

Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association – Monthly Meeting

Location: Grants Pass Parkway Station

Date: February 15, 2022

Time: 0900

Call to Order: 0900

Approval of Last Month's Minutes: Motion by Chief Vetter, 2nd Chief Nelson. Motion Passes

Approval of Financial Report: BC DeLonge reported unchanged at \$4,716.58. Dues are being mailed today. 1st motion by Chief Crume, approved by all.

Additions to the Agenda:

- DEQ Update, Wilson Wade: Agricultural open burning - There is ORS OAR Statute 468 that states local departments can limit the pile sizes and distance to road. If overwhelming amounts of complaints are received, then the burns can be shut down. Wilson will email the template to RVFCA to be distributed to members. He will also send out the enforcement guidance.

Special Guests:

- Welcome to Theresa Vaughn, Rogue Valley Integrated Fire Plan Coordinator.

Informational Presentation:

- AlertWildFire Camera System: Chief Bates shared information about this camera system. It is like ODF's but ODF's main purpose is to find fires. The AlertWildFire cameras are a public facing camera system. They are more designed to monitor areas in the WUI. We can pan and tilt. Public can also monitor the fire and see how close it is to them.
- There are not many cameras in Oregon. Cave Junction has one of the cameras. The other two cameras are still available if anyone has specific sites in mind. Rogue Valley Council of Governments applied for a FEMA grant to fund 13-15 of these in the Rogue Valley. One difference is that ODF wants to get camera back up once fire is located to monitor for additional fires in the area. This one we can leave on, watching the fire. There is a yearly maintenance fee. The University of Oregon and AlertWildFire take care of maintenance, the camera, network and website. California is mainly supported by utilities who in return pay the yearly fee.

Section Reports:

Operations (Fire/EMS):

- Evacuation subgroups being done. Looked at guidelines, wording and any updates. A subgroup is also looking at scripting a courtesy notification. Interested in finding a way to make neighborhoods aware that there is a fire in your area, but no evacuation at this time. A subgroup is working on Public Education Outreach. Groups recommendations were returned to the fire chiefs. Try to encourage radio traffic that when utilize "structure threatened" then add in evacuations being considered or not considered.

- Current guidelines have an evacuation group position already built in. Their job would be to focus on the evacuations and being a liaison between IC, Sheriff and EM. FDBC tries to facilitate IC by getting notifications done and areas affected. Still a few working groups. Hoping to meet the March 1st deadline for implementation.

Training (RITA):

- Tom Davidson: RITA wrapping up the firefighter academy. Just wrapped up the leadership and supervision. S215 and S231 class in the spring. Pumper operator in spring. Also looking for a person to take over SOWS, still plan on giving one this spring. Have anyone interested contact Tom.
- Chris Chambers- Discussion about a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange Program. Was in Ashland at SOU, been on hold due to COVID. Steering group TREX looking to make it more regionally. Would like to call it Rogue TREX instead of Ashland TREX. Also have more of an on call TREX program this year. A department could sign up for a spot or 2 spots over a 2-month period. Call out will be done the day before. Sending out a survey on who is interested and how many spots. There may be a small registration fee to make sure people are serious about it. There are burn acres available on private and public lands. This is a great way to get task books signed off. Looking for a leader to have someone take on the program. Idea of marrying the TREX program into RITA. Chris will forward the email with the survey soon. Chris will attend the RITA at 0900 ODF Medford via Zoom.
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- Rob Budge (Forest Service): Coordinator position skills are really needed for this leader position.

Prevention (RVFPC, SOFCO):

- Natalie Weber: Update on Wildfire Preparedness Day, May 7th, 2022. What can we do as a group to get people thinking and get people more engaged? Everyone is going back to their groups and will come back with ideas. Team teaching hopefully for the Spring. Hoping their next meeting is in person.
- SOFCO: No update.

Liaison Reports:

911 Centers – Nothing from Josephine or Jackson County.

OSFM – Emergency response unit has engine specification committee. They will be getting specs for the units done by February 17th. Application or interest request. This will be coming up this spring to place the apparatus.

2022 Fire Service Mobilization Committee has met and addresses preplacement, immediate response and IMT team members.

OSFM looking at an in person TFL in May. TBD

Regional mobilization coordinator has been hired for East area.

Community Risk Reduction position is still in the background check phase. Internal position opened and closed Feb 9th.

Fire Investigation Class flier is out for classes in March. There are 3 prerequisites on CFI Trainer prior to attending.

Currently 13 open Deputy state Fire Marshals positions.

Working hard to complete the update to the Fire Code.

Units will be placed in most vulnerable districts that show there is a need for those units. Idea is to get on the fire quicker and put out the fire. Currently no funds to help with staffing.

OFMA – No update.

EMS – No update.

Haz-Mat – No update.

PIO – Natalie Weber: First quarterly meeting at the beginning of Feb. Did decide to have an additional meeting prior to the next quarterly meeting in May. Also had a presentation from Marcus Coffman from ODF about the idea of using us as a pool resource and using our members to send out on incidents. Bryan Ballou is working on putting a class together on S203 February 22-25,2022 at RCC. Natalie can send the link to anyone who needs it.

Emergency Management – No update.

OFCA – Roundtables were cancelled. Spring conference at The River House in Bend the first week of May. There is a number of at large vacancies.

