

**Tangent Rural Fire District
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes
April 14, 2021**

Board Members Present: John Dunn, Paul Strombeck, Chris Meyer, Scott Richards, Bruce Riley
Staff Present: Chief Wooldridge, BC Chapin, OA Duckworth
Staff Absent: AC Vonasek
Others Present: Assn. President Walters (late); Volunteer Chris Hunt

Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF:

Minutes – Regular Meeting, March 10, 2021

Action: Meyer moved to approve the minutes of March 10 as presented. Richards seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Financial Report – March 2021

Action: Meyer moved to approve the March financial report as submitted. Strombeck seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (5-0).

II. STANDING REPORTS:

Volunteers Association – Assn. President Walters was not present at this time to give his report.

Fire Chief's Report – (The following is the Chief's written report as well as additional comments made at the meeting.)

- **COVID-19:** As of 4/09/2021, Linn County will move back to 'High' in the ranking schematics. This will not affect how we are operating at TFD and we will continue to bring our volunteers back into the mix. CDC is still advising that those that are 'completely' vaccinated do not need to wear masks around each other. At the fire station, during trainings, inside, we will continue wearing masks for groups of 10 or more until we hear a different message from OSHA.
- **Weekend Duty Officer:** Staff is now scheduled for 7-day rotations as BC Steve Sonne has taken a leave of absence to determine his future commitments at TFD. Loel Trulove will be back next week, and Chris Hunt has indicated a potential interest in becoming a duty officer. We still have availability for those qualified to jump in and partake in the duty rotation.
- **Response Times:** We will continue to push for faster response times. This is an ongoing drive to build momentum for an eventual ISO audit and potentially lowering our rating. Some volunteers

have shared that one of the reasons they don't respond is because staff leaves with the first truck before the volunteers can make it to the station. The Chief said because we respond to emergencies, it is our duty to leave as soon as we can fill a vehicle; if other volunteers come later, they can always respond with a second vehicle. If they don't report to the station at all, then often we can't fill that second vehicle when it is much needed. Currently, out-of-district volunteers have to complete at least 24 hours on shift each month, and 4 of our 10 out-of-district volunteers are responding to 70% of our calls. To improve this statistic, staff suggested that OD volunteers serve their 24 hours in 12-hour shifts, which would help with more consistent manpower coverage for the station, but this was not very well accepted by the volunteers. Staff is also considering extending those recommended 12-hour shifts to in-district volunteers to help improve their participation with station coverage and response times. The Chief is forming a small group of volunteers (both in- and out-of-district) to help come up with some solutions to this problem.

- **Van Buren Bridge Corvallis:** We have an IGA in place with Corvallis Fire to respond to 'Structure Fires' only at this time. We agreed upon a more limited response for the IGA but will always be available for mutual aid. This is slated to be in effect until Summer 2024.
- **Surplus Vehicles:** The Chief and staff have been looking at our current fleet of apparatus and what will need replacing over the next 10 years. This past year, we surplused T-72 based on its age, but we have not put it on the market yet. We could pull T-72 back into service as it works really well—it's just aging—and go another route with our fleet. All members of the department know the issues we have had over the past few years with T-71 and T-73 (which are used chassis with new tanks). Unfortunately, their transmissions were not what we expected and do not perform well for us during field and brush fires. So, staff has talked with the Board at length about replacing those two tenders with something more workable. They are good rigs for certain operations and could be sold for decent money.

So, the Chief suggested the Board consider something like the following: Retain T-72 (and put \$30,000 to \$40,000 into it to refurbish and paint it), then sell T-71 and T-73 and E-72 (it will need replacing within 5-7 years) and use the proceeds to purchase a new combination tender/engine that would better serve our needs. This configuration would leave us with two engines, one regular tender, one combination tender/engine, and the brush rig. The price of a new stripped-down tender is about \$225,000. The Board expressed concern that, over the past several years, we seem to have purchased apparatus that haven't necessarily been a good fit for our district, and they questioned whether our district even has the correct fleet configuration that a district our size needs.

Suggestion to the Chief: Create a plan for an ideal apparatus fleet for our district as if we were a newly formed district and purchasing our first set of rigs—at this point, don't consider how we make work what we already have, but what should the ideal fleet look like given our number and type of incident calls. Consider what the future of firefighting might look like; we may not need the large engines anymore. Bring this plan back to the Board so that we can begin to think about a financial plan to make it happen.

Barenbrug Fire: We had a commercial structure fire at Barenbrug Seed on the 5th. The fire went well, we worked well with AFD in a joint effort and had a good turnout of volunteers. The responders were eager to get in and work, integrating seamlessly with AFD. A major event was avoided by the fire attack from E-71 and E12.

