**Jefferson County Fire and EMS**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**December 10, 2024**

**Meeting called to Order:** 5:32 PM

**Pledge of Allegiance lead by:** Led by Rob Galyen

**Roll Call:**

Board President Kim Stout, Secretary Dusty Miller, Director Ryan Boyle, Director Chris DuPont

**Fire Members Absent:**

**Department staff:** Billing Manager Danielle Peckham, Fire Chief Blake, Deputy Chief Earnest, Deputy Chief Skaar, Captain Glen, Finance Kristal H, Captain Beebe

**Zoom:**

**Community Members:**  Linda Larson, Scott Spaulding, Michelle Spaulding

**Agenda approval/adjustment:** Secretary Miller motioned to approve the agenda as typed. Vice President Galyen seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Presenter:** No presentation.

**Citizens Input:** Linda Larson commented on the layoff situation. She stated everyone in the room is concerned with the potential lay off situation. She stated this happened at Warm Springs and employees who were not laid off left and they did not have anyone left to run calls, leaving the Chief and Assistant Chief to run calls. She continued stating FEMA had to come in to run calls. Can the dept afford to pay fema rather than the crews that are here? She continued to state that people will not want to work at this dept because of the layoff situation. The dept can’t afford to pay fema. She asked when we lose the personnel who will take care of the citizens of the community. There is a lot of knowledge in the dept, and they are willing to help. When members are willing to help it seems they are being looked at insubordinate. She has had family members come down to the board, but they are scared the board will retaliate against them. People are not free to speak their minds here. This county needs these personnel but the dept will end up with nobody and with the calls they have it will not work. She would like to know what the board plan is. It is the board’s job to oversee spending and the chief and his actions. She likes the chief and believes he wants to do good, but he has fail the dept members and the community. Board President Kim Stout stated they will be taking that as a comment and not responding.

**Minutes from previous meeting:** Front page agenda approval section needs to be cleaned up stated by director Boyle. Secretary Miller motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Director Boyle seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

**EMS/Fire Consolidation:** Blake stated that we are continuing to work with our auditors to see how are consolidating funds. He stated we had an employee meeting today to update staff. He stated we are continuing to work and revenue and how to get it in and ensure it is clean on the books. We are continuing to work on back billing as well.

**Old Business**

**Building Expansion:** Chief Blake stated that the building expansion is moving along we have gotten an invoice for permit fees. We are still waiting to get info on the next steps from the builder on what they will need from us outside. We are still working on getting the schedule corrected as well. In the meantime they’ve gotten the ground prepped and trailer set up.

**Old Business**

**Bond Advisory**: Blake stated we needed another meeting on the books to get the bond advisory board updated sometime in Jan. The fire truck we are getting is delayed another month. We are looking at how we will pay for it- leasing vs. paying it out right so it makes bond funds last longer.

**New Business**

**Fire Audit:** Auditors will be presenting in Jan. Kristal stated we are working on the next audit to be able to finalize by Jan. 2025. Sec. Miller asked if it will be done by Jan.1? Kristal stated the end of Jan. 2025.

**New Business**

**Finance Update:** Kristal then proceeded to go over the financial update. She went over the General fund stating we are right in line. It is higher than last year. Revenues $500,000.00 YTD for EMS revenues.

Property Taxes from bond- we have received revenues and paid the first payment.

We have not received GEMT revenue, and we have gotten contract services funds that have exceeded what we expected. Blake stated he will be in Salem soon to have a meeting about GEMT and also to testify and support wildfire funding for the staffing grant for OFSM.

Expenditures are less than the budget so that is good. Personnel services 39%, 33% for material services. Net revenue expenditures- there is a swing in that because of the EMS revenues collected and the bond. Second page; Personnel costs – this year vs. last. Cash on hand was presented in the financial dashboard as well. It says we have a significant amount of cash but that is because of the bond funds. Board President Stout asked for the bond to be a separate section.

EMS Revenue was then turned over to Danielle and she reviewed the YTD as of July 2023 so the board could see the big picture from last year when we started billing again.

**Fire Ops.:** Deputy Chief Skaar went over fire ops. We are down by a few calls compared to last year at this time, it’ll be interesting to see where we end up at the end of this year. He stated in this monthly report it shows calls from 1701 and 1702. Vice President Galyen asked what the term for missed calls was. Deputy Chief Skaar stated it was called unable to respond. The only time we do that now is potentially a transfer due to other calls happening such as a fire. Vice President Galyen asked if “the transfer thing has gotten better?” Chief Blake stated Deputy Chief has been working hard on this and we have gotten it worked out with meetings as needed and such. Blake stated that one thing we are working on is seeing if we can take more transfers. He has asked the employee group for their opinions on it. Blake also said we are getting reimbursements from the fires we were on this summer – three in total this far. He stated we got payment from “some of the stuff from the State Fire Marshalls Office.” We are still waiting for tender funds to come in from the summer.

Chief Skaar stated we are applying for an AFG grant. WE have a 5% match. We are going for this to get turnouts and SCBA’s, washer and dryer, cascade system and a fill station with the help of FF Ronan and Capt. Glen.