SWOCG – Tyler McCarty: No meetings since early December. Hope to schedule a meeting in the next few weeks.

Chaplains – No update.

IMT – Every spring we go on a recruitment drive. We have run a thin roster for a long time, but those that were there were active. Specialty is short duration to send in resources to prop up and assist the local districts. Then we provide handoff to the incoming team. It is unusual and has evolved over time. Between COVID and retirements we have a very low number of applicants. The leadership group has been the IC (more of a management committee running the group). The outgoing membership have put together a plan to create a new style of leadership and want to present next month what the plan is. May even change the name to Incident Management Pool. Please make sure to get applications in and Chief Turnbull will be working to request agencies have people sign up. Place on the agenda for next month.

SOFRC - Chris Chambers: Lots of great stuff going on. Capacity funding has happened to help keep staff paid. Organization is growing. Most recently three awards from the ODF Landscape Resilience Program came to Southern Oregon. Ashland received \$445,000 for Wildland Fuels Mitigation work, West Bear Project (Wagner Creek in Talent out to Jacksonville) received \$3.5 million, will go towards work around homes, driveways and the greater landscape to create fire suppression opportunities. An award went to Applegate for \$700,000.

Infrastructure Bill at federal level trickling down into our area. Seeing more staff on Forest Service side at meetings which is a good thing. Getting paperwork finished for the very big CFLRP. It is funded now so we will start to see agreements in place. It is an \$80 million 10-year investment on FS land around Rogue Basin.

Rob from Forest Service- Positioned to be receiving a lot of money. It is taking a little time to figure out where it goes. Slater Fire recovery is possibly getting around \$30 million. Infrastructure may be a large amount of dollars. Worried about getting enough folks to do the work. There will be a whole lot more fuels work and prescribed burning going on.

Justin- What is best way for local fire districts to help figure out projects? Future NEPA projects we can work to get involved and hit up the local ranger for the district. Between BLM and FS there's a new authority that was passed to allow for construction of fuel breaks. This will allow for fuel breaks around and in communities that don't have to go through the lengthy environmental process.

LEPC - There has not been a recent meeting.

Old Business:

- Open Burn Task Group – Chief Hanley- A few months back the fire chiefs asked for volunteers to join a task group. This was to look for potential opportunities to expand open burns. Several agencies helped do an exploratory mission. Met at ODF and talked about our issues. Chief Vetter's area outside AQMA, is problematic for Williams and folks out there, as they can burn as much as they want. Then, on D5 area, it is extremely limited.

Tried to identify what the problem is and then come up with solutions. Look at allowing burning by micro burn zone approach but learned that it does not work that way. Spot forecast does not change the weather model. Reports back from DEQ that said State and Federal legislation would have to change to change the ventilation index. Micro treatments and community outreach to help educate people and to teach them how and what to burn.

Jackson and Josephine counties are two diametrically different areas with different problems.

Being we are up against State and Federal laws this is a marathon to make change, nothing will be fast. Is the problem pile burning? Is it hazardous fuels mitigation?

Senate bill 762 is going to require clearing fuels around the houses and property.

- Evac Planning Group – Chief Prince See Fire Operations Report

- Lifetime Membership Proposals survey will be sent out.
- Association Strategic Plan - Waiting for a quote from CenterPoint. Will have an update next month.
- RVFCA logo update- Still working on this.

New Business / Issues for Consideration:

- RVFCA Paging Group (ECSO) – A list was sent out electronically and passed around the meeting. Please update it and return to Kevin Harris so he can update the list. Looking to go automatic rather than manual. We will be adding the IMT team members to the paging list. Activation of members will be done from the same page. Justin will check with Kevin to make sure this is what is wanted.
- Sam- Been meeting with Chiefs locally to discuss what the needs are at the districts. Recognized that agencies are lacking bodies and need the funding to help with staffing.

Good of the order:

IVFD Chief Holmes - Promoted a few people inhouse. Two new lieutenant's and two new engineers. Looking towards the next fire season.

RMFD Chief Turnbull – Will the application go out with the minutes. Yes

Williams Fire Chief Vetter – Attended the memorial service and relayed how it impacted him and the importance of making sure we protect our people. An explosion from refrigerant caused his injuries. It shows the importance of why we need fire service standards and proper training. It also shows how close we are as a fire service.

OSFM - No update.

Forest Service – Most of our seats will be filled, higher grade positions first and then work their way down.

GPFR DC DeLonge: BC Lawless is working 40's to assist DeLonge. The Chief's process is upcoming, hope to have in place by July 1st. Upcoming internal lieutenant process and BC process.

EVFD Travis Crume – They will be taking delivery of a high axel rescue truck tomorrow from Oregon Office of Emergency Management. It will be outfitted as a brush truck for fire season. Tom Davidson has been promoted to Operations Chief.

ODF Tyler McCarty – Karl Witz's was recently promoted to the GP unit Forester. Currently recruiting for permanent and approximately 50 seasonal positions. Looking to add two additional engines to their staff this summer and through OSP 672 extend their dispatch hours if positions can be filled. Actively recruiting for IMT's. There is an effort to look at Oregon's enlarged funding. There is no news about the BLM Western Oregon Operating Plan. SoCal is coming up March 23-24 in Anderson, CA.

Next Meeting:

March 15, 2022, at Applegate Fire Headquarters Training Building

Adjournment: