

**MIST-BIRKENFELD RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**  
**12525 Hwy 202, Mist, OR 97016**  
**(503) 755-2710 or FAX (503) 755-2556**

Board Meeting Minutes  
May 20, 2025

**Board Members Present:**

Pamela Owen (President), Paul Ramsey (Vice President) (Personnel Representative), Rene Armstrong (Secretary), Larry Boxman (Director), and Barbara Smith (Treasurer).

**Staff Present:**

Fire Chief Joe Kaczenski (Via Zoom), Training Division Chief Will Steinweg, Administrative Resource Specialist Ann Berg, and Director of Administrative Services Marianne Berg.

**Others Present:**

-Volunteer Lieutenant Brent Dass, Volunteer Karrie Dass, Volunteer Brandi Abney, Kendall Nelson (Via Zoom), and Don Beck (Via Zoom)

**A. Flag Salute**

-The meeting was called to order at 19:01 hours by President Pamela Owen with the flag salute.

**B. Additions to Agenda**

-Policy 5210, Computer Use, Policies  
-Ambulance Service Agreement Plan, New Business

**C. Public Comment**

-None

**D. Board Minutes**

-The April 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed by the Board.

*A motion was made by Director Rene Armstrong to approve the April 16, 2025 Board Minutes as presented. Director Barbara Smith seconded the motion. Directors Pamela Owen, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Barbara Smith, and Paul Ramsey gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

**E. Monthly Expenditures**

The Board engaged in a discussion with the Fire Chief and staff pertaining to the questions and answers related to the monthly expenditure reports presented.

*A motion was made by Director Barbara Smith to approve the April 2025 Expenditures Reports as presented. Director Paul Ramsey seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

**F. Fire Chief's Report**

-Chief Joe Kaczenski is recovering from a severe illness. No Fire Chief's Report was presented.

**G. Volunteer Association**

-No report given

**H. Unfinished Business**

Chief Steinweg provided a FEPP update. The Fire District had its annual audit by the Oregon Department of Forestry, which oversees the FEPP equipment. Since the audit only covered some of the equipment, Chief Steinweg requested a full inventory from the ODF Representative.

-Chief Steinweg provided an update on the bunk room. Some measurements still need to be taken and provided to the engineers for accurate drawings.

**I. Policies**

-Policy 5210, Computer Use, was presented to the Board, with amendments.

*A motion was made by Director Paul Ramsey to approve amended policy 5210, Computer Use, as presented. Director Rene Armstrong seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

**J. Correspondence**

-None presented

**K. Committee Reports**

-A Workplace Health and Safety Committee (WHaSC) update was given by Training Division Chief Will Steinweg. No injuries, illnesses, or events to report. April was quarterly inspections. The Sager Station work party has been scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup>. The WHaSC bylaws have been updated as of today. The next meeting is scheduled for June 10th at 0900.

-Director Larry Boxman presented a Community Assessment Survey Draft on behalf of the Community Assessment Task Force.

*A motion was made by Director Paul Ramsey to approve the reviewed Community Assessment Survey as presented. Director Barbara Smith seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

**L. New Business**

-Resolution 2025-2026 B, Adopting the 25/26 Budget was presented to the Board.

*A motion was made by Director Rene Armstrong to approve Resolution 2025-2026, Adopting the 24/25 Budget. Director Larry Boxman seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

*A motion was made by Director Rene Armstrong to adopt Resolution 2025-2026 B, Imposing the 25/26 tax of \$2.0875 per \$1,000. Director Paul Ramsey seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

-Director of Administrative Services Marianne Berg presented a Budget Committee application filled out by Kathleen Birkenfeld for a three-year term, beginning July 1, 2025.

*A motion was made by Director Barbara Smith to appoint Kathleen Birkenfeld to Position 1 on the Budget Committee for a 3-year term beginning July 1, 2025. Director Paul Ramsey seconded the motion. Directors Barbara Smith, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, Paul Ramsey, and Pamela Owen gave a yes vote. The motion carries.*

**-Ambulance Service Agreement Plan**

Director Larry Boxman provided the Board with updates regarding the Ambulance Service Agreement Plan. He mentioned ongoing discussions between Columbia County and the Fire Districts regarding potential changes to the agreement and referred to Chief Kaczinski for further details. Vernonia's ambulance service, Metro West Ambulance Service, is currently the only area in Columbia County that has signed the proposed ASA contract. The deadline for signing the contract is July 1st.

Director Boxman disclosed a potential conflict of interest due to his employment with Metro West Ambulance Service. As an employee of Metro West, he was asked to arrange a meeting with county staff as directed by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners do not support the Fire Districts' request for a more collaborative partnership. Should the contracts remain unsigned by July 1st, it will be illegal for the Fire Districts to continue providing ambulance services.

The County Commissioners are considering alternative options for ambulance service provision, including the possibility of Metro West Ambulance Service taking over ambulance services for all of Columbia County. Representing Metro West Ambulance Service, Director Boxman stated that while it is not their preferred outcome, they would comply if required. He emphasized the importance of involving the Board in these decisions. If the contracts are not finalized by July 1st and MBRFPD continues patient transportation, the Fire District could face litigation from the County Commissioners.

Discussion commenced between the Board and staff. Director Pamela Owen will speak with the County Commissioners.

*It is the consensus of the Board to hold a Special Board Meeting to further discuss the Ambulance Service Agreement Plan on June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.*

**M. Board Member Comments**

-None

**N. Good of the Order**

-Chief Steinweg informed the Board of the following:

- C-COMM has registered twenty-one calls in April for MBRFPD
- Engine 462 is still at True North for a pump rebuild. The pump has been put back together and now they are performing some general maintenance and then it should be ready to return to the Fire District.
- Lt. Dass replaced a coolant sensor on Water Tender 464
- The ODOT/Hwy 47 closure in Mist begins June 16<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to end on August 21<sup>st</sup>
- During the last Fire Defense Board meeting, State Representative Darcy Edwards discussed the Ambulance Service Agreement Plan and the ODOT/Hwy 47 project impacting MBRFPD, Clatskanie RFPD, Rainier, and the Apiary corridor. MBRFPD is collaborating with Representative Edwards for emergency access through Weyerhaeuser property and requesting ODOT to maintain the road for emergency vehicle access. The current road condition prevents fire engines or ambulances from traversing it.
- Four candidates have applied for the seasonal wildland firefighter position. MBRFPD plans to employ two seasonals. Interviews commence tomorrow. The seasonal wildland firefighter position begins on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- Chief Steinweg is waiting to hear back from the Upper Nehalem Watershed regarding the Wetland Mitigation Program.
- Next Tuesday is the Fire Districts annual walk-through at the Miller Station site.
- Jessika Kaczenski has been offered the EMS Director position, but she is on FMLA after recently having a baby.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

*A motion was made by Director Barbara Smith to adjourn the meeting at 19:50. Director Larry Boxman seconded the motion. Directors Pamela Owen, Paul Ramsey, Larry Boxman, Rene Armstrong, and Barbara Smith all gave a yes vote. The motion carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Rene Armstrong  
Secretary  
MCB