

Rogue River Rural Fire Protection District 1

Minutes – Board of Directors Local Option Levy Workshop
Meeting of October 23, 2025 at 6:00pm



CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00p.m. by President John Ellis.

ATTENDANCE:

John Ellis, Jim Stearns, John Foster, Mike Hammond, Jenna Kurzyniec, Jeni Darr, Cameron Deupree, Tom Reynolds, KOBI News and John Bond.

LOCAL OPTION LEVY WORKSHOP – TOWN HALL MEETING

Community member John Bond, praised the Rogue River Fire District and ambulance service for professionalism, quick response times, and strong community ties. Emphasized the importance of retaining local, high-quality emergency response rather than merging with outside agencies. Also acknowledging the challenging financial times and the importance of supporting essential emergency services, especially in an elderly community.

Chief Hammond presented a slide show presentation. Informing the public of the district's current levy rate and now proposed rate, areas the fire district and ambulance service area covers, personnel, and the increase in call volume over the last decade. Increased operational costs are driven by inflation, health insurance, workers' compensation, PERS, and salaries—all rising faster than revenue.

Board members and staff addressed rumors, clarifying that the carryover is not a surplus but necessary for cash flow. Board member, Jim Stearns, explained key funding sources: 68% property taxes, 25% ambulance fees, and periodic capital and local option levies. The annual budget requires a cash carryover of approximately \$850,000-\$1M to cover operating expenses during months before property tax revenue is received. Another rumor addressed, board member by John Ellis, was the idea that the levy increase is to facilitate a future merger; the board refuted this, stating the raise is strictly due to rising costs outpacing revenue.

Other informative items presented were;

- Grants received require reserve funds in case obligations are unmet, also impacting perceived reserves.
- Regulatory requirements (e.g., OSHA's two-in, two-out rule) mandate higher staffing levels, increasing expenses.
- The fire district is independent from the City of Rogue River and receives no city general funds.


Discussion of if the levy fails, there could be significant service reductions, including slower response times and potentially no local ambulance. Board member stressed any such decisions would involve public input and careful review.

The union president highlighted that Rogue River's fire and ambulance staff handle more calls per station than nearby districts with higher tax rates. Despite lower staffing and funding, the department maintains high service levels, but the strain is increasing with rising call volume and prolonged call durations due to medical transports.

The union and board both urged community support for the levy to maintain current service levels and avoid detrimental cuts.

Meeting ended at 6:41pm.


Jenna Kurzyniec
Clerk to the Board


Craig Berry
Secretary/Treasurer - Board of Directors

not
present