

## SALEM FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

November 4, 2025

Commissioners Present: Frank Cardis, Denice Carpenter, Charles Freshour, Ben Gerrald, and Tim Hanke.

Frank called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He stated that all commissioners were present, and that the minutes from the previous meeting had been distributed prior to this meeting. Charles made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes. Ben was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report – Tim stated that all monies in all accounts is \$1,163,862.93. He added that we are still expecting around \$145,000 before the end of the year, which would bring us to about \$1.3 million.

Chief's Report – Gil stated that we had 69 runs last month. We had 2 structure fires, and they were both ours. We have 22 firefighters on the roster, 1 on leave of absence, 3 in training, and 1 new applicant. Gil said that we had 120 man hours of training. Tim said they did a good job on the fires, with the total loss only \$35,000. Stewart said that 1 of those was just an outbuilding. Gil said that the other was a trailer, and they are still able to live in it. Charles made a motion to approve all reports. Denice was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Old Business – New Station – Ben said that he has not reached out again, but there still has been no response from Mr. Walker. Tim said that there's never going to be a perfect time to build a new station, so let's just build it. Laura said that we still have to figure out if we can afford it first. Tim said that we can afford it. He said that the day we move in to the new station, this one is sold; maybe station 2 is sold. Tim said that we could have the building 1/3 paid off the day we move in. He added that we need to hire an architect and move forward. He said that the public is ready for it, and the firefighters are ready; it is time. Tim made a motion to hire a certified architect from our applicants. Ben asked if any of the those were willing to work with us on that percentage fee. Laura said that there was a couple. Frank said that he thought that they were all right there at 6.5%. Tim said that there was a slight drop in interest rates, and the banks are willing to work with us. Laura referenced the list of architects, and said that Liveco and Chad Young with WDD Architects both said that they can negotiate the price. Tim said that if we don't do something soon, he would like to see it taken off of old/unfinished business. Ben said that Liveco isn't really a viable option since they are only willing to do it as a negotiated contract deal, as opposed to hiring an architect and using the bid process. Frank said that Tim made a motion to hire a certified architect. Laura presented the list of candidates. Tim asked if they all would still be interested. Laura said that she let them know that we were going with someone else when the Board decided to hire Nick Walker, and they each asked to be kept in mind if anything changed. Ben said that he understood that Liveco was not interested in doing the architecture if they weren't guaranteed the contract. Denice said she thought that was who she remembered coming to talk to us. Laura said that he was actually the only one who came and talked to us. His name is Josh Newton. Tim made a motion to contact Chad Young, since his was negotiable. Frank clarified that he wanted us to contact him to see if they were still interested. Laura said that they will definitely be interested. Tim said that he would like to find out what the negotiated price means. Ben asked if we are still interested if they can't do anything other than the 6.5%. He said that will be \$160,000 to \$165,000, based on \$2.5 million. Stewart asked if this Chad Young came here to talk to us. Laura said that Josh Newton is the only one that came here. Stewart said that he probably wouldn't hire a painter that he has never met, that he has just gotten a quote from. Ben said that is valid. Denice asked if we could appoint a committee to talk to these guys, to get an idea of what they can provide us, and what their

