

**Seal Rock Rural Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting – January 9, 2020
Seal Rock Administration Building**

Directors Present John Soltau Peter Benjamin
Tina Fritz Dustin Joll
Larry Henson

Others Present Chief Tom Sakaris Mel Beery
Mickie Lundquist Dave Oliver
Andrew Licon Derek Udoutch
Landon Blake Skip Smith
John Raudsep Patty Benjamin

Call to Order

President Soltau presided and called the meeting to order at 18:31. There was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes for December 12, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting

Director Joll moved, Director Benjamin seconded, to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2019 regular meeting. Director Henson proposed two changes to the minutes relating to the Volunteer Firefighters Association under Old Business. Director Benjamin moved to approve the amended minutes. Director Joll seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

Approval of Minutes for December 19, 2019 Board of Directors Special Meeting

Director Benjamin moved, Director Joll seconded, to approve the December 19, 2019 special meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed 5-0 with no discussion.

Financials

Mr. Beery distributed the financial reports and discussed each statement.

1. Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2019/Current Assets and Liabilities—Total Operating Funds was \$636,110. Total in Truck & Building Reserve Funds was \$143,967. Total LOSAP Funds was \$54,137. Total Accounts Payable was \$3,678. Total Credit Card Payable was \$4,034.

2. Income and Expense for December 2019—Total Income was \$1,237. Mr. Beery noted that additional property tax revenue had been received that day. Firefighters Fund Expenses totaled \$22,614. Chief Fund Expenses totaled \$8,843. General Fund Expenses totaled \$8,756. The total for Truck & Building Fund Expenses was \$2,393.

3. Expense Detail December 2019—Director Henson said that people “may or may not be able to read” the financial reports as they are presented—as an example, he said the \$1,314,121 shown as Total Assets on the Balance sheet could be construed as money

available within the district to be spent. He noted that the Operating Fund stood at \$679,425 for the month of November but had dropped to \$636,110 in December, while Cash Requirements had grown from \$43,800 to \$54,100 over the same period. He cited PERS expense at 73% of budget, uniforms at 74%, medical supplies/services at 95%, and equipment testing at 69%, and felt those were warning signs that the district is getting close to budget at half-way through the Fiscal Year. Regarding the medical supplies expense, Chief Sakaris and Mr. Beery said that expense should have come out of Capital Equipment but the correction had not yet been made, and all of those categories would be reviewed and adjustments made, if necessary, at the end of the year. The district also has a \$15,000 contingency fund. Director Henson said he was still concerned that last month's spending put the district over budget and felt \$15,000 might not be enough.

4. Budget vs. Actual Report July through October 2019—At 50% through the Fiscal Year, Total Income was at 93% of budget; the Firefighters Fund Expenses was at 51%; the Chief Fund Expenses was at 46%; and General Fund Expenses stood at 37%. Director Benjamin moved to approve the Financial Report. Director Joll seconded and it passed 5-0.

5. Bills Paid January 2020—Total bills paid was \$19,416.10. Mr. Beery pointed out that the \$11,625.00 paid to Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) was an annual payment for property and liability insurance and would show up as an expense on the January 2020 financial report. Director Benjamin moved, Director Joll seconded, to approve Accounts Payable. Motion passed with all in favor.

6. Cash requirements January 2020—\$54,100 would be required to meet payroll and bills. Director Joll made a motion to approve the transfer from the LGIP fund. Director Benjamin seconded the motion and it passed 5-0 with no discussion.

Mr. Beery stated that he would continue doing the district's accounting until June or July of 2020 but then it would be time to turn it over to someone else. He recommended Tom Wilson, who is currently doing the district's payroll, and said he would make himself available to Mr. Wilson through the transition period. The financial statements would be done in the same format but Mr. Beery suggested the board's treasurer, Director Joll, or whoever the board appoints, make the financial presentation at the board meetings. Mr. Beery said he would work with and assist that person. President Soltau thanked Mr. Beery for his many years of service to the board and the Seal Rock Fire District.

