

Seal Rock Rural Fire Protection District
Board Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2020

Acting Board Chair, Board Secretary Tina Fritz: All right. I am going to call the meeting to order at 15:32, November 12, 2020.

We are in-person. There is a new structure with the agenda

I call the meeting, the order.

Roll Call:

Board Members Present; Director Tina Fritz, Director Dustin Joll, Director John Soltau, Director Larry Henson,

Staff Present: Fire Chief Sakaris, Accountant Tom Wilson, Past Accountant Mel Berry, District Attorney Adam Springer, Board Recorder Mary Lou Morris, District Firefighter John Townley.

Absent; Board Chair Director Peter Benjamin

First thing on agenda is the acceptance of board member chair, Peter Benjamin resignation.

Do I hear a motion to accept Peter Benjamin's resignation?

Dustin Joll Joll made the motion and Larry Henson seconded it.

All in favor?

Board Members: Aye

Tina, Okay. It is unanimous. Peter has now officially resigned. At this time, I am going to ask if there is any recommendation for who should be taking his resignation form down to the county district.

Fire Chief Sakaris: Yes, I will take that over to the court's office.

Tina: I have been acting as Board chair while Peter is gone. This normally falls on the vice president, John, do you want to take responsibility of the presidency or do you wish to pass it on?

John: I wish to pass it on.

Tina: Okay. So, then that leaves me as secretary. Are there any objections to me stepping in as the board president?

John: I move that the board accept Tina moving up to board chair from the position of secretary, effective immediately.

Larry: And I second that.

Tina: All in favor?

Board Members: Aye.

Tina: Ok as board president, John, I have to ask, since you did not want to step up and take the president position, with my schedule and work, I am going to rely on my vice president a lot. Do you still want to be the vice president? Or would you like to pass that on to somebody else?

John: Well, I would be willing to do it, Tina. I think it would be good for us to sit down and talk about what your expectations are, and see if I can meet them or not. I think that would be the best thing.

Tina: Okay, we will discuss this later.

The next thing on our agenda is approval of the previous minutes. Do we have any comment from the board on the previous minute?

Larry: I do. On page four under board comments, there is a paragraph that says, "Director Henson said, Now it is required as volunteers have made certain hours of training." the next-- one, two, three, four, five words following should be deleted because I did not say that. What I had said was, it is difficult because none of us is getting any younger. Not that requirements are based on age.

Mary Lou: What I want you to do Larry is to send me an email with specifically, what is written in the minutes now and how you want it corrected.

Larry: All right. I am sorry. I apologize that you did not hear whenever I read that. I know that communications are kind of bad. So, I will do that. However, I think it is critical that we understand that this would be a change to the minutes on that second bullet point under board comment. That I know where it says, "Now it is required that volunteers have met certain hours of training and be a certain age." I did not say, "and be a certain age," because that is

discriminatory. What I actually said is, difficult, because none of us are getting any younger. It was directed at myself, not to the audience.

Tina: All right. Dustin Joll or John, do you have anything with the minutes that needs to be corrected?

Tina: Okay. So, after Mary Lou gets the minutes fixed for Larry, do I have a motion to pass the minutes?

John: I will make the motion to pass the minutes. This is John speaking.

Dustin Joll: And I will second that. This is Dustin Joll.

Tina: All right. All in favor?

Board Members: Aye

Tina: All right.

Is Tom Wilson here [tonight](#)?

Tom: Yes, I am

Tom Wilson gives financial report that was distributed to the Board

Tina: Any questions?

Tina: Do I hear a motion to approve the financial report?

Larry Henson: I move that we approve the financial report.

Tina: do we have a second?

Dustin Joll: I will second.

Tina: All in favor?

Board Members: Aye.

Tina: Okay. And now, we need money to pay.

Tom: This month, we are recommending to transfer forty one thousand dollars and we need a motion.

Tina: Do I have a motion to transfer the forty one thousand dollars from the LGIP bank account so we can pay our bills?

Dustin Joll: I SO move.

Tina: Okay. Do I have a second

Larry Henson: I will second.

Tina: All right. All in favor paying our bills [inaudible]?

Board Members: Aye

Tina: All right, we are paying our bills. So this is where it is going to be a new section for us. This is going to be our public comment section.

Our first speaker is going to be Lyle Beard

I talked to a lady [today](#) who said it took forty-five minutes to respond to her house.