numbers are going to be. She said that we need to sit down and talk specifics with someone. Denice suggested having the Chief, someone from the Board, and maybe a firefighter. Laura said that we have a Building Committee. Denice asked if there was a board member on the committee. Laura said no. Denice said that she feels like there should be a board member involved. She added that she thinks we need to do more research with these people, and get a package that can be presented to the rest of the Board before we vote on hiring someone that we don't know anything about. Denice said that we need to have a more detailed plan before we start voting to go that far into debt. We need the complete package: these are the numbers, this is who we have talked to, and these are the recommendations from the committee. Stewart suggested having a Board member sit in as an advisor to the committee, but not actually have a vote. The committee will then bring the recommendation to the Board, where that board member will have a vote. Chance said that they can have a voice, but no vote. Denice said that she believes it would be easier for the board to make a decision if they are presented with a detailed package vs. just picking a name off of a list and going with it. She added that we don't have enough good information to go that far. Frank reminded everyone that Tim has made a motion that needs a second. There was no second, so the motion fails. Frank said that since we do have a building committee, it makes sense to have that group contact and meet with the potential candidates, if that is not too much to ask. He added that they can appoint a member of the board as an ex officio member of the committee, so they can be present and participate, but without voting rights. Frank said that the committee could report back to the board with a recommendation at the December meeting. Frank asked if any of the Board members would like to volunteer. Stewart asked how many candidates are on the list. Laura said 6, but that does not count Amanda. Stewart suggested short-listing it, and maybe get with 3 of them. Then the building committee can meet with them, and bring something to the Board. Tim asked how you choose just 3. Frank said that Liveco will only do design build, which is not an option, and Nick wouldn't be there, which just leaves 4. We can have the committee reach out to those 4, and go from there. That will be Michael Hughes of Hughes Architectural Designs, Melissa Dysart of Level 5 Architecture, Chad Young of WDD Architects, and Brandon Ruhl of Taggart Architects. Each of these indicated that there would be a standard 6.5% fee. One thing the committee can look at, is whether or not this can be negotiated. Mike asked if any of them have built fire stations before. Frank said that is one of the things that the committee can look at. Gil said that if they are all saying 6.5%, why aren't we including Amanda, because she has been here from the start. Denice said that she thought her rate was higher. Laura said it is 6.5%, which is the legal rate. Laura added that Amanda said that they would not go above the \$165,000, even if the building cost went up. Ben said that she was skeptical that it would be any lower than that. Gil said that they are just scaring you. They are telling you that the building will cost \$3 million, but it will not cost \$3 million. He added that he has built them, and that won't happen. Ben asked who was currently on the building committee. Gil said him and Ryan; he couldn't remember who else. Laura added Adam and Holly are. Chance said that Daniel, Mike, and himself. Laura said that you added Keith Kellum last time this was discussed, to replace Daniel. Laura said that they added another firefighter, but she couldn't remember if it was Chad or Mike. Ben asked if it would be in the minutes. Laura said it would be, but she didn't remember which month that was. Gil said that he thought there was only 5 before they added Kellum when he became JP. Chance said that the Committee was Holly, Adam, Ben, Chance, Daniel Coppock, Gil, Laura, Frank, Ryan, and Stewart. Laura said that it was actually set up in 2022, and it was Gil, Mike, Adam, Chance, Daniel, Ryan, and Holly. It was all Officers except for Daniel, Ryan, and Holly. Now, Ryan is an Officer, and Daniel is gone, so that left Holly as the only firefighter. When we discussed this recently, you chose to put another firefighter on the committee, and Tim recommended Keith Kellum. Chance said he was looking at the

Building Committee Groupme, which included some board members. Laura said she believes the meeting this was discussed was earlier this year. Gil said that Keith took office this spring. Laura said that she thinks Keith was put on the spot, which is why he agreed to be on the committee. Tim said that he agrees that a Board member should be on the committee. He added that it should be one of the board members that are guaranteed to be here for the next 2 years, since we have 2 board members we don't know about until the next meeting. Chance said that we could just name a seat from the board, like the vice chair; that seat would serve on the committee regardless of who holds it. Ben said he has 7 names listed, based on what he is hearing. He asked if all of these have been active; have they been attending the meetings. Gil said that they haven't had any meetings, because nothing has been going on. Adam said he doesn't think they even had a meeting in 2022. Gil said that the last time he had all of them together, was one at a time, when they came in and signed off on the new station design, when we made the station square. Laura clarified that there was no actual meeting. Gil acknowledged that there was no meeting. He said that they didn't need a meeting, because everyone agreed that was the best design. Gil added that the Board asked them to cut money, so that's what they did. It's a square building now, not an offset. He added that as long as you keep it squared, you keep the cost down. Frank asked if 30 days was enough time, especially with Thanksgiving in the middle. Gil said if the Board wants the committee to get with the architects, let them do it, and then they will come back to the board. He added that it may be difficult with the holidays to get with these people. Frank volunteered to be the ex officio member on the committee, as a non-voting member. Frank asked Gil if he was chairing the committee. Gil said he has been. Frank offered that maybe it happened organically that way. Gil agreed. Frank said that we should attempt to contact the architects that have submitted bids, and have some report for the Board at the next meeting. Gil said that he thinks that it will be easier to get them to do a zoom meeting, instead of physically coming here. He said that has become the standard. Stewart asked if they could define who was on the committee, because he has heard a lot of names thrown around, like Daniel Coppock. Laura said that Daniel was originally on the committee, and it was mentioned to replace him with Mike Irmen, but she doesn't know if he was ever asked. Laura suggested having Frank replace Kellum, since he was put on the spot. Gil said that he agrees; he said Kellum will do what he can to help, but he would rather not be on the committee. Gil said that he has just let it slide, since they haven't been doing anything. Gil agreed with Frank taking Keith's place. Ben said that someone mentioned Mike before; which Mike. Laura said that originally, we had Mike Moravec; now we are talking about Mike Irmen. Laura added that she never got confirmation about adding Mike Irmen, but she does feel like we need to have another firefighter as a representative; otherwise it is all officers except for Holly. Chance said he would be ok with removing Ryan, because he has a lot going on right now. He is focused on school, along with taking care of PRN. Laura suggested asking him; at least give him the option. Gil echoed what Chance said; Ryan won't say a word if they drop him. Chance offered to call Ryan. Frank tabled it until he returned.

