



CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Directors: President Lisa Pratt (via Zoom), Vice President Loren Dieter, Directors David Boor, Ken Brown (6:07 p.m.) and Luis Medel Rodriguez
Staff: Chief Mike Hughes, Executive Assistant Suzanne Gray, Fire Marshal Marty Broadbent, Lt. Sam Irons, Lt. Ethan Salata, Firefighter/Paramedic Devon Pulvino, Firefighter/Paramedic Zulema Gaytan

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION: (Three-minute time limit)

Vice President Dieter thanked people for attending and reviewed the rules for public comment. He reminded the audience that the Board would not engage with the commenters and that questions needing addressed could be placed on the next meeting's agenda.

Scott Ezell, Irrigon resident, Irrigon Rural Fire Protection District (IRFPD) Board Member and Morrow County Health District (MCHD) Board Member: Stated his comments were his, however they represented the Irrigon community. He went on to demand an apology for comments made at the last meeting and said all first responders deserved respect.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS: None

DIRECTOR REPORTS

1. Board Bylaws: President Pratt requested a work session. After discussion, it was tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 13th, 8:00 a.m.-noon, Boardman Fire Station 81, Community Room. Chief Hughes will follow-up with the Board to confirm the date and publicly notice the meeting.
2. Regular Meeting Start Time: Director Browne asked that the monthly Board meetings begin at 7:00 p.m., rather than 6:00 p.m. After a brief discussion, Chief Hughes said a resolution for the change will be scheduled for the next meeting.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – Chief Hughes

1. Ambulance Service Area Plan (ASA): Morrow County received the draft Plan back from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Once the county submits the revisions, OHA has 60 days to respond.
2. Other: Boardman Fire Rescue District (BFRD) began providing ambulance services in Boardman on March 4th and countywide on March 12th at 6:00 p.m. On March 13th, there were four calls and IRFPD responded, as well. BFRD responded to the two calls received today, as did IRFPD's Fire Chief. Chief Hughes noted BFRD's response times exceeded the minimum standard, as printed in the ASA Plan, adding they have not gone over the required response times. He said he continued to look for sleeping quarters in Irrigon, however,



FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT, CONTINUED

each time something was secured, the plans fell through.

President Pratt asked Chief Hughes to clarify the status of ambulances in Boardman when one is responding to a call. He said there are still two staffed ambulances in Boardman – two Advanced Life Support (ALS) and a third Basic Life Support (BLS) is available 90% of the time.

Chief Hughes said, operationally in south county, one ambulance is staffed 24-hours a day, just like MCHD’s model prior to vacating services. The first responder agencies in south county were encouraged to staff the second ambulance, but they all declined. He went on to explain when an ambulance in Heppner was recently sent to the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Park, BFRD immediately sent an ambulance to Heppner, which still left three ambulances in Boardman for Irrigon and Boardman. In response to Director Browne’s question, Chief Hughes clarified that Medic 82 is stationed in Irrigon. He reiterated, the lack of housing in Irrigon is not due to a lack of effort. Nobody in Irrigon has been willing to rent a house or apartment to BFRD, so the personnel are staying at the Morrow County Government Center in Irrigon during the day and sleeping at the old station in Boardman at night. They are still meeting the minimum standard for response times in the ASA, even at night, he stated.

Regarding Chief Hughes working with the attorney to explore potential slander or libel claims, the people in question removed their social media posts. He said it’s been a point of contention about spending taxpayer dollars on this, but BFRD has not spent a single taxpayer dollar on this, nor will it. The union stepped up and agreed to pay those fees because they view any attacks on leadership, the Board or command staff, as attacks on them (union members). No taxpayer dollars have been spent on any of this, it comes from the union, he reiterated.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

1. Minutes – January 11, 2024
2. Approve Bills & Payables

Chief Hughes said the minutes of February 15th and 21st were inadvertently omitted from the agenda but they were included in the Board’s packet. (The minutes of January 11, 2024 were approved at the February 15, 2024 Board meeting.) He then briefly reviewed the payables, noting he was not affiliated in any way with Hughes Fire Equipment, Inc., a vendor in the payables.



CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS, CONTINUED

President Pratt moved to approve the Consent Calendar, as presented, adding the minutes of February 15, 2024 and February 21, 2024. Director Boor seconded. Motion carried 5-0 by those named – President Pratt, Vice President Dieter, Directors Boor, Browne and Rodriguez.

ACTION ITEM

1. Request to Purchase Emergency Services Apparatus totalling \$300,150.00

Chief Hughes requested authorization to purchase three used ambulances in the amount of \$300,150 (one with approximately 35,000 miles and two with approximately 27,000 miles each). He said BFRD has always been proactive instead of reactive and this purchase would allow the district to stay ahead of the current situation. MCHD has been clear if it isn't approved to be the sole ambulance provider for the county, then it won't provide any ambulance service whatsoever. Because procuring an ambulance can be a lengthy process, sometimes up to two years, he said he'd like to be prepared for several potential eventualities, including MCHD declining to provide service, or in the event Heppner Fire or Irrigon Fire wanted to provide service to their communities. The ambulances would be in-county in 10 days and licensed in about another two weeks.

Chief Hughes said if MCHD was approved as the sole provider in the ASA Plan, BFRD's existing higher-mileage units could be sold and replaced with the newer units. The proceeds from selling the older units would go into the Operating Budget. He added the agreement with the dealer is BFRD won't be charged to resell its apparatus. There are funds in the Operational Budget, Contingency, to make the purchase. If no one wanted or needed them, they could be resold and the funds could be recouped. He also talked about plans to update two older ambulances by remounting the existing patient compartment on a new chassis. Remounts would no longer be necessary, resulting in a savings of at least \$100,000.

He also explained the agreement between the county and AMR for the three leased ambulances is very short. If for any reason, the interim service was extended, the newer units being requested would be onsite and available for use without skipping a beat.

Director Boor asked who purchased MCHD's ambulances. Chief Hughes replied, "The public did."

Director Browne asked if the Board of Commissioners would have a decision regarding the ASA Plan in a timely manner. Chief Hughes said the BOC's goal is to wrap it up within the 90-day contract for interim services.



ACTION ITEMS, CONTINUED

Chief Hughes said, for clarity, the BFRD Board does not want to provide ambulance services countywide or on a continual basis. This is being done as a temporary, stopgap measure.

Director Boor said he struggled with this and people will twist it around. He wanted it made clear, the BFRD Board does not want to do this, they have to do this.

Director Browne moved to approve the purchase of the three ambulances in the amount of \$300,150.00. Director Rodriguez seconded. Discussion: Chief Hughes said if they aren't needed, they could be sold and all funds recouped. The goal is if MCHD doesn't provide service, BFRD could be in a position to help other providers get through the process to become a provider. Vice President Dieter said, worst case scenario, BFRD will have three low mileage ambulances compared to what it has now, which means a much longer service-life than the current ones. Director Boor talked about the savings in no longer needing to remount the older ambulances. President Pratt asked about the status of interfacility transports (IFTs). Chief Hughes said they have been more limited since taking over services countywide. Prior to that, BFRD routinely ran two or three at the same time, so the ambulances will be utilized. Vote: President Pratt: yes; Vice President Dieter: yes; Directors Boor: yes; Browne: yes; Rodriguez: yes. Motion carried 5-0.

FIRE LOSS MANAGEMENT REPORT – Fire Marshal Marty Broadbent

February Report:

1. Plan reviews have been picking up and one of the Amazon buildings on Bombing Range Road is complete or nearing completion.
2. Testing/Inspections:
 - a. PDX 112 Phase 12 (building final)
 - b. PDX 178 Underground fire line flush; fire line hydro; fire pump start-up; hydro for phases 4, 5 & 6; fire alarm final for office area, phases 1, 2 & 3; fire alarm final security building; fire alarm final for IW building
 - c. LW West Underground fire line hydro for expansion
 - d. Threemile Canyon Farms Suppression system final
3. Plan Reviews:
 - a. SAGE Center Alarms and Sprinklers
 - b. PDX 179 Alarms

TRAINING DIVISION REPORT – Lt. Sam Irons, Training Officer

Lt. Irons presented the following certifications from the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) to Firefighter/Paramedic Zulema Gaytan:



1. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firefighter I – Instructor Certification **TRAINING DIVISION REPORT, CONTINUED**
2. NFPA Firefighter II – Wildland Certification
3. NFPA Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator

Lt. Irons introduced Justice Watson, Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), who was hired March 1st.

February Report:

1. Four firefighters attended the DPSST Winter Fire School where they took advanced auto extrication, leadership, and supervision courses through the National Fire Academy.
2. Eighteen team members contributed a total of 231 hours of training.
3. Training topics included EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Protocols, EMS Airway, EMS Medical, Equipment Familiarization, Software Familiarization, Fire Officer Development, Fire Inspector, Probation Test Prep, Multi-Company Evolutions, Hose Deployments, SCBAs (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus), Ground Ladders, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), and Auto Extrication.
4. Two Fire Extinguisher classes were held for a total of 15 students.
5. Three CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) classes were held for a total of 37 students.

EMS REPORT – Devon Pulvino, Firefighter/Paramedic

Firefighter/Paramedic Pulvino said since BFRD assumed duties on March 4th, there have been 36 EMS call. Since assuming duties countywide on March 12th, there have been five calls from Irrigon and four from Heppner. New personnel have been hired to assist with the increased ambulance duties and shifts, and there have been more overtime hours recorded. “We’ll step up and fill the void where needed and make this work for us and the communities,” he said.

Chief Hughes added the two ambulances in Heppner will be fully staffed, beginning on Friday, for this weekend’s Wee Bit O’Ireland Celebration and bull riding event.

FIRE LIEUTENANT REPORT – Lt. Ethan Salata, EMT

Lt. Salata said B Shift has been working on preparations for the wildland season. Things are already starting to dry up and there have been a few fires. They’ve been working on equipment and sharpening tools, for example. Lt. Salata said he and Firefighter II/EMT Cole Anderson recently participated in the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Annual Stair Climb in Seattle. They both completed the event and raised just over \$2,300 for the charity. Lt. Salata concluded by saying all BFRD personnel are doing what they need to do to ensure all areas in the county are covered.



FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR FEBRUARY – Chief Hughes

Chief Hughes explained funds were being received under the EMS Recovery line since IFTs began about four months ago. These funds tend to trickle in as it takes a minimum of 45 days to receive them after billing. BFRD is slated to receive about \$170,000 for IFTs.

The Operating Expenses line remained over budget, he said, due to the attorney fees from MCHD's lawsuit against BFRD. He further clarified that BFRD does not have five attorneys, contrary to postings on social media. BFRD hired a law firm, not five separate attorneys, just like MCHD's attorney works for a law firm with multiple attorneys.

The Payroll Expense PERS line stands at 110% because the contribution rate amounts were increased after the budget was established, explained Chief Hughes. A resolution will be on an agenda in the near future for the budget adjustment, he added. The budget meeting for fiscal year 2024-25 will take place in May, if not sooner, he said.

COMMUNICATIONS – Executive Assistant Suzanne Gray

Ms. Gray said the Special Districts Association of Oregon will hold a Risk Management training in Pendleton on March 20th; she can assist with registration. The 2024 Best Practices Program is available and the topic Public Meetings. BFRD can receive up to 10% reduction of the annual building and vehicle insurance if all categories for Best Practices are met.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

NEXT MEETING – Thursday, April 11th at 6:00 p.m. Morrow County Assessor/Tax Collector, Mike Gorman, will present on the various sources of taxes and assessed values.

ADJOURNED: 6:46 p.m.