



*Woodburn Fire District*  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 18, 2024**

**Attendance:** Board Chair Jerry Cotter, Secretary/Treasurer Deb Yager, Director Benito Puente, Director Sharon Schaub

**Staff Present:** Fire Chief Joe Budge, Korrin Petersen, Office Administrator/Finance Officer

**Joined via TEAMS:** Board Vice-Chair Andy Ponce, Gordon Sletmoe, Special District's Association of Oregon

**Community Members:** Paul Kovacevich

Board Chair Cotter called the meeting to order 7:05 pm.

**Administration:**

Director Cotter called the meeting to order. Roll call & Pledge of allegiance was completed.

**Approval of August 21, 2024:** Director Yager made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 21, 2024, 2024, board meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Schaub. The motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer's report was read by Secretary/Treasurer Yager:

As August, 31, 2024:

Local Government Investment Pool 1:	\$2,878,171.48
Local Government Investment Pool, 2022 GO Bond:	\$2,690,104.74
Local Government Investment Pool, 2024 GO Bond:	\$6,311,052.70
Umpqua Bank Checking:	\$176,338.12
Total Resources:	\$12,055,717.04
Payment of August Net Payables:	\$97,834.18
Payment of August Bond Payables:	\$116,484.21
Payment of August Net Payroll:	\$449,152.24

Director Schaub made a motion to approve the treasurer's report for August. The motion was seconded by Director Yager. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Information Items**

**Revised Civil Service Rule Approval by Woodburn Firefighters & Adoption of Revised Rules –** Chief Budge informed the board that the revised Civil Service Rules have been approved by the Woodburn firefighters. The board of directors had adopted the rules at the August meeting pending final approval of the labor group for those articles that referenced the collective

bargaining agreement. Attorney's representing the district and labor group worked together on the revisions. Although reworking the rules took almost a year, Chief Budge stated he is happy with the clarity of the document and that the rules provide a clear guide for the employment process. Director Yager asked if we have received an invoice from the district's attorney. Chief Budge stated that a final invoice has not yet been received but he estimates the cost to be about \$1,000.

**Recruit Class 23-01 Probation Completion & Paramedic FTEP Start** – Engineers Thomas Cally and Jared Redmon have completed their year of probation. Both members are now entering into the paramedic training program where they will be mentored by a district training paramedic. This comprehensive program takes a minimum of 240 hours to complete and includes competent demonstration of all advanced life support skills. Paramedic Jesse Halpern and Ryan Johnson have been assigned as the field training officers for Cally and Redmon. They will be mentoring and evaluating these members during the training process.

**New Engine 21 In-Service** – The new Engine 21 was placed in-service on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> with Captain Koenig and C Shift. A copy of the media release was included in the board packet. Chief Budge thanked Engineer Dan Agee for getting the tools and equipment mounted. His mechanical skills and attention to detail have been invaluable. He also thanked Lt. Jeremy Peil for getting all the radio and communications equipment, and decals complete. These members put a lot of time and effort into this engine.

**Station 23 Groundbreaking Ceremony** – Also included in the board packet was a media release for the Station 23 groundbreaking ceremony. The article was sent with architectural renderings and photos from the event. Chief Budge thanked Korrin for putting the event together. He also stated that the P & C Construction and Orange Wall Architects have been good to work with. As we are getting off to a great start, we are looking forward to having this station complete and ready for emergency response.

**Station 21 Remodel Project Update** – Division Chief Walker reported that the Initial guaranteed maximum pricing (GMP) for the Station 21 remodel came in at \$1,884,000. This was significantly more than what was budgeted. A cut package was proposed by Bremik Construction and discussed at the board of directors meeting in August. The two major areas cut were the expansion of the training room, which would have held the antique fire truck, and the uniform storage area. The board had voted to authorize Chief Budge to sign the GMP for a maximum price of \$1,750,000. By removing these areas and adding in a much-needed roof repair the final GMP came in at \$1,631,354. This number includes some built-in healthy contingencies, most of which we are anticipating being unused. A diagram of the lobby and plaza, which will be accessible from the training room was included in the board packet. The remodel will allow the public to have community room access while protecting private areas of the station. Chief Budge shared that Division Walker has done an outstanding job with negotiating the cost with the contractors. Any unused dollars will go towards remodeling Station 22.