I want you to look into why it took so long. And the date on that is 10-16-20 at 3:08 AM.

As a long time volunteer, I have a real concern for the lack of volunteers now and whatever has cause that to happen. I guess that the board should look into it and try to resolve that, because I think in order for a fire department to be viable, to have personnel on the team good qualified firefighter volunteers. And at this time, as far as I know, there is not any qualified volunteers.

Tina: Next is Larry Silverthorn

Larry Silverthorn: I now want to make sure, since I do not have copies of your minutes, that it is in the minutes that Director Fritz cut me off after Peter Benjamin gave me a moment to make a comment

Second item, August minutes shows Silverthorn questions but no board answers, why?

Item three, [September 10th](#) minutes approved, your board minutes on your website showing none of my questions and no board answers.

Item four, if you are aware I have told John Soltau, that just for your information, Kirby did live behind the fire hall, and his wife, both passed away, I think that it is important information for the fire district to know.

Fifth item. After the last October meeting, the next morning, I saw the Chief and Peter, talked to them directly I asked them for a sit-down meeting to address some of these issues over the past three months. They did not say yes or no. A week went by on **Friday**, I did not receive any response from either person.

On **Monday** the following, ten days later, I caught the Chief coming back to the fire hall, so I approached and asked him about this meeting. He told me personally that they have been instructed, I am assuming him and Peter, that your legal council- I want to make this clear, your fire legal council has instructed them not to talk or meet with me. You do not have any idea how upset I am about this. I asked the Chief to confirm this. He called me back and said that he would have the legal council call me to confirm that this was actually happening.

Item number six, [inaudible].

John Soltau: Larry, you got thirty seconds.

Larry Silverthorn: I will be meeting with the paper in December to address some of these issues and items. I have asked you guys once. I have asked the Chief and Tom. I have asked the board to address these things and sit down to participate. So I am asking the second time, and the paper is going to meet with me so both sides can be heard and the taxpayers can be informed other than these board meetings.

Number seven, any board member wants to contact me to 2703172 and I am making a formal request to be on any hiring board in the future for Seal Rock fire personnel of any sort. Thank you.

Tina: Okay. Larry, I will talk to the Chief and ask him, and I will talk to Adam and ask him about the meeting with you. I am sorry that you did not get a response. So, I will get back to you on that. I have to get your phone number again, Larry Silverthorn: 270-3172 and I appreciate your answer.

Tina: Next speaker will be Paul Ramola

Paul Ramola: Okay. Peter Benjamin made two statements in recent meetings that the board lawyer gave him an opinion on two different subjects. It appears

that the board went along with this and therefore seems to agree with the statements by Peter Benjamin.

First off, the reopening budget meeting board vote was a two-to-two tie. We were told that the vote did not fail, but reverted back to the previous meeting where it already passed. This has brought up a number of questions, peek out on the request for information. [inaudible] request and it has been over a month. The questions of conflict of interest with the board member and the Central Coast fire and the board member was not in conflict with any future [inaudible] at Central Coast fire.

If this was a written opinion, we have a right to see it. If it was a verbal opinion, you have an obligation to prove exactly what the lawyer said and not just interpretation of the board minutes [inaudible] board members. Mr. Smith here brought that up at the meeting, by the way. The request was made on [October 13th](#) and yet has to be acknowledged. If this was an FOIA request, the board is in violation of the open document [inaudible]. It is my opinion that the board [inaudible]

It is my opinion that the board has been less than transparent for some time now. For your information, we watch the website that examines district issues, board actions or inactions, at an average to bring all facts as well as issues to the taxpayers of the district so they can fairly judge if their taxes are spent wisely. In addition, it is a great form for the taxpayers to judge whether or not the board is acting in the best interest of the taxpayers and residents. Thank you.

Tina: Thank you. So in your regards, we will get you the information you are asking that they are not a conflict of interest with the Seal Rock and Central Coast fire.

Dustin Joll: So, Adam (the SR Attorney) is on the phone.

Tina: Adam, are you on the phone?

Adam: I am.

Tina: Can you please let Paul Ramola understand how I am not a conflict of interest?

