

# Rogue River Rural Fire Protection District 1

Minutes – Board of Directors Regular Session

Meeting of July 9, 2025 at 7:30am



## CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:30a.m. by President Randy Cort.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGEANCE

## ROLL CALL:

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

Also in attendance: Mike Hammond, Jenna Kurzyniec, Jeni Darr, Cameron Deupree, Preston Jernigan and guest Tom Zimmer.

GOOD OF THE ORDER: None

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- Craig Berry nominated John Ellis as Board President, Jim Stearns 2<sup>nd</sup>. In favor: Craig Berry, John Ellis, Jim Stearns. Opposed: John Foster and Randy Cort. John Ellis awarded position of Board President.

**Comments by Randy Cort:** Concerns of other board members having an origin by neighbors meeting/get together in approach to change the structure of the board. Stating neither party contacted him to ask if it was a good time to do that or spoke with the chief, just deciding to make a move. He finds it an interesting way to do business; expressing we have never done business like this historically that he is aware of. Randy said he has worked with 5 chiefs in the past at the district and feels that this was disrespectful to his tenure on this board to handle in this manner. We are getting close to a leadership change at the top and he thinks that this move is going to be disruptive to our board environment with our current chief. Cort feels Ellis has been disrespectful at times and talks down to others on the board. He also has been told that it is always bad thing to have a fire chief on your board because they can't seem to keep away from operations, and now, we have two of them on the board. Other concern is that he will steer the district in the direction that he operated in California. Cort believes that California is not the model that we want to follow up here. Also voiced issues with overregulating and trying to manage our chief. Cort has heard that he, himself, is not good at looking at alternative funding sources and states, maybe somebody's better at that.

**Comments by John Foster:** Concerns that the two gentlemen, Cort and Hammond, might change about even participating in this event. They're both local grown, have terrific input and output from the city. Local Rogue River boys are doing good. States Randy Cort has done a good job. Chief Hammond also has done a great job. If Hammond were to leave his position, its going to be bad enough. He doesn't have to be here, but he's here to serve the community. Chief Hammond not dependent on a check coming in. It would be catastrophic with what we have on the horizon with levies. Foster states he is very apprehensive on what the reaction is going to be. The public is used to their fire department, now it's going to move on to somebody else's fire department. Foster believing we are going to lose a lot of corporate knowledge, continuity with the locals and all the contacts that chief has with different departments. There isn't anybody in southern Oregon that doesn't know Mike Hammond. To sum it up; He was very disappointed having the same concerns that Cort pointed out on how this whole thing originated.

**Comments by John Ellis:** First comment being that at previous elections and everything where Randy stated that everybody went out and talked to everybody prior. He states when Randy Cort was elected President, nobody was conversed with. It was a shock to Jim and everything. In regards to being disrespectful, that was not the intent and not the desire... In regards to Cort feeling that Ellis is difficult to work with. He appreciates that criticism and will work towards that... If anyone feels that he, John Ellis, is being difficult to let him know. Ellis states the goal of the board president is to set agendas, set meeting and those things of that nature. The president is only one vote, everyone else on this board still retains their vote. It is not the goal and it is not the direction that we are out looking for anybody for negative actions. Our goal is to see that the district can move forward and be in a fiscally sound position and that we do so in a legal manner. Letting Chief know that in public he is going to work with him and not against him.

- Craig Berry nominated Jim Stearns as Vice President, John Ellis 2<sup>nd</sup>. In favor, Craig Berry and John Ellis. John Ellis nominated Randy Cort as Vice President, Jim Stearns 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor except Craig Berry opposed. Randy Cort awarded position of Board Vice President.



- Jim Stearns nominated Craig Berry as Board Secretary, John Ellis 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Craig Berry awarded position of Board Secretary.
- Position budget Officer and board clerk was appointed to Mike Hammond. All in favor.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Review of Ordinance No. 2025-1. Adoption of cost-based fee and rates for response services and administrative services and allowing for future board amendment of fees and rates by resolution.

Public comments: none

John Ellis read ordinance out by title only as the ordinance was available to the public prior to the meeting.

