

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2024



Call to Order: 10:05am

Roll Call:

Board Members Present

- Position 1 – Heather Glass
- Position 2 – Brian Barton
- Position 3 – Claudia Pratt
- Position 4 – Bill Ertel
- Position 5 – David Applegate (via Zoom)

Williams Staff Present

- Interim Fire Chief – Nicco Holt
- Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter
- Lieutenant – Oskar Sundell
- Fire Marshal – Jon Scaroni
- Firefighter – Devin Brennan
- Ash Martell – Community Relations Coordinator
- Firefighter Liz Dunlap

Public Presence:

- Applegate Fire Chief – Chris Wolfard (left at 10:46am)
- Wilma Hyde – Williams Community Member
- Marni Brown – Williams Community Member

Zoom Attendees:

None.

SDAO Representative(s)

Gordon Sletmoe, Senior Consultant (10:50am attending via phone)

Announcements:

Board Chair Heather Glass reminded everyone that this is a professional business meeting and to treat these meetings as such.

Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes:

- A motion was made by Brian Barton to approve the April 5, 2024 Special Board Meeting Minutes, April 9, 2024 Board Workshop Meeting Minutes, April 9, 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes, April 17, 2024 Special Board Meeting Minutes, and April 22, 2024 Special Board Meeting Minutes and it was seconded by Bill Ertel.






Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt felt that there are issues not typed up and left out feeling as though things are hidden. She only approves of April 22, 2024 minutes. Board Member Claudia Pratt states that on April 5, the minutes reflect that Jenny Vetter states that she provides the administrative side to the Chief such as financials, money, etc. and Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Board Member Claudia Pratt's opinion to Jenny Vetter's statement is irrelevant as the approval of the minutes has to do with what is said in the meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt banter for clarification and Jennifer Vetter stated that if Board Member Claudia Pratt is asking for clarification of the minutes that Jennifer Vetter indeed stated such, then yes. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the motion is to approve the minutes for what was said. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about the portion of the same minutes which stated the verbiage where Interim Chief and Captain Holt made it clear that Nicco Holt did not want the Fire Chief job. Board Member Claudia Pratt goes on to say that Board Member Claudia Pratt has stated that Nicco Holt would fill the job, he doesn't really want to fill the job but he would do that. Going on to say that Board Chair Heather Glass inquired if the Board is asking him to fill a position he really does not want to fill? Board Member Claudia Pratt is confused. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she is referring to statements from the Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt of his feelings of taking the Fire Chief job. "Why are we asking him things he really does not want to do?" per Board Chair Heather Glass. Board Member Claudia Pratt verifies the meeting minutes indeed as taken, just asking for clarification.

Board Member Claudia Pratt is looking for a policy if the Board can make a motion and votes in workshops are if workshops are only for discussion.

Board Member Claudia Pratt is asking if the public has access to SDAO emails. Board Chair Heather Glass states that the emails to SDAO emails are not accessible to the public.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about a statement on the same minutes where a nay came from Board Member Claudia Pratt was sent to SDAO on a motion (unstated motion) saying that Board Member Claudia Pratt had no input after a vote and Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the email sent on behalf of the Board by the Board Chair reflected the Board's decision including Board Member Claudia Pratt's 'Nay' vote. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she should have had the chance to voice her opinion... Board Chair Heather

Glass stated that Board Member Claudia Pratt indeed had her opinion and was out-voted. Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that he made a motion to approve the minutes as written, not to discuss the minutes, and the motion was seconded. Vice Chair Brian Barton also requested that if any meeting attendees were live streaming that they could announce so. Community Member Marni Brown announced that she is live streaming as she has done last board meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that approving the minutes includes concerns that are out there and Board Chair Heather Glass and Board Vice Chair Brian Barton stated that approving the minutes is approving that they are written as they have happened. Board Member Claudia Pratt is inquiring about 'clowns' and she stated that she did not see anything about 'clowns' in the minutes. Jennifer Vetter asked if Board Member Claudia Pratt has it on her own recordings (on her own device) to hear that such was said. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated it isn't herself that types the minutes. Jennifer Vetter asked if she heard it happen as it wasn't heard on the recording taken to produce the minutes. Roll call was taken.