Adam: Yes, we can discuss that personally. Basically the information requested by Mr. Ramola falls within the attorney-client privilege. So, that is the issue we have with your request. But to this, I am going to ask him to give

an opinion. Outside of direct dealings with Central Coast fire district, there is no conflict of interest for an employee of Central Coast fire district to be on the board of the Seal Rock fire district.

Chair Tina Fritz: Next, Mike Burt.

Mike Burt: I am sure you have probably heard that there is a petition floating around. The petition is also posted on the website that Paul Rimula has mentioned. [Today](#), this petition has over a hundred signatures from local residents and taxpayers. The petition is to pursue an accountability and responsibility by the board on how they monitor and spend taxpayers' money.

On that petition, there are some items that we have listed that are factual and verbal. We hoped that this petition brings the community to a higher level of awareness of the Seal Rock fire district and how the money is being spent. [inaudible] on the petition includes management of budget and financial reports transparency, unequal subsidies for the other fire districts with taxpayers' funds and district equipment thereby depleting our resources, not maintaining stepping levels paid for by district's taxpayers, complete disregard for and not utilizing district volunteers.

No strategic future plans for fire district long term stability, depleting district resources paid for by the taxpayers to benefit neighboring fire districts and leaving our district unprotected. District board not abiding by the Oregon open meeting statutes. Need for [inaudible] vehicles and equipment not prioritized.

Like I have said, we have over a hundred signatures to date and we are continuing to pursue board signatures. The goal is to get the community aware of how their taxes are being spent and hopefully, with a good open dialogue, we can make it beneficial to all parts. Thank you.

Tina: Thank you, Mike.

Tina: Next is Mickey Lindquest.

Question about Fire Chief ability to use staff vehicle

We believe that the Chief should be assigned to that car. He should use it 24/7, unless he is leaving the county on personal business or vacation, or whatever. If he is in Newport and he gets a call down here that is very important, use his personal car, come down here, trade car to get the equipment. That just not make sense to the taxpayers that I know and I am sure I could fill several petitions with that.

Tina: His car that I know, Micky, he is always in his car or to be in his car if he is in the district. The only time he does not have his car is if he is going on vacation.

Tina: So, I do not think that any of us has ever spoken that he could not be in his car unless he is [inaudible] the letter you put [crosstalk]. I am sorry that there is a misunderstanding about that.

The next portion is public letters.

I did not see any letters come in. Obviously, last month would be the month we will be addressing this month. So, anything that is brought this month then, we will try to address next month.

The next section is going to be our executive director report

Fire Chief Sakaris: Good evening, everybody. Can you hear me?

Members: Yes.

Fire Chief: Okay. I am going to start off with my monthly Chief's report and end with the number of calls that we have this month. Again, a lot of these is repetitive because they have the meeting each month. I have attended the fire assess board meeting, the phone conference. I am continuing to go to the weekly IGA meetings with Chief Mason and Chief Woodson.

I have met with the water department regarding water distribution. Adam Dellinger and myself, we had a meeting regarding the water distribution. And right now, the crews have completed flowing all the district hydrants and they will now conduct flow testing of the hydrants for upcoming testing.

I met this last month, actually with this month and last month, with the board member Fritz and board member Henson regarding firefighter, and a letter was written to Central Coast fire protection district on the feasibility of a joint firefighter. Now, we have not really gotten into the main [inaudible] of that, but we are in discussions with that. This project and the firefighter for the board members needed to be hired by around the first of [January 2021](#). So, that is our goal to hire another firefighter; whether it would be a joint position or Seal Rock fire department hiring a firefighter.

[October 20th](#), three of our pieces of equipment were pump tested and as of right now, all of our equipment has been pump tested and the tests have all

passed on every piece of equipment. So, we have been certified with all of our pump-casting.

The Bayshore station addition has been completed. We have to get some incidentals in there before everything is ready to be occupied, but we have added the two rooms. We are getting some dining chairs and some other things that the firefighters need so they can move in. That should be near within the next couple of weeks. They will be moving into that station.

Monday trainings are ongoing with Central Coast and Seal Rocks fire district with the volunteers. The county Fire Academy speaking to Chief Mason is going very well. All the station generators have been in maintenance and serviced as part of their maintenance schedule and all of them are up and running, and in good working condition.

The next item is that we received a letter from Life Flight regarding a patient that we had; that it was a CPR and the person, the guys brought them back. There is life-saving measures on that. The person was transported to Corvallis and when she got to Corvallis with unstable condition and I want to get clues that every individual that was on that call, it was a 55-year-old individual and the guy did a tremendous job of resuscitation on the female.