Skaar has been working on the part time paid on call draft as well. It has all stemmed from what our dept can afford. We must see what the dept. can afford with numbers of part-timers, students, etc. we can have with the cost of turnouts, insurance, etc.

**New Business**

**Fire Prevention:** Deputy Chief Earnest went over his fire prevention report for the month. He stated it was a pretty light month- special events- two parades. A big shout out to John Brown and Steven Johnson for taking that project on and the shifts that participated. Things went smoothly. Address signs are low. Grizzly estates is coming along. There are two new subdivisions coming in that will be discussed at planning review later in the month. Inspection-wise he looked at El Torito, they are still working getting supplies in. HE redid COSI now that bins have been rebuilt with few issues- mostly the date of the building. He went to the board of county comm. Meeting and talked about title 3 and hazard mitigation grants. We will hear more on that at the next board meeting. Titel 3 will be used for defensible space reimbursements. HMGP grant- we have been in partnership with SO he asked for burners to service the entire county. Chief Earnest worked with GIS with the county on ISO rating quick link to tell you what your ISO rating is. It is now on our website.

**New Business**

**EMS Report:** Deputy Chief Lepin was absent, but he did provide a report. He has been working with WASCO county on their ASA plans, he is working with the new pub. Health director to continue to strengthen relationships, City of Fossil is working on getting EMTs, and the biggest thing OHA has put forward a bill for balance billing.

**New Business**

**Chief Update:** Chief Blake touched on the balance billing bill as seen in Deputy Chief Lepins report. He stated that the ground and emergency transport are not considered providers. We do not fit in the provider category. Therefor our Medicare rates are lower. That is why our rates are a third of what we bill.

We have the second meeting scheduled for urban renewal task force to peal back some of the urban renewal district and bring more money into the organization. WE lost 120k to the urban renewal district and that will continue to rise as more building comes in. Since we have as a dept. second comparable of size, we have the second lowest permanent tax rate and the lowest assessed value. With the new building coming in it will not be recognized in that renewal. We have gone to the governor’s office on the houseless money. There is a heavy dose of low-income housing and homeless money – we have never received any of that. Houselessness is a big percentage of our calls. It is 1 call for every 6 people that are houseless.

He stated we had a Christmas Party and that is why there are decorations. There were a lot of donations for the Christmas party. There was only $85.00 of the district’s money spent on the party.

Culver- continuing to improve services on how to improve Culver, response, the building, etc. With the change in Culver, it has been an opportunity to build a relationship.

PGE contract- numbers have been finalized. Tim is working on finalizing the contract. Blake stated everything is moving forward and it will bring more revenue into the dept.

Civil Service- Blake stated he has done a lot of research on Civil Service. It dropped when we were below the qualifications and now that we are merged, we need a civil service. He is working to put the Civil Service together. By next month he hopes to have a resolution for civil service and some more documentation on it.

Sec. Miller asked if we paid the tax anticipation loan. Blake stated yes, we did a week ago. Sec Miller asked if we are surplussing our type threes. Sec. Miller asked if the board needed to approve those or have a policy on those. Blake explained the procedure. Sec. Miller wanted to ensure we are going through the correct process.

**Pay Bills:** Blake stated that our bills include the bond payment, extra payment of pers and building permits to the City of Madras. So, our bills are $288,100.00 for the month. Blake stated we are working with PERS to continue moving forward. He stated our debt appears to be lower than what we originally thought. Sec. Miller asked if we had a final number on what we owed. Kristal and Blake stated that we would know by February.

Sec. Miller motioned to pay the bills. Vice President Galyen seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Miller asked what the sea western bill was for – it was a part of the VFA grant. Sec.

**Citizens Input:** None.

**Additional Comments/Concerns:** FF/ Paramedic Chase Duran asked if some of the board staff are going to attend some of the line staff meetings. He stated he was confused about the meeting with the line staff today was a lot different tone regarding layoffs and budget shortfalls. It seems that the mood in the board meeting is different, and he appreciates the board. Sec. Miller stated it sounds like Jan we will have a better idea of finance and know what our pers debt will be so we can have a plan. He stated we need a clear transparent plan to set benchmarks with set dates on what our plans will be with all our different outcomes. Blake stated we have to have a decision in Jan or Feb and he’d like staff to get 60 days’ notice. He wants to figure out what we can do for our new hires in medic class, what we can and cant do with them if they get furloughed. Blake stated he would like to have answers but we have a lot of research to continue to do. He stated he is working on things. Sec Miller asked if questions regarding employee handbook were addressed to staff. Blake stated yes. Sec miller stated months ago an employee survey was going out and asked if there were plans for the board to see that. Blake stated he was unaware of an employee survey. The survey was a dept comment question survey- Blake said he had not sent it out. Danielle asked if it was the one for the staff meeting? Blake stated we did send questions out for that, and he addressed most those questions today. He stated at the staff meetings we do send out a link for staff to ask questions.

**Adjourn Meeting:** 7:16 PM

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Board President Recording Secretary