## Action Items

**Resolution 2024-30 – NIMS Compliance** – A resolution stating that the Woodburn Fire District is in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is required every (5) years to maintain qualification for federal grant programs. The emergency management office for each county is required to perform an annual NIMS compliance survey. This resolution is part of the survey. Compliance with NIMS provides common language and incident command structure

so that all mutual-aid partners can work together under one common system. Approving the resolution confirms our commitment to NIMS and allow us to be eligible for county, state, and federal grants.

Board Chair Cotter read the resolution by title only. Director Yager made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-30 as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Schaub. The motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2024-31 – MCFD 1 Intterra Reimbursement** – This resolution would allow for budget adjustments made to the IGA revenue account and to the materials and services account entitled “Computer Application and Licensing” as part of a reimbursement in the amount of \$19,658 from Marion County Fire District 1 for the purchase of the Intterra software program.

Board Chair Cotter read the resolution by title only. Director Schaub made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-31 as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Yager. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Fire Chief Transition – Document Review & Recruitment Process** – This item was moved to the beginning of the agenda to accommodate SDAO consultant Gordon Sletmoe who joined the meeting via TEAMS.

#### **A. Job Description**

The Fire Chief’s job description was included in the board packet for the board’s consideration and approval. The proposed document includes revision from SDAO’s HR manager who adjusted the form, flow, layout, and legality of the document. Gordon added that the completed review was done from a professional perspective, adding that the job description should not just be used as a hiring document. The job description should be used throughout the life of the fire chief’s tenure to ensure that chief is fulfilling the duties assigned. The description can be added to as work is added.

There was some discussion about the Special Requirement on page 5 which states, “Live within 30 minutes of the main fire station within 12 months of hire (an exception may be made upon approval of the Board of Directors).” This allows the board some leeway that would not exclude external candidates should the board choose to go in that direction. Gordon explained that the board will need to decide their level of comfort with the residency requirement. Other language includes a requirement to hold an Oregon EMT. By adding the language, “(or the ability to obtain within 6 months of hire),” allows the board to hire based on competency for the position without this certification at the onset of employment. Director Ponce would like to see the fire chief live within the district boundaries. Board Chair Cotter stated that the maximum would be 30 minutes. The other board members agreed that the chief would live no longer than a maximum of 30 minutes from Station 21.

Chief Budge stated that the residency requirement of being within 30 minutes of the station has been in place for quite some time now. The required education, experience, certifications and licensing open the position for our current captain and all our current lieutenants who may be interested in applying for the position as requested by the board at the August meeting.

Director Yager stated it is good that the job description allows all who are interested in applying. She asked if the signature lines added are for the board and new fire chief to sign when they onboard. Gordon confirmed that they were and stated that this document would become part of the employment agreement. He went on to say that he likes to see it signed in case there is a conflict sometime down the road and there isn't a time where someone says, I wasn't told. Signing the job description also makes it a legal document that everyone agrees to. Although it is not mandatory, it is good practice.

Director Ponce asked about the language requiring a standard probationary period. Gordon stated for a district like ours, with a well written employment agreement, probably wouldn't need one. He went on to say that the board should be doing two performance evaluations within the first year; 1 at the six-month mark and one at the end of the first year and then rotate to an annual performance evaluation. Director Ponce asked if the evaluations are tied to pay increases or time off. Chief Budge stated that those incentives have not been tied to the contract. SDAO has provided some good evaluation forms that will be shared with the board when completing the reviews. Director Schaub asked about word, "Management" on page 6 and if that should be changed to Board of Directors. Gordon confirmed that it should and will make that change.

