

**JOSEPHINE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION
COMMITTEE**

May 13, 2020

3:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Present:	Scott Blower, Charlie Chase, Bryan Hawkins, Michael Jones, Janet Lancaster, Dave Mathews, John Maupin, Rich McClintock, Richard Wharton, Dorothy Yetter, Austin Prince, Mick McLaughlin (3:53), Commissioner Fowler – Liaison, Annette Sorensen – Staff, Sara Rubrecht - Staff
Absent:	Vivian Kirkpatrick-Pilger, Harry Mackin, Jeff Wolf, Jason Folkstad – County Fire, Mariana Ruiz-Temple – Oregon State Fire Marshal, Dave Larson - ODF
Public Attendees:	
Recorder	Annette Sorensen

1. Call to Order

Chair Wharton called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Roll call taken by Annette Sorensen

3. Status of Standards for Fire Protection

Annette let the group know that the most recent update received from Dave Mathews was sent to Legal Counsel for review.

Annette let the group know that she received a map from the City of Grants Pass urban growth boundaries and will work.

4. Matters from Committee Members

Annette confirmed Janet's questions that she will be looking at properties that were in the County that are now in the urban growth boundary.

John Maupin asked Annette to let the committee know as early as possible when the BCC will be discussing anything to do with the fire committee. Annette said she would email the group when items come up.

Richard gave an update on the committee members that have not been present, Jeff, Harry and Vivian. Jeff and Harry have had medical situations arise and Vivian is deciding whether she would like to remain on the committee as she is not as familiar with the industry knowledge and terminology.

5. Ex Officio Member Update

No updates reported

6. BCC Liaison Report

Commissioner Fowler let the committee know that the BCC looked at the draft contract with the consultant was and said it looks good and represents the recommendation from the Fire Committee and the BCC's wishes. We are waiting on a negotiated cost. It will be sent to the committee for their information. Commissioner Fowler let everyone know that the County is opening in Phase I this Friday.

He thought the Standards that the committee worked on looked professional and are in Legal. The BCC will see them soon and it can be discussed on what action can be taken, if they should be run by the public or consultant.

Commissioner Fowler answered Dorothy's question and said the Health Dept. will go to business and advise them on how to open. Those guidelines are available on the Governor's and the County's website. Local law enforcement will be taking more of an advisement role. State organizations may be taking more of an enforcement role. The County is offering a grant program of \$1,500 per business, mostly outside the City of Grants Pass.

John Maupin asked when the contract might go out. Commissioner Fowler asked that it be put on next Wednesday's agenda. He thinks it will go out quickly. They are going to ask the consultant to try and finish before the May ballot if they decide to put in on the ballot.

Janet asked about the Standards and wanted to clarify that after they come out from legal, it will go to the BCC. The BCC can decide if they want to take action by referring them to the consultant or adopt as an ordinance and engage the public by having the consultant help with that.

Meeting ended at 3:22 p.m.

WORKSHOP –

Chair Wharton reminded the group that at a workshop there are no action items or anything to be adopted. This is for their information and workshop only.

Items discussed were:

1) Review of 8 Principles of Agreement

Review of what was discussed and adopted as a group at a previous meeting.

- Cost of service can not be more than current level
- Didn't anticipate the public wanting to drop the level of service they had, they would hope it would get better
- Rural fire board would have their own autonomy
- Decisions would make decisions
- ISO rating will not go down
- Looking for long term solution
- District to have ability improve
- Sustainable financially

2) Fire Delivery Option

Dorothy facilitated the discussion of pros and cons on the options listed on the Alternatives Assessment Worksheet. Revisions are documented on the attached document noted as Version 2 – 05/13/2020.

Chair Wharton suggested Annette will send out revised document to committee members. The next meeting will be in two weeks on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 3:00

Meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Analysis of Alternatives for Fire Protection
Fire Protection Committee

ALTERNATIVES	PROS	CONS	TAXPAYER COSTS
<p>Leave as-is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really an alternative <p>BCC - Franchise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole source, or • Multiple providers • Authority for managing is with BCC or a designee of the BCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires service levels, finances, and standards spelled out in franchise contract • If exclusive, improves funding stability for franchise holder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No taxpayer control of rate • Vulnerable to loss of single provider • No citizen vote • Annual fee to County from subscriptions paid • Not a permanent solution • Cannot improve ISO & reduce homeowner insurance • Cannot improve coverage & response time • Remain in “unprotected” status • Confusion with dispatch and on-scene • Subsidy issue continues (65% RM contract payers subsidize others for all hazard coverage)-is an unfair financial model 	<p>Contract fee with Private Fire Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franchise annual subscription fee

