**Jefferson County Fire & EMS**
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**
**Date:** June 18th, 2025
**Time:** 5:30 PM
**Location:** Station 1701, 765 S. 5th St. Madras, OR 97741

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the Board President, **Kim Stout**, at 5:39 PM.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President, **Rob Galyen,** at5:40 pm

**III. Roll Call**

**Board Members Present:** Board President Kim Stout, Vice President Rob Galyen, Secretary Dusty Miller, Director Chris Dupont,

Krystal Hughes, Finance Manager

Tim Gassner, Attorney

**Board Members Absent:** Director Ryan Boyle, Secretary Dusty Miller

**Staff Members Present:** Chief Jeff Blake, Deputy Chief Micheal Lepin, Intermittently Captain Andrew Glen and other staff- roll call was not available.

**Staff Members Absent:** Deputy Chief Kasey Skaar and Danielle Peckham

**Community Members:** Linda Larson, Ben Anderson, Scott Leeper

**Zoom Attendees:** Not recorded

**IV. Agenda Approval/Adjustments**

The agenda was reviewed and amended to include an additional item under New Business: Strategic Planning Discussion, to follow immediately after the Payment of Bills and prior to Policy and Personnel Updates.
**Motion:** Vice President Rob Galyen moved to approve the amended agenda.

**Seconded by:** Director Chris Dupont
**Motion Passed Unanimously. 5:42 pm**

**V. Presentations**

There were no presentations at this meeting.

**VI. 2025–2026 Budget Hearing**

**Open Public Hearing on Budget Matters**
Krystal Hughes of Bridging the Accounting Gap, LLC presented the adopted FY 2025–2026 budget. She walked the board through the key documents and provided detailed line-item context. The budget totals $10,906,356 across three funds: General, Capital Projects, and Debt Service. Highlights included a reduction of $1.54 million from the prior year, primarily through the reduction of seven FTE positions.

**Public Comment on FY 2025–26 Budget:**
No public comment was received.

**Deliberation/Discussion:**
The board discussed overtime, part-time staffing offsets, grant-funded staffing contingencies, and short-term disability line items, noting these may be subject to upcoming collective bargaining. Hughes clarified methodology and exclusions related to grant-based revenue.

**Presentation of FY 2024–2025 Supplemental Budget**
Krystal Hughes also presented the supplemental budget incorporating the $1.1 million tax anticipation loan. Adjustments included both the revenue and associated debt service.

**Public Comment on Supplemental Budget:**
No public comment was received.

**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to close the regular budget hearing and open the supplemental hearing.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to adopt the FY 2025–2026 Budget Resolution No. 2025-2026-X.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to adopt the FY 2024–2025 Supplemental Budget Resolution No. 2024-2025-X.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**Close Public Hearing Time TBD**

**VI. Citizen Input**

No public comments were received at this meeting.

**VII. Approval of May and June 2025 Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meetings were reviewed:

**May 2025 Minutes: The board reviewed the minutes from the May 21st, 2025 meeting.
Motion:** Vice President Rob Galyen moved to approve the May 21st minutes as presented.
**Seconded by:** Director Chris Dupont
**Motion Passed Unanimously.** 5:42 PM

**June 2025 Minutes: Due to Danielle’s excused absence, the June 2nd board meeting minutes were not available for review.**
**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to table the approval of the June minutes until the next meeting.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously.** 5:43 PM

**VIII. Old Business**

**A. Building Expansion – Timeline Update**
Chief Blake and Deputy Chief Lepin delivered an expanded report on Station 1701 upgrades:

* Stacy Chiddix continues to coordinate with engineers.
* Bid specifications and scope of work drafts are underway.
* DAS grant funds are secured and being tracked separately.
* Apparatus Bay phasing and siding/roof work are progressing.

Chief Blake also updated the board on the request to purchase a turnout gear dryer, contingent on state capital funding. The dryer supports faster turnout reuse, safety compliance, and turnout preservation. Staff and volunteers spoke in support of the purchase, citing current limitations and the operational burden of drying turnout gear manually. The board acknowledged the potential for grant or bond alignment and the lack of alternative grant sources for dryers.