Laura's back-up – Laura said that she did get with Barbara's contact regarding payroll; they actually talked twice. She said that it was very comparable to Yoakum and Lovell, but still not worth what it would cost us. Laura said that the lady was surprised that she was familiar with how to do the payroll taxes. They are used to customers that simply turn in a time sheet, and they do all of the rest. She let Laura know that she didn't see the value in hiring them, since she is already able to take care of all of that. Laura said that if we did go with a service, we would have to switch everyone to direct deposit, which would mean the guys wouldn't get paid on Mondays like they do now. We would have to adjust the pay schedule, where they would be behind a week, like you would starting a new job. Laura said that she has only talked to one of the guys so far, and he would

prefer to get paid by check on Mondays. Ben asked if there was any interest in the back up position. Laura said no.

Chance called Ryan, and verified that he was fine with being removed. Stewart said that he was unable to reach Mike Irmen. He added that he thinks Mike is aware of the opportunity. Frank said that if it is in the minutes that we asked him to be on the committee, then he is probably on it, unless he declines the appointment. Frank added that it is a more manageable group at 5 or 6, than a dozen. He reminded them that he would be happy to serve on the committee as the ex officio member. He added that if we can get that moving, it would be a positive step.

Software – Laura said that she finally got the trial package. He had trouble getting the link to work. The new computer is in, and it would not let her download it, because it thought it was a virus. Laura said that she was able to download it to the old computer, but she did not receive the revised link until Friday afternoon, and yesterday she was preparing for the board meeting. Laura said that she still needs to put it on another computer for the Officers. Ben asked how long we will have it. Laura said he didn't really give a timeline. Denice asked what the name of it is. Laura said it is Red Alert Alpine. Denice said that she has been exploring the new NERIS system, and they can provide you with the system, too. Laura said that you can go online and directly go through NERIS for incidents, which is how we are going to start, because we are not going to have the software up and running before the deadline. Laura added that with NFIRS you could do that, too; we didn't have to have Firehouse. We could have input our incidents online. She added that she doesn't know if we would have had access to those reports after they were sent in, like when someone requests a fire report. Denice said that she saw a lot of different options, but she didn't get to explore much. Laura said that there are a lot of help videos you can watch. Denice said that she was just curious how far we have gotten with it. Laura said that since it starts at the first of the year, we will have to start with the online version. That will give us time to figure things out with either ESO or Red Alpine. Laura said that we can change at any time. Chance said that he believes that Mayflower Fire Department just went to the Red Alert by Alpine. Chance said he talked to Ashton Tolar, the Chief, and he showed him theirs, because they all have the apps on their phones. They are doing truck checks from their phones, and they built custom inventory for each truck. Any time there is an issue, it is sent to whoever needs to know; very similar to ESO, but more user friendly, and more tailorable options. Chance said that they love it. Their Fire Marshall is even able to add all of the fire plans to it. They have used ESO, and are now using this, and like it better. Stewart verified that the trial is not live, and let Denice know she could have played with it without messing anything up. Denice said she was actually talking about the NERIS site. When she was exploring different options, she found out that NERIS had their own, and they even offer things for inventory.