Director Yager made a motion to approve the fire chief's job description with corrections for the removal of the probation period language and the substituting board of directors for management on page 6. The motion was seconded by Director Schaub. The motion was carried unanimously.

**B. Salary & Benefits Review & Consideration** – Chief Budge directed the board to the blue Salary & Benefit Package spreadsheet for our current position and to the Salary & Benefits Survey report prepared by HR Answers Inc. The completed survey compared our salary and benefits to Aurora, Canby, Forest Grove, Keizer, Marion County Fire District 1, and the McMinnville Fire Department. These districts and departments are almost exactly like Woodburn in size and population served. Page 15 of the document shows a summary and opportunities for consideration/change. One of the considerations under other compensation is to pay for conflagration deployments should the fire chief be deployed. The pay would be at time and a half on off-duty days. It is worth noting that the state would reimburse the district for any deployment. We have reviewed the healthcare and VEBA package, with multiple plans to choose from, we feel that our current plan is very competitive. Under "Other Retirement Plans", we do not have any additional retirement plan incentives available as some of the other agencies do. This may be something we can consider providing as the budget allows. The report shows that Woodburn is the lowest in leave accruals, however, it does not consider the additional 96 hours of administrative time given January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. When adding the administrative time back in with the PTO accruals, we are comparable. Page 13 shows the time allotted for bereavement is lower than the comparables and we have increased that to 5 days. The salary consideration on page 3 shows Woodburn being 4.61% lower than the other districts reported. Because of that we have increased our salary range from \$161,692-\$182,120. There were some questions and discussion about the wording on the Salary and Benefit Package under overtime. The board agreed that the district will not pay for overtime except for conflagration deployment and requested that the wording be edited to reflect that change.

Director Yager made a motion to approve the fire chief's salary & benefit package with the revised language under overtime for conflagration deployment or backfill only. The motion was seconded by Director Schaub. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **C. Recruitment & Selection Methodology Discussion & Decision –**

The discussion on whether to open the position for internal, external or a combination of both was started at the August board meeting. Chief Budge reported that we know that we have one internal candidate who would like to apply. With the job description approved, the current captain and lieutenants would also qualify should they decide to submit an application. If the board decides to move forward with an external recruitment, there are two companies that would be able to help with that process. SDAO and Prothman have both submitted cost proposals for the recruitment and hiring process. The proposal from SDAO would be a maximum of \$6,000. The process would take a minimum of 6 months. Prothman's proposal was \$17,500. Additional charges would include publications, direct mailers, consultant travel, candidate interview packets and background checks which could easily raise the price to \$30,000. If the board decided to start an internal process, cost have already been incurred in the amount of \$1,300 for the salary and benefits report that HR Answers has provided. The SDAO no-charge consulting hours used to date have been 5.50 out of the 8 provided. We do not anticipate going much over the 8 hours provided. The internal process would still require background checks to ensure there have been no new developments since the initial hire date.

SDAO Gordon Sletmoe confirmed the report given, stating that upon execution of an agreement the fees for SDAO to conduct an external process will not exceed \$6,000. Most hiring processes come in around \$4,500. He went on to state that external process would take a minimum of 6 months. He has been working with a district since last December and they still have not appointed a fire chief. He also stated that the board could run an internal search first and then external if they determined to do so following the internal candidate interviews. He stated that he cannot encourage the board to go in one way or the other but stated that the plan laid out by Chief Budge is very viable for an internal and external path depending upon which direction the board chooses to go.

Board Chair Cotter stated that he is leaning toward starting with an internal process. Director Yager agreed. Board Chair Cotter stated that he cannot justify spending a bunch of money when we have people internally who could step into the position.

