

LEBANON FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 10, 2016

- Allen Forster, Board President
- Jeff King, Board Member
- Jamel Mercado, Board Member
- Michael Schrader, Vice President
- Duane Taylor, Secretary/Treasurer

- Gordon Sletmoe, Fire Chief
- Ron Sipe, DC of Operations
- Mark Wilson, DC of Prevention
- John Tacy, DC of Training
- Darlaine Smith, Admin. Asst.
- Nick Tyler, Recruitment Lt.

### CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order and the flag salute was led by President Forster at 5:30pm. hours.

### MINUTES: APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND FINANCIALS FROM APRIL 12 & 19, 2016.

- Minutes and financials were reviewed.
- **Member King made a motion to approve the minutes and financials. Member Mercado 2nd, all in favor, motion approved.**

### CITIZEN COMMENTS

- None.

### AGENDA ITEM #1 – PINNING CEREMONY

- Chief introduced Jason Bolen as the new Division Chief of Planning & Administration. Mark Wilson has retired and we have made some modifications to the position. Discussed the hiring process. Chief stated Jason went through a very rigorous process and he did a very good job. Chief said he has great faith in his ability to perform and he feels he will do an excellent job in his new position. He performed the swearing in ceremony and Jason's family performed the pinning.
- Chief stated Jason has truly large shoes to fill. This is Mark Wilson's last board meeting. Chief stated he would like to commend Mark for his service to the district over the past years and his commitment and service to the Fire & Life Safety Division. The education and prevention work that is done in that division is not easily measured but is a huge part of the service the district provides, preventing loss of structure and lives. They are often the un-sung heros in the work they provide to the district. Chief stated his hat is off to Mark and he wants to commend him for his career and a job very well done.

### AGENDA ITEM #2 – UNION ADDRESS THE BOARD

- No comments.

### AGENDA ITEM #3 – VOLUNTEERS ADDRESS THE BOARD

- Nick Tyler stated they are up to 12 volunteers hired under the Safer grant. We now have 35 volunteers and 5 Interns. We have one intern spot open. We are recruiting from as far as the Portland area. Member King asked what the goal was and Nick stated he is aiming for 40 volunteers. Chief stated if we could have a perfect world, he would like to see 70, but doesn't know if we can recruit that many. He believes 50 may be attainable. President Forster asked if we've found any potential volunteers for the substations and Nick responded we have one. He stated we are going to be parking the OFVA trailer out at the substations with volunteer recruiting information signs, to reach more rural volunteers. As well, we have updated our Active Volunteer policy to include out of district volunteers, which will increase our numbers.

**AGENDA ITEM #4 – POST-RETIREMENT HEALTHCARE AGREEMENT**

- Chief informed the board Jason Bolen was a recipient of the post-retirement healthcare agreement that is in place with the union, and because of Jason's promotion to management, we are extending the same post-retirement healthcare agreement that we have to other management members that left the union with the same benefit.
- **President Forster made a motion to approve the Post-Retirement Agreement between Jason Bolen and the District. Member King 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion approved.**

**AGENDA ITEM #5 – VOLUNTEER LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM**

- Chief informed the board that LOSAP is an incentive retirement program for volunteer firefighters. LFD started the program here around 1996. It is some sort of incentive that we can give volunteers for their service here. The program has largely remained unchanged but we would like to move to an easier way to calculate how the distributions are made. Chief explained some of the decisions that the district makes when they create the plan, such as how much money you're going to donate, the method of how you're going to distribute, etc. The new calculation method is simpler and more equitable to activity level. The new method is based on a percentage of the volunteers responses. LOSAP has also changed some of their paperwork, and they require the board's approval to make changes to the program prior to the fiscal year that it's implemented. We are asking the board to approve the new LOSAP document. The two things that are changed are the method of calculation for the distributions, and now members can decide on their own investments.
- Member King asked when the volunteer ranks grow, if the allocation would change. Chief discussed the history of the \$20,000 allocation. He believes over time we may have to increase the amount.
- **Member Mercado made a motion to approve the changes made to the LOSAP program. Member Schrader 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion approved.**

