

Columbia River Fire & Rescue
Regular Meeting of the Boards of Directors
58611 McNulty Way, St. Helens OR 97051
And Virtual via Teams Meeting
August 08, 2023, 7:00 pm

Regular Meeting: After due and legal notice, the Regular Board meeting of the Columbia River Fire & Rescue Board of Directors was called to order by President Niles at 7:00 pm.

Present: Kelly Niles, Gary Hudson, Richard Fletcher, Ryan Welby, Austin Zimbrick

Absent: None

Others: FC Medina, DC Sanchez, DC Smythe, FM Pederson, K. Lehner, BC Cole, J. Fagan, D. Reed, K. Klem, R. Melton, T. Thorn, E. Sikover, M. Reed, L. Fox, J/A Barbouletos, G. Auker, M. Millard, R.C., K. Melton, J. Lockhart, E. Murray, S. Raichel, M. Chandler, M. Denley, C. Chism, C. Booth, A. Jones, A. Schlumpberger, S. Bowe.

Via Teams Meeting/Phone In: (see attached sheet for attendees)

Flag Salute: President Niles led the flag salute.

Changes to agenda: VP Welby made a motion to amend the agenda, Director Zimbrick 2nd the motion, VP Welby made a motion to terminate Chief Joel Medina, VP Welby read a statement/resolution regarding the termination. There was discussion and disagreement from Director Hudson regarding the termination of Chief Medina. Director Hudson requested VP Welby define "for cause" surrounding the termination, but none was provided. VP Welby went on to state that what he's heard and read was reason enough. Zimbrick made a statement that he felt in his heart it was the right thing to do and you could see it on the faces of the firefighters. Secretary Fletcher stated he supported the decision that the department is the worst it has ever been. Director Hudson reminded Welby, Zimbrick, and Fletcher of the closed executive session at the last board meeting and that they were opening themselves up to be personally liable for the lawsuit that would undoubtedly accompany their decisions. Director Hudson stated that they were bought and paid for and had been planning this ahead of the meeting. Director Hudson discussed that allegations against the Fire Chief do not constitute for cause reasoning. He asked to see proof of their findings relating to the termination of Chief Medina and said that they should have further discussion when they could provide supporting evidence for cause. President Niles concurred with Director Hudson and discussed putting Chief Medina on administrative leave to offset liability. President Niles reiterated that there would be consequences for their actions. President Niles all in favor of amending the agenda, 4-1 Director Hudson nay. VP Welby motion for resolution FY 23-24-02 For Cause Termination of Chief Joel Medina, Director Zimbrick 2nd the motion, 3 in favor, Director Hudson nay, President Niles abstained. Chief Medina asked President Niles why he abstained, President Niles stated he thought Chief Medina should be placed on leave and not terminated. Chief Medina requested the resolution be read out loud in its entirety. President Niles read the resolution for the termination of Chief Medina.

VP Welby made a request for a 2nd agenda amendment. VP Welby made a motion to amend the agenda to add resolution FY 24-23-03, Appointing Chief Gorsuch as the interim Fire Chief. Director Zimbrick 2nd the motion, 4-1 Director Hudson nay. VP Welby read the resolution out loud and made a motion to accept resolution FY 24-23-03, Director Zimbrick 2nd the motion. Director Hudson discussed that the resolutions were prepared in advance by an outside party, and the three new board members had been preparing for this action prior to the board meeting. VP Welby confirmed that an outside party composed the resolutions. Director Hudson asked if the three new board members were in agreement with placing Chief Gorsuch in the interim position. Director Zimbrick commented that he thought Chief Gorsuch would be a good fit. Director Hudson stated that the situation looked like collusion, and it was another nail for the district and the 3 new board members. Director Hudson said he wanted to see someone in the leadership role for the time being but that it would be incredibly hard to fill the seat with the tarnished reputation and stink the district has. All in favor 5-0, Motion carries.

The presentation by Jeff Griffin regarding board member duties and responsibilities was canceled. Mr. Griffin stated that he could present another time.

Public Comment: Ronda Melton, Jeff Lockhart, Chris Booth

Local 3215 Report: Aaron Schrotzberger

Volunteer Report: Eric Murray

Correspondence: None

CRFR Consent Agenda: Included in the consent agenda are the minutes from the Regular Board meeting on July 11, 2023, and the cash flow analysis. Secretary Fletcher made a motion to approve the consent agenda, VP Welby 2nd the motion, all in favor, approved 5-0.

Chief Officers Report: None

Old Business: None

New Business: Chief Cole discussed the contractor that was hired to consolidate our utility services. The contractor provides the service at no cost.

Resolution #FY-23-24-01 EMS Medical Director Contract; Secretary Fletcher made a motion to approve #FY-23-24-01 EMS Medical Director Contract, Director Zimbrick seconded the motion, all in favor, approved 5-0.

Chief Cole supplied a civil service list and discussed the first meeting they had at the end of July. Civil Service Members are currently working on updating the rule handbook.

Board Comments:

Secretary Fletcher: Tough meeting, but we did the right thing. Asked for a policy handbook for Board Members. VP Welby: Suggested they get together on a bi-monthly basis.

Director Hudson: Acknowledge Cary Wacker for his service to the volunteer association. Recommended Chief Gorsuch review the chain of command and educate the line staff and board on what that is. One of the tenets that he managed by was to praise in public and coach in private. Accusations that you make about coaching and counseling are without merit.

President Niles: Not an easy night, and another can of worms has been opened. We just need to move forward.

Adjourn: 20:36