Old Business

1. Brian Booth State Park Update

Director Henson reported that the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners had denied the Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department's request for expansion of the Brian Booth State Park. He said the state has a lot invested in the expansion, with the purchase of 1,200 acres, so State Parks will go to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) for the next phase and, since they are both state agencies, it was hard to know what conditions, if any,

would be put on the development plan. He used Southshore, a development that had been denied in Lincoln County but granted by LUBA, as an example. He added that LUBA's board changes and, if the hearings were held elsewhere in the state, Lincoln County's representation would likely be small. Director Henson and attorney Adam Springer will continue following developments and keep the board apprised.

2. Policy Update

Chief Sakaris said he would cover the policy update in his Chief's Report.

3. Adopt Harassment Policy

A copy of the harassment policy from Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) had been sent to the board members for review. Chief Sakaris suggested that the board adopt it as written. It was the consensus of the board that the policy was sufficient to the district's needs. Director Benjamin moved to adopt the Harassment Policy as written by SDAO. Director Fritz seconded the motion and it passed 5-0 with no further discussion.

New Business

1. Chief's Report by Chief Sakaris

Chief Sakaris had e-mailed attachments to his monthly report to the board members. He discussed the following items:

- Personnel responded to 7 calls from Station 6200 (Seal Rock) and 15 calls from Station 6300 (Bayshore) for a total of 22 calls in December 2019.
- The chief is working with Lexipol, a risk management company, on a new policy manual. The manual is 493 pages covering 117 different policies. When adopted, the district's SOPs will be included, making it not so much a policy but a procedure, and it will also correspond with the firefighters' contracts. Creating it will be time consuming—nine hours per week to get the policy done in four to six months. The chief asked the board members whether they wanted him to take the lead on working with Lexipol and he would e-mail information to the board for discussion, or if they wanted to form a committee to work on the policy manual. After a brief discussion, Chief Sakaris was directed to proceed with taking the lead on working with Lexipol and keep the board informed.
- On January 2, 2020, the chief and Director Henson attended a SDAO webinar on Harassment & Discrimination in the Work Place. Director Henson said the webinar contained quick and to the point information.
- Firefighter Kyle Bridges is leaving effective January 31, 2020, and is currently taking vacation time. The chief will post a job announcement with *Daily Dispatch* for six weeks. A discussion followed about whether to advertise a full time or part time position.
- A washer and dryer and two new toilets are in and plumbed at the Bayshore Station.
- A spending freeze is in place on everything except essential items until the new contract needs are known.

- Engine 6207 did not pass its pump test. The chief had gotten two bids on a new butterfly valve and the engine might have to spend four days in Hillsboro for the repair. Director Fritz suggested that Oregon Apparatus in Eugene, OR might offer a faster turnaround on the engine. She would provide Chief Sakaris with their contact information.

Returning to advertising the firefighter position, President Soltau said a decision needed to be made about whether to hire one full time firefighter or multiple part time firefighters. He added that he and the chief advocate the part time approach. A discussion followed, with input from the paid firefighters present, about the advantages of having a crew of two to respond to the increasing number of calls. President Soltau called for a motion and Director Fritz moved to hire part time firefighters. Director Joll seconded the motion. A discussion followed about the cost of outfitting firefighters with uniforms and protective clothing. Chief Sakaris said that Kyle Bridges would be available on his days off from his new job to work part time for Seal Rock, and he is already outfitted. President Soltau called for a vote and the motion passed with all in favor. Chief Sakaris said he would start the process the following day and e-mail the board members the revised job announcement.

President Soltau distributed copies of an expense schedule he had made showing details of a proposed insurance benefit to the firefighters and the fire chief. The proposed benefit to the firefighters would be \$10,000, given through payroll at \$595.93 (net after deductions) per month until the firefighters' new contract is negotiated; the chief's benefit would be \$18,000, given through payroll at \$1,072.50 (net after deductions) per month, starting with his December 2019 check. Action would be taken on the proposal after the Executive Session, when the meeting returned to regular session.

