Sheridan Fire District

Board Meeting

2/14/2023

President Tammy Heidt called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Board members present: Tammy Heidt, Ray Bottenberg, Pete Gutbrod, Harry Cooley, Gary Giddings

Others Present: Fire Chief Les Thomas, Administrative Assistant Marguerite Alexander

Harry Moved and Ray seconded the motion to approve the minutes from both the January 10 and Feb. 2 board meetings.

Financials: Tammy did not get the financials ahead of time. She would like the check detail prior to the meeting including in the check memo what the check is for. Financials tabled until next month.

No audience participation.

Old Business:

1. Community outreach report (see included in board packet. )Donna has been named Firefighter of the Year by the American Legion. (Long-term service.) She received a challenge coin. The Life Flight Brochures for our fire district have arrived.
2. Land Annexation document: Oregon Department of Forestry needs to sign off on it. (Appendix B). Tammy made a motion to complete and sign the form for voluntary annexation….Harry seconded the motion. The motion carried.
3. Grant proposals in progress: Chief finished the FEMA AFG grant for apparatus. The multiuse Engine holds 2000 gallons of water and has a 1250 or better pump plus rescue tool compartments. The grant is for $800,000 by next year. He has also applied for a FEMA Safer grant for 6 personnel over 3-year period. (Amount?). He has submitted a $10,00 grant to the Siletz Tribe for PPE. Everyone should have a new set plus one backup set to prevent cancer. He is also looking at funding for a Volunteer Retention and Recruitment Coordinator. (Officer or Admin position.) Something to help get more volunteer engagement. He also sent a letter to the state OHA and OFSM for guidance. Firehouse Subs grant isn’t open. The grant period for the CTGR ended January 1. The more grant monies we get in, the better we will be for a fleet. Then we can begin to put money away money for rainy day fund. We also need a plan to replace our rescue tools. Maintenance is running $5,000 per year. Deferred maintenance is coming back to get us. Although we have been ablet to upgrade, the tools we have will not cut the new car materials of vehicles going down the road now. The is also a grant funding opportunity for Fire prevention for wildland -- $10,000 for defensible space. Not many applied.
4. Contract with Kathie. Both Kathie and Blake will be here on 2/24. Kathie has been hired to do the financials. We are not disengaging GNSA at this point for payroll. We must give them 90 days’ notice. Will see what happens between now and July 1. We can make a decision later whether to have Kathie take on payroll too. The Chief would like to limit us to one resolution and one supplemental budget. The budget law class that Chief Thomas and Marguerite attended was amazing. They learned the legalities of doing transfers. We do not want to make 18 changes in one year, as pointed out in the audit. Pete feels comfortable having one agency doing both financials and payroll. Chief Thomas recommended letting GNSA finish out the fiscal year. We should get the audit and taxes first as we don’t want to dump too much on at one time. The original contract with Blake was for $5,000/month including payroll. We have continued to pay Blake even when he isn’t doing the payroll. Tammy sees it as a wash financially. Pete wants reliability. Tammy wants someone we can contact. Chief Thomas wants to give someone reliable. We have had too many breakdowns. GNSA has not paid PERS. They have checked and double-checked.

Tammy made a motion to notify GNSA that effective after the pay period for June 2023 we will no longer be using their services; we will use Bryan Fitzsimmons, CPA for payroll. Harry seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Audit: Gary noticed a missing page in the audit report. Marguerite reached out to Accuity. Ray moved to accept the 2020-21 audit. Harry seconded the motion. The motion carried.

We have a three-year contract with Accuity.

Bill pay options: Once a month is not ideal. We will schedule two days per month to have checks signed. Pete doesn’t mind signing checks. Gary is local and doesn’t mind. We will try to use the ACH system and we will talk to Kathie. In addition to having checks signed at the board meeting we will plan for a second batch of checks on Tuesday morning two weeks after the board meeting.

Tammy asked if the Chemeketa check had been mailed. All three of the students have signed contracts with the district. Chief Thomas has talked to their instructors, and they are doing well. They must do well for the district to pay the expenses.

New Business:

1. Election: Four positions will be up for election
2. Budget Calendar: Tammy wants to see the calendar set earlier. Four out of five public budget committee members are returning. Robyn’s term would expire 6/30/2023. She did not show up for the meetings last year, and we have been unable to contact her. We will look at replacing her.
3. McMinnville Assistance Status and ASA: Chief has been in seven meeting since January. One of the four transporting agencies, which serves Washington County, wants to penalize for overuse of move ups. They want them limited to 5 percent of the calls. McMinnville averages 6000 runs. Failing to keep below the 5 percent number could result in fines or even loss of some of the ASA. There was an attempt to make our area suburban with a 7-to-9-minute response time. The Chief said that is okay in the city but we are primarily rural, which has a 10-20 minutes response window. Wilderness response is 2 hours. Yamhill County’s goal is to improve patient care through contact. Analytics start with contact. Accountability. That’s the biggest function we are talking about. They are making a lot of changes at the hospital. Staffing has been an issue. The Chief said they may hear some of our people ignore diverts. There are times when all the hospitals are all on divert. Chief said the ASA is sticking together to do the right thing for the patient. Bypassing two or three hospitals is not good for the patient, and our physician advisor will back us.

Dean Bender is heading up the ASA study group for Polk. Chief Thomas was asked for his opinion for realigning boundaries for ASA. He said he wants what is best for patients and not moving boundaries for ego our monetary gains. He believes the commissioners will do the right thing. Dean is reviewing the report. It will be out in the next few weeks. If the ASA boundaries are adjusted, our district could lose 30-35 calls per year. That doesn’t mean we won’t send someone. It will continue to be our fire district and we will provide first responders as we can. It will be a decision of the Polk County Commissioners. There is no public input. We should have a standard for our EMS service. (Age of vehicles.) Holding other people accountable. We asked our citizens to support our levy which includes EMS. We will need to educate them. He recommended publicly inviting one of the three commissioners to a town hall as well as Dean Bender. (Craig Pope?) When we receive that study, we can give out information at the community level. The Chief’s goal in May is to thank voters for approving the levy and tell them what we achieved as well as what we are working toward. Chief suggests using the same strategy for this. Pete likes the idea of inviting them out to meet our taxpayers. They cannot take our fire district. Taxes are going to fire while EMS is pay for services. Education is the key. We should run statements through our lawyer. Citizens have every right to approach the county commissioners regarding concerns about the decision. The decision will affect Ballston and Buell the most. “I worry about the service they are going to get,” Pete said. Tammy agreed. Chief told the board that we offer a better service. Concern was expressed that we are being reactive instead of proactive. Ray said he would contact County Commissioner Craig Pope and get dates. The board agreed that we still need to put our concerns together and let it be known on an official public record that we disagree with an ordinance to change the ASA boundaries.

It has come to the district’s attention that our entity under the Oregon Secretary of State Corporate Division is inactive. We will need signatures to reactivate our status.

Sheridan Volunteer Firefighters Association is a separate entity. They have been fundraising for one of the volunteers. There was concern expressed that if they do a fundraising event, they are covered under the district’s umbrella policy. Tammy feels it is important to know of the activities prior to the event, even if not held on district property. Gary said that in the past a volunteer attended the board meeting to represent the group and present the volunteer meeting minutes. Chief Thomas said he will find out more information. Ray said he doesn’t want to come across heavy handed. Tammy said she just wants to be kept in the loop.

Meetings: Meeting agendas are posted on the website and at main station per the ORS.

Harry moved to adjourn. Gary seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Marguerite Alexander

Administrative Assistant