Our calls for service this month was a total of fifty-two. Two serve rescues, four brush fires, four public assistance calls, one fire alarm, one building fire, two motor vehicle accidents, and thirty-eight medical aid calls. And if there are any other questions for me?

Chair Tina Fritz: Thank you. We are going to go on to old business. In this section, it is going to be anything that we have previously went over in a meeting. We are going to be looking at how to resolve.

With that being said, One old business item is the budget. I know this is a concern, the budget did not pass. We are going to be redoing our budget meeting. Chief, when has that budget meeting been set so that we can have it on next month's agenda to pass it?

Fire Chief Sakaris: I sent out an email to all the budget individuals and I received back from board member Henson, Mary Lou, Micky, and James. I still need a few of the other board members to call in and let me know, as well as mail. So, if you could give me those schedules, I want to have it before the **Thanksgiving** holiday.

The next business is the CAC applications. So Larry, how is that going?

Three people have applied: Jamie Mason, Al Anton, Lynda Engle. Two more have expressed interest.

As soon as we get three people that want to step up, I have no problem with any of these four or five [inaudible] if they want to join the committee. But until we have at least three, we cannot necessarily set it a day for when to discuss that.

I have also heard from two other people in the community who said that they thank the district for the opportunity to apply, but that they were pursuing other interest at the time.

Chair Tina Fritz: The next item is Facebook.

Chief Sakaris: Will be setting up a meeting with former Chief Shaw to get the site back in operation.

Tina: I keep hearing this and it is frustrating, So how about we make a new Facebook page.

I am looking for suggestions because it falls into how are we going to get volunteers? I want to reach out to the community, and I want to get our volunteers up and running. This is not something that any of us take lightly and I know that everybody says we do not want volunteers. That is not true. We want volunteers.

Larry Silverthorn: In the last four years, we have lost seventeen volunteers.

Tina: You are correct and that has to do with the training hours that are required, and some of that has to do with some personal issues.

Larry Silverthorn: Some of those rules became so strict that it is really impossible to respond to a call. That is why I quit.

Tina: Okay. Well, be patient with this. We are trying to rectify and get the volunteers up and running and doing it the correct way. Do not hold the past against us. Let us move forward is what I ask.

Fire Chief Sakaris: There are currently two new recruits.

Tina: I have met both of them and they both seem very eager and ready. I started out as a volunteer. Volunteers are near and dear to my heart. They really are.

Chair Tina Fritz: New business

Process for filling position of Peter Benjamin's remaining term.

Director Larry Henson: The SDAO website gives direction on how to fill the position. We will have an application form that SDAO has provided that will be placed on the website

There are four points: set a timeline, accept applications, interview applicants, select replacement.

Board received several question from audience concerning past filling of vacancy, rules of order, timeline, access to application form and where to turn in completed forms

Board Director Henson: I personally believe in having clear, open, and transparent governance. I welcome every question. I have a friend sitting in the audience here [tonight](#) who asked me the other day, "Larry, I am getting concerned about some of the people who are questioning the District's actions; why in the world are they taking everything so personally?, because it is not a personal thing. The District exists for each and every one of us and our goal working together is to make the Seal Rock district the best district that we can."

A question was asked concerning the meaning of SDAO: Special Districts Association of Oregon.

A question came up again from the audience concerning volunteers.

Director Henson replied: Volunteers come and go at will, the District needs to provide qualified and properly trained responders at all times thus the need to hire people. One paid staff person costs more than many volunteers, I understand that. I have been asked by a past District Board member about the lack of volunteers and reminded them that when they were on the District Board they were also searching for ways to attract volunteers, because the volunteers were getting to the point of being overworked. Then, if volunteers are going to be paid fifteen to twenty dollars an hour, tax withholdings must be done, And for me, I am talking to some of the volunteers here at this time, then they would not be a volunteer. Do I personally want to spend the many hours of training and duty shifts required to do that? NO. So, there are a lot of issues.

Statement from the audience: I do not think any of the volunteers quit because they are not getting paid. They quit because they receive no respect.

Director Henson: That is a problem with all districts.

Director John Soltau: Can I-- [inaudible]

Fire Chief: [inaudible] If people are going to talk, we need you to speak louder because we are cutting in and out. Thank you very much.

