

HOODLAND FIRE DISTRICT # 74
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2020

Those Present: Board Members: Shirley Dueber, Mary Ellen Fitzgerald, Darcy Lais, Jacob Rackley and Cliff Fortune (Conference Call). Staff: Steve Abel; Interim Fire Chief, Carol Norgard; Financial Manager, DC Scott Kline, Lt. Andy Figini (Conference Call), SFF Brian Henrichs, Debra Sinz (Conference Call), and Sally Chester (Conference Call). Guests: Kirk Peterson (Conference Call), Jessica Rackley (Conference Call), Kim Weaver, and Jim Mooney (Conference Call).

1. Call to Order: By Shirley Dueber at 7:00 PM.
2. Roll Call – delayed until after the Executive Session.
3. Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Scott Kline.
4. Persons to be Heard. None.
5. Executive Session under ORS 192.660.2(d) Conferring with persons designated by the Board to handle labor negotiations.
 - A. The Board expects to reconvene in Regular Open Session at 8:00 PM.

RECESS: 7:03 PM from Regular Session.

RECONVENE: 7:05 PM into Executive Session.

- B. Discussion with Labor Negotiator.

ADJOURN: 8:00 PM from Executive Session.

RECONVENE: 8:04 PM into Regular Session.

2. Resume Roll Call: With the meeting being offered as a conference call, a roll call was performed.
4. Repeat Persons to be Heard. None.

6. Approval of Minutes.

A. Board Meeting Minutes on Tuesday April 14, 2020.

MOTION MADE: By Darcy Lais to approve the April 14, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes as submitted.

2ND: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

B. Work Session Meeting Minutes on Tuesday April 21, 2020.

MOTION MADE: By Jacob Rackley to approve the April 21, 2020 Work Session Meeting Minutes as submitted.

2ND: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

C. Special Board Meeting Minutes on Tuesday April 28, 2020.

MOTION MADE: By Jacob Rackley to approve the April 28, 2020 Special Board Meeting Minutes as submitted.

2ND: By Darcy Lais.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

D. Special Board Meeting Minutes on Tuesday May 5, 2020.

MOTION MADE: By Jacob Rackley to approve the May 5, 2020 Special Board Meeting Minutes as submitted.

2ND: By Darcy Lais.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

7. Communications by Chief Steve Abel.

A. Thank you card from a patient.

B. Thank you card to DC Kline for helping with a vehicle lock out.

8. Reports:

A. Chief's Report by Chief Steve Abel.

i. Budget – continuing to work on many drafts in order to present a balanced budget.

8. A. Report – Chief’s Report Continued

ii. Officer’s Meetings – productive meetings with the career officers.

iii. Drills – restarting weekly drills with small groups to maintain social distancing.

iv. Invited Mic Eby to return as a Volunteer Officer and he accepted.

v. BC Scott Kline was promoted to temporary Deputy Chief for up to six months. A interview and permanent appointment will need to be made.

vi. Lt. Phil Burks announced his retirement effective 7/1/2020. We will need to conduct an Internal Lt. Promotional Exam.

vii. Firefighter Testing Process still needs to be completed.

viii. Strategic Planning process needs to be started.

ix. Two updated polices are available for a first reading.

B. Staff Report by DC Scott Kline.

i. Working on Safer Grant for a Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Coordinator. If approved, this grant would fund a position for four years and cover the cost for the employee to recruit, train, and outfit new volunteers. We are applying for a hardship waiver to remove the cost share and make this 100% funded for four years.

ii. Working on a COVID-19 Reimbursement Grant from FEMA.

iii. Working on a Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. Will check to see if any of the SDAO safety recommendations can be covered with grant funds.

iv. Continuing to work on SDAO’s 64 recommendations.

C. SDAO Assessment Report Update.

i. #1 Strategic Planning – Board approved Chief Abel to start this process; we need to schedule meeting dates.

ii. #8 Updated Policies and SOGs – Starting this process, this will be ongoing. Two updated polices will be presented at this meeting.

8. C. Reports – SDAO Assessment Report Update.

iii. #13 Monthly Review of Probationary Firefighters – In process.

iv. #16 Adopting a Standard of Cover – Project is still active.

v. #25 Recruiting In-District Volunteers – Volunteer training restarted and had meetings to recruit volunteer Duty Officers.

vi. #26, #27, and #28 Student Program – Student Program is on-hold due to budgetary concerns.

vii. #30 Plan with Secretary of State for Audits – Actively working on this.

viii. #31 Fee for Service Policy – Policy is currently being updated and first reading should be in June.

ix. #33, #34, #35, and #36 Equipment Replacement Plan – In process.

x. #38 Sweep excess funds into Reserve Accounts – No excess funds available.

xi. #39, #41, #43, #47, #50, and #61 Training – Overall training responsibility is now assigned to the Deputy Chief. Written expectations and program are being developed.

xii. #56 SDAO Risk Management – Continued conversations with representatives.

xiii. #60 Personnel Accountability – In progress.

ix. #64 Fire Chief Sign Off on Safety Meetings – Started and ongoing.

