

# Seal Rock Rural Fire Protection District

## Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting

**When:** January 20, 2022 5:00pm / 17:00 hours

**Where:** 10349 NW Rand Street Seal Rock, Oregon 97376

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM

**ROLL CALL:** Karl Kowalski, Mike Burt, Skip Smith, Paul Rimola, Tina Fritz was absent. There was a quorum.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** 14 (SEE ATTACHMENT)

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** The minutes from previous meeting were accepted and approved with no changes or objections.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Erik Dedijer-Small opened up comments with his observation of the years of service given to the District by SRFD volunteers
- Larry Silverthorn had complaints as to the condition of some fire hydrants in the District which badly need attention, especially the one at Hwy 101 & Bernard St. He also shared his disappointment as to the state of the Green Building inside, which he claimed was filthy and without proper lighting as well as one of the trucks that had missing hubcaps.
- Paul Highfill and Lyle Beard addressed some of Larry's complaints and responded that repairs have been made in the Green Bldg and that the hubcap issue was a result of the truck being in for repairs and they had recommended leaving the hubcaps off.
- Shi Bucher, from COCFD and the Union representative, discussed the letter from the Union firefighters that was posted on social media and assured those present that they do support all the volunteers but felt safety was

being compromised. DPSST certifications need to be met, he feels. Karl asked about Union negotiations and an email is to be resent by the Union with an “intent to negotiate.”

- Lyle Beard pointed out the many years of FF experience and how the letter made them all sound inexperienced. Further discussion went on.
- John Stotts had questions regarding the Bayshore Station dorms.
- Larry Silverthorn asked if the paid CCF&R Fire Fighters lived in their District.

Both questions were suggested for discussion after the meeting.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT:** (See Attachment)

- It was determined that Accountant Tom Wilson doesn’t need to attend every month and can send his report. The cut off of his report needs to be the end of the month and if his numbers change before the scheduled meeting, he can notify the Board.
- Director Paul Rimola (Treasurer) stated that an error was made on the LGIP report by the County and money is to be transferred.
- Because the Dec 16, 2021 Board Meeting was canceled and money needed to be transferred without a quorum in order to pay bills and salaries, he wanted it on record that he had transferred \$53,125. A motion was made and seconded to move \$61,981.
- In the financial report showing Budget vs Actual we are over on salaries and PERS (due to having to catch up last years that prior Board/Chief neglected to pay).
- Chief Ewing explained that we are currently on a “strategic pause” in spending on “big stuff” since we have been playing catch-up. Some expenditures have been taken from the wrong categories but we are moving to a purchase order system with a correct code in the future.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT:**

- The green building is being looked at by the County to possibly be rezoned so we can put it to use. Also, a Conditional Use Permit is under discussion. They are eager to help us out. The exhaust in the bldg. is being addressed with help from volunteer John Stotts and Larry Silverthorn are still working on the sign for the building. Chief Ewing suggested we refer to our Seal Rock location as a campus due to the multiple buildings.
- The extrication drill on January 15 was well attended and guys had fun cutting up the 2 cars that had been donated. The new battery-operated tools were easier to use and it was suggested maybe a mini version be purchased for being on another truck.
- Volunteers continue to return and there is interest by a younger guy who lives in the District.
- Maintenance is getting done on the trucks and SCBU air test results just came back and are good. Generators are being looked at and tested.
- Paul Rimola shared that we now have 2 spreadsheets for the fire hydrants showing their maintenance and flow. Larry Silverthorn said the paid staff are responsible for the work on them per their job duties.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Director Rimola read his motion that the IGA be canceled and his reasons. (See attachment) A lively discussion followed. One possibility is allowing it to run out, which would be on May 17 of this year. Chief Ewing explained his attempt to communicate with Chief Mason regarding the IGA and his requests for an up to date and signed copy. The physical copy that SRFD has is not signed and Director Smith said after his research into Board minutes that it appears that the 2020 website version is the only valid one because it was voted on by both boards whereas the later versions were not voted on, that he can find, and the 2021 copy is not signed.

There were multiple comments as to how the IGA affects the District of Seal Rock Fire and most of the Board feel the IGA can be saved and is useful if changes can be made by the Chiefs sitting down together. As a result of the discussion around the IGA, Director Rimola withdrew his motion to cancel it. Instead, two new decisions were made:

- A proposal was made by President Kowalski to select two Board members to an Oversight Committee (along with the Chief) in negotiating the IGA. Paul Rimola and Karl Kowalski were selected.
- Motion to give notice to CCF&R that the IGA will be allowed to run out on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 if a mutually beneficial agreement cannot be reached. Passed unanimously.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Director Rimola said he would table the topics of the Audit and Lexipol for another meeting. The Chief Hiring Committee (now called Chief - Job Description) will be addressed at the Special Board meeting in 2 weeks.

### **BOARD COMMENTS:**

Director Skip Smith offered a hand-out with the schedule from SDAO of free virtual classes coming up in February. He also requested a current inventory list be made available to him.

**January 27 is Fire Service Appreciation Day!** Director Smith thanked the Volunteers for their Service.

**Adjournment was at 6:52**

Minutes by LE

To The Board of Directors of the Seal Rock Fire Prevention District

IGA Cancellation

1/20/22

In spite of our best and most sincere efforts, and in the face of a divisive misinformation campaign launched by our friends across the bridge, I am afraid that the so called IGA may have to come to an end. The agreement has been weaponized against our Seal Rock Board, driving a wedge between our districts, as well as our paid firefighters and our unpaid volunteer professionals.

