

**Crooked River Ranch RFPD  
6971 SW Shad Rd  
Terrebonne, OR 97760-9250  
March 21, 2024**

A Board meeting of the Crooked River Ranch Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors took place on Thursday, March 21, 2024. The Board meeting was held at 6:30 pm and was held at the Crooked River Ranch Fire District Fire Station, located at 6971 SW Shad Road Crooked River Ranch, Oregon.

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

#### **1. Called to Order** at 6:00 pm by Director Norberg

**1.1 Flag Salute** – led by Director Palmer

**1.2 Roll Call** – Director Costigan completed the roll call, and the following individuals were in attendance: Directors Palmer, Costigan, Norberg, and Pahl. Director Gayheart initially was excused, but later entered the meeting via the Zoom platform. Staff members attending the meeting were Fire Chief Sean Hartley, Captain David McDonald, and Administrative Assistant Dana Schulke attended the meeting via Zoom. Members of the public present were Bill Burt, Vicki Burt, Mike Dries, Linda Kay Widmer and Robin Huber.

#### **2. Review of the Agenda** - Director Norberg reviewed the agenda.

#### **3. Approval Minutes**

**3.1 Board Meeting Minutes from February 15, 2024** – The minutes were in the Board packet for review. Director Norberg questioned the wording of a sentence in the Fire Chief’s Report on page 2 of the minutes, referring to repairs on the snowplow “due to a glass”. She stated this did not make sense. Chief Hartley clarified that the glass was broken; the sentence will be corrected accordingly. Director Palmer made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 15, 2024, meeting, as amended. Director Pahl seconded the motion. All voted to approve the minutes by stating “Aye,” motion carried, (4-0).

**3.2 Board Workshop Minutes from February 29, 2024** – The minutes were in the Board packet for review. Director Gayheart entered the meeting via Zoom. Director Pahl made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 29, 2024, workshop, as presented. Director Palmer seconded the motion. All voted to approve the minutes by stating “Aye,” motion carried, (5-0).

#### **4. Financial Reports**

**4.1 Acknowledge receipt and approval of financial reports for February 2024** – Director Pahl stated that we have balanced for the month of February and balance sheet was in the Board packets for review. Director Pahl reported that we have \$1,567,354.50 in the General Fund for February. Director Norberg asked why several of the numbers on the balance sheet were shown in red, and Chief Hartley noted that those reflect overages in those categories, but the total net Materials and Services is still well under budget. Director Costigan asked for clarification of the Professional Services line item; Chief Hartley stated that this was comprised of fees for the levy election and the attorney’s work on policy review and paperwork for the donation of equipment to Lower Bridge Fire District. Director Norberg asked for clarification about the overage for Rope Rescue Operations, and Chief Hartley

explained that one rope that was past its 10-year life span that was replaced. Director Costigan asked for confirmation that the Part-time Personnel figures are shown as a replacement for the third position; Chief Hartley confirmed and stated that he will consult with the auditors about how to do the manual journal entry because of the OSFM funding through October. There were a couple of pay periods after that the part-timers were still showing in the wrong line item. Clarification is needed about dating and wording for these two-line items. Chief Hartley assured the Board that the auditor will be concerned only if the total for Materials and Services goes into the red. Director Pahl reported a balance of \$463,056.51 in the Capital Reserve Fund. Director Norberg asked if there were going to be further expenses taken from the CRF, and Chief Hartley replied that the second payment for the cabinets in the dorm room was going to be paid this month, but no other capital expenses were anticipated. Director Palmer made a motion to approve the February 2024 financials as presented. Director Costigan seconded the motion. All voted to approve the financials by stating “Aye,” motion carried, (5-0).