Director Soltau: [inaudible]

Fire Chief: Cannot hear him.

Director John Soltau: [inaudible] I spoke to the [inaudible]

Mary Lou: Okay. This is Mary Lou. I am leaving. [crosstalk]

[background noises]

Board Chair Tina Fritz: The next item of new business concerning filling the position of Peter Benjamin is: For John Soltau and Dustin Joll, to state how long you would like to run this applications for?

Director John Soltau: I think fifteen days is definitely sufficient. It might be actually longer than what we need to do. The people in the community that are engaged in this fire district are most likely on the phone right now. But yes, 15 days sounds okay.

Director Dustin Joll: I would agree with him, Tina. I think it is plenty of time.

District Board Chair Tina Fritz: Director Henson Are you good with the 15 days?

Board Member Larry Henson: That is fine with me.

Board Chair Tina Fritz: Okay. **Today** is the 12th. Fifteen days actually pushes out onto a **Saturday**. So, we are going to make it 17 days. Applications to be in by the 30th, if we can get them interviewed by the first or the second, then I think we can have a new board member brought in on our board meeting which is on the 10th. How does that all sound to everybody?

Board Director Henson: sounds good to me.

Board Director Soltau: I think that is perfect. Thank you, Tina.

Board Director Dustin Joll: Yes. That was all good.

Board Chair Tina Fritz: We will have these applications available and we will start looking at them and do the interview either on the first or the second. We will definitely let the public know which day. For new business, that is all I have.

We are now going to board comments. Let us start with John, do you have anything? Sorry John, hold on. Joe Bartling of the Firefighters local union wants to make a statement.

Local Firefighters Union Rep, Joe Bartling: Hello. My name is Joe Bartling and I am the representative of the new Central Coast firefighters Union. I want to officially let the board know that we will soon be doing labor contracts and I am the point of contact.

Board Chair Tina Fritz: Okay.

Union Rep Bartling: Awesome Thank you.

Board Director John Soltau: I just want to compliment you, Tina, for the way you have conducted the meeting [tonight](#). You have done a good job.

Board Director Dustin Joll: Well done Tina. I also appreciate Peter Benjamin's decades of service to this district. Can you give me the response data for the [October 16th](#) on Spring Street that Mr. Beard spoke about earlier?

Board Chair Tina Fritz: Yes. Chief Mason has the answer to that. So, we will let him respond real quick on that.

Board Director Dustin Joll: Okay. Perfect. And then, I appreciate Mr. Silverthorn's comments.

We will chat about his concerns. And then finally, Director Henson, thank you for your work with the Citizens Advisory Committee getting up and running. I think that is really going to do a lot to address the communication challenges that we are experiencing and have been experiencing over the last two years. So, thank you very much. That is all I have.

Board Chair Tina Fritz: Assistant Chief Mason from the Central Coast Fire and Rescue District would you please address the question presented by Mr. Lyle Beard earlier in the meeting?

Chief Mason: Yes, So when the concern was brought up, we immediately pulled up the records from the VVCP. All of our traffic communications, and vehicle traffic, and the call that was referenced was dispatched at 3:08 in the morning, the engine was en route with the crew at 3:11, and was on scene at 3:20.

Board Chair Tina Fritz: All right. So then, I am going to end this with saying thank you. I am very, very new with this. I am going to be referring to my other board members from time to time because I like to jabber. Since I am new, I may have to refer to them a lot. It is not my desire to try to hide or do anything myself. I want transparency, communication and open dialog with our community. I want to bridge the gap and work with everyone together so we can figure out how we can make this all work. We have a training officer and are trying to take the next step. So, please do not pull the past into the present, be open and lets together make this the best.

I am going to call the meeting closed. The next day of our meeting is [December 10th](#). It will be here at the Seal Rock Station.

Director Henson: Will there be a meeting to consider the applications?

Board Chair Tina Fritz: The board will get together on the first to have the interview, the first or the second. So our next meeting for the board, will be meeting with the applicants to fill up Peter's position on [Tuesday, December 1st](#), and we will do it at 4:30. So, we will need to have all applications in by the 30th, and then hopefully by [December 10th](#), we can swear in somebody for Peter's position. At this time, I think, I will call the meeting and it is 19:55. Let us have a good evening.