

Pleasant Hill Goshen Fire & Rescue
Pleasant Hill Rural Fire Protection District
Goshen Rural Fire Protection District
Joint Board Meeting in Person/Zoom Meeting
January 10, 2023

Call to Order:

The hybrid Joint Board Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Goshen Board President, Willie Bronson.

Flag Salute

Attendance:

Pleasant Hill Board Members: President Todd Anderson, Vice President Kevin Flory, Secretary/Treasurer Darrell Shoemaker, and Board Member Paul Filson.

Goshen Board Members: President Willie Bronson, Vice President Tom McClellan, and Secretary/Treasurer Rose Reinertson.

Pleasant Hill Goshen Fire & Rescue Board Members: President Willie Bronson, Vice President Todd Anderson, Secretary/Treasurer Rose Reinertson, and Board Member Kevin Flory.

Staff: Fire Chief Andrew Smith, Captain Riley Moore, Executive Assistant Haley Meshnik.

Guests: - Anne Maire, Bob Schutte, Mark Reinertson, 2 additional Pleasant Hill residents.

Welcome to Visitors:

Public Comment: -

There was a public comment inquiring about the estimated cost of the new Pleasant Hill Fire station, found in a Register Guard news article. The board members replied that the holidays delayed the cost estimator and we do not have that information at this time. Chief Smith added that the goal is that it will be presented in a work session before the February board meeting. A discussion ensued on an overview of what the boards have been working on this past year and why. Some discussion points: Kevin Flory shared that one of our biggest challenges is educating our communities and getting them all the information so that they understand all the challenges we are trying to address, to serve them best. Kevin shared that they have held four town hall meetings, sent out mailers, and posted announcements on social media. The boards agree that they need to reach more community members, and when their plan is ready, they will canvas and organize more town halls.

Kevin Flory added that the Town Hall meetings they have done had great participation, but we are still only talking about a small percentage of our entire community. He added that we try to send out postcards to every mailbox in the district, to invite them to come see what we are working on, to try and serve them the best way that we can with the money that we have. Paul Filson offered to exchange numbers and sit down with the guests to explain all of this and answer any of their questions.

It was added that when we have our plan and station design ready for the public, it will all be laid out and very transparent. But we want to make sure we have our ducks in a row first. The guest shared that they feel that the public needs to see and understand the explanation of the apparatus replacement needs and be made aware of grants received and how they are used.

One public comment was that their biggest question is, how much are our taxes going to go up, so they can prepare for it. Bob Schutte asked the board members if the tax rate would go down if they received a large grant to assist with the station costs. Chief Smith replied that the board can always elect to reduce the tax rate, but they can never increase it without a public vote. Chief Smith added to keep in mind that there are benefits of hiring more staff to increase service and prepare for the next 30 years.

Paul Filson shared that the average tax rate in Lane county is about \$2.15 per thousand and right now Pleasant Hill pays \$1.10 per thousand. He added that Pleasant Hill has never had a bond or a levy and in summary Pleasant Hill is basically a day late and a dollar short. This all should have been done years ago, but the issue is that there are a lot of variables that came into place. Paul added that the tax rate was froze in 1995 and it can't be raised again without a bond or a levy. He added that we could ask for a bond to build a station and then they would need to go out and ask for a levy to hire three officers to staff the station 24/7. He concluded that you are going to be constantly doing that over and over and end up with the same amount of money than what you would be paying now with our goal/plan. Once we pay off the fire station, we will have the revenue to build a training facility or whatever the current need is and have money in reserve funds to do it.

