

WILLIAMS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Special Board Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024

Called to order: 17:02pm

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

Williams Staff Present

Administrative Assistant – Jennifer Vetter

Community Members Present:

None.

Zoom Attendees:

Illinois Valley Fire Chief John Holmes

Gordon Sletmoe – Senior Consultant, Special Districts Association of Oregon

Announcements:

Board Secretary David Applegate stated that via Zoom the participants in the room need to be loud when speaking to be heard by Zoom attendees.

Board Room Attendance Introductions.

Fire Chief Job Description

Everyone has a copy of the job description (official title is position description) to review. Gordon and the SDAO HR Director had reviewed the document and they added their input. Gordon stated that he felt he received a good outline from the WRFPD Board of Directors. The SDAO representatives added what is required legally. Tools and equipment used, physical demands, and work environment are sections that are roughly boiler plate and similar if not exact as to what is placed in other fire chief job descriptions.

The position description will be used throughout the course of the career person to make sure the position is continued to be fulfilled. It has the salary range, general duties, work schedule of 30-40 hours per week, essential functions and major assignments, specific knowledge, skills, and ability, and education experience/licensure (required and desired)... all that the Board has decided on.

Two changes per Gordon to consider in required education, experience, certification:

- Add NFPA Instructor 1
- Change minimum of 5 years of experience to 10 years of experience with at least 5 years in a supervisory capacity

Board Member Claudia Pratt expressed that the fire district may not get the applicants with the 10 and 5 requirements. Board Chair Heather Glass confirmed that Hazmat recommendations will be taken off and Gordon stated that it is pretty common that it is required.

Gordon stated that the phrase, “an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience sufficient to perform the essential duties of the job” allows the Board to retain the ability to hire someone that doesn’t have those certifications and the Board has the ability to make it part of a performance evaluation in a specified time.

Must Live in Boundaries of Fire District within 12 Months of Employment:

Per Gordon, residency requirements for districts such like Williams are very common. Does the board have flexibility with the residency requirement? Does the real estate market support the requirement? What if the perfect candidate lives nearby and not inclined to move? Board Member Bill Ertel stated that any modification will be at the discretion of the Board. Gordon asked if the board truly is willing to be flexible... Board Chair Heather Glass, Board Member Claudia Pratt both say yes. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that it could be a yes for him but it would depend on the candidate and how far away the person resided. Board Member Bill Ertel stated that a previous candidate lived in Grants Pass and worked for Applegate Fire and it was difficult for him to be successful.

The discussion ensued about real estate cost. Board Member Bill Ertel suggested perhaps raising the wage to accommodate the ability to live inside the fire district. Board Member Bill Ertel stated the original intent of the modular home the fire district is renting right now was to have it as a living arrangement when it was purchased during his tenure on the Board. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that she has understood it to be a training house and Board Member Bill Ertel disagreed to her understanding of the intent of the modular home purchase.

Gordon stated that it may read “The Board may grant an exception, or time extension, to the [residential] requirement.”

Board Member Claudia Pratt had questions:

- Normal work schedule is 30-40 hours per week – she is requesting that fire season be added

Gordon asked if there will be flexibility for the Chief hours later and that any applicant in Oregon, Washington, and California should know fire season well. In agreement with Board Member Bill Ertel, it would be beneficial for an applicant to research the area before applying. Fire season will be covered in the interview process or placed in the position documentation.

- Coordinates and Directs Operations of the Volunteers:

Williams Fire has 4 permanent employees, 2 grant paid employees, and 1 on contract. Per Gordon this bullet is redundant and can be removed.

- Will be required to drive district vehicle as a regular function of the job

Per Gordon, if the district requires a driver's license and insurance, then the district has to show that it is an essential part of the job to drive for a living. From a technical standpoint, that as the need arises, the chief will drive any and everything in the fleet.

- Extensive knowledge of... "modern emergency services" will be changed for modern to be replaced by "current" along with miscellaneous edits made to the bullet point to smooth the sentence out
- 'Must haves' are job requirements
- Subordinate, per Board Member Claudia Pratt, feels the word is condescending. Board Member Bill Ertel agrees with the word. Gordon states that the sentence shows that the fire chief is the boss and the boss is directing everyone below and the term subordinate indicates everyone who is not the boss... it is everyone directed below the chief.
- An out of state candidate may not have an OR Driver's License
- Tools and Equipment: for personal computers, the word 'personal' will be removed
- Physical demands: the list is not in any specific order and may happen at any point of the position of the job. Occasional moving of over 165lbs: the fire chief may need to rapidly move another person. Candidate must have the ability to meet health and physical qualifications and carry out firefighting abilities.
- Work environment: Fire Chief is exposed to hearing alarms. Per Gordon any and all of the bullets of the work environment can occur in the course of the career.
- Signature area will have printed names and signatures

Fire Instructor 1 or equivalent and 10 years of experience will be added to the position description.

Board Secretary David Applegate stated that the position description is well done and the Board should go with it.

Gordon will word the additions to say: "Minimum of 10 years of experience in public fire service with documented progression in responsibility and rank with a 5 years of company officer and above."

Page numbers and Date at the bottom of the document will be added.

- A motion was made by David Applegate to approve the position description as edited for the Williams Rural Fire Protection District. The motion was seconded by Heather Glass.