- **Officer Training:** We had Lebanon Fire's training officer over to do strategies and tactics training for Officers and some firefighters also attended. The training went great, and we will look to do more in the future.
- **Volunteer Participation:** I have asked a small group of volunteers to sit and identify some needs of the volunteers to get better participation, response and overall desire to perform at the highest level possible for Tangent Fire. I am still waiting for their report.
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - April 4 Easter Day
 - April 21 Administrative Professional Day

Asst. Chief/Training Officer's Report – (The following is the Asst. Chief's written report as he was absent from the meeting.)

- **Fire & Ems Training** –
 - **In-House** – Training is progressing to a near-normal atmosphere, and volunteers have been attending drills at 70 – 80 % attendance.
Lebanon Fire Has invited us to participate in a "live-fire" training burn on Sandridge Road. Clearance to burn the structure is still being worked out, and LFD will notify us when they will move forward with the burn.
We are Hosting a live burn in our fixed facility burn box on April 10 for Dallas Fire Department.
 - **Regional** – The Linn-Benton Fire Training Council is wrapping up training that has been on-again/off-again through winter. The L-BFTC will be addressing training needs for the upcoming months; and, hopefully, barring any COVID restrictions, they will be able to fulfill training gaps that were left from this past year.
 - **State** – Until DPSST finds a replacement for the recently vacated Field Training representative, we will be served by John West, who has been with DPSST for almost 20 years.
The state has not announced opening training at the DPSST academy, but I expect to hear something soon.
 - **OR-EMS** – EMTs are progressing with their cont. ed. hours for their EMT recertifications in May.
 - **National** – The National Fire Academy has been offering a limited schedule of classes so far. I hope to attend the academy again this year, and Brice Walters had to cancel last year. The next application period starts April 15, 2021, with courses starting October 2021.
- **Health & Safety** –
 - **Safety Committee** – The Safety Committee was able to meet for the first time for the year last Tuesday. Discussions were about moving forward as a committee and topics to focus on for 2021.
 - **Policies** – OR-OSHA Temporary Rule on COVID-19 has been presented through Target Solutions among the volunteers and staff. Updates are already being discussed among the EH&S community.
 - **Respiratory Protection** - I have begun gathering information for purchasing of SCBAs. Although this is a year or so out, I want to get the Assistance to Firefighters Grant submitted and

then have another opportunity should we not be able to get it this time around. As it stands, we are in good shape as we meet several areas of criteria for the AFG; (two NFPA revisions and current SCBAs are over 10 years old).

- **SCBA Update** – The attempt for an AFG grant to purchase new SCBAs, passed abruptly as the grant's announcement came much earlier this year.

We do have another year-plus for our SCBAs before their component warranties expire. We still have to pay for service. Chief and I discussed hiring a grant writer who would, in turn, include their grant writing fees into the grant.

LN Curtis & Sons - SCBA technician for the MSA breathing apparatus will be here this month to repair our current apparatus and flow test. (This has been pushed out a month, late April.)

- **Equipment Update** –
 - **New Equipment** – The new hydraulic Holmatro extrication equipment should be arriving within the next couple of weeks.
- **Community Outreach** –
 - **Tangent Fire District Website** – Is holding its own very well.
 - **Tangent Community Blood Drive** – Next Red Cross Blood Drive is June 10, 2021.

Staff Battalion Chief's Report – (The following is the Staff Battalion Chief's written report as well as additional comments made at the meeting.)

- **Fire Inspections-** EC Electric for a courtesy inspection to see where they stood with current fire code standards. I completed a sprinkler test for Selmet in conjunction with Linn County Building Officials. DSFM Jones and I did an inspection of Central Valley Christian School.
- Considering the issues with the Tangent Inn recently, we don't have many mechanisms in place to help community business stay compliant with fire codes. I have prepared a Fire Plan Review guide, Chief is currently reviewing it, and we will have a draft to the board soon.
- **Pre-Plans-** No new pre-plans.
- **Fire Prevention-** I attended the OLST meeting where they had a guest speaker from the City of Pasco, WA. The topic he covered was Community Risk Reduction.
- **New Grant -** We recently learned we were awarded a grant through the State Fire Marshal's office. See attached for the list of equipment we will be receiving.
- **Vehicle Maintenance-** Brush 71 recently had its PM, the E-71 foam unit is now fixed, and we replaced the headlights on WT-71 and WT-73. Subsequently, both units (WT-71 and WT-73) were used on a structure fire, and the headlights worked great.
- **Building Maintenance-** Nothing to report.
- **Volunteers-** Did some cone course time with some of the volunteers. We interviewed three applicants for out-of-district volunteers. Chris Hunt has moved back to Albany and has rejoined as a volunteer. Nick Wooldridge, the Chief's son, has also been accepted as a new volunteer. As the Chief is the supervisor of the volunteers, the Board had some concerns about whether our nepotism policy and/or ORS statutes allows the Chief to supervise his own son on a permanent basis and make other decisions regarding his position. They asked staff to contact SDAO or our attorney with the Local Govt. Law Group for advice on this issue.