-  Heather Glass – Aye
-  Brian Barton – Aye
-  Claudia Pratt – Nay
-  Bill Ertel – Aye
-  David Applegate – Aye

- The motion was approved 4 in favor to 1 opposed - PASSES

Chief's Report (Given by Interim Chief Nicco Holt):

The report was given out electronically to the Board. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about compensation. Interim Chief and Captain Holt stated that he won't do anything with the compensation that doesn't fit in the budget. Interim Chief and Captain Holt discussed the Josephine County Grant award for \$13k and the possibility of getting some EMS supplies paid for. Board Chair Heather Glass noted that everyone did a wonderful job when the Chaney Grant representatives came to discuss a funding/donation opportunity. Also, Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt stated that the Krois donation is being utilized for training mannequins and rope rescue equipment.

Operations Report – Lt. Sundell:

Lt. Sundell's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired and Lt. Sundell spoke about the support letter for the Resilience Hubs Grant. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about tender water shuttles.

District Fire Marshal Report:

District Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she is glad Fire Marshal Scaroni is taking the educational classes he has been attending. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired and Fire Marshal Scaroni spoke to the Pennington Creek project and Pacific Power's role in the project. Fire Marshal Jon Scaroni currently is devoting much of his time to the Chipper Program and also in his spare time performs investigations for buildings and any fires.

Community Relations Coordinator Report:

Community Relations Coordinator Ash Martell's report was provided electronically before the meeting. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the Coffee with the Chief attendance could be better and recommended that Ash place more reminders out. Board Member Bill Ertel also recommended that the Board could be informed of certain functions that are happening so that the Board can be invited or attend.

Firefighter Input

Firefighter Devin Brennan shared that a firefighter association is being pursued. He will be sending a message out to gauge general interest to see what forming an association will look like.

Chair's Report

Nothing to Report

Unfinished Business:

Modular Home Update: Tabled.

Discussion: It was confirmed as 15 days per visit for business. The lease is currently written that no one can stay for more than 4 to 5 days without permission. This would allow it for a duration.

Five Year Plan: Board Member Bill Ertel stated that they are about 15% into the review/draft.

Board Duties and Responsibilities Policy Manual: Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she didn't have time to review and it was suggested to table the topic and perhaps put it into a workshop. This will be voted on eventually and placed into effect and it will also replace the by-laws from 1964.

Solar Panels: Tabled.

Lawn Mower and \$800 reimbursement: After doing research, Firefighter Devin Brennan found a zero turn mower and spent roughly \$4300 and was approached by Board Member Claudia Pratt who stated she would donate the extra \$800 to cover the cost. 20% off was received from Lewis Power Equipment to the Fire District.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve \$800 above the previously approved amount of \$3500 for the lawn mower... approving the expenditure of \$4300 for the purchase of the lawn mower. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed unanimously

New Business:

Assessment vs Interview Process for Hiring of New Chief: Board Chair Heather Glass would like to see an assessment process, Board Member Claudia Pratt would like to see a hybrid process. SDAO Representative Gordon Sletmoe is contacted by phone for the meeting to answer inquiries.

Gordon stated that any and all items of the assessment/interview content is plug and play and can be utilized interchangeably. He discourages making the process too long. Example 2-3 assessment pieces and 2-3 items for the interview panels. A decision needs to be made prior to the notification of the candidates to the process as it takes time to assemble evaluators and to get the game plan together. As of this morning, per Gordon, with nearly 2 weeks left, there are no applicants, however the bulk of the applications come in around the last week of the process. Gordon will coordinate with the Board to fill the panel members for the process. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired about a recommended model for the hybrid process. Gordon discussed examples and provided suggestions and stated that much of the process depends on what matters to the Board. A meet and greet could measure how a candidate would act in a social setting. Gordon gave a recommendation that of the 5 components of the assessment center that the written and personnel exercise be dropped. It leaves 4 components: presentation, operational exercise, interview panels 1 and 2. Other reliance will be on the meet and greet for the interaction with constituents and employees and written submissions of their cover letter for their ability to write. This consists of phase 1 of the process which will be graded/rated by the

panels. Phase 2 consists of the Board interview. The decision remains in the Board's hands until the end.