D. CERT Report provided in packet.

9. Finance by Chief Steve Abel.

A. Year to date budget report. Line items should be at about 83% at this point in the fiscal year, many packages have been overspent.

i. Package 1 – Personnel and Administrative Services is at 96.17%.

ii. Package 2 – Admin Materials and Services is at 94.04%.

iii. Package 4 – Capital Outlay is at 178.9%.

9. A. Finance – Year to Date Budget Report.

iv. Package 10 – SCBA Maintenance is at 123.4%.

v. Package 11 – Firefighting Equipment is at 105.27%.

vi. A Supplemental Budget will need to be done in June since we have gone over so much.

B. Account Balances: Unappropriated Ending Fund Balance (UEFB) is at \$960,000 this year; it should be at 1.1 million dollars.

10. Unfinished Business. None.

11. New Business:

A. Chief Abel needs Budget Direction from the Board.

i. Decisions need to be made before a balanced budget can be presented to the Budget Committee for review and approval.

ii. Money has been spent in the past several years by not adding money into Reserve Accounts and now money needs to be removed from the Reserve Accounts to balance the budget. The Reserve Accounts are underfunded for when a future purchase is needed.

iii. UEFB is underfunded; this is the money that is needed to cover the basic expenses from July – November each year.

iv. Materials and Services have already been cut a lot.

v. Package 1 is the only place that can be reduced further.

vi. With no cuts, the starting budget had a \$713,000 deficit.

vii. Budget Version 1 (V1) Staffing Level includes 8 firefighters and drops to 7 on January 1, 2021. This equals a \$102,000 deficit. The deficit might be lowered by \$40,000 if we can switch to a lower health insurance plan.

viii. Projecting out the budget with 7 firefighters in FY 2021-2022 would be a \$28,000 deficit and FY 2022-2023 would be a \$34,000 deficit. This is without increasing Reserve Accounts, UEFB, or Contingency Fund.

11. A. New Business - Budget Direction Continued

- ix. Minimum of 7 firefighters is needed to maintain 24 hour staffing. Two per shift and one flex shift.
- x. Budget Version 2 (V2) Staffing Level drops to 5 firefighters on January 1, 2021. This would eliminate 24 hour staffing. This would have a deficit in FY 2020-2021 of \$76,000 (less if health insurance plan is lowered) but the next FYs would not have a deficit and money could be added back into the Reserve Accounts, UEFB and Contingency Fund.
- xi. 6 firefighters would not work for 24 hour staffing because there would be too much overtime.
- xii. If you borrow from a Reserve Account it needs to be repaid the next year. If you abolish a Reserve Account you don't have to pay it back. You can also reestablish a Reserve Account.
- xiii. Looking into Cost Recovery Ordinances, those are typically for out of district residences. This may only bring in \$5,000 - \$10,000 per year.
- xiv. V2 is drastic. Decisions need to be made thoughtfully and determined after discussion and the Strategic Plan. We might have to go backwards and then move forward as quickly as we can.
- xv. The two versions were created to answer the Board's questions (1) What can we afford? = 2.3 million (V2). (2) What is the minimum staffing needed to maintain level of service? = 7 firefighters (V1).
- xvi. Right now the fire district cannot afford to maintain 24 hour staffing. Projecting out every year continues to run a deficit. Using the Reserve Accounts to balance the budget every year is not sustainable.
- xvii. The Levy stated to add a Paramedic Chief Officer and ensure 3 Career Firefighter Paramedics on 24/7.
- xviii. The Reserve Accounts make it look like there is more money than there is in the Budget.
- xix. Money needs to be borrowed from a Reserve Account, UEFB, or Contingency Fund in order to balance the budget in either V1 or V2.

11. A. New Business - Budget Direction Continued

xx. No firefighters should be laid off before January 1, 2021 because of the Safer Grant obligations.

xxi. If firefighters will be laid off they should be given as much notice as possible to find alternative employment.

xxii. A supplemental budget will need to be done because the Contingency Fund is being used to cover unanticipated operating expenses.

xxiii. Suggestion to borrow the money from the Reserve Account and wait to abolish the account. Not sure if Account can be abolished with outstanding loan repayment?

xxiv. Regarding the Safer Grant for the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, this position could not be a primary responder on calls and cannot cover vacation.

