

Rogue River Rural Fire Protection District 1

Minutes – Board of Directors Local Option Levy Workshop
Meeting of August 11, 2025 at 5:00pm



CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 5:00p.m. by President John Ellis.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGEANCE

ROLL CALL:

John Foster, Jim Stearns, John Ellis, Randy Cort and Craig Berry, all present.

Also in attendance: Mike Hammond, Jenna Kurzyniec, Lane Augustson and Preston Jernigan.

Guests from the community also attended.

LOCAL OPTION LEVY:

Main workshop objective: discussion of the local option levy for the Rogue River Rural Fire Protection District, including deadlines and financial projections.

Key Dates and Procedural Information

- August 15th: Deadline to file the ballot title for the local levy (due this Friday).
- September 8th: Last day to submit a statement to be included in the voter's pamphlet (must go to Jackson County).
- Any decision/vote on the levy amount will be at a public meeting on Wednesday at 7:30 a.m.

Financial Analysis and Levy Options

- Historical audited financial data (2019–2024) used to calculate growth rates:
- Property taxes, all funds combined, averaged a 4.65% annual increase.
- Expenses are increasing faster (7.1%/year without grants) than revenues.
- Projected that, if the levy remains at 50 cents, the district will be at a deficit from 2027 onward.
- Various levy increase scenarios (10–30 cents) modeled for impact by 2030:
- Examples given for homeowner tax impact: a 15-cent increase is \$45/year for a \$300k home; 30 cents is \$90/year.
- Chief's recommendation: 30 cent increase, in light of expense trends and local comparisons.

Community and Board Discussion

- Questions raised about the effect of new housing developments; growth factored at historical 4.9%.
- Compared local levy/tax rates to neighboring fire districts: even with a 30-cent increase, the rate would remain below Fire Districts 3 and 4.
- Noted that new homes may take years to be fully constructed/assessed.
- Discussion on the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating: lower funding could increase insurance rates for homeowners if department rating drops.
- Commentary on the potential to lose personnel if funding isn't adequate.
- Challenge of balancing service level expectations and financial realities discussed; board members encouraged to submit arguments for the levy in the voter's pamphlet.

Operational and Revenue Challenges

- Staffing increases from grants noted as temporary; a return to minimum staffing poses risk of reduced service and increased overtime liability.
- Call volumes and workload are rising, further straining resources.
- Fee schedule changes offer limited additional revenue—ambulance fees mostly reimbursed via Medicare/Medicaid at lower rates.
- Ambulance revenue collection rate is about 52% of billed amounts; services cannot be refused based on ability to pay.
- Discussion of district's financial obligations, including a 29% increase in retirement costs (PERS), unlikely to improve soon.

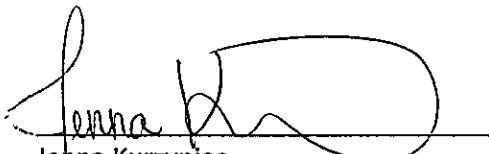
Public Meeting and Outreach

- Next step is for the board to vote on the levy amount at the upcoming Board of Directors meeting; public is invited.
- Board and public members encouraged to submit statements to local newspapers and the voter's pamphlet before September 8th.
- General appreciation expressed to the public for participation.

Suggested Action Items

- Board members to review and be prepared to vote on the levy increase at the next meeting.
- Submit statements in support (or opposition) to the voter's pamphlet before September 8th.
- Staff/board to provide public outreach and information ahead of the vote.
- Chief to provide further call volume data and monitor for additional cost-saving opportunities.

ADJORNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 5:47pm a.m. by Craig Berry, 2nd by Randy Cort. Motion passed.



Jenna Kurzyniec
Clerk to the Board



Craig Berry
Secretary/Treasurer - Board of Directors