defined.

We will send a newsletter out in December with messaging for the holidays. The messaging in the newsletter will also answer common questions to dispel rumor.

Construction update: Member Taylor walked through and was impressed with the size of the facility. Chief Rodondi offered Board members to walk through Station 31 if they would like. This project is a favorite for many including the Chief Rodondi and Emerick Construction.

The OSHA appeal is in January. We are appealing all but one citation. OSHA can offer a decision and we can decide what we accept or what we move forward to the next level. SCBA's is being watched at the State Fire Chief's level. It is a concern for all fire agencies across Oregon. Manufactures are all different in their recommendations, but OSHA is using one standard. It's unrealistic for volunteers at unstaffed stations to perform a 20-minute daily fit test before responding to a call. We completed a public information request for notes from OSHA and they still haven't responded. We've discussed this with our lawyers.

Chief Rodondi mentioned our struggles with OHA's accounting. They are coming next week and our consultant Blake Jamison from Tactical Business Group, will be present. GEMT had lost our application from September. This is not the first time. GEMT has very little accountability and that needs changed. This topic is at the State Fire Chiefs level. Chief Rodondi will present this issue to the group in an effort to fix the issues. Discussing our submissions with our consultant is one of those topics.

State Fire Marshal's office has received funding and has improved, allowing grants, IGA Type 6 grant allowing us to receive a Type 6 sometime in the first 6 months.

Member King and Chief Rodondi sat on the Lebanon City Manager panel as a community member. Council will review the applicants. One is very experienced.

Chief updated the Board on the vacancy statuses. Three were on the Single Role eligibility list, two declined and one is in backgrounds. Three firefighters have informed us they are in backgrounds with

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Salem, with the intent to leave in January. We have four vacancies counting the three leaving for Salem. We will not offer a position until they have left. The Battalion Chief and Lieutenant eligibility lists have been extended. The current plan is to test for Engineer in March, Lieutenants in June and Battalion Chiefs in August. Crystal Patterson's last day is December 21st. She has accepted another position with Corvallis PD. She was wonderful at marketing and our positive position in the community is due, in part, to her work. The Administrative Assistant position will open in January with hopes to fill the position in March. We are using a temp agency to fill the position until a more permanent selection is made. Member Forster asked the Chief about Desiree's position being the combination of two jobs. Chief explained it was the Finance Director and Office Administrator positions that were combined.

1.2 million of the Cares Act was used by the Sheriff's department to improve the radio infrastructure. VHF availability was challenging but overcome. We needed four additional frequencies. The project is moving forward.

Next Board meeting will be at Station 34, then we will begin rotating meetings at different stations. The first Board meeting at Station 31 is expected in May.

January's meeting we'll see some training, ballot language and levy kick-off.

Jeff Griffin, Executive Director of Fire Chiefs, will be scheduled for February.

Member King asked how the community outreach was going. A meeting with the Sheriff and Commissioner Tucker is next week. We've received some guidance that, due to the challenges of fund-raising for the election may prove challenging. Member King liked the newsletter and suggested a video newsletter. Chief Rodondi updated the group on the website update. One message to share is that our services are slipping and why. We will be reaching out to the videographer that did our recruiting videos.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

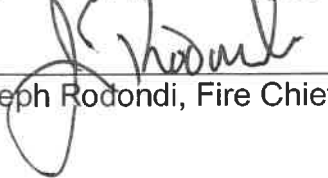
Chief thanked the staff that attended and supported the Board meeting.

ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION

- Adjourn Regular Session at 6:25 pm.



Robert Taylor, Board President



Joseph Rodondi, Fire Chief