

**NEHALEM BAY FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 3:00 PM

**36375 Highway 101 N.
Nehalem, OR 97131**

Zoom Meeting ID 874 7455 2030 Passcode: 571185

I. CALL TO ORDER

President John Handler called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Board members present were Vice President Mike Sims, Secretary Charles Bridge, and Treasurer John Steele. Handler noted Director Bob Forster was absent; Forster later arrived at 3:03 PM. Other district personnel present were Fire Chief Frank Knight III and Executive Assistant Kristen Coyle.

District volunteer fire-fighter Dan Weitzel attended via Zoom.

II. WELCOME TO VISITORS

A. PUBLIC COMMENT

Weitzel stated he feels Chief Knight is doing a good job.

B. READING AND APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 10, 2023

Handler asked the Board members if they had any corrections or comments after reviewing the minutes from the August 10, 2023 Board Meeting.

Sims made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Bridge seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 4-0.

III. FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Board reviewed the Bills Paid, Visa Charges, and the YTD Profit & Loss vs. Budget reports for the month of August. Knight noted the District was at 71% of its annual Building Maintenance budget due to exterior painting at both stations. He also noted plans to re-seal St. 13's asphalt prior to winter.

Sims made a motion to approve the August 2023 financial reports as presented; Forster seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Knight provided a district volunteer head count update: the agency roster contains 19 volunteer responders. He also noted some changes to the presentation of the volunteer numbers for technical teams and response specialties.

Knight presented August's call volume; there were 105 calls for August. Knight noted the district continues to see an increase in incidents compared to prior years. He provided a summary of the month's five fire incidents. He also noted response to multiple false alarms at the same address; the problem has stopped after Knight recently educated the occupant regarding district policy for billing false alarms. Knight's report presented transport ambulance response times to in-district medical calls: the ambulance response times continues to be suboptimal.

Knight provided an apparatus update. Several apparatuses recently had diagnostic testing performed which indicated needs for minor repairs. He anticipates the problems will be fixed soon; annual pump testing is scheduled for October.

Knight noted that the Type III engine completed its debut wildland fire deployment with a crew of three to the Lane County Lookout Fire. The crew reported some warranty items to be addressed; the manufacturer will be sending a tech to perform the work.

Knight highlighted public outreach events held at the Nehalem Bay State Park and the Tillamook County Fair. Both venues provided an opportunity to educate the public and recruit potential volunteers.

Knight described plans for a Station 13 Open House scheduled for Saturday, October 14th, which is the last day of Fire Prevention Week. He also noted throughout that week, district personnel will be attending various events at the elementary, middle, and high schools. Bridge asked about a possible high school cadet program. Knight noted it is not on the immediate horizon; he explained that since OSHA laws do not allow minors to perform approximately 60% of firefighter activities, the priority is to get participants 18 and older in the annual Fire Academy.

Knight concluded his report by noting the district has recently undergone a successful transition to AT&T First Net for mobile services as well as the successful completion of its annual financial audit.

B. TRAINING REPORT

The board packet contained Division Chief Jesse Walsh's training report. In response to Steele's inquiry, Knight elaborated the "Man In Machine" training.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. LOSAP - UPDATE

Knight noted staff continues to review revisions to the proposed plan; he anticipates a revised policy will be presented for a first reading at the next board meeting. Items to be addressed include reducing the vesting period from five to three years and changing the frequency of district contributions.

B. 1997 E-ONE PUMPER ENGINE REPAIR/SURPLUS

Knight noted the engine repairs have been completed and it has successfully passed its pump test. He is ready to surplus the engine on the Oregon State Surplus platform at the previously board approved price of \$20,000.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. SAFER GRANT AWARD

Knight noted FEMA has awarded the district a SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant. The grant will provide the district with up to \$75,000 annually to fund a dedicated Recruiting and Retention position for four years. Knight noted that this is less than the amount requested. From speaking with neighboring agencies, Knight learned this is the standard agency award amount. Staff presented an analysis of the offer versus incremental position costs. During the four-year grant period, it is estimated the Grant will fund 70% of the fully loaded costs. Knight noted the District must accept or decline the offer by September 24, 2023.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for a dedicated resource, how to shuffle existing staff duties, and how to cover the unfunded costs for the unbudgeted position. Knight noted the new position will be a fully certified firefighter; he also noted how challenging it is to have recruiting and retention duties stacked along with other duties such as pre-planning and fire prevention; in his opinion, the District's greatest challenge is recruiting and retention. This sentiment was subsequently expressed by other board members and FF Weitzel. Staff provided an estimate of the incremental position's impact on the FY 2023-24 budget. Other items discussed include the continued growth of the District's incident volume and occupancies, existing staff overtime and concern for burnout, the uncertainty of the SAFER grant offerings in future years, grant performance reporting requirements, and the timing of grant funding. Other items noted by board members included the inevitable need to hire another full-time position in the near future if the grant offer is declined and the unique skillset needed for a dedicated recruitment and retention position.

Forster made a motion to accept the SAFER Grant and add an additional full-time firefighter; Bridge seconded. Handler performed a roll call: Sims Aye, Forster Aye, Steele Aye, Bridge Aye, Handler Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS

Weitzel commended the board for its constructive discussion regarding the SAFER Grant.

VIII. REVIEW / SET NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular board meeting was set for Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 3:00 PM. Steele noted he would not be able to attend that meeting. Several board members noted they would be out of town the second Thursday of November. It was decided to set the November board meeting date during the October board meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Handler adjourned the meeting at 4:29 PM.

MINUTES APPROVED BY BOARD
October 19, 2023

ATTEST: Charles F. Bridge
Charles Bridge, Secretary

John D. Handler
John Handler, President