**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to authorize the Chief to proceed with the purchase of a turnout gear dryer only if the 2025 capital funding request is awarded, with confirmation to be reviewed by at least two board members.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**B. Audit Updates**
Krystal Hughes reported that the Secretary of State's Office contacted the district requesting submission of audits for fiscal years 2021–22, 2022–23, and 2023–24. While the FY 2022–23 and 2023–24 audit had been prepared and presented to the board earlier in the year, the auditors had not submitted it to the state as required. On the day of the board meeting, Krystal and administrative support staff resolved the issue and submitted the required audit. Email confirmations were received.

She clarified that all EMS financial transactions for FY 2022–23 were incorporated into the fire district audit, meaning there is no separate EMS audit for that year. A standalone EMS audit is not required or recommended.

With all required data provided by the June 30 deadline, the audit will be finalized in early July. Chief Blake noted the district’s new auditors will begin the FY 2023–24 audit on July 1, followed by the FY 2024–25 audit, with the goal of completing both within the year. Staff expressed satisfaction with the new audit firm’s pricing and approach.

**C. Spending Reduction Update**
Chief Blake noted that seven FTEs were reduced in the new budget; seasonal staffing and part-time support remain under review.

He emphasized that this agenda item remains ongoing as a means of accountability and transparency. The district continues to explore new ways to reduce costs, question expenditures, and reassess operational priorities.

* A meeting is scheduled for June 30 with the City, County, and all dispatch fee participants to discuss a shared IGA and potential reductions.
* Fiscal policy updates are underway to address budget line clarity, particularly around credit card use and budgeted allocations.
* Materials and services spending is being reassessed with the goal of reducing it to approximately $80,000/month. Some costs may be better allocated under dues/subscriptions or EMS billing.
* All credit card expenditures are now being pre-reviewed by Chief Blake to assess necessity and avoid waste.
* A TDS cable backup for the phone system was canceled, resulting in an estimated annual savings of $5,000.
* The district is in continued discussions with the City of Culver to reduce or eliminate the current lease, with positive collaboration and improved communication in place.

Chief Blake reiterated his commitment to making these efforts transparent and aligning them with overall strategic and fiscal goals.

**D. Nighttime Transfers**
Chief Blake reported an increase in transfer requests, many of which must be deferred or pushed back due to concurrent emergencies, ambulance availability, or ongoing fire activity. He explained the distinction between "push back" (delaying until a unit returns to town) and "defer" (allowing a private ambulance company to complete the transfer).

Deputy Chief Mike Lepin reported that in May 2025, Jefferson County EMS received 65 interfacility transfer requests and completed 61. Transfers ranged from one to six per day, with only five days in May without a request.

There were instances when multiple requests came in simultaneously or when all district crews were unavailable, prompting Deputy Chief Lepin to notify the St. Charles Transfer Center directly.

Captain Glen expressed concern that some transfers may not have been appropriate for EMS resources, and these are being reviewed with St. Charles. A new Transfer Center Director, Rebecca Bruce, has taken over after Daniel Davis’s departure. Deputy Chief Lepin is building a positive working relationship with her to resolve routing and communication issues.

Chief Blake and Lepin also participate in an inter-facility transfer workgroup alongside other EMS agencies, providing a broader platform for identifying systemwide bottlenecks and coordinating protocols.

**E. Capital Funding – Finance Update**Board members acknowledged that the capital funding topic had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.
Chief Jeff Blake confirmed, stating the update had been sufficiently addressed.

No further discussion or action was taken on this item.

**IX. New Business
A. Finance Update and Payment of Bills**

Finance Manager Krystal Hughes presented the monthly financial update and distributed handouts to the board for review. As of May 2025, the District was 92% through the fiscal year. Hughes reported the following:

The District received approximately $1.2 million in property taxes.

User fees totaled $1.4 million year-to-date, though the final June figures had not yet been received.