Chief Budge stated that the interview process we would like to follow was proposed by SDAO. It would be conducted by two stakeholder panels and then the board of directors. The two panels would be made up of administrative, career staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders. Upon completion of the interviews, each panel would score the candidate and brief the board. Director Cotter asked if there should be a board member on each panel. Gordon stated it is better to let the stakeholder panels operate without the board members present. This allows the board to get fully unbiased feedback from the panels. When the board is present it tends to change the dynamics a bit. There are some districts who want a board member present and that is ok as well. There is no ethical or legal reason not to.

Chief Budge stated that pending the board's decision, he is ready to send out the position announcement and will work towards setting up the interview panels pending the board's agreement on schedule. The interview process will take about 4 hours. The board came to a consensus to begin the fire chief recruitment with an internal process. There was some discussion by the board on what date would work to hold interviews and it was settled that Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> would work. This will allow a board decision to be made at the October meeting to extend a conditional offer to an internal candidate or open up an external recruitment process.

Director Yager made a motion to move forward with an internal fire chief recruitment. The motion was seconded by Director Schaub, stating that if it did not work out, they could move forward with an external search. Director Ponce stated he was in favor of the plan presented. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was some discussion regarding who would be on the interview panel. Chief Budge presented a list which included: Cpt. Koeing, Korrin, Lt. Jacobucci, Paramedic Jesse Halpern, Engineer Dan Agee, Paul Iverson, Frank Lonergan, Ted Farr, Aurora's Fire Chief Josh Williams, Melissa Gist from the city, James Audritsh or Mark Van Lieu for volunteer representation. Director Schaub stated that she would like to see Scott Derickson on the panel. Director Ponce stated the list seemed very solid. The board would like to add Charlie Piper as an alternate.

**D. Public Comment** – SDAO consultant Gordon Sletmoe confirmed that the plan set is very comprehensive. He offered to consult with the district and board through the process as needed. Chief Budge stated it has been very good to have Gordon advise and guide through this process.

**E. Job Announcement Direction** – The board gave Chief Budge the approval to meld the job description with the salary and benefits package and move forward with the internal announcement.

### Executive Session

None

### Miscellaneous Items & Recognitions

**Thank You Letter, Jefferson County Fire & EMS, Elk Lane Fire** – Included with the board packet was a thank you letter from Jefferson County Fire & EMS for our help on the Elk Lane conflagration. WFD members Dan Agee & Raul Garza were deployed as part of the Marion County Task Force. This letter represents the importance of our mutual-aid partnerships across the state. Pool resources to help one another allows help to come to us when we are in need as well. Director Yager read a partial sentence of the letter that states, "there was a deep sense of respect for the fire service partnerships that have been developed through the OSFM conflagration program."

**Thank You Letter, Soto Family** – A letter from the Soto family was included in the board packet. Chief Budge stated that the district receives thank you letters like this frequently which reflects the outstanding work our members are providing day in and day out across all shifts.

**9/11 Remembrance Ceremony** – A 9/11 media release was included in the board packet. WFD hosted the event for district members, Marion County Sheriff's office, Woodburn PD, and Woodburn Ambulance. Korrin made breakfast after the ceremony. Director Yager commended the good media release.

**Station 23 Groundbreaking** – The groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> was a success and well attended. Thank you to those board members who could be in attendance.

**Annual Open House, Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>** – The district's annual Open House is coming up Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. CERT/CPR Coordinator Uli Reich is taking the lead again this year. He has been diligently working on getting vendors and sponsors lined up for the event. Korrin has helped with the advertising. The board is, as always, welcome to join.

### Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Director Yager stated that she enjoyed the groundbreaking. Director Schaub appreciated the crew picking her up and giving her a ride in the new engine to the groundbreaking event. She commended the members of the fire district as a wonderful group and stated that attending the board meetings and being a part of the district is one of her favorite things to do.

Director Schaub made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 pm. The motion was seconded by Director Yager. The motion was carried unanimously.

Next meeting will be held on: Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

APPROVED: Jerry Cotter Date: 10-16-2024  
Jerry Cotter, Board President

ATTEST: Joseph M. Budge 10/21/24  
Joseph Budge, Fire Chief  
Woodburn Fire District