**4.2. Appointment of Board members to sign checks** – It was decided that Director Norberg and Director Palmer will sign checks on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, and Director Norberg and Director Gayheart will sign checks on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **5. Unfinished Business –**

**5.1 Budget calendar reminder** – Chief Hartley Budget Committee Training will be at 6 pm on April 4, 2024, as well as the current year financial review since the March financials will be done. The budget document will be available to review on April 12<sup>th</sup>, and the first Budget Committee meeting will be May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**5.2 Workshop Overview** – Director Norberg reported that the workshop was interesting and informative. Chief Hartley reported that one of the topics discussed at the workshop was the Fire Med program data, especially the administrative costs, to determine how to move forward. Other topics of discussion were the Department’s vision statement, obtaining new fire apparatus, and review of ambulance billing rate data. Public hearings will be held regarding ambulance billing and obtaining new fire apparatus. Chief Hartley recommended separate hearings on both issues. Regarding the ambulance billing rates, Director Costigan asked if there would be a public presentation prior to Board meetings in April and May, to which Chief Hartley replied he planned to do a presentation at the Board meeting in April, and then hold a public hearing immediately before the May meeting. The goal would be approval at the June meeting with an effective date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Director Costigan expressed concern that leaving the approval until June would leave a short window of time to change the rates by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Chief Hartley responded that it should be clear after public comment in May what the rate change would be. Chief Hartley will reach out to the biller to see if action needs to be taken at the May meeting.

## **6. New Business –**

**6.1 Consideration/revision of the District’s Vision Statement** – Chief Hartley noted that the current vision statement is: “To provide the best service and protection for our community in a cost-effective manner.” The discussion at the recent workshop was to make the statement more specific. After some discussion, the Board approved of the following statement: “To provide exceptional fire, medical and life-safety services to the Crooked River

Ranch community, in a fiscally responsible / cost-effective manner.” Work is also being done on the Mission and Core Values statements.

**6.2 2023 Annual Report presentation** – The Annual Report was in the Board packets for review. It will be posted on the website, and there will be printed copies available at the station. It was suggested that it be sent to County Commissioners and two news outlets in the interest of transparency.

**6.3 Upcoming Board Training for Best Practices discount** – Information on this training was included in the Board packets. Director Norberg encouraged Board members to participate in the classes as they are available, which would provide up to 10% discount on our insurance. She reported that the SDIS requires districts to have a public meeting policy included in their Board Policy Manual. She explained that we have a policy, but it is not in the recommended format. Chief Hartley further explained that the Oregon Government Ethics Commission was given statutory authority to enforce public meeting law, receive complaints, etc., and they require all Board members to attend at least one of these trainings after their term begins. SDAO asked if OGEC does a public meetings training covering the laws and updates, could they validate our training. OGEC is unable to do that because their training is not done yet. The policy should be reviewed and updated with the new language at the April meeting. A template will be available in the SDAO library to use as a guideline to construct our own policy. Then we can send it to our attorney for review.

Chief Hartley reiterated the importance of attending the training because of the impact on the insurance rates. He noted that he had just received the estimates for the health insurance (approximately a 7% increase) and for the building and property liability insurance (approximately 11-18% increase). The Chief stated that because we are part of the SDIS, which is self-insured, and because of the savings we have experienced due to the small number of claims, we have been able to put away \$9,000,000 in savings. This will be used to help alleviate some of the increases.

**7. Fire Chief's Report** – The report was in the Board packet for all to review. Chief Hartley thanked Captain McDonald for getting the cabinets and trim installed in the dorm room. The Chief added to his report that he had attended the public hearing held by the Jefferson County Commissioners for the Title III Grant Funds for the Defensible Space Lot Assessment Program. After talking to other fire chiefs and working with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, it was recognized that \$500 was insufficient to cover costs incurred. It was agreed to request \$600 for the grant and some extra money for publishing defensible space materials. Keeping within the 45-day open comment period, the Commissioners will make a decision at their May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The public hearing was held in Madras, but the Commissioners held their regular meeting on the Ranch that evening, and Chief Hartley was able to address the public and answer questions from Ranch residents, many of whom had concerns about fuels reduction on the National Grasslands. Homeowners' insurance was also a major topic of discussion. He recommended to people if they are dropped by their insurance, to reach out to the Oregon Insurance Commission to make sure the insurer has followed all the required policies and procedures. The State is watching the situation closely because they are getting push-back from homeowners state-wide regarding insurance. The OSFM Office is starting to report some data from the Lot Assessment Program that could be used in insurance disputes. Director Norberg asked if the State had revised the fire risk map