Revenue from the OSFM three-year personnel grant totaled approximately $346,000.

Total revenue for the fiscal year was approximately $3.4 million.

Regarding expenditures:

General Fund expenditures were tracking at $3.3–$3.4 million.

The District had estimated expenditures closely during the budget buildout, using nearly final figures for June.

Capital outlay spending mainly reflected equipment purchases earlier in the fiscal year.

The District had anticipated expenditures exceeding revenues for the fiscal year and had taken out a tax anticipation loan to bridge this gap.

Personnel expenses in May were approximately $262,000, and materials/services were trending between $80,000 and $100,000 per month, which Chief Blake noted is a target for financial health. Large annual expenses such as liability insurance and PERS contributions were also highlighted.

Krystal noted:

Seismic grant reimbursements continue to follow a multi-step process involving Business Oregon and Jefferson County for proper allocation to Fund 666 (Bond Fund).

Adjustments to internal processes were made to ensure that future seismic reimbursements are correctly allocated upon receipt.

Bond project expenses totaled $863,645.45 for the period.

Debt service payments had been made as scheduled, despite a shortfall in the dedicated account due to delayed property tax assessments. The shortage (approximately $17,000) was covered using available funds from within the District.

Cash balances, expenditures, and fund positions as of May were reviewed in the provided documentation. The board discussed the higher-than-expected EMS checking account balance, which may have been affected by residual deposits and will be followed up by staff.

Chief Blake also noted that two recent staff departures contributed to elevated costs due to payouts for accrued vacation and compensatory time. Additionally, the early start to fire season resulted in higher overtime expenditures.

After concluding the finance presentation and discussion, the board moved to approve payment of monthly bills.

**Motion:** Director Chris Dupont moved to approve payment of bills totaling $296,429.67 from the General Fund and $863,645.45 in Bond Project expenses. **Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen **Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**B. Strategic Plan Discussion**

Chief Blake informed the board that the updated strategic plan was included in their meeting materials for review. No action was requested at this meeting, but board members were encouraged to review the document over the next month in preparation for further discussion.

The strategic plan will also be shared with department captains and command staff for additional feedback. Although a presentation to captains had been planned, it was postponed due to a fire response during their scheduled meeting. Instead, the plan will be distributed electronically for review and discussion within crews.

Feedback gathered from both board and staff will be compiled, and updates or additional categories may be incorporated into the final version. The strategic plan will also be reviewed during upcoming administrative meetings held on Monday afternoons.

Board members were invited to bring any questions or preliminary feedback forward, but no questions were raised during the meeting.

**C. Budget Actions- (Presented as read verification will be needed)**

Finance Manager Krystal Hughes presented two resolutions for board adoption related to fiscal year budgets.

1. The first resolution, **Resolution No. 2024-2025-07**, pertains to the supplemental budget for fiscal year 2024–2025. This resolution accepts additional revenue, adjusts appropriations to reflect the $1.1 million Tax Anticipation Loan recently secured, and adds budget authority for the associated debt service that was not included in the original adopted budget.

**Motion**: Director Chris Dupont moved to adopt FY 2024–2025 Supplemental Budget Resolution No. 2024-2025-07 as presented.
**Seconded by:** Vice President Rob Galyen
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

1. The second resolution, Resolution No. 2025-2026-08, represents the formal adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 annual budget. This resolution includes a total budget of $10,906,356 across all funds, appropriations as outlined in the resolution, the imposition of ad valorem property taxes at a rate of $1.847 per $1,000 of assessed value for general operations, and the imposition of the general obligation bond levy at $0.5364 per $1,000 of assessed value. Additionally, it categorizes the taxes in accordance with Article XI, Section 11B of the Oregon Constitution.

**Motion:** President Kim Stout moved to adopt FY 2025–2026 Budget Resolution No. 2025-2026-08 as presented.
**Seconded by**: Director Chris Dupont
**Motion Passed Unanimously. Time TBD**

**D. SDAO Loan**

Attendance member briefly noted that the SDAO Tax Anticipation Loan had already been discussed and that it was received. No further discussion was deemed necessary at this time, and the board did not take any additional action related to the loan.