Correspondence: - None

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

- a. **PLEASANT HILL Minutes of December 13, 2022 Board Meeting** were reviewed. Kevin Flory made a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes. Paul Filson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. **GOSHEN Minutes of December 13, 2022 Board Meeting** were reviewed. Tom McClellan made a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes. Rose Reinertson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. **PLEASANT HILL GOSHEN FIRE & RESCUE Minutes of December 13, 2022 Board Meeting** were reviewed. Todd Anderson made a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes. Kevin Flory seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Monthly Financial Reports:

Pleasant Hill RFPD

Transaction List & Financial Review. The Board reviewed the financials and transaction list. **Kevin Flory made a motion to approve the Pleasant Hill RFPD Financials and to pay the Pleasant Hill bills.** Paul Filson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Goshen RFPD

Transaction List & Financial Review. The Board reviewed the financials and transaction list. **Willie Bronson made a motion to approve the Goshen Financials and to pay the Goshen bills.** Cameron Saxon seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Fire Authority

Transaction List & Financial Review. The Board reviewed the financials and transaction list. **Kevin Flory made a motion to approve the Fire Authority Financials and to pay the fire authority bills.** Rose Reinertson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Smith shared a success resuscitation story, in the field. He added that it shows the level of competence and compassion carried by the personnel here, that was able to respond on the call.

Fire Chief's Report

**The Board reviewed the Fire Chief's Reports and further staff reports, which were attached as addendums and are available on file.*

Fire Chief's Topics Discussed:

- Fire Chief Jury Duty
- OSFM Grant Status
- Roof Project at Jasper
- Oregon Fire Chief Association Round Table
- Year End Statistics
- Volunteer Incentives, requirements, and expectations

- Coffee and Chats with the Chief
- 2022 Total Call Volume: 1,153
 - 507 Pleasant Hill
 - 515 Goshen

Captain Moore's Monthly Board Report and Operations and Staffing Report

- **December 2022:** 85 Alarms
- **Offering a EMR course to high school students, funded by a grant.**
 - Tom McClellan shared that he thought it was great, he welcomes it, and hopes it brings some exposure and that leads to others to getting involved with our organization.

Lieutenant Roll's Monthly Board Report

Division Chief Barnhart's Monthly Board Report

Board of Directors Consensus Agenda

- 2022/2023 Hiring for Shift Officer
 - Chief Smith shared that we received zero applications outside the organization. He added that in conversations with other agencies, that is also what they are experiencing. Chief Smith added that he appreciates having internal applicants that we can mold into what we need. We currently don't have an open position, but continue to plan for the future
- Budget Workshop for FY 23/24
 - Pending the fire station presentation, that is really important, the secondary need is to have the annual budget workshop to frame out the items for the budget.
- 2022 Awards Banquet
 - March 4th at Emerald Valley.
- FY 21/22 Audit Documents from Accuity LLC.
 - All financials were sent out electronically for board members to review. Chief Smith added that now is a good time to present any questions for him to answer.
 - Willie Bronson asked for clarification about the list of Goshen assets as well as clarity on the cash carryforward amount. A discussion ensued and Chief Smith shared that he has a spreadsheet he starts in April and it is a moving target as he estimates all the expenses between April and July.
- Surplus Apparatus and Future Needs
 - Chief Smith said that one organization needs to replace one engine and that engine will be able to replace two engines in our fleet, to address our apparatus replacement needs. Chief Smith explained that the 1995 Reserve Fire Engine in Pleasant Hill needs to be retired. We cannot afford to replace both Pleasant Hill's '95 and Goshen's '93 Fire Engines at the same time. They

were both kept because the boards didn't know what the future held. Chief Smith added that reduction of the redundant fleet is important. Chief Smith added that the engine is currently parked and not being used. The engine gets its weekly maintenance checks and it has its yearly inspection coming up, which costs around \$2K. Chief Smith asked the Board for their direction on what they would like to do with the 28-year-old engine? Chief Smith shared that it is the 5th Engine in our fleet and our absolute last engine to go out. Goshen also has a 1993 engine, but it has a couple better features. Paul Filson suggested to have Pleasant Hill's '95 engine tested and then after the budget process, look to sell it. Paul Filson asked Chief Smith if it was used during training, and Chief Smith explained that it is used during their live fire training, when you need 3 engines.

