

JOSEPHINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION COMMITTEE

December 3, 2019

5:30 p.m.

Community Corrections
Marie Hill Conference Room

510 NW 4th Street
Grants Pass, OR 97526

MINUTES

Present:	Scott Blower, Charlie Chase, Bryan Hawkins, Michael Jones, Vivian Kirkpatrick-Pilger, Janet Lancaster, Harry Mackin, John Maupin, Rick McClintock, Richard Wharton, Jeffery Wolf, Dorothy Yetter, Austin Prince – Rural Metro, Dan Trader – County Fire, Mike Shaw (For Mariana Ruiz-Temple) – Oregon State Fire Marshal, Dave Larson – ODF, Mike McLaughlin, Lily Morgan – BCC Liaison, Annette Sorensen – Staff, Sara Rubrecht - Staff
Absent:	Dave Mathews, Mariana Ruiz-Temple – Oregon State Fire Marshal
Public Attendees:	Rich Holloway, Elaine Wolf, Lance Shaw, Shaun Hall – Daily Courier
Recorder	Annette Sorensen

1. Opening

Commissioner Morgan opened the meeting discussing the cancelation of last week’s meeting due to the weather conditions.

Commissioner Morgan stated that Mariana Ruiz-Temple, the Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal, has gathered some examples of feasibility studies. Annette will send them out to the group. Commissioner Morgan suggested that it may be beneficial to start that process now as other information is being gathered. However, this will be up to the group to make the decision on time frames and if they would rather wait until all of the other information is gathered or to begin it now and what they would like to be verified in a feasibility study. Commissioner Morgan recommends that the group consider beginning the process of determining the details of the Request for Proposal (RFP) such as what they would like in the feasibility study, involvement in getting feedback from the stakeholders so that information can continued to be gathered. Dorothy asked what the RFP would be for. Commissioner Morgan clarified that it would be for the consultant to do the feasibility study. The Board has requested they want an outside consultant in the process and to verify the information. The committee can submit what they have completed to the consultant for consideration and the consultant can confirm if it’s sufficient or gather more information if necessary. The committee would then look at the RFP proposals taking into consideration cost and quality of what is being offered then make a recommendation to the Board to issue the contract to one of the responders.

Richard suggested that after the Chairman and Vice Chair have been selected, the existing information from prior committees be reviewed so time is not spent on information that they already have. Items to focus on are the feasibility study, current rate and things of that nature.

Commissioner Morgan can get the group time lines and reverse time lines for elections dates and deadlines. This is different from what is required for the RFP and other items. The standard process requires that once the RPF is approved and published there is a month response time and a certain amount of time from the deadline to review it for a decision. After the study is completed and reviewed a report will be due by a designated date.

Richard also mentioned that after the committee has completed their task and if a district is created, there is a Rural Fire Board that will have to make financial and business decision that this committee should not

make presumptions on. In addition, it is the role of the fire chief to set standards, training and recruitment and not the committee's. The process begins with a reverse timeline.

It was mentioned that the Rogue Valley's Chief already has standards that can be referenced.

It was stated that if the election is in November 2020, taxes would not be collected until the following year and the earliest this could begin would be January 2021 which gives plenty of time to set things up. Commissioner Morgan clarified that County collects taxes for all districts in November and distributed to the different districts within certain time frames.

Commissioner Morgan reminded the group that there are hearings that are required in the formation of a district and set standards for those hearing. Those dates will be provided in the timeline that will be provide.

Richard suggested not repeating what was done in previous attempts and to focus on the rate setting and how the service can be delivered at a price the voters will approve. The standards are established by the Fire District Chiefs.

Dorothy suggested we call for the orders of the day.

Dorothy made a motion to select board officers, moving agenda item No. 4 to No. 1 then review the minutes. Dorothy also recommended that item No. 3 be skipped. It motion was seconded.

Vivian wanted clarification on the goals of the committee and if the County gets money collected for the district. Commissioner Morgan explained that a Fire District is not under County government and there is no overhead costs going to the County.

2. Select Board Officer (Moved from No. 4)

A vote was made about electing a chair – Motion passed 10 yea's and 2 nay's Mike Jones and Vivian Kirkpatrick-Pilger.

Commissioner Morgan asked if the committee would like other positions on the Board. Vivian suggested having a Vice Chair, it was agreed upon by the group.

Chair nominations were Mike Jones, Richard Wharton and Vivian Kirkpatrick-Pilger.

The vote was closed by a Motion with a second.

A show of hands for Mike was called with 1 vote.

- Vivian Kirkpatrick

A show of hands for Richards was called with 11 votes.

- Scott Blower, Charlie Chase, Bryan Hawkins, Mike Jones, Janet Lancaster, Harry Mackin, John Maupin, Rick McClintock, Richard Wharton, Jeff Wolf, Dorothy Yetter.

Richard Wharton was elected as Chair.

Dorothy Yetter was nominated and seconded as vice chair
Bryan Hawkins was nominated
Charles Chase was nominated

The nominations were closed with call to vote.

A show of hands for Dorothy Yetter was called with 8 votes

- Rick McClintock, Bryan Hawkins, John Maupin, Janet Lancaster, Mike Jones, Harry Mackin, Jeff Wolf, Scott Blower.

A show of hands for Bryan Hawkins was called with 2 votes.

- Dorothy Yetter and Charlie Chase

A show of hands for Charlie Chase was called with 2 votes.

- Vivian Kirkpatrick-Pilger and Richard Wharton

Dorothy Yetter was elected as Vice Chair.

Richard clarified that he does not have a preconceived notion that you cannot keep the service that you currently have, that will be up to the committee.

3. Minute Review / Approval (Moved from No. 2)

Richard called for a review of the minutes from 11/12/19 for questions, revisions or amendments. Janet had concerns that all of the information was not reflected in the minutes and offered to rewrite them and bring them back to the group. Annette had no objection. Commissioner Morgan stated that minutes do meet the law requirements as they are. Rick suggest that in the interest of time, the minutes be approved as they are and Janet give the addendum to Annette and they can be brought back to the meeting. Annette will explore the possibility of having the recordings uploaded to the County website.

Vivian made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/12/19 if Janet would like to offer an addendum she can do that.

Harry seconded that motion. The vote was passed unanimously.

4. Questions from Committee Members (Moved from No. 3)

Mike McLaughlin stated he is currently representing the Fire Defense Board Chief for Josephine County and has been asked to represent the Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs as well. He asked for authorization to represent that agency as well. Commissioner Morgan will take that back to the Board for amendment. A Motion was made and seconded to support that change and ask the Commissioners accept the change. The Motion passed unanimously.

Mike McLaughlin handed out two packets, the Rogue Valley Regional Mobilization Plan and the RVFCA Mutual/Automatic Aid Agreement Jackson/Josephine Counties. These will be available to the public online after the first of the year. This is a tool for the committee members to read to provide better accurate information regarding some of the statements that have been made the last few meetings. If there are questions, they can be asked at the next meeting.

5. SWOT Analysis

Janet requested to share the definitions of Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities & Threats based on best practices.

Strengths – positive factors that help take advantage of opportunities in the external environment, attributes and resources that support a successful outcome (fire protection and emergency services)

Weakness – Conditions that negatively impact current structural fire protection and emergency services. Missing skills, equipment, training and reporting are examples of weaknesses.

Opportunities – Conditions that have to potential to have a positive impact of the current state of structural fire protection and emergency services.

Threats – Elements that could be problematic or catastrophic to fire protection in the future.

Commissioner Morgan brought up that this SWOT analysis was originally based on the current system.

Strengths

Momentum for change
Existing fire Service
Choice
Private company
Rogue Valley Fire Chief Association
JoCo Emergency Management
JoCo 911 Agency
Efficient use of part paid fire fighters,
eqpt & systems
Mutual/Aid GP/ODF
Lower taxes
Gov. Council on Wildfire Response

Weaknesses

No Tax base \$
No Control Over Rate
No Control Over Service
No Control Over Sustainability
Not everyone pays
Communication from 911
Choice

Disparity of Svc
Lack of transparency
Lack of documentation
Potential civil and criminal liabilities
Training documentation/standards
Response times
After action reports
Eqpt. maint. records
State mandated records
BLS
Lack of liability ins.
Confusion on fire ground
Cannot apply for grants and surplus
Only 1 company contributes to mutual aid/auto aid/911/full service
Billing issue
Lack of fire code enforcement in unprotected area
Privates do not have authority to investigate fires
Fees to private companies are not tax deduct.
Private companies do not have tort limits
Public perception
Low barrier to entry
False sense of security
Standards
Governance of Private

Opportunities

Grant opportunities
Consideration of existing drafts
Self-Governance -elected fire board
Improve coverage & service
Improve mutual aid/auto aid/911
Improve the public image of fire service
Reduce homeowner & business insurance costs
Everyone pays
Increases safety of community & fire fighters
Consumer protection
Stable funding
Lower operating insurance costs
Fire and life safety improvements through code enf.
Less arson through fire investigation
Preventing standard regression

Threats

Wildfire
No guarantee companies will stay
Unionized fire fighters
PERS
Culture of community
Volunteer resource pool
County liability
Loss of trust BCC
Cost increases
Competing resources
Negative economic impact
Lack of accurate info/trust
Loss of insurance

Bryan created questions for Rural Metro & County Fire Security. They were passed out to the committee. Richard reminded that the process to submit questions is to send them to the Board staff and they would forward to the appropriate person. The staff would then forward the answers to the committee.

6. Next Steps

Richard suggested to the group that they establish subcommittees.

A Standards subcommittee will come up with standards and submit them to the Committee who will submit them to the Board. Committee members will be Janet, Bryan and Mike McLaughlin.

A Service Boundaries subcommittee was created to confirm the existing information on service boundaries is relevant and should be submitted to the Board. Subcommittee members will be Charlie and Harry.

Rate setting will be complicated and done separately.

Fire Protection Boundaries and Service Areas topic need definition clarification. Commissioner Morgan will get clarification from Legal Counsel.

Commissioner Morgan passed out two maps. The first was Fire Response Areas: ISO 5 Mile Service Areas. The second was Fire Response Areas and Fire Districts.

Janet requested having a subcommittee looking at alternatives and options.

Other subcommittees suggested were feasibility and communications.

It was suggested that the remainder of the committee think about other groups that might be appropriate for information gathering. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Richard suggested that the committee put in writing the level of service the committee thinks the new Fire District should be delivering, but how it is delivered is determined by the Fire Board.

Richard suggested that at the next meeting the committee discuss rates and options so the members who will be on those committees will have that information.

Rick suggested that the group define the adequate level of protection based on values at risk.

Bryan suggested having workshops in addition to the meetings.

Richard suggested the agenda include to finish the SWOT analysis, meeting schedule and alternative dates for meetings.

Annette will email the proposed schedule to the committee.

Austin wanted clarification on questions to the ex officio members. Richard stated that anything the group asks is a request and not a requirement. Austin request that the questions be submitted electronically.

Annette clarified that the meeting must be noticed 24 hours before the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.