**E. Culver Station Update**

Chief Blake provided an update regarding ongoing discussions with the City of Culver and City Recorder Sherry Kohler. The District continues to work with Kohler on multiple topics, including exploring joint ownership of the Culver station building.

A recent walkthrough with a potential contractor confirmed that the building is structurally viable and suitable for a future remodel. If the District proceeds with shared ownership, the facility could be modernized to meet operational needs.

Chief Blake and City Recorder Kohler have initiated discussions about applying for a seismic upgrade grant. While the timeline for the grant is uncertain—ranging from one to three years—such funding could significantly reduce the financial impact on the District by covering a substantial portion of the remodel costs.

At this time, conversations are ongoing and no formal decisions have been made.

**F. Legislative Update**

Chief Blake provided a brief legislative update. He reported that the balance billing legislation appears to be moving forward successfully. EMS modernization, however, is likely stalled due to its $10 million fiscal impact and the state’s current conservative budget posture. There had been some discussion about reducing the request to $5 million, but as of the board meeting, the proposal had not advanced out of subcommittee. Blake explained that the first phase of EMS modernization—recognizing systemic issues—had passed previously, and the current phase was intended to address funding needs.

Deputy Chief Lepin added that the balance billing measure had passed unanimously out of the subcommittee and was proceeding to the full Ways and Means Committee, with further advancement expected. He echoed that the EMS modernization effort had previously taken a step back and been restructured into phases. The lengthy proposed 10-year study attached to the current phase may have contributed to its stalled progress, as legislators expressed concern about long timelines in the face of urgent EMS system needs.

No board action was taken following the legislative update.

**G. Saint Charles Transfer Agreement**

The board was informed that the District is currently working on a potential transfer agreement with Saint Charles, which could result in additional funding opportunities for the Operations Levy. Although there were initial discussions about partnering with neighboring agencies on this initiative, differing perspectives have led the District to pursue an independent agreement with Saint Charles.

Preliminary steps have been taken, and it is anticipated that a draft agreement may be ready for board review by the July meeting. No formal proposal or board action was required at this time.

**H. Payment COIC**

No major discussion ensued regarding this topic that was recorded via zoom to be heard. Supplemental discussion may have taken place but missed in translation.

**I. PERS Status Update**
Chief Blake reported that PERS initially disputed firefighter classification for EMS staff based on the IGA language. After providing job descriptions and certification documentation, PERS reversed its position. Employee service credit was adjusted retroactively from June 2024 back to July 20, 2022. The district is awaiting further information on any financial impact from this correction, including potential back payments. The adjustment will ensure appropriate retirement classification moving forward.

**J. PGE RFP Negotiations**
Chief Blake provided an update on the pending contract response from Portland General Electric (PGE). Although no formal proposal had been received by the time of the meeting, internal communication from the presenting party indicated that a proposal is expected imminently. Chief Blake noted the anticipated offer may be lower than originally submitted and emphasized that final decisions will rest with the board, who will evaluate the contract based on community value and equity.

The board and staff reaffirmed that all contracted service areas, including Culver, must contribute equitably to district operations. If needed, the district is willing to consider a step-down approach to costs, as presented in the district’s initial submission.

**No motion was made;** discussion will resume upon receipt of PGE’s formal proposal.

**K. Fire Operations Report**

In the absence of Deputy Chief Skaar, a written narrative was provided in the meeting packet outlining fire and EMS operations for May. Chief Blake acknowledged the report and expressed appreciation to staff for compiling the data.

The District responded to 289 incidents in May. While April showed a slight increase in call volume, May was down by seven calls. Early June indicated a rise in activity again. The report broke down responses between engine and medic units, with turnout times remaining consistent.

Transfer activity included 61 transports, many of which were out-of-area transfers to Bend or Redmond. These long-distance calls remove ambulances from local service for two to three hours, which significantly affects unit hour utilization. Current utilization data showed approximately 19.39% for the primary ambulance and 14.63% for the second unit.

