**Jefferson County Fire & EMS**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**July 9th, 2024, 5:30 pm 1701**

1. **5th St. Madras, Or. 97741**

**Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order 05:40 pm by Ryan Boyle.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Ryan Boyle.

**Roll Call**

Fire and EMS board members Present Dusti Miller, Kim Stout and Ryan Boyle

Rob Galyen and Chris Dupont were both absent.

**Fire and EMS Staff Present**

Chief Jeff Blake, Deputy Chief Kasey Skaar, Deputy Chief Michael Lepin, Deputy Chief Jared Earnest, FF/Paramedic Kayla Page, FF/Paramedic Jessica Haury and Billing manager Danielle Peckham were in attendance.

**Community Members**

Community members present Linda Larson and Attorney Tim Gassner.

**Agenda Approval/Adjustments**

Kim Stout motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Dusti Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Presenter**

There were no presenters at this meeting.

**Citizen Input**

There were no public comments on Items on or off the agenda-

**Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of June 2024 Board Meeting(s) include: June 5th and June 18th, Dusti Miller motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Kim Stout seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Please note there may be a duplicity of approval as it was unclear whether the minutes were approved at the June 30th meeting.

**Old Business**

**EMS / Fire Consolidation:**

Updates regarding policy development are in action. Discussion regarding two viable options to help with finances and audit preparation. The department is still waiting on “the field day” from current auditors. Discussion of two candidates for temporary financial controller/business manager both have worked in municipality and Caselle software. One candidate is an actual accountant, and the other candidate is a previous finance director for. Interview meetings are set up for the future that will include Chris Dupont. Billing status is ongoing and further questions should be directed to Danielle. GEMT concerns were discussed. Dusti asked if we still retained policy books or had access to Lexapol product to help expedite policies. Chief Blake reiterates policies are still a priority. Job descriptions are still being worked on with Chief Blake and Deputy Chief Jared Earnest.

**Building Expansion:**

Architect is currently waiting on contractors for the bid process. Architects have reached out to in order to do a late fall start date.

**Bond Update:**

Submitted RFP to special district and bond counsel. The current status is proofread and was sent back to the finance market for our bond. No timeline in place yet at this time.

**New Business**

**Finance Update:**

A financial update was provided for all bank accounts and reviewed by the board.

Danielle gave an overview of collections related to EMS billing. The GADCS audit has been completed, and GEMT projects are progressing. Internal control audits are up-to-date, which helps in pre-planning for payer information involving individual claims and batches that are to be processed. Billing is current through May for the first section, and we are beginning to see individual claims being paid. Full batches will soon be processed. Payments are trickling in, which is a positive sign and indicates we are moving in the right direction.

Chief Blake attended several meetings, including the Convening of the Fire Service, which involved a broader discussion on the public perception of fire services and the role of rural fire protection districts. A document called the “White Paper Rough Draft” from the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s office will address how to increase revenue for EMS funding, handle OHA reimbursements in a timely manner, and improve communication between OHA and fire/EMS agencies. One issue discussed was the disparity between what we bill versus what we actually receive. Representatives from various fire and EMS groups across Oregon participated in the meeting, working collaboratively on both short-term and long-term financial solutions.

Chief Blake is also advocating at the federal level to establish EMS as vital healthcare providers. Positive developments include Senate Bill 1068, which requires a map in the annexation process; the surveyor is adjusting details for the Department of Revenue, and current city surveyors are working on this. PGE has begun negotiations for future outreach. Attorney Tim Gassner and Chief Blake are working on a contract with PGE. The district has received revisions but has not yet reached a signable agreement. Discussions also covered contracts for annexation throughout Jefferson County; PGE will not be involved in annexation but will be part of a step contract.

**Fire Operations:**

Deputy Chief Skaar’s June 2024 monthly handout was distributed and reviewed. The call volume was extremely high this past month. Monthly statistics were discussed. Regarding the incident that happened on July 8th, appreciation was expressed for all the help received. This included call-back staff, administrative staff, crew members, and the community, including farmers. It was noted how everyone came together, and with a bit of luck from the wind, many farmers stopped with their equipment. The fires had extreme potential for disaster, but thanks to our community's efforts, this was prevented. There was significant effort expended throughout the entire district. With both fires and EMS calls, it was an all-hands-on-deck approach, with everyone supporting aid to the district.

The new UTV is in and should be ready in about 7-10 days. The skid unit will arrive shortly after, and it is planned for use at the air show and fair. There will be a shift change as Captain Jaca moves into a support services role during the day shift, and Andrew Glen has been promoted to A Shift Captain. The OFSM grant was utilized to provide extra staffing during peak hours (noon to midnight), which greatly helped protect the district and the community.

Deputy Chief Skaar states that Mark Johnson has been going above and beyond for maintenance, which will soon free him up to focus on other responsibilities, including supporting Captain Jaca with vehicle-related tasks**.**

**Fire Prevention:**

Deputy Chief Earnest discussed fire prevention activities and his handout was reviewed and discussed. The new interim building inspector has had joint meetings with the city and county. The relationship between the county, the city, and us is flourishing. Investigations are being led by the OFSM. Code enforcement is progressing well in Madras, with a focus on vacant lots and stray vehicles.

Public education efforts include participation in National Night Out and the Jefferson County Fair.

**EMS Report:**

Deputy Chief Lepin shared his EMS report. A discussion took place about new ambulances being in service as it stands one of the new ambulances is already on the road, while the second ambulance is waiting for its second radio to be installed. The topic of OSAA balance billing was covered, including the work that Chief Lepin and Danielle are doing.

Emergent and specialty care transfers are being coordinated with Dr. Welle and RN Labree with a budget allocated for two new ventilators—BiPAP and high-acuity respiratory devices. Chief Lepin is working with Greg from St. Charles to offset costs by the end of summer through a grant.

Regarding the Wasco County ASA plan, since we are the closest ASA, it was requested that we leave our equipment in that ASA to cover the area. This requirement was included in the third draft of the plan, which was reviewed by all agencies, deemed unacceptable, and ultimately discarded.

**Chief Report:**

Chief Blake discussed the following concerns and updates. Various traffic improvements are being planned for the City of Madras and Terrebonne. Grants have been submitted for OEM-related needs, including radios and an SCBA compressor, with competitive grants listed on the bond. The ODOT project manager might assist with the safety of the corridor, including staffing needs and updates to extrication tools for the project.

The recent auditors' list includes approximately 12 more auditors. Two auditors have indicated that we are at capacity, so efforts are underway to line up additional auditors. Mark participated in a joint academy with Three Rivers, which was very successful and resulted in a new batch of students. Some of the Three Rivers students are becoming volunteers.

OSAA has reached out, and OFCA is working on specific initiatives for GEMT at the state level.

**Monthly Bank Accounts**

Chief Jeffrey Blake went over all bank account balances and reviewed with the board.

**Accounts Payable-Pay Bills**

Board Checks for accounts payable totaled $448,570.29. Dusti Miller motioned to accept and pay the bills as presented. Kim Stout seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Citizen Input**

Ryan Boyle opened the floor to Citizens. No comments were made, and citizen input was closed.

**Additional Comments or Announcements**

Chief Blake mentioned it might be wise to move board meetings to the 3rd Tuesday of the month it was discussed, and concerns were mention as it stands this will be put on hold till further review.

**Adjournment**

**Meeting was adjourned by Ryan Boyle at approximately 6:30 pm.**

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**Board President**  **Recording Secretary**