- Bob Schutte asked if the engine could be sent out on Conflagration and earn the \$100/hour lease amount? Chief Smith replied that type 1 engines do not get requested in Oregon. He added that there are age stipulations and it would not make it to California.
- There was a discussion on the information that the 5th engine in the fleet would need to take gear off another engine to be able to deliver service. Paul Filson pointed out that we don't have the staff currently in Pleasant Hill to man the 1st engine, let alone man this reserve engine that needs some additional equipment. Paul added, that is why we are putting this full package out to the voters to try and address all these needs at once and reduce redundancy. He shared that in the meantime we have mutual aid that can come in and work alongside us. Currently Goshen has two ready to use engines, Pleasant Hill has one and then this reserve engine in discussion of replacing, and Jasper has one engine.
- Future Work Sessions (Tentative ideas)
 - Chief Smith shared with the boards that in a future meeting, they needed to talk about what the requirements for a good standing volunteer was and what can we be doing for our students, volunteers, and residents that is appropriate in the eyes of the IRS. A suggestion was made that plaques were made with each volunteer's hours of service. Kevin Flory asked if we know what the volunteers would like? Chief Smith said we get a lot of different answers and we need to be competitive in the market to pull volunteers out of the same dried up well.
 - Paul Filson expressed that maybe we have too many hands in the pot. Paul suggested a small group that included the staff and a board member from Pleasant Hill and Goshen to discuss this and present to the board for decision. Kevin Flory agreed and said that a committee makes more sense for these topics.
- SAFER Grant (Staffing and Adequate Fire and Emergency Response)
 - Chief Smith explained that he applied for 3 positions for 3 years. The SAFER Grant will cover 100% of the positions for 3 years. This will help us, however, if the community turns down our measure, they will have to fire the 3 new individuals after the 3 years.

Unfinished Business:

Fire Authority –

- **Formation of a New Fire District/Dissolution of Existing District Items**
 - No new information at this time.
- **Paid Leave Oregon Follow Up Discussion & Action Items**
 - Chief Smith summarized that he does not suggest the board pay the voluntary additional employer portion. Through learning more about it, Chief Smith said you stand to get nothing from it, and it is high risk because that portion is not capped. However, the employee portion is capped to not exceed a 1% tax. Chief Smith added that the Boards agreed to pay the employee 6/10th of a percent, but we have learned that executing that is a little complicated. Chief Smith added that doing monthly quarterly reimbursements is labor intensive and high risk of mistakes and he does not recommend it. The second option is to just offer the employees a 6/10th of a percent raise to offset the PLO tax. Chief Smith is recommending the board considers offering a .65% raise to make it pretty close to neutral for the employee. Chief added that next year the state could increase the employee contribution to a max of 1% and that the board could consider offering a 1% raise now. A discussion ensued. Rose Reinertson shared that she prefers doing the 1% now so that we, and the fire chief does not have to discuss this further this year. She added that the Fire Chief has enough going on as it is. Paul Filson shared that we don't have 15 employees and that we are talking about a very small amount of money. Kevin Flory shared that he thinks we need to take care of our employees knowing it is a competitive market and they can leave at any time.
 - **Kevin Flory made a motion to give the employees a 1% raise to offset the PLO mandatory tax with a buffer to cover if the state elects to increase the 6/10th of a percentage to 1%.** Rose Reinertson Seconded.
 - Willie Bronson wanted it in the notes that this is not a step increase, but as long as the PLO state withholding is taken out of employee's paycheck, they will be compensated for it. He added that if we are trying to retain good employees, is 4 pennies out of \$100 worth debating? Kevin Flory added that he agrees that we need to value our employees and not do the bare bones required. Willie Bronson added that if we don't offer this, it's 6/10th out of their paycheck and it's like a penalty to the employee instead of a raise. Paul Filson added that if you take the responsibilities and what the shift officers/supervisors on each shift have to deal with, and how they are paid, it is nowhere close to what Eugene/Springfield or anywhere else. Paul added that we put a lot on these individuals and they can leave anytime they want and go somewhere else, but they are dedicated to their job here. Paul concluded that we want to keep them and keep them happy, and when the states comes in and tells them they need to pay more money, we should

seriously consider covering that expense, considering it is a very small amount. Willie Bronson agrees.