- **Out-of-district** volunteers' hours are on the next page.
- **Resident Student Volunteers-** Haden Hewes has been accepted as a new student resident volunteer. Knightin passed his National EMT test and will be receiving his State EMT License shortly. The RVs completed additional training in fire attack, ladders, and a couple of NFPA 1410 drills.
- **Wildland-** I am prepping for wildland classes scheduled for the weekend of April 16-18. For all interested volunteers, we held a conflagration meeting to cover expectations and how the system works. I submitted a 50/50 VFA grant through the Oregon Department of Forestry for wildland gear. If awarded the grant, it will be used for outfitting our volunteers with wildland boots.

Activity Report – 64 calls through March 2021, 3 less than last year at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

Consideration of Potential Professional Education Reimbursement Policy – This is a carryover issue from the last Board meeting. As staff had asked the Board to consider partial tuition reimbursement for university/college courses taken that are applicable to the employee's current position, the Board responded by asking staff to prepare a policy for professional education reimbursement without increasing the budget. To that end, staff presented such a policy with a cap of \$3500/year (\$1,000 per full-time employee and \$500 per half-time employee) with those funds being created by reducing budgeted amounts in the "classes" line item and the "conferences" line item for that same amount.

Action: Riley moved to approve Policy No. 1032 "Professional Education Reimbursement" as submitted. The motion was seconded by Richards and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Consideration of Revised Staff Benefits Policy – This policy is being changed to provide 100% employer paid health/dental/vision insurance premiums for half-time employees for the "employee only" premium. If the half-time employee wishes further coverage for spouse and/or family, the employer will pay only 50% of such coverage.

Action: Riley moved to approve Policy No. 1010 "Benefits" as submitted. The motion was seconded by Meyer and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Consideration of Administrative Leave for the Chief – At the last Board meeting, there was discussion as to how staff is compensated for extra hours worked (such as weekend duty officer time or weekend trainings, etc.). Chief shared that while he works with Chapin and Vonasek to trade off some weekday work hours for those extra hours, he cannot make that decision for himself as he is not his own supervisor. The Board then suggested that a Board member or two sit with the Chief to come up with a plan for him to be compensated for some of the extra hours worked, and Chair Dunn presented that plan to the Board tonight, which is reflected in the motion below.

Action: Riley moved to award the Fire Chief 40 hours of administrative leave (in addition to his vacation hours) each year on January 1 to be used by December 31 of that same year. This leave

cannot be rolled over from year to year nor accumulated nor will any unused leave be paid off upon the Chief's resignation during a calendar year. For Chief Wooldridge, the first 40 hours will be retroactive to January 1, 2021. Richards seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Preliminary Review of Proposed 2021-22 Budget – This was just a preliminary review of the proposed budget that will be presented to the full Budget committee at their meeting on May 3. No actions were taken, and no directions were received from the Board as this cannot be done until the full Budget Committee meets. Staff just shared where and why they had made changes from the current year's budget. As this was only a cursory presentation, detailed notes on individual budget line-item changes will be provided in the Budget Committee Meeting minutes after May 3.

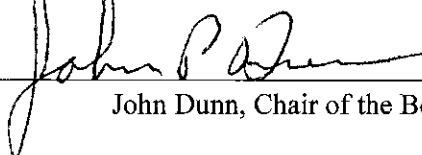
Volunteers Association Report – Assn. President Walters arrived late to the meeting and reported that the Assn. revised their by-laws, which will now allow the student resident volunteers voting rights. Also, the Assn. will be donating \$4,000 to help the district with the purchase of new defibrillators. And, they will be moving forward with the pancake breakfast in the fall to include a possible scavenger hunt in coordination with Albany Fire.

GOOD OF THE ORDER: Budget Committee Meeting is May 3, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Chair Dunn adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Karen Duckworth
Office Administrator

APPROVED BY:



John Dunn, Chair of the Board

5-12-2021

Date