The seeds of this failure have its roots in the destruction of our once robust volunteer force, aided and abetted by a complacent and accommodating past Seal Rock **Board**. In my opinion, the IGA seems to be born of a desire for consolidation of Central Coast and Seal Rock without a vote of the taxpayers of either district.

If I was a manager in Central Coast, I would say why not? Seal Rock put into place the seeds of their own destruction. If I was in the place of their management, I would look around and realize that Seal Rock invested in four paid firefighters with half the calls of Central Coast district. If another district is willing to subsidize us, I would do exactly as they did, especially if I cannot get my residents to pass a levy and seeing a weak district willing to transfer their resources. I am however, a representative of Seal Rock residents and taxpayers and cannot let this go on.

So here we are at this juncture, in spite of our best efforts and the best efforts of our Chief. I will make a motion to give "90-day notice to quit" per the IGA contract, to be dated February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

I did not come to this conclusion lightly nor without cause. I will now outline some of the reasons we need to jump out of this contract:

- During the July, 2021 meeting the board suggested that our former Chief hammer out the issue with firefighter stationing with Central Coast. This was never done.
- During the July special meeting Chief Mason attended our meeting and proceeded to tell our board that we should put on the ballot another 80 cent per thousand levy, the same levy proposal that just failed. I believe that he came in at the invitation of one of our board members. The problem with this is that our district levy was not the business of Central Coast. I was uncomfortable and insulted by that approach. I, and some of my fellow board members, thought that that Mason felt that he was in charge of our district. At that time, I suggested that they should hire two to four more firefighters to make things equal.
- In November at the regular meeting, I presented a "State of the District" Report in which I outlined my concerns about the IGA. (See attached).
- A motion was passed during the November meeting instructing Chief Ewing to engage Chief Mason about our concerns and negotiate changes that would be acceptable to Seal Rock Fire, based on the report.
- Time went on and no progress was made. It appeared to me that Mason was not discussing this in good faith. It also appeared that Mason thought that we were violating the IGA by our demands that our firefighters spend time in Seal Rock. In truth this convoluted and

poorly written document only discusses shared resources, not who would occupy which space in the fire districts.

- Then came the campaign of misinformation. We were attacked by Knudson of Central Coast in the newspaper. An inflammatory, emotional, and a grossly inaccurate letter was sent on a Union Letterhead and put on the Internet and spread around to media. This letter was unsigned but supposedly was supported by the paid employees of both districts.
- All this has done is to make it unclear who we are supposed to negotiate with. Chief Mason was asked to comment on the letter and did not. In fact, as far as I can see, he has been MIA since before January 6<sup>th</sup>. I consider this a negotiating smokescreen. To me, Knudson suggested that he spoke for the district and the board.
- Chief Ewing summed it up very well with a letter to Mason, a letter that has no reply. It appears that Mason approved of this tactic, and I have to ask did he orchestrate it? His silence is deafening. Is he talking for the board?

We tried; it is now time to quit. We need to move on with business that actually benefits our district, and this nonsense has taken way too much time to justify any more time spent. Even if the committee, called for in the contract or a subcommittee, came up with an acceptable agreement that both boards approved, I doubt that any agreement would be implemented by Central Coast Fire paid staff or employees.

With this notice we fully intend to abide by the terms and conditions of the jointly signed Mutual Aid agreement.

**I motion for SRRFD to give notice to Central Coast Fire District that we are exercising our option in the Intergovernmental Agreement and giving Central Coast Fire 90-day notice to cancel the IGA agreement. Notice will be dated February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Expiration date will be May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. The mutual aid agreement will be the default and controlling agreement.**

## IGA and Concerns

An Intergovernmental Agreement has been in effect for about a year or less. This agreement was rewritten at the end of the last fiscal year shortly before this board was sworn in.

After review I see problems with this sloppily written agreement. This board has asked questions and directed the former Seal Rock Chief to immediately get together with the Central Coast Chief and work out issues, especially the issue of our Seal Rock Firefighters not spending time in Seal Rock.

### Issues

#### Sloppy

- No one can show me the most current version with certainty. The version on the internet does not jive with the last copy I was given. I have a handful of paper with no context.
- Most contracts have page numbers. This does not and makes it difficult to keep in order and navigate.
- The IGA has been amended, the last time was shortly before this board term started and seemed to be rushed through. I ask why?
- Is this de-facto Consolidation? Was this the goal all along?

#### One Sided

- Seal Rock personal respond to twice as many calls in Central Coast as Central Coast responds to in Seal Rock
- Seal Rock personal have been spending all day and all night at Central Coast with little or no time in Seal Rock outside of responding to calls.
- This has resulted in maintenance issues with Seal Rock equipment and buildings. It makes Hydrant maintenance in our district difficult if not impossible.
- When told we wanted to have our firefighters spend at least the day in Seal Rock Red Station Central Coast resisted.
- We are responsible to pay for training costs.
- There is no provision for our reimbursement for our firefighters responding to twice as many calls in Central Coast as Seal Rock.
- We have sleeping quarters at Bayshore and that station needs to be used.

### Public Perception/Taxpayer Perception

- There seems public confusion. I have heard on a number of occasions that we are actually Central Coast.
- Taxpayers are questioning our commitment to the northern part of the district.
- Taxpayer confusion may lead to funding resistance.
- We have directed our consultant to go through the equipment and make sure they are road worthy and ready to go. There should be no excuse not to use our equipment.

#### Insurance Reimbursement

- We are conducting an audit of all crash reimbursement that may have been claimed by Central Coast so we can make sure we are getting out fair share.
- All insurance claims in Seal Rock should be filed by company contracted by Seal Rock.