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

- Motion passes unanimously

Job Announcement

Does the content and the format meet the needs of the fire district? Changes to the job announcement will be made to match the job description.

Board Member Claudia Pratt had inquiries:

- Position Details: The position will be listed as 30-40 hours per week. Gordon states it is a 30+ hours position per week, including weekend duty officer shifts. The conversation of PERS can be had at a later date.
 - No current policy for vacation and sick leave.
 - Economic Base: "Primary timber" is no longer applicable. Remove the word primary and the area consists of agriculture, residential real estate, sales, and businesses, etc., etc.
 - Weather: Any additions regarding the seasons such as winter? Not every year does the area receive snow. Compared to various regions, the area can vary. It can vary to say what is wanted. Per Gordon, "Lead with the good stuff."
 - District Main Fire Station: there is only one fire station and the intersection is Williams Hwy and not Water Gap as listed in the discussed document.
 - Miscellaneous edits were made to correct grammar and spelling
 - Discussions of population/census and how many structures. Gordon states that this is a recruiting document and average candidates really need a close estimate and not exact
 - Addition of ethics and integrity discussion
- A motion was made by Bill Ertel to approve the revised position description as previously edited with the added "Integrity, Innovation, and Foresight" bullet point. The motion was seconded by Claudia Pratt.

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

- Motion passes unanimously

Board Member Claudia Pratt had a question on the Job Announcement under "Ideal Candidate" and inquired about ability to speak and ability to plan. Gordon feels they are separated enough to leave alone.

Board Member Bill Ertel inquired where to send he resumes to and how the district is referred to by name. Submissions will go to Shanta of SDAO and the name will be Williams RFPD.

- A motion was made by Claudia Pratt to approve the Job Posting/Announcement. The motion was seconded by David Applegate.

- Heather Glass – Aye
- Brian Barton – Aye
- Claudia Pratt – Nay (reason stated: no contract in hand)
- Bill Ertel – Aye
- David Applegate – Aye

- Motion passed unanimously

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about the \$500 reimbursement. Gordon stated that the reimbursement will be only for invited candidates for verified costs up to the maximum \$500 if the Board so chooses.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to reimburse travel expenses of up to \$500 to invited candidates for onsite assessments. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

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

- Motion passed unanimously

Board Member Claudia Pratt inquired about handicapped candidates. Gordon stated that the candidates must meet the qualifications.

Gordon discussed the tentative timeline and stated that there are two decisions to make:

- Community Meet and Greet
 - Wanted by all
- What process will be used to assess the candidates
 - What is the perceived format and purpose
 - Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that community members that get on Facebook are not always positive and that a meet and greet will help with the 'public online talk' and all candidates will get equal talk and meet time.
 - Gordon stated that the format is pretty common and set to happen in June with the night before the process the candidates come into the station and mingle... Gordon asks the Board, "What happens with that experience?" They are difficult to score and the risk is run that someone is not that type of personality who may be a good candidate who doesn't show well or there is a gregarious person that may not be the fit for the District. Who will run the assessment and what objective criteria will be applied? Perhaps people can leave an anonymous note. This would give the community an opportunity to meet candidates. Board Secretary David Applegate stated that he doesn't see a need for this as it will only be for a few minutes. Board Chair Heather Glass stated that it would be telling to see how a candidate handles even just a few minutes. Board Member Claudia Pratt stated that the community will have a voice. Board Member Bill Ertel and Chair Heather Glass agree that a complaint of the community is that the community wants to participate. A meet and greet will take place.
 - During this public meeting the decisions will allow for an executive session
 - Does the Board wish for interviews only or an assessment/scenario-based evaluation? Gordon stated that stake holder interviews are typically 5 to 12ish stakeholders (people from the district, fire chiefs, sheriff's office, etc.) to make interview panels. Each panel will interview each candidate with a scoring matrix and this is common. Another option is skills-based that could have 5 components. One component is written and scored on several items such as grammar, spelling, ability to put thoughts on paper. Another component is... Can the candidate operate a power point, are they motivational or compelling? Another is a personnel scenario where the candidate has a difficult situation to work through. Another is operational decision-making, testing skills in incident command and knowledge in firefighting. Interview process takes between 5 and 12 outside people and the assessment takes a minimum of 12-15 people. Either do the 5-component system or the interview system. The hybrid option is fire command control and interviews. Gordon will send assessment and interview concepts to the Board.
- Where to Advertise:
 - Board Member Bill Ertel stated that he would like it advertised on all industry publications.
 - It will be on the SDAO website, LinkedIn.com, District Website, District SocialMedia, Rogue Valley Fire Chief's Association, Daily Dispatch, local newspaper, FireCareers.com.
 - National listing on Daily Dispatch is \$575 for 4 week listing period

Meet and Greet and interview/assessment may take place during two dates in June...possibly a Friday evening and Saturday daytime.

- A motion was made by Heather Glass to spend \$575 to advertise on Daily Dispatch for four weeks. The motion was seconded by Brian Barton.

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

- Motion passed unanimously

A motion to adjourn was made by Brian Barton was seconded by Bill Ertel.

The meeting was adjourned at 19:27pm

Respectfully,

Heather Glass, Board Chair