Further analysis revealed that interfacility transfers cost the District approximately $1.5 million annually, with reimbursement covering only about one-third of that expense. Costs include staff time, travel, apparatus maintenance, and depreciation. These figures underscore the financial burden of medical transfers on the system.

Efforts are underway to better educate hospitals and explore legislative strategies for creating a more balanced and sustainable approach to ambulance-based patient transfers.

**L. EMS Report**

Deputy Chief Lepin provided a written update and handouts. A grant in the amount of $4,300 was awarded by the Roundhouse Foundation to purchase CPR training equipment. The funds will allow the District to acquire adult and child mannequins, as well as AED trainers that closely resemble the devices used in the field. The mannequins are diverse and allow for customizable features such as skin tone and gender, which is especially appreciated by Spanish-speaking instructors.

The District also applied for $30,000 in opioid settlement funds to replace video laryngoscope equipment. If additional funding becomes available, the District may also purchase an AED for a newly designated interface engine and acquire high-flow nasal cannula therapy systems to enhance specialty care transport capability.

Training continues on ventilator equipment, including BiPAP use. Staff confidence and proficiency are being developed through simulation training and check-off protocols. Additional training support is being coordinated with team members who have experience using similar equipment in air medical settings.

On the community health front, discussions are underway with regional partners—including clinic staff, local leaders, and health associations—about the possibility of launching a community paramedic program in a neighboring rural community. The goal is to address provider shortages and reduce red tape by coordinating with stakeholders in both health care and emergency response sectors.

Finally, the District is exploring partnerships to support youth recruitment for EMS volunteer programs. One model being reviewed involves outreach to high school students through programs like MSR (Medical Services Readiness), with the goal of developing a younger volunteer pipeline to offset aging demographics among current EMS volunteers.

**M. Chief Blake's Report**

The District is currently developing a Request for Proposals/Request for Information (RFP/RFI) for contracted EMS billing services. The purpose is to explore the available vendors and meet legal procurement requirements. Conversations have taken place with several vendors, and a preferred provider is being evaluated based on ongoing research and input from peer agencies. The intent is to formally issue the RFI and return in July with a compiled summary of viable options.

Additionally, the Chief will attend an upcoming meeting in Salem focused on EMS billing and related federal developments. The meeting will also serve as an opportunity to connect directly with billing vendors.

Lastly, the District formally thanked a departing board member for their many years of service as both a volunteer and board director. A card was presented along with a personalized gift as a token of appreciation for their dedication to the organization.

**X. Citizen Input (Continued)**

* No time noted- There was no formal citizen input provided during this portion of the meeting. Discussions ensued across many and hard to distinguish voice recognition.

**XI. Additional Board and Staff Comments- No time noted**

* **New Board Members**:
	+ Incoming board member *Kate Zemke* is scheduled to be sworn in on **July 16**.
	+ The District plans to meet with incoming board members beforehand to ensure a smooth transition and answer preliminary questions.
	+ Staff will work to add new members to official systems (e-mail, bank signatures, etc.) prior to July.
* **Farewell to Chris Dupont**:
	+ Multiple board and staff members expressed appreciation for *Chris Dupont*'s service, noting he will be missed in many ways.
	+ Staff emphasized continued reliance on Chris’s expertise, especially regarding financial matters.
	+ Comments highlighted his professionalism, collaboration, and the positive impact he made during his tenure.
* **Reflections on Change**:
	+ It was noted that while much has changed in the organization over time, the respect for the agency and its members remains strong.
	+ The agency was described as well-regarded, with a deep investment in its personnel and mission.

**XII. Adjournment 7:47 PM**

**Motion:** Kim Stout motioned to adjourn the meeting.
**Seconded by:** N/A
**Motion Passed N/A.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM by Board President **Kim Stout**.

**Signatures:**

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**Board President, Kim Stout**       **Recording Secretary**