Ash Martell inquired about an organic written opportunity to prove inability to write and Gordon stated that it isn't quantifiable and argued that smart people do get their writings proofed by others.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the hybrid option discussed by Gordon Sletmoe, SDAO Senior Consultant: the presentation, operational scenario, and 2 interview panels. The motion was seconded by Bill Ertel.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed unanimously

Discussion: If the Board does not receive the applicants needed, Gordon is looking to get approval to work with Heather to speak on behalf of the Board to present the decision to extend or not extend the application process. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he trusts Board Chair Heather Glass and encourages her to consult with Vice Chair Brian Barton to authorize any consultation with Gordon to extend the advertising time frame.

- A motion was made by Bill Ertel to appoint Heather Glass and Brian Barton as authorized to consult with SDAO Senior Consultant Gordon Sletmoe to extend the advertising time frame by 4 weeks or until sufficient applications are received. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed unanimously.

IGA Approval: Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired if \$54 per hour for Chief Wolfard and his people is due for a phone call, duty shift, coming out, etc. What are they being paid for? Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the hourly expense is for use when Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt happen to call for assistance, for chief level assistance/advice, not operational reasons.

- A motion was made by Bill Ertel that the Board to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for services between the Applegate Valley Fire District and the Williams Rural Fire Protection District with changes made at the signature line for printed names. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed unanimously.

Interim Chief Agreement Approval:

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the Interim Fire Chief Agreement with discussed changes. The motion was seconded by Bill Ertel.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

Discussion: Discussion of whether to use Nicco Holt’s name or Interim Chief was suggested as a change along with ‘long term goals’, some verbiage flow, interpretation of verbiage, etc.

- The motion passed unanimously.

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- A motion was made by Heather Glass to back pay Nicco Holt per the Interim Chief Agreement back to February 2nd, 2024. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye

- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed unanimously.

Duty Officer Pay: The current duty officer program pays a stipend for the weekend but not the weekdays (Monday through Friday evenings). Interim Chief and Captain calculated \$40 per day as proposed for the weekday Duty Officer coverage. It will add \$15,600 to the budget line that is currently \$10,400. This will be split between each of the 3 duty officers that are available to respond to calls. This is currently not compensated.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to approve the increase of the duty officer rate to \$40 per weekday shift. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

- ✚ Heather Glass – Aye
- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Aye
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Aye
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel inquired, what does a weekday mean? Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt stated that it is roughly 5pm until 7-ish am. This is for the duty officer that is mandated to be available during the shift time. This does not apply to volunteers, only the duty officers. The person filling this position, per Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt, is intended to be the incident command and is not inconceivable that this role can be handed off.

- The motion passed unanimously.

Human Resource Manager / Admin to the Board Review: Board Chair Heather Glass inquired if Jennifer Vetter would like her review in open or executive session. Jennifer Vetter stated she would like it in open session. Jennifer Vetter handed out her job description so that everyone can see the criteria which she is held to along with her previous two reviews for the Board's review and ability to trend her performance. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she did not review or evaluate the board packet in entirety. She also had the perception that she would






have input other than the meeting. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she purposely solicited advice from SDAO knowing that this question would come up. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she wished she had more time to evaluate Jennifer Vetter. Board Chair Heather Glass affirmed that the Board knew that 'Jenny' would be evaluated since her review time had come up in January and it had been postponed until now. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she needed more time to review the evaluation on Jennifer Vetter. Jennifer Vetter inquired if Board Member Claudia Pratt was the only one who didn't review her board packet in entirety. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she spent over 20 hours reviewing the packet. Board Member Bill Ertel also stated he spent over 20 hours. Board Member Bill Ertel inquired why this matter when to SDAO. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she went to SDAO before starting the review process knowing that a couple of board members would like to have input. SDAO replied back with a process stating that many district use this particular process. Board Chair Heather Glass sent an email out to all volunteers and staff requesting input, she and David Applegate met with Jennifer Vetter. She received back from SDAO that 2 members get assigned to the employee review, bring the review to the Board and the Board during a meeting and the Board has a chance to have input at that time. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that a whole policy can be made to change this if the Board wanted to change the way to do it, noting that most other districts do it this way. Board Member Claudia Pratt complained that she would have liked the review 4-5 days prior to the board packet. Board Chair Heather Glass reminded Board Member Claudia Pratt that she had been complaining of the confusion of items being sent outside of a board packet and therefore why all items are now inside the packet to alleviate complaints like this. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she used her way of reviewing the packet as to why she didn't get to reviewing all board packet material.