that was previously issued and then pulled. Chief Hartley said he had not seen an updated version of the map, and it is not available for public viewing. The County Commissioners did see a draft. Chief Hartley also reported that he will attend a joint meeting on Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> with people from the Crooked River National Grasslands, the HOA, and some CRR Lions Club members. The Grasslands personnel will address their plans for fuels reductions on the Ranch. There is also a plan to have them represented at the Open House on May 4<sup>th</sup>, along with a possible additional meeting for the public to hear from the National Grasslands officials. The Chief further reported that he and Administrative Assistant Dana Schulke met with representatives from Chase Bank to discuss financing options and information about how we do business. They are also going to explore the bill pay options, which would eliminate the need to print checks for most of the payables or to pay postage to mail those checks. We will need to reach out to the auditors to see how to make this work with our current process of Board members reviewing and approving invoices. We will do a test with one biller to see how it will work. It may be necessary for us to continue to issue checks to some of the billers, but the goal is to streamline the bill-paying process. Director Costigan asked if there would be a pre-approved list of vendors, and then deal with vendors not on the list as paid by our individual check. Chief Hartley responded that a list of vendors would be uploaded to Chase. Those that are Chase customers would be paid electronically; those not Chase customers would be issued a Chase check. Dana Schulke reported that she and Chief Hartley attended the Northwest Leadership Conference in Portland. Gordon Graham, creator of Lexipol, was the featured speaker. It was a great opportunity to connect with other agencies. We learned that we need to be a little bit more thorough on our background checks, so we will be utilizing a different company rather than BioMed. The checks will be more complete, and the reference checking will be done for us. Chief Hartley also noted that Paul Sage did an excellent risk management presentation at the conference. The Chief further reported that the two newest fire fighter/paramedics, Laura, and Elizabeth, went to their Wildland Firefighter Type I Training in The Dalles and did very well. He also noted that the application process for our third paramedic position has been closed and a testing date is set for April 19<sup>th</sup>. We currently have four applicants, but one of them will not be able to make the testing date due to school conflicts, so we will be testing three applicants.

**8. CERT Report** – Linda Kay Widmer reported that CERT is going strong. They are doing CPR this month and first aid for training. In May we will be working on the updated Crooked River Ranch evacuation plan with Chief Hartley and Sergeant Skidgel of Jefferson County Emergency Management. Chief Hartley stated that they are working to finalize the map, and he is waiting for a map from Deschutes County, who is utilizing a program called Zone Haven. This program looks at your population and roads, then creates the zones for you. The zones that are currently drawn are too big and would cause more people to evacuate than necessary for small to mid-size incidents, creating unnecessary traffic issues. Linda Kay also reported that three CERT members have volunteered to participate in the Jefferson County Search and Rescue Program. She also thanked everyone for helping with preparation for the Easter Egg Hunt. Five thousand easter eggs were stuffed in approximately 48 hours.

**9. Comments/Questions:**

**9.1 Public Input on current agenda topics** – Mike Dries thanked the district for allowing him to volunteer to stuff easter eggs.

**9.1 Public Input on future agenda topics – None**

**10. Correspondence/Recognitions/Good of the Order** – Director Norberg brought attention to a thank you note from Cathy Schroth, president of Crooked River Ranch Lions Club. Chief Hartley had attended a meeting with Heather Miller to answer questions regarding the fire abatement efforts on the Ranch.

**11. Adjournment** by Director Norberg at 7:28 pm.

Respectively submitted by:

Vicki Burt, Community Service Volunteer, for Dana Schulke