2. SRFD Association

Dave Oliver had replaced Hank Lopez as president of the SRFD Association. He reported that the association had lost four volunteers last year, leaving six current volunteers and one firefighter in training, which makes it difficult to cover the station. He suggested that changes need to be made to the association's by-laws, "taking the ranks off the sleeves" and changing from a leadership role to trained certified staff roles. He said a command structure is no longer feasible and the goal over the next year is to "take the by-laws apart". Mr. Oliver said that Seal Rock is not the only volunteer department going through these changes, but it's all along the coast, and added that the average age in this volunteer department is 65. He said he would like to have a closed session with the board after the regular meeting. A discussion followed about ordinances and sub-sections relating to complaints and charges, as they apply to advertising executive sessions on public meeting agendas. While the board chair can exercise discretion, President Soltau said it had been the culture of the department to notify and advertise accordingly and he would follow that precedent. The executive session with Mr. Oliver will be advertised on the agenda for the February 2020 board meeting.

Public Comment

In answer to a question from John Raudsep, Chief Sakaris said a firefighter's protective clothing could not be sold to another department when they leave because that department might have different specifications.

Mickie Lundquist thanked the board and the fire chief for allowing the Seal Rock Garden Club to use the station to make wreaths for their Christmas sale. She said the sale went very well and the money raised will be used for repairs to the Garden Club's building.

Board Member Comments

Director Benjamin reported on the Waldport Chamber of Commerce meeting he had attended that day. The presentation was on the use of social media for promoting businesses. He shared the handout he brought from the meeting with firefighter Landon Blake and suggested it might be useful in reaching out to potential volunteers.

President Soltau adjourned the regular meeting at 20:06 and opened Executive Session under ORS 192.660, Section (2), Contracts.

The meeting returned to regular session at 20:40.

Chief Sakaris and paid firefighters Landon Blake, Andrew Licon, and Derek Udoutch returned to the meeting. The firefighters were not happy with the schedule of expenses President Soltau had prepared, or with the proposed taxes on their insurance benefit. They stated that their compensation had grown steadily smaller since they had been employed and questioned the costs to the district. Director Joll said the insurance reimbursements in their contract were never intended to be anything but a health benefit and, if receipts were not submitted, the firefighters were not honoring their contract. The firefighters disputed that, saying that they had been told it was compensation and, if it was improperly administered, that wasn't their problem. Director Fritz said the board was "fighting for you guys" and trying to make things right, but the contract was binding and the insurance benefit had to be taxed. Firefighter Blake said he had had no option in signing the contract; he had been told to sign it or leave. President Soltau said that had been a mistake but "these are terms the board is offering". Director Joll asked if this was an acceptable offer and the firefighters said "No". They felt the board "continued to take from us", adding that they felt they were expected to work while "under-equipped". Director Fritz reiterated that the board was trying to fix what had happened but the district had only so much money to work with. Firefighter Licon said he didn't understand "on an ethical level" how it could be this way. Director Joll pointed out that the district would absorb Social Security, Medicare, and income tax liability when the wages were reported. Firefighter Licon asked, if he accepted this proposal, could he fill in the part time shifts until new personnel were hired. President Soltau said that was an operational question, not for the board to answer, and he would have to talk with Chief Sakaris. Chief Sakaris said he would need to see what money was available for overtime, as much as he would like to see two people on a shift. Director

Henson asked if the firefighters had a counter offer. They did not. President Soltau said, "We're there." Checks would be printed and payroll taxes deducted.

President Soltau moved that Director Joll clean up the new contract into a presentable form and present it to the firefighters as soon as possible. Director Fritz seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.

In answer to a question from Director Joll, Firefighter Landon said he was on shift the following day. Director Joll said he would have the contract to him before lunch.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 21:00.

Minutes prepared by Patty Benjamin.