Board Chair Heather Glass inquired if anyone else reviewed the employee review in the packet? Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he didn't get around to reviewing until the day before the board meeting. He also stated that this review should have been done 3 months ago and although he takes this seriously and tries to do his best to evaluate, he made notes, he unsure if he is comfortable with the notes, and will do what he needs to do to participate. He also states that it is too bad that Williams Fire doesn't do evaluations in executive session stating that he feels it would be much more productive. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that the executive session idea is up to the individual. Jennifer Vetter stated that she wants the open session so that the tax payer knows what they are paying for. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that when an employee wants an open session review that it is a hostile situation. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she doesn't speak for Jennifer Vetter but states that from her standpoint she doesn't see the open session as meant to be hostile. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he is agreeable to do what is needed. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired if any else had input on her evaluation and what is she being evaluated on such as the assistant to the board or on everything she does besides the firefighting. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Jennifer Vetter is being evaluated on her job description. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired why Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt isn't conducting the evaluation and Board Chair Heather Glass stated that he

didn't supervise her last year and it would be unfair to Jennifer Vetter to have someone who is new do her evaluation. Board Member Claudia Pratt attempted to say that Jennifer Vetter is not supervised by the Board and Jennifer Vetter pointed out that the job description in which Jennifer Vetter is held to was developed and approved by the Board. There was more back and forth about the review process. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that it is already unfair to prolong this process that should have been done 3 months ago, looking back at how long it took the Board last year to complete this process. Board Member Bill Ertel stated he felt left out. Board Member Claudia Pratt still had many questions. Board Secretary David Applegate asserted that a few months ago, the Board voted to follow the SDAO process. They got the appropriate forms, sat down with Jennifer Vetter, and per his experience was normal. The process was followed and reminded the members of the Board are not required to have input. He states that it is not supposed to take this long. He states that if the complaining board members want to have more involvement, then volunteer to do the process as he and Board Chair Heather Glass did. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that the SDAO way seems to give more weight to the staff than a board member. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that they Board was aware of the review taking place and could have provided input at any time. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she doesn't care what SDAO said and that 2 members got to do a review within a 5 member board. In the background, community member Marni Brown is live streaming and stated that this interaction "does not look good for our fire department".

Board Member Bill Ertel gave his review comments that he recorded regarding Jennifer Vetter on paper to Board Secretary David Applegate and Board Member Claudia Pratt remarked that those documents "will end up in the shredder".

- A motion was made by Brian Barton to approve Jennifer Vetter's review. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

-  Heather Glass – Aye
-  Brian Barton – Aye
-  Claudia Pratt – Nay
-  Bill Ertel – Nay
-  David Applegate – Aye

- The motion passed with 3 ayes and 2 nays - PASSES

Jennifer Vetter Salary Compensation:

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to increase Jennifer Vetter's salary to \$43,500. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

-  Heather Glass – Aye

- ✚ Brian Barton – Aye
- ✚ Claudia Pratt – Nay
- ✚ Bill Ertel – Nay
- ✚ David Applegate – Aye