- Todd Anderson expressed that he would be comfortable doing the .65% at this time, but not doing the full 1%, because that is a little over and above right now. Todd agrees that we should take care of the employees, but that we don't give more at this time. That way we can show the taxpayers and justify that we are prudent with our money. Todd added that when we discuss the budget, we can address COLA then.
- Kevin Flory agreed with Todd Anderson that our constituents rely on us to be prudent with our money. Kevin Flory withdrew his motion to offer the 1% raise to the employees.
- **Kevin Flory made a motion that the employer offers a .65% raise to cover the costs of the PLO tax to our employees.** Todd Anderson second. Rose Reinertson expressed her disagreement with that motion and that offering the full 1% would only be offering about a .4% increase, which is not that much considering. Motion passed, 3 yes and 1 abstained.

Pleasant Hill –

- **Replacement of the Pleasant Hill Fire Station Design Process Update**
 - More coming in February

Goshen –

- **Quitclaim Deed for Northern Property Line with Church**
 - Tom McClellan shared that he reviewed the paperwork and that he and Chief met with the property owners. A discussion ensued. In summary the agreement is to share the parking area, like we always have. However, this will allow them to legally develop the easement we share. There was discussion about the easement ceasing when there is a transfer of owners. The board members wanted to make sure there was no way we could lose the property and would always have access. Willie Bronson shared that he thinks the agreement should be perpetual, so we don't have to re-negotiate this with every property owner. There is a 5ft drainage easement with that space that we cannot use. There was a consensus of the board to allow Tom McClellan to tell the property owner that we are comfortable not adding the cease easement agreement when they sell it.
- **Replacement of the 2003 - Type 6 Brush Engine**
 - No further action has been made. Chief Smith has not been able to get additional available chassis other than what was presented in the December board meeting.

New Business:

Fire Authority Action Items –

- **Residency Requirement for Line Firefighters (Shift Officers)**
 - Chief Smith asked the board what they wanted the residency requirement for shift officers to be. He explained that in the past they were required to live within a 10 min bubble around this station. That is not a policy, but that has been the practice. Many fire departments have

ended this practice, because many employees live in different states or cities and drive to work for shift. Chief added that requiring our staff to live within 10 minutes of the fire station is not that practical in the housing market and lack of rental options available in this area. This practice limits the pool we are able to get when trying to hire. Chief Smith clarified that he is not suggesting that the fire chief follow this rule. The fire chief will be expected to live within 10 minutes. A discussion ensued and the board members agreed that the staff should not be required to live within a specific bubble.

Pleasant Hill Action Items –

- **Resolution 1-23 Appropriation Transfers in the General Fund**
 - Chief Smith advised the board that it is suggested that we move money from the general fund – capital outlay – strategic future purposes to material services. The reason for this is because architectural and consultant services are both a materials and service expense, for the purpose of professional services. This will allocate the money in the correct spot, make us compliant with the budget law, and was directed by our auditor.

Todd Anderson made a motion to approve Resolution 1-23 for the Purpose of Transferring Appropriations within a Fund. Kevin Flory seconded. Motion passed unanimously

Goshen Action Items –

- **Resolution 1-23 Appropriation Transfers in the General Fund**

Rose Reinertson made a motion to approve Resolution 1-23 for the Purpose of Transferring Appropriations within a Fund. Tom McClellan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

To do:

- Chief Smith to provide an update from Dave's research.
- Bullet points of why the new formation will benefit both districts, for those who will not read the 22-page feasibility study. Strong points and numbers in an easy way to explain to the public.
- Share on social media and the website the grants we are awarded.

Willie Bronson adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Haley Meshnik
- Recording Secretary