New Business – Frank announced that at our next meeting, we will have an election for positions 1 and 2, currently held by Charles and Tim. Frank said that we have 4 applicants for the fire department that live outside of the district. He asked Chief to address these. Gil said that 3 of them are already here in training; they are all just out of high school, so pretty young. He added that the 4<sup>th</sup> one was a Benton firefighter that called him. Gil said that they had a long discussion about what we require, and he was good with that. The Officers talked, and decided to go ahead and push this through this month, because it takes 2 weeks to get paperwork back. Gil believes he will be good, and he has his EMT license. Stewart added that he has been working with the 3 in training. He said that they are all motivated, and wanting to be part of this organization. Denice asked about the addresses for the applicants. Laura said that Balend actually lives on Harrison, which is

on the edge of our district. Adam said that one is in Benton, and the other in Bryant. Even the one in Bryant is closer than some of our guys. Gil added that Michael Barnett lived further away when he joined. Stewart added that each of these guys are young and unattached, and willing to hang out and man the station. Denice asked if the one that used to be at Benton FD has another job. Gil said he does, as an electrician. Frank asked if they have all been interviewed by the Officers. Laura said that the 3 in training have been, but the Benton Firefighter has not. Gil said that is because we just got his application, and his paperwork isn't back yet. He added that they are all in agreement because he is board certified. Adam said that he seemed like a solid guy. Tim made a motion to accept the 3 for sure, and wait on the paperwork for the 4<sup>th</sup> one. Laura said that they were looking for approval on all 4. Charles said we could, depending on the paperwork. Mike said that you can say approved depending on a successful background check. Tim amended his motion to approve all 4 applicants, with the 4<sup>th</sup> subject to a background check. Charles was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ben asked for clarification that the Officers were all unanimous in their decision about the first 3 applicants. Gil said that they are not bringing any to the board without a unanimous decision. Frank clarified that Ryan Joseph would be approved subject to a background check, and the other 2 candidates: Alexander Strong and Nicholas Payne are approved as members living outside of the district. (Balend Hamilton did not require Board approval.) Motion approved.

Gil said that we need a generator for Engine 5. He said that we bought that one used. We sent it to the shop, and they said it would cost \$2,000 to repair it. They told him that we could buy a new one for less than \$3,000. Gil said that he hasn't sent the quote yet, but he is asking for \$3,000 to buy a 5,000 watt Honda just like that one, so we know it will fit back on Engine 5. Ben asked Chance about the generators he uses. Chance said that his were larger, and he got good deals on used ones. Denice made a motion to spend \$3,000 for the purchase of a generator for Engine 5. Tim was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Gil said that we finally got a check for the Humvee; it took forever for Laura to get the title for it. We received \$10,000 for it. The Officers have been researching trucks to replace it. He added that Federal Surplus is going away; the building is being turned over to the State Police. Gil said that we are not eligible for anything from Forestry anymore, because we have too much money. He said that they looked at ordering a brush truck, 2 years. The Officers are asking the Board to authorize up to \$130,000. That will buy a chassis off of the state contract like we have done in the past, a utility bed bought and installed locally, have Mickey paint it, outsource the lights, buy a skid unit and mount it ourselves. Gil said that we could have it up and running before spring. He said that the rough estimate is \$130,000, and it won't be all at once; the biggest chunk up front will be buying the chassis. He was told that they are 7-10 weeks out if we order today. Ben asked about the standing instructions to not take brush truck offroad. Gil said yes; our 5500 would sink out of sight. Ben asked how this would be different. Adam said that they are going with a 3500. They are looking to gear it different, with more capabilities. Ben said that's where Hummer excelled; you could take it anywhere you wanted to. Gil said that you can't find the Humvees. Ben asked Adam about the ones he said we could find for \$30,000-\$40,000. Adam said that we can find them; he was really looking at the later series, with enhanced EFE, enhanced cooling system, and enhanced brakes. He said that most of the private ones he has found don't have all of that. He added that the newer model would be closer to \$40,000-\$60,000, and it would still have less capability. Adam said that they decided to go with the 3500 chassis, and try to keep it where it has some off road capability. Ben asked if we are looking at a 200 skid. Gil said that they are going with 300; it's only 800 pounds more. Ben asked if we are going dual. Gil said yes, and 4 wheel drive. Stewart said that we ran the same thing on the GMC 2500, with 300 gallon. It was  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton with heavy duty leaves, and it never had any