Analysis of Alternatives for Fire Protection
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ALTERNATIVES	PROS	CONS	TAXPAYER COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC - Contract • Countywide excluding areas served currently, or • By geographic boundaries/areas, or • Sole source of multiple contracts • Authority for managing is with BCC or a designee of the BCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No taxpayer control of rate • Vulnerable to loss of single provider • No citizen vote • Not a permanent solution • Cannot improve ISO & reduce homeowner insurance • Cannot improve coverage & response time • Remain in “unprotected” status • Confusion with dispatch and on-scene • Subsidy issue continues (65% RM contract payers subsidize others for all hazard coverage)-is an unfair financial model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent tax

Analysis of Alternatives for Fire Protection
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ALTERNATIVES		PROS	CONS	TAXPAYER COSTS
<p>BCC - Zone 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State authorized Maximum .0025 tax assessed on real market value Optional .0025 special tax with election authorization Possible .0125 real market property bonded indebtedness Opt out provision BCC needs define delivery method Authority for managing is with BCC or a designee of the BCC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start it today All would need to pay BCC specify the delivery method and standards Could start rate low to build reserves for future fire organization Flexibility of delivery: contract, franchise, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No taxpayer control of rate Vulnerable to loss of single provider No citizen vote for first .0025 tax Permanent tax on total acreage – no limited to 5 acres Never been done in OR, no experience Possible long time to make happen Tax may be for eternity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent tax rate with no local election Capital outlay – possible bond measure
<p>Annexation into an existing fire district</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing body existing district Tax rate is from existing district Authority for managing is with existing Fire District Board or until a new Board is elected by voters 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economies of scale possible Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing tax rates, levies, and bonds of existing district inherited by annexed area Proposed district greater than all current fire districts combined Requires election with many more people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital outlay – bond measure Permanent tax rate

Analysis of Alternatives for Fire Protection
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ALTERNATIVES	PROS	CONS	TAXPAYER COSTS
<p>Form a new Rural Fire Protection District (RFPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can choose delivery options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contract, ○ Franchise (never been done), ○ All New from Ground Up, or ○ Combination of all considering transition to desired end state • Authority for managing is with an elected RFPD Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No taxing authority without public vote • Tax rate on assessed value on 5 acres where ODF currently taxes on remaining acreage • Could fund with grants, legislative contributions, and County redirected of existing revenue • Eligible for surplus property donation, in-kind contributions • Authority having jurisdiction is a 5-member citizen Board elected by voters • Grants available after formation • Opportunity to improve ISO and coverage • Get out of unprotected status • All pay.. no subsidy for all hazard • All hazard response possible • Favorable financing on bonds and other financial paper • Remove current possible billing issues between private fire companies • Special districts can take advantage of state resources • Employees have potential of state provided benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERS comes into play if services not contracted out. • All Forced to pay tax for fire protection • Lose chance of competition that keeps prices competitive • Startup costs • Could be interruption of service level during transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent tax rate that cannot be changed without another vote for a bond or levy. May be a vote to remove and reinstate new rate.

Analysis of Alternatives for Fire Protection
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ALTERNATIVES		PROS	CONS	TAXPAYER COSTS
RFPD Delivery method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build from Ground Up Staff with volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower labor costs Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years long project Volunteer departments are in crisis of failure, including Wolf Creek More moving parts; more chance of something going wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital outlay – bond measure Permanent tax rate
RFPD Delivery method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build from Ground Up Staff with Permanent Paid staff with some volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years long project More moving parts; more chance of something going wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital outlay – bond measure Permanent tax rate
RFPD Delivery method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy existing Private Fire Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency exists Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Fire Company may not sell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital outlay – bond measure Permanent tax rate
RFPD Delivery method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District contracts with Private Fire Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replicate existing coverage for 65+% of residents Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire district must be voted into existence, or Fire district is established first by BCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent tax rate
Form two RFPDs	All of the above must be considered for each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National trend is consolidation, not dividing districts Split tax base may not generate enough revenue to support 2 districts Duplication of administrative and firefighting staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital outlay – bond measure Permanent tax rate