

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

**Wednesday, January 21, 2026**

**Attendance:** Board Chair Jerry Cotter, Director Andy Ponce, Director Ed Everts, Director Deb Yager

**Absent:** Director Sharon Schaub

**Staff Present:** Fire Chief Jim Walker, Assistant Chief Mike Corless, Finance Officer Korrin Petersen, Fire Marshal Omar Ortiz

**Community Members:** None

Board Chair Cotter opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. Roll call and the pledge of allegiance were conducted.

**Administration:**

**Approval of Board Minutes from the December meeting** –Director Ponce made a motion to approve the board meeting notes as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Yager. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer’s report was read by Secretary/Treasurer:

As of December 31, 2025:

Local Government Investment Pool 1:	\$7,203,457.27
Local Government Investment Pool, 2024 GO Bond:	\$1,165,044.65
Columbia Bank Checking:	\$225,000.26
Total Resources:	\$8,593,502.18
Payment of December Net Payables:	\$143,277.26
Payment of December Bond Payables:	\$145,811.00
Payment of November Net Payroll: (includes SAFER firefighters)	\$396,746.50

Director Ponce made a motion to approve the report for December as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Everts. The motion was carried unanimously.

## Information Items

**Board Policy Review & Recommendations** – Board Chair Cotter opened the floor for discussion regarding the review of the amended board policies. Director Everts presented language regarding the board’s responsibilities regarding negotiations with Local 1660 and the collective bargaining agreement between the district and the union. The key roles and responsibilities included the following:

- **Strategy & Direction:** The board sets the guidelines and parameters for negotiations, which includes defining the budget and key issues that are non-negotiable.
- **Negotiations Team Oversight:** They authorize and instruct the negotiations team, which can include management and legal representatives, and receive regular updates.
- **Budget & Financial Management:** The board must consider the fiscal implications of any proposed agreement and ensure it is financially responsible and aligns with the organization’s long-term interests.
- **Approval:** While the negotiations team handles the details, the board has the final authority to ratify or approve any tentative agreements reached during the bargaining process.
- **Communication:** The board is responsible for establishing clear communication channels with their negotiation team, ensuring a unified approach from the employer’s side.
- **Risk Assessment:** Before negotiations begin, the board, with legal counsel, should review the existing agreement for improvement, weaknesses or potential issues that may arise.

The board reviewed the recommended language. Director Ponce stated that contract negotiations fall under the responsibility of the Fire Chief and the board delegates the authority to the Fire Chief. Board Chair Cotter and Director Yager agreed with Director Ponce adding board meetings are open and the board having input into the negotiations could be problematic during the process, as well as the fact that contract negotiations are part of the Fire Chief’s contract, and that this is what we hire and trust the Fire Chief for. There were further discussions and the board asked Finance Officer Petersen to send the board a copy of the Fire Chief’s contract. It was agreed to have further discussions regarding the matter at February’s meeting.

The board also agreed to use the terms Chair and Vice Chair instead of President and Vice President when referring to the board positions.

**Station 22 GMP Contract Award** – Chief Walker reported that the final design-build process for Station 22 has been completed and a contract has been executed with Woodburn Construction in the amount of \$135,000 for the remodel project. The project is anticipated to begin in March; however, the start date is contingent upon resolving ongoing water issues at Station 23 so staff can be relocated there during construction. Director Everts asked about the projected duration of the project, and Chief Walker indicated that the remodel is expected to take approximately 8–10 weeks. Discussion followed regarding the station’s water filtration system and the importance of ensuring access to clean, safe water prior to staffing the facility. Director Yager inquired whether drilling to a deeper aquifer could be an option to reduce or eliminate carcinogens in the water supply. Chief Walker and Assistant Chief Corless stated they will follow up with Fishers and Clear Water to explore potential options and obtain cost estimates.

**Levy Campaign Update** – Included in the board packet was the first media release distributed to media outlets regarding the early-stage planning process for a levy campaign and the funding of the eight

firefighters currently being paid through the SAFER grant. Chief Walker stated that the district has been waiting for tax growth projections from Marion County for fiscal year 2027. The revenue forecast came in lower than anticipated, with the Amazon valuation being approximately \$300,000,000 on a \$500,000,000 building, as one example. Current projections indicate that a potential levy increase would cost taxpayers an average of \$7–\$10 per month. Chief Walker stated that it is the district’s responsibility to inform the community about what resources it currently has and what is needed, but that the ultimate decision rests with the voters. Director Yager stated that she appreciates the messaging. Director Everts emphasized the importance of being very truthful and avoiding any scare tactics, noting that this will be a challenging effort. Chief Walker agreed and stated that the plan is to place the measure on the ballot in May and, if necessary, again in November. Director Everts asked whether staff have been provided with a list of do’s and don’ts. Chief Walker responded that he has met with all shifts and reminded staff that they may share information but cannot ask for a “yes” vote. Liz Loomis Public Affairs is finalizing a one-page reference sheet. Additional information will be presented to the board in February.

**Oregon Fire Code Revision** – Every three years an update to Oregon Fire Code is made by a group of folks, reviewing the international current code and make modifications specific to Oregon. The board was asked to recognize and adopt the 2025 Oregon Fire Code that Fire Marshal Ortiz and Fire Inspector Kelly will be using when they are out doing their inspections. Director Cotter asked if there was anything controversial in the new codes. Fire Marshal Ortiz stated there is always conversations when industry has a bigger voice than public safety. The board recognized the Oregon Fire codes.

**Fire Chief Annual Review, February 2026** – Included in the board packet was a one-year performance review of Fire Chief Walker, which outlined goals and achievements. This one-year review, to be completed at the February meeting, provides the board with the opportunity not only to review past performance but also to add additional goals for the upcoming year. The form and evaluation were developed by SDAO and former Fire Chief Budge. The February discussion will be conducted in executive session.

### Executive Session

None

### Action Items

**Resolution 2025/26-23** Resolution 2025/26-23 appropriating unanticipated reimbursement from physician advisor Dr. Mark Zeitzer, for the dissolution of his contract. Board Chair Cotter read the resolution by title. Director Yager made a motion to approve Resolution 2025/26-23. The motion was seconded by Director Everts. The motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2025-26/24** – Resolution 2025/26-24 appropriating unanticipated revenue from the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to materials and services for volunteer tuition reimbursement for EMT certifications. Board Chair Cotter read the resolution by title only. Director Yager made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-26/24. The motion was seconded by Director Ponce. The motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2025-26/25** – Resolution 2025/26-25 adopting revised board policies. Director Yager made a motion to table the approval of the board policies until February. The motion was seconded by Director Ponce. The motion carried unanimously.

**Miscellaneous Items & Recognitions**

Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup> 12:00 – Police vs. Fire Chili Cook Off, Woodburn Senior Estate Auditorium. Chief Walker stated this is a great fundraiser for the Kiwanis group and a fun event between the firefighter and police officers. Engine 21 and Engine 22 will be participating.


SDAO Conference, February 5-8– Chief Walker, Assistant Chief Corless, Finance Officer Petersen and Board Director Everts will be attending the event.

**Public Comment:** There were no comments from the public.

Director Yager made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm. The motion was seconded by Director Ponce. The motion was carried unanimously.

Next meeting will be held on: Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

APPROVED:  Date: 2/18/26  
Jerry Cotter, Board President

ATTEST:   
Jim Walker, Fire Chief  
Woodburn Fire District