

Josephine County Rural Fire Protection District Board Meeting: July 7, 2025
10:00 a.m. – In Person, Grants Pass Fire Rescue, Parkway Station – 800 E. Park St

Rural Fire Protection District Attendance:

Members Present: Vincent Ownbey, Tom McGowan, Roy Hauser(Telephonic), Ralph Weidling, Mark Jones

Members Absent: N/A

Recorder: Kassie Austin

Guest Presenters: None

General Public: Julie Cosner, Mike Shaw, Austin Prince, Steve Nelson, Ryan Bradbeer

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. The Board called roll, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of Agenda

The board reviewed today's agenda items. Mr. McGowan made a motion to approve the agenda as listed.

Seconded by Mr. Weidling. Upon roll call; Mr. Ownbey – yes, Mr. McGowan – yes, Mr. Hauser – excused, Mr. Weidling – yes, Mr. Jones – yes. Motion carried 4-0.

2. Approval of Minutes

This matter is tabled. The board will approve minutes at the next scheduled meeting.

3. Financial Report

The board approved the special election invoice to be paid out of the district fund without objection. Mr. Weidling received Ms. Nelson's contact information at the County to get fund information. Discussion was held regarding having two (2) designated signers for treasury. The board would like to add signing authority discussion to the next meeting agenda.

4. Public Comment

None heard.

5. Old Business

a. Personal Services Contract Sorenson, Ransom & Ferguson, LLP

Mr. McGowan made a motion to approve the contract as written. Seconded by Mr. Weidling. Upon roll call; Mr. Ownbey – yes, Mr. McGowan – yes, Mr. Hauser – excused, Mr. Weidling – yes, Mr. Jones – yes. Motion carried 4-0.

6. New Business

a. District Name

Discussion was held regarding re-naming the district, as it could be confusing geographically, as there are 4 (four) other districts within the County. Mr. Ownbey expressed that there have already been several documents, and a court case under this name. Mr. McGowan made a motion to change the name to Mid-Rogue Rural Fire Protection District . Discussion was held regarding the process and who would need to be contacted for the district name change. Mr. McGowan withdrew his motion until the Board can hear back from state entities on what is required for a name change. This matter is tabled for next week.

b. Committee Reports

Mr. Jones provided a draft resolution stating that the Board does not take any compensation for sitting on the board. Mr. Weidling made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-01. Seconded by Mr. Ownbey. Upon roll call; Mr. Ownbey – yes, Mr. McGowan – yes, Mr. Hauser – yes (Telephonic), Mr. Weidling – yes, Mr. Jones – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Jones reviewed potential amendments to a draft Board Duties and Responsibilities Policy Manual provided by SDAO with the potential to be adopted by the District. Mr. Ownbey made a motion to adopt the Board Duties and Responsibilities Policy Manual, with the possibility of a name change to the district. Seconded by Mr. McGowan. Upon roll call; Mr. Ownbey – yes, Mr. McGowan – yes, Mr. Hauser – yes (telephonic), Mr. Weidling – yes, Mr. Jones – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. McGowan briefed the board that he does have draft job descriptions for a fire chief and administrative assistants. Mr. McGowan has more information to come in the future. Mr. Ownbey stated that in the newly adopted Board Duties and Responsibilities Policy Manual, it does state that the Board can appoint an interim fire chief. The Board tabled this matter into next week.

c. Service Provider Agreement

The board discussed proposed changes to the franchise agreement. Mr. Steve Nelson, Rural Metro Fire Chief, explained that rates need to be approved by the fire district. There was language added that states if there are good faith efforts to continue negotiate the agreement, the timeframe is flexible. The length of the termination clause was discussed for a 1-year for cause termination clause. The board agreed upon the term without objection. Mr. McGowan made a motion to approve the Rural Metro Fire Service Agreement as amended. Seconded by Mr. Weidling. Upon roll call; Mr. Ownbey – yes, Mr. McGowan – yes, Mr. Hauser – yes, Mr. Weidling – yes, Mr. Jones – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

d. Adoption of Board Duties Policy

This matter was handled under the Committee Report Section of this agenda.

e. Review of Fire District Insurance Coverage

Mr. Jones stated that he is working on this matter, there is an early-estimated cost of \$2,500 to \$4,500, with annual membership dues of 4.65% of the policy cost, and this will be brought back up under next week's meeting.

f. Set Agenda for Future Meeting

Discussion was held on what agenda items were to be placed on next week's schedule.

7. Correspondence

None heard.

8. Additional Matters of the Board

Mr. Ownbey expressed that the new policy that was adopted today specifically lists that Mr. Jones is considered the PIO, and is the appointed official to talk about the district.

Mark Jones, President called for executive session at 11:14 a.m.

Additional Attendees: Kendell Ferguson, District Counsel.

9. Executive Session

- a. Applegate Valley Rural Fire Protection District #9 vs. Josephine County and Josephine County Rural Fire Protection District – Case No. 24cv59327 – ORS 192.660(2)(h)**

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Executive Session adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

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