**AGENDA ITEM #6 – LETTER FROM TANGENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- President Forster discussed the letter they received from John Dunn. He stated he talked to John at the conference about his suggestion for the meeting. President Forster stated his opinion is that we have the district send John a letter stating we're not interested in meeting. He feels that way because the things he wants to discuss are items that we pay the Chief to take care of and he doesn't want to stray into things that the board shouldn't do.. He asked what the other members think.
- Member King stated he thinks if there's something specific that might need to be dealt with, that's one thing, but if the County Fire Chiefs are already meeting, he doesn't know if it's needed.
- Member Schrader stated he doesn't want another meeting, plus he feels it may be a slippery slope where decisions may be made, and there may not be things done legally, as far as board minutes, public notice, etc. He doesn't want to do it.
- Chief stated all the thoughts that were just mentioned were his thoughts as well. He stated he talked to our attorney about it. She stated if a couple people show up and make a decision, that's illegal. If one person shows up and makes a decision, that's one person speaking on behalf of the board which is also illegal. She cautioned the agenda issue as well. He feels there are some cautions involved that should be considered.

- Member King stated he thinks it gets us close to micromanagement.
- President Forster asked if the board agrees to have the district send a letter declining. All agreed. Chief stated we will draft up a letter but he thinks it should be signed by the board president since it came from a board president.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #7 – MOU WITH CITY OF ALBANY RE: LADDER TRUCK**

- Chief sent the board a draft MOU. He's received it back from the attorney with some word changes, but it's substantially the same. The intent is the same. Chief discussed our current ladder truck and stated it's unreliable and it is currently broken. Albany has a new ladder truck and they're trying to sell their old one. They also have a construction project going on and they have a need for some parking space. We discussed them parking their ladder truck here and letting us use it, knowing when they need it, it will respond to Albany. The language also states if our grant is not successful, we can purchase this apparatus for \$50,000. If we do get our grant, we can use this until we get the new apparatus, and then this one goes back to Albany. It is parked here today. Chief feels we are getting a good deal. Our intent is to still get a quote on our current truck to see if it's worth fixing or not. Because there's a \$50,000 agreement in the MOU, Chief would recommend the board vote to approve it.
- **Member Schrader made a motion that we approve the MOU with the City of Albany regarding the ladder truck. Member Mercado 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion carries.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM #8 – FIRE CHIEFS REPORT**

- Chief informed the board about a donation we received from Francis Haugen. He donates each year to our FireMed program. Chief wanted to recognize him here at the meeting. We are going to utilize the money to purchase a video laryngoscope. They are very expensive and we do not have them in the budget.
- Linn County Fire Chiefs wrote a letter to Governor Brown regarding the injuries and deaths on highway 34. They have received a letter back from ODOT, which states they were directed by the Governor to respond to the chiefs. The letter states what their plans in place are to make Hwy 34 a safer place.
- Awards Banquet this Friday at 6:00pm at the Event Center.
- Open House will be Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at Cheadle Lake Park. 10:00am – 2:00pm.
- Fire Corp is an auxiliary assistance group that is somewhat affiliated with LFD. We are working on the process to bring them into LFD as volunteers. They are currently a 501C3, which we are working on dissolving. It will be good for the Fire Corp program and good for us to have the additional volunteers.
- Mark and Jason applied for a Fire Prevention and Safety grant. We applied with the goal to decrease the number of undetermined fires. One component is training, one is equipment, and the final is a vehicle to put the equipment in. It will be several months before we know.
- Our current Chaplain, Dave Albanese, has been with us for 5 years. He's a full time pastor and he recently got a full time job with LPD. He is stepping down with us due to time constraints. We are working on replacing him.
- OFCA meeting in Redmond tomorrow through Friday.

President Forster stated we were going to go to Executive Session for the Chiefs evaluation. If the evaluation is amendable, once we come out of Executive Session, he would ask for a motion regarding Chief Sletmoe's compensation.

**ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION PER ORS 192.660(2)(i) TO EVALUATE THE PERFORMANCE OF AN OFFICER, EMPLOYEE, OR STAFF MEMBER**

- Adjourn to Executive Session at 6:12.

**RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION**

- Reconvene Regular Session at 6:40 pm.