Hammond informs the board and guests that this is the first of two hearings. Craig Berry had questions on open burn fee. Jim Stearns questions who provides the certified copies and requests change regarding plan review fees. Chief Hammond will make requested changes and bring back the answers at the next regular board meeting.

#### **MINUTES:**

Randy Cort made a motion to approve the regular BOD minutes of meeting on June 11, 2025, Jim Stearns 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Randy Cort made a motion to approve the safety minutes of meeting on June 10, 2025, John Foster 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor, Craig Berry opposed. Craig stated a few years ago he was able to get the board to provide ballistic vests for our firefighters after being exposed to an incident where there was individual armed with a rifle. The vests were suitable for handguns, small caliber, not suitable for the treat that initiated, a rifle. Craig states he went to the chief and requested we get plates that can handle a rifle still going through chest, and didn't want to go that route. Berry states he wanted to attend a safety meeting to make sure that he could explain the situation to the safety committee directly. He was first invited and then uninvited, he said he was told that if it was anybody but him, they could attend the safety committee meeting, so he will be voting no perpetuity until that policy changes.

#### **FINANCE:**

Chief Hammond updated board on our cash carry forward for the fiscal year and how we ended on a good note and group discussed Alder Creek Fire conflagration. Jim Stearns made a motion to accept the finance report for June 2025, Craig Berry 2<sup>nd</sup>. Roll call vote: John Foster-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis-yes, Randy Cort-yes, Craig Berry- yes. Motion passed.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Fire Protection Contracts: Chief Hammond clarified that in Jackson County we sign off on permit process and In Joephine County we do not.
- Chief's Goals: Each board member provided a list of their suggested goals. Craig Berry would like to see progress on the WUI program and that has always been his goal. Other items brought up was the volunteer program. All other items were given to the board president. John Ellis will sit down with Chief Hammond and come up with 5 achievable goals and by next meeting submit the goals to the entire board.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Internal Controls: Chief Hammond explained the change to the internal controls. The finance committee, Finance Manager and Fire Chief will now sign the bank reconciliation report at each board meeting. Craig Berry made a motion to accept the changes to the internal controls as presented. All in favor. Motion passed.
- Resolution R25-26-002: Citizen donation of \$200 for employees, staff and crews are going to purchase a new station barbeque with donation. Roll call vote to accept resolution R25-26-002. John Foster-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis-yes, Randy Cort-yes, Craig Berry-yes.
- Record retention policy: Chief Hammond presented information compiled regarding our records policy for the boards information.
- Local Option Levy: Chief Hammond went over that the Local Option Levy is coming up for renewal in November. Stating we have a couple of options, one is to ask the voters to continue the tax rate as is, which is \$0.50/\$1000, the other option is to request an increase. Chief Hammond states that if we stay status quo, we will be okay for a year or two financially. Board members decided to discuss the Local Option Levy renewal at the next board meeting.

#### **CHIEF COMMENTS:**

Chief Hammond presented his monthly report to the board. This month we are working on the district annual audit. Updated the board on the deployment to Alder Springs fire, Niel Creek fire and Applegate fire. House bill 3940 was discussed along with the line of credit with Umpqua Bank.

**MONTHLY REPORTS:**

Monthly reports were reviewed; Randy Cort made a motion to approve the monthly reports as presented, Jim Stearns 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

**ITEMS THAT CAME UP AFTER AGENDA POSTED:**

John Ellis states SDAO is offering a webinar regarding fire service funding.

Craig Berry requests the boards permission to reapply for the solar grant, using the existing information submitted along with a way to share the solar source with the community. Craig Berry will email John Ellis with suggestions and the intent and will then share with the other board members. If none of the board members are in opposition, we should go ahead and let Craig Berry move forward.

Jim Stearns wanted to give kudos to the crews in preparation of the parade. The rooster crow parade went very well.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Guest Tom Zimmer expressed his thoughts on the mornings election of officers and hopes that everyone can shake each other's hands and circum.

**SUGGESTED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

Local Option Levy

**ADJORNMENT:** Motion to adjourn at 8:57 a.m. by Randy Cort, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John Foster. Motion passed.

  
Jenna Kurzyniec  
Clerk to the Board

  
Craig Berry  
Secretary/Treasurer - Board of Directors