MOTION MADE: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald to direct Fire Chief Abel to proceed with Version 1 for FY 2020-2021 Budget and to borrow from the Building Reserve Account to balance the budget. During Strategic Planning look at the long term staffing costs and reevaluate how to manage the Building Reserve Account.

2ND: By Jacob Rackley with caveat and Cliff Fortune.

DISCUSSION: Borrowing from the Reserve Account so money doesn't get used up with abolishing. Jacob Rackley would like to guarantee that the staff would receive at least six months' notice if there is going to be any layoffs. Due to lack of specifics Mary Ellen Fitzgerald withdraws the motion and will restate a new motion.

MOTION MADE: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald to direct Fire Chief Abel to adopt Version 1 Staffing Level as outlined for the FY 2020-2021 Budget and borrow \$120,000 out of the Building Reserve Account to cover the budget shortfall.

2ND: By Cliff Fortune.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed. Four Ayes (Mary Ellen Fitzgerald, Cliff Fortune, Darcy Lais, and Shirley Dueber) and One Nay (Jacob Rackley).

MOTION MADE: By Jacob Rackley to guarantee at least six months' notice be given to any staff that will be laid off through the FY 2021-2022 Budget.

DISCUSSION: No one seconded this motion. Too many unknowns to guarantee six months' notice. Jacob Rackley argues that if we go to Version 2 Staffing Level, there is enough notice before layoffs. Motion cannot proceed without a second; the subject is tabled for now.

11. New Business Continued

B. First Reading of the changes to Policy 007: Notice and Location of Fire Board Meetings.

- i. After questions arose about meeting notification timelines and guidelines ORS research was conducted and the policy was modified.

MOTION MADE: By Darcy Lais to approve the first reading of the changes to Policy 007: Notice and Location of Fire Board Meetings.

2ND: By Jacob Rackley.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

C. First Reading of the changes to Policy 107: Public Records.

- i. After receiving a public records request and reviewing the current policy and fees, research was done and found that Oregon Law only allows the charging of reasonable fees to reflect costs so the policy was modified.

MOTION MADE: By Darcy Lais to approve the first reading of the changes to Policy 107: Public Records.

2ND: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald.

DISCUSSION: Policy states that we will comply with ORS for records retention.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

D. Hoodland Fire Outreach.

- i. USFS Mount Hood is planning to reopen. They would like Hoodland Fire's input regarding concerns.

a. Concern when parking area is full, cars will use the road as overflow parking lot. This is a bigger issue on BLM land.

b. No special concerns regarding COVID-19.

c. Opening up the USFS lands will bring in needed revenue to the local small businesses.

d. Chief Abel will email USFS contact regarding Hoodland Fire's lack of concerns.

12. Motion to Pay Bills:

MOTION MADE: By Mary Ellen Fitzgerald to pay all bills as submitted.

2ND: By Darcy Lais.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Passed Unanimously.

13. Board Members Comments.

A. Darcy Lais – Thank you to Carol and Chief Abel for working so hard on the Budget.

B. Shirley Dueber – Thank you to everyone for your hard work, it has been an education. Thank you to all the Board Members for working through the disagreements.

C. Cliff Fortune – Welcome back Mic Eby, thank you for coming back to be a volunteer Duty Officer. Thank you to all Board Members for your thoughtfulness with dealing with these tough decisions.

D. Mary Ellen – Thank you to all the Board Members for sharing your points of view.

14. Other New Business.

A. Suggestion to have a Special Board Meeting with an Executive Session in two weeks and have a consultation with Attorney John Watts in order to get updates.

B. Suggestion to discuss Budget Messaging to the Public plan at the next meeting.

C. Suggestion to discuss leadership options. Chief Abel is willing to stay until Chief Ingrao returns or another Fire Chief is hired.

D. Suggestion to discuss audit progress at the next meeting. Audit for FY 2016-2017 should be done in late May or early June.

E. Suggestion to better onboard Budget Committee Members. We did start Budget Training Workshops this year, but the second one had to be cancelled.

F. Special Board Meeting will be on May 26, 2020 at 7 PM.

15. Adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned by Shirley Dueber at 10:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn M. Norgard

Carolyn M. Norgard, Financial Manager

Notes Typed By: Kelli Ewing, Administrative Assistant