

**Western Lane Ambulance District
Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue
Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority
2625 Highway 101 North, Florence, OR 97439**

Joint Meeting Minutes, March 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
The Zoom recording will be posted on SVFR & WLAD Websites

SVFR BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Directors Jim Palisi, Alan Burns, Ron Green, Ned Hickson, Sam Spayd

WLAD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Directors Rick Yecny, Larry Farnsworth, Mike Webb, John Murphey, Cindy Russell

WLFEA BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Directors Jim Palisi, John Murphey, Cindy Russell, Sam Spayd

STAFF PRESENT:

Chief Schick, Dina McClure, Operations Chief House, Fire Marshal Tony Miller, Holly Lais

Chief Schick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll Call established quorums.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- RJ Pilcher addressed his concerns over the WLAD PERS Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL). He blamed the legislature for their mismanagement of PERS and encouraged the need for an internal fund.
- Mike Cavin, president of Local IAFF 851 Union, responded to the paid ad in the newspaper from last week. He spoke about the value of personnel, the PERS annual rate, and benefits.

SWEAR IN WLAD FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE JEFFCOTT:

- Chief House introduced MacKenzie Jeffcott, and Chief Schick conducted the Swearing-in Ceremony. She gave her oath and was pinned by her family members.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- February 25, 2021, Joint Board Meeting Minutes
- Staff Reports: Chief, Operations Chief, Office Manager, and Fire Marshal
- Correspondence: RJ Pilcher Document

REVIEW OF FINANCIALS – WLAD, SVFR, WLFEA:

- McClure noted that 8 months into the fiscal year, financials should be tracking at 67%.
- Director Yecny gave kudos to McClure for her handling of finances and the conservative manner in keeping the expenses controlled.
- Director Farnsworth asked for an additional budget column in the LifeMed Analysis Report to show month-to-date data. Farnsworth will contact McClure during business hours to discuss.

OLD BUSINESS:**SVFR & WLAD Discussion: Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) Account**

- The decision to move funds to an LGIP or keep funds local was postponed to next month until more information can be obtained.

WLFEA Discussion: Restrict Funds for PERS Unfunded Liability

- Chief Schick recommended two options for the board to consider for the management of the PERS Unfunded Liability, 1) keep the additional PERS funding within the General Fund, specifically in a Reserved for Future Expenditure line item, to be used to address future PERS liability as decided by the Board, or 2) move the money designated for future PERS liability into a Reserve Fund.
- The boards weighed each option and inquired where they were on the state waiting list. McClure believed they were down around 30 on the waiting list, as other larger districts were farther up.
- Director Murphey did not want the state to hold the funds and wants to keep funds available in case of an emergency.
- Director Webb was concerned about the liability and 25% match.

Director Farnsworth motioned to move funds to a Reserve Fund. There was no second. The motion was not taken to a vote. Funds will stay in the General Fund for future PERS expenditures.

NEW BUSINESS:**SVFR Action Item: Appoint Budget Committee Member**

- Three individuals submitted applications for one position with the SVFR Budget Committee. The term of the new appointee will serve through December 31, 2023.
- Director Green recommended the committees have more diversity amongst their members.

Director Green motioned to nominate Erin Huston. Director Hickson seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion passed.

WLFEA Action Item: Present WLFEA Budget to SVFR and WLAD Directors

- Chief Schick presented the WLFEA Draft Budget. He informed that the part-time Admin. Assistant will be moving to full-time, and each Admin. Assistant performs different functions and are all trained at the same level. He reviewed the healthcare insurance and the employee step system. Chief Schick explained SVFR and WLAD are splitting the WLFEA costs 50%/50%. The Fire Marshal will be funded 100% by SVFR and Ops Chief Matt House will be promoted to Assistant Chief dependent on his Chief Officers completion.
- Director Farnsworth inquired about a 12-month rolling expense, stating that the budget did not give a full picture. Farnsworth also questioned why there was such a difference in past/future IT Services.
- Director Farnsworth was not in favor of the wage increases and asked to see each employee's salary range. Chief explained that once an employee reaches top step, they will receive an annual COLA, and he is the only employee in WLFEA to have additional steps.
- Director Palisi expressed his frustration towards the discussion of pay cuts. He feels that it will be hard to retain personnel with pay and benefit cuts and stressed the need our services provide in the community.

SVFR: Director Hickson motioned to approve the WLFEA Budget for submission to the SVFR Budget Committee. Director Burns seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion passed.

WLAD: Director Webb motioned to approve the WLFEA Budget for submission to the WLAD Budget Committee. Director Russell seconded. Roll Call. Directors Murphey, Russell, Webb, and Yecny voted yes. Director Farnsworth voted no. The motion passed 4 to 1.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS:

- Director Webb said years ago the district had chosen to be a public agency and make choices from a business model perspective. They had decided not to have the skinniest budget and use the money to better serve the people.
- Director Yecny said there was concern a year ago about WLAD living within their means. This year, he feels more confident about the budget after completion of the Labor Negotiations and a drop in the PERS rate. He is happy with the current finances and happy to see that WLAD has been able to keep up with their great service.
- Director Russell read a mission statement she had written in response to a recent news article. She emphasized that she is here for the crews, they need to stay educated, and that our community deserves the best of the best medical service.
- Director Farnsworth congratulated Jeffcott on her new position. He restated that the district's are overcompensating their employees and he represents the taxpayer.
- Director Murphey commented as Board Chair of WLAD that he is starting a WLAD Levy Support Committee. He appointed Director Webb and Director Yecny (who will serve as a community member since his term with the Board ends soon) to act as Treasurer. Director Murphey plans to have different facets of community and employees from SVFR and WLAD as members.
- Director Spayd informed that he was hired to represent the people of the community and work for what they want.
- Director Palisi stated that during the first discussions of consolidation of the districts, the purpose was to bring better services to the community. He said to look to the long-term goals that can be achieved and the districts are stronger working together. He said he is passionate about public safety.
- Director Green said that at times, Florence feels like an island and that there are three agencies in our community (PeaceHarbor Hospital, WLAD, and SVFR) that drive economic development in Florence. He had taken the oath of financial responsibility and there is a need for local reinvestment. He would like to see the districts put quality first, but the debate is for the taxpayers. He said the quality of service we have here comes at a cost.
- Director Burns echoed that the directors work for the public and the community would make their decisions when all the information is available to them. He is looking forward to face-to-face meetings.
- Director Hickson said he too is looking forward to live meetings again, possibly after Spring Break. He explained that he tries to keep his board position separate from his editor position. He reviewed the difference between Articles, Periodicals, Ads, and Guest viewpoints.
- Director Murphey requested to see a mock budget of what the districts would look like with a consolidation. He also said he appreciates the level of care provided by SVFR and WLAD personnel.
- Chief gave a brief update on the Strategic Plan and the projected meeting dates.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The WLFEA Directors went into Executive Session per ORS 192.660 (2) (i) to evaluate the performance of the Fire & EMS Chief.

The WLFEA Directors came back into open session at 8:14pm to take action. Director Palisi made a motion to increase Chief Schick's salary from Step 5 to Step 6. Director Russell seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Lais
Recording Secretary