**AGENDA ITEM #9 – FIRE CHIEF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION/COMPENSATION REVIEW**

- **Member King moves to approve the evaluation decided on in Executive Session for Chief Sletmoe. Member Mercado 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion approved.**
- President Forster opened discussion for compensation and possible pay raise.
- Member King stated he has some comments about the process itself and if it works for us as well as how it correlates to what Chiefs pay raise should be. Member Forster stated he asked Chief to get some comparable information from other chiefs and the board has that information/wage scale. He stated that as a board, they have never gone with the highest or the lowest range, they have typically stayed in the middle of the range. Member King stated he wants to give Chief a tool that he could use to move forward with as well. In the past the way a raise was given was that it followed what the union/staff got. He doesn't feel that's the best way to run an organization. He feels this organization is in a position to be a leadership organization in the fire service. Member Forster stated he'd like to see us follow the Master Plan in the future as far as goals/objectives. He asked what the others thought. Member Schrader stated it would give us a foundation to build upon. Member King stated he feels part of the process should be that we meet with Gordon and work with him on goals so that they're attainable. This should be a tool for the Chief to use with his staff as well, to make our district better. Discussed his philosophy on meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Member Forster asked about numbers. Member Mercado stated he doesn't want to toss out numbers when he really doesn't know. Member King discussed how we obtain comparables.
- Chief stated we can do a comprehensive compensation review. We did that last year and it's time consuming. The numbers he provided the board is purely monetary compensation. He queried the comparables that the union uses, which is who we used last year. All of them have had some movement as reflected in the numbers given. One option is to select a percentage for an increase. Another option is to set the amount within the comparable range. The other option is to specify Cost of Living and a Merit raise.
- Member King asked what's most productive for the Chief going forward dealing with his staff. He would like to see this as a process for the organization.
- Member Mercado asked Chief Sletmoe what he would like to see. Chief responded that when he looks at staff compensation, he looks at internal compression, at the rank/steps, the work load, etc. He looks at the attractiveness of the position. He looks at entry level vs. advanced level. He feels there should be additional compensation for the knowledge and experience that someone brings. Then he looks externally to see what others are paying. They are our competition for good employees. Then it's a balancing act and what the budget can afford.

Last year for staff positions, we didn't do pay raises, we did an adjustment to establish the step process. This year we are going to do another adjustment. That will probably be a three year process to get management where they need to be. He feels the board should look at comparables, and come up with a philosophy of where we want our chief to be in the scale. Discussed a merit system and how it's not utilized with staff. Discussed a percentage. Member Mercado asked if we were going to continue with the philosophy of going with the middle. Member King stated he likes the merit system so that we can develop the district and someone can get more than the middle. Member Forster stated he feels Chief should be in the middle. Member King stated he disagrees. He doesn't feel Chief is a middle line chief. He has been much more and he feels his compensation should be higher than middle.

- Chief stated 5 out of 6 of the comparables have replied back. Last year we chose to not use the 6<sup>th</sup> comparable anyway because it's not in the same ballpark. The question is whether or not we wait for their information. Chief has the data and a calculation spreadsheet, if the board would like to find out the figures, but he's not pushing them in that direction.
- Member Forster asked what the high and the middle was. Chief responded high is \$138,856. Low is \$130,000, median is \$133,354. These are after July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Currently, the median is \$128,994. Chief is at \$131,000 so just above median right now. Member King discussed how if we had chose the median, we would actually be cutting his salary.
- Member Schrader asked Member King what he wanted to do. Discussing the numbers, if he got \$135, he would be just holding ground. He thinks the job he's done has been awesome. Member Mercado suggested \$137,000. Member King stated that would be approximately a \$2000 merit raise. Chief Sletmoe ran the calculation and stated \$137,107 is 5.5%. The comparables range from 0 to 11%. It is approximately \$3700 above median. The board discussed.
- Chief stated his current base wage is \$121,608, so the proposed base wage would be 128,252. That's 5.5%. The other compensation hinges on the base. The motion can be either to raise the total compensation, or increase the base by 5.5. The addendum will only talk about the base wage.
- **Member Schrader made a motion to change the chief's salary based off of his evaluation, to the total compensation of \$137,107, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Member King 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion approved.**

Chief stated he really enjoys his job and is thankful for it. He appreciates the raise and thanks the board.

Member King asked if the board would like him to start working on reviewing the evaluation process. After discussion they decided to discuss it further at a later date.

Chief discussed that with the budget process, our budget is typically set by about March and we make placeholders on what's going to happen with wages. Every 3<sup>rd</sup> year, we have quite a guess. Chief asked if the board would consider moving the evaluation process to January so that the number can be accurately reflected in the budget. The board discussed and agreed.

Member Forster stated that we are going to have election of board officers in the near future. He encouraged other members that if they were interested in the presidency, he would be happy to have someone else take the position. He stated it's good for everybody to get a chance to perform the different offices, if they have the time to do it.

**ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION**

- Adjourn Regular Session at 7:27pm.

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Allen D. Forster, Board President

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Gordon Sletmoe, Fire Chief