issues. Denice asked if we are looking at 2 door or 4 door. Gil said 2 door, because we are trying to keep the weight down. Denice asked what the price of the chassis is. Gil said a little under \$60,000. Ben verified that the skid would have the pump mounted down low, not on top of the tank. Gil said yes; they already priced that. He said that the only thing on top is the red reel. Ben asked how this fits in with our purchasing policy. Chance said that they have gotten some bids, but they weren't competitive. He said that if we can get in the ballpark, then we can talk to a salesman. Ben asked Laura for a copy of our purchasing policy. Charles told Gil that he should have asked for the truck first, then the generator would have seemed like nothing. Gil said that we have to have the generator; we want the truck. He added that if ISO did a spot inspection, we could be dinged for it. Laura presented the Purchasing Policy to the Board. Gil said that the state bid will be the cheapest; the rest we know we have to get bids on. He said that before anything else is bought, they will have their 2 or 3 bids. Gil said that once we have the chassis ordered, Chance can get a firm quote from these other entities. Ben asked the other Board members if they want to approve the \$130,000 now, but require bids before the other purchases are made. Frank said that he was fine with that, with the understanding that they would need to submit 3 quotes for each individual component, with the exception of the chassis. Gil said that you are not going to beat that price for the chassis. Ben said that the policy still stands. Gil said that he understands. Chance said that you are not going to be able to get similar quotes on the chassis, like he can with the box. Tim asked what the total cost was. Gil said that the ballpark is \$130,000, and that is with them doing the install on what they can. They will outsource the installation of the radio, lights, bed, and winch; we would install the skid unit. Frank said that we could approve the purchase of the chassis right now, and wait on the 3 quotes for the other individual components, to comply with our policy. Denice asked for specifics. Gil said it is a Dodge 3500, dually, 4 wheel drive, single cab, 60" cab to axle, short wheel base. Ben asked if it had upfitter switches. Gil said that it had a few things, but he didn't think it had that. Ben asked about brake controller. Gil said that there were some add-ons at the bottom; he knows that there is a class 5 hitch included. He said a brake controller is only \$50. Frank asked for a motion for the purchase of a chassis, for the beginning of construction of a brush truck, for just under \$60,000. Charles made a motion to purchase the chassis, up to \$61,000, with the rest of the components to be approved after 3 bids are submitted. Chance asked if it was mandatory 3 bids, or just following the policy. Charles said following the policy. Ben said that first line states that "\$10,000 or more requires a minimum of 3 quotes." Chance asked what happens if they can't get 3 quotes. Ben said that is addressed: "A good faith effort shall be made to obtain the required number of quotes." Chance was good with that. Charles amended the quote to approve the \$61,000 for the chassis, and the rest to be approved based on the Purchasing Policy. Denice was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Gil said that we have a firefighter moving out of the district, and would like to remain on the department. They are moving to Hidden Valley on Highway 5, which is 1 ½ miles from the district line. He said that the Officers agreed to send this to the Board because she is moving out of district. Ben asked what her run volume and training looked like. Gil said that she is good on that; she is doing what she is supposed to. He added that the Officers voted 100% to send it to the Board. Frank asked which firefighter it is. Gil said Christy Lucas. Tim made a motion to keep Christy Lucas on the department. Charles was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed. Gil thanked the Board on behalf of the Officers for the approval of the brush truck. He stated that they looked, and felt like this was the best option for the department. Ben asked what the status was on the TICs. Chance said they have been ordered, and we got \$600 back on trade in value; they took the 2 bad MSAs, and they plan to put the other 2 on other rigs. This would put something on nearly every rig. Ben asked if we are happy with these after they are in service, do we plan to revisit purchasing more. Chance said that he wants to be money conscious, and

use the old MSAs until we deem them non-usable. He said that he personally thinks there is other equipment that he thinks would benefit the fire department as a whole, instead of replacing 2 second-line rig TICs. Chance added that he would love them, but that would be low on the priority list. Chance said that the hose has been ordered, and they are shipping it free of charge. He added that they networked with other departments for the order, and are having it all shipped here. Chance said that we will have 2 or 3 pallets of hose delivered here, but it saves us over \$1,000 in freight. Stewart asked if it was being delivered to station 2. Chance said that he is having it delivered to station 1, and have it all distributed within a day or two. Gil said that the departments have all been told that they have to come and get it the day it comes in. Chance said that he will be able to track the shipping, and give them plenty of warning. He added that the majority of the hose is ours, so we will be able to test it and put it in service, and the others will pick up in a day or two.

Ben made a motion to adjourn at 8:03. Charles was 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.