Discussion: Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired if there is a way to relieve Jennifer Vetter of some of the items in her job description since she had been putting in long hours lately and Jennifer Vetter stated surely she can share some of the workload with a qualified person that Jennifer Vetter can train. Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired on the qualifications and Jennifer Vetter stated that sharing some of the job duties with an unqualified person could lead to discrepancies and mistakes. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that Jennifer Vetter’s pay is not up to par and the motion is to provide Jennifer Vetter with an equitable living wage. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that a lot of people need a salary increase. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he doesn’t know what Jenny Vetter does. He doesn’t know how much time it takes for her to accomplish her tasks and states that the job has grown. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that this position has regularly required more money and feels that the position needs to be split. He states as a former risk manager, if Jennifer Vetter leaves tomorrow the doors may close, right now she makes \$36k. Board Member Bill Ertel stated he thinks the job is about \$60k, Board Chair Heather Glass stated with benefits, Jennifer Vetter’s employment package is actually \$48k. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that Jennifer Vetter is talented and there are other opportunities outside of Williams for Jennifer Vetter to make more money if she chooses. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that she feels the motion is reasonable. Board Member Bill Ertel wanted the Board to think about fairness and states that a Human Resource Manager can make \$80k. Firefighter Devin Brennan inquired if any other position has gotten raises like this position has received. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that staff salaries are being worked on currently. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that Jennifer Vetter was requested by Board Member Claudia Pratt to give compensation amounts of others in the organization and was told by Jennifer Vetter, “don’t worry about it”. Jennifer Vetter responded to Board Member Claudia Pratt stating that isn’t her verbiage nor does she speak in that manner. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated she had verbally requested other employees’ private information from Jennifer Vetter and Jennifer Vetter refused to provide such. Jennifer Vetter stated that in comparison to her peers at the same organizational level, there is an obvious disparity in pay, they are male colleagues who make \$10k more for positions that hold less liability and education. She states it is conceivable that she is underpaid compared to her male counterparts. Board Member Bill Ertel states that he hopes the positions are being paid for time in service, education, accomplishments, and would hope that this organization doesn’t pay less than males as a matter of practice. Jennifer Vetter inquired if there is ever this much banter over any of the males’ compensation.

- The motion passed with 3 ayes and 2 nays - PASSES

Treasurer’s Report:

Clerk/Treasurer reports for March 2024 were reviewed by the board members. Jennifer Vetter and staff answered any questions about revenue and expenses for the previous month's expenses previously distributed electronically. Items of review in the financial reports included spending on district credit cards, payroll, regular monthly bills, employee benefits package, station maintenance/repairs items, donations, grants, and reimbursements.

Each of the reports reviewed included:

- District credit cards
- The Umpqua Bank Account
- Profit and Loss Statements
- LGIP Account

Discussion: Board Member Bill Ertel stated his opinion that the financial documents provided by Jennifer Vetter are probably the best in the state. He then inquired about the chipper blades purchase and received answers from Interim Chief and Captain Nicco Holt. The volunteer stipends were discussed.

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about the advertising monies, ground maintenance, and other transactions. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the financial reports were well put together.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to accept the Resolution 2023/2024-4. Therefore, it is resolved by the Board of Directors of the Williams Rural Fire Protection District, to receive and allocate \$35,000.00 into the budget in Personal Services for fiscal year 2023-2024. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

- 🗳 Heather Glass – Aye
- 🗳 Brian Barton – Aye
- 🗳 Claudia Pratt – Aye
- 🗳 Bill Ertel – Aye
- 🗳 David Applegate – Aye

Discussion: None.

- The motion passed unanimously

Next regular board meeting is June 11th at 10am.

Public Input:

Previous meeting questions/comments from community member Marni Brown, Board Chair Heather Glass stated that a workshop can be held on how to handle a rebuttal as a board.

Board Member Claudia Pratt provided a public comment from herself regarding a 'clown issue' stating that she is waking with nightmares, where in a previous meeting a comment was made by Brian Barton calling firefighters 'clowns'. Brian Barton stated that it was not meant as a derogatory comment but providing a praise at the time and Claudia Pratt stated that now after her husband has passed she envisions clowns. Brian Barton stated that he wished that Claudia Pratt would have come to him earlier to talk about this and offered an apology to Claudia Pratt.

Board Vice Chair Brian Barton also offered another open apology to the staff, the community, and Board during the end of the meeting.

- Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Brian Barton and seconded by David Applegate. Unanimously approved.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:28pm

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chairperson