

**ELSIE-VINEMAPLE Rural Fire Protection District**

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**Elsie Vinemaple Fire Protection District (EVRFPD)**

**Special Board Meeting - REMOTE**

**February 7, 5:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**REMOTE ACCESS:** [**https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84692601729?pwd=cTVvhxKeGqX2xDFN6h9Br6RrVOXCeE.1**](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84692601729?pwd=cTVvhxKeGqX2xDFN6h9Br6RrVOXCeE.1)

1. **Call to Order and Welcome**. Meeting started at 5:13 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**. Board members present: Vivian McCann, TJ Hecox, Kerry Walsh, Staciy Morrison, Wayne Carmichael. Community members—35 on Zoom
3. **Motion to accept updated agenda**. Motion made by TJ and seconded by Staciy. Motion passed 5 yes, 0 no.
4. **Inventory Report** – Ed Van Dyke. Report statement:

*After the scheduled Saturday February 3, inventory turn in, it was necessary on Monday, February 5th, to call the Clatsop County Sheriff.   
 During the "turn in", several volunteers informed me that their turn outs were located in their lockers at Station 1. We informed the volunteers that the gear was not located in their lockers. The volunteers were adamant that the gear was either already turned in or in their lockers at the station. To re-verify, the inventory crew went down that same day to inspect the lockers again; but the turn outs and other gear were not in the lockers.   
 With these statements from the volunteers that the equipment was in the lockers, we had no recourse but to call Clatsop County Sheriff and report a possible breaking and entering and theft of government property. In addition, this report will be needed for any possible insurance claims to replace any lost or stolen government property in the future.   
 At this time, we can verify that there is $10.591.40 of unaccounted government property. We are diligently continuing the inventory process and will keep the County Sheriff's Office updated of any further findings*.

1. **Treasurer’s Report** – Staciy Morrison. Report Statement:
   1. *We located the last of the financial documents, which were the credit card statements.*
   2. *Marianne (administrative fire department) from Mist Birkenhead fire department is coming over on 2/9, to spend the day helping us prioritize & identify any upcoming deadlines or past due deadlines.*
2. **Personnel Report** – Wayne Carmichael. Report Statement:
   1. *Letters/contact went out to 3 responders who requested a leave of absence, acknowledging that leave and requesting they return for department use and inventory all gear etc. that they have that is public property. Two have responded and one has not.*
   2. *A letter was sent to one responder who asked about whether responders who returned to active status would retain their current status should they return.*
   3. *I am coordinating with the gear/equipment inventory process as it pertains to the responder status.*
3. **Additional report Medical Gear**- Submitted by email from Beth MacNicoll, and read by Wayne:

*I would like to give you an update on the progress of the EMS team.*

***a.*** *Emergency Medicine List is almost done, and a priority order/donation list has been completed.*

***b.*** *Standing orders have been received. I am looking for options to print out. We need a minimum of four copies at this time. One at Station 1 for training and one for each of the three responding EMS personnel.*

***c.*** *The inventory of medical supplies is still in progress. Goals include inventory lists for each bag and a restocking list for Medix.*

***d.*** *Creating a training guild for EMS recert, at all levels, is still in progress.*

*The Medication list for Donation/Order is primarily cardiac drugs and supplies.*

*NOTE: donation refers to medical supplies that we get from Medix as they are used on a callout. Among other things, what is needed includes one set of Cardiac drugs for each bag and one of immediate restock at Station one.*

1. **Safety Report –** Vivian McCann. Report Statement regarding an OSHA violation from the summer of 2023:

*“At our June 13, 2023 Board meeting, and reflected in those minutes, the Chief informed us of a complaint received by OSHA regarding our cadet’s engagement in various activities. He told the Board he had replied with accurate information, and OSHA had closed the case. We have since learned that there is more to the story.  Part of the complaint was that cadets entered structures actively on fire, which is true. For example, it happened at the Rhodes Road fire a couple of years ago, and at the Gronnel Road fire last year. The Chief stated in his reply to OSHA that the department did not enter live fires, and instead “all we do is surround and drown.” This was untrue.*

*It is fairly well-known in the community that our cadets participate in fighting structural fires from the inside – but what many of us in the community may not know is that this is illegal. By law, firefighters can ONLY go inside burning structures if they are certified as a Firefighter I, and registered as such with DPSST, which is the Department for Public Safety Standards and Training. The minimum age requirement for that certification and registration is 18, so our cadets do not qualify. Despite their training, we cannot put them at risk like that.*

*What’s more, the PPE – personal protective equipment – the turnouts - worn by the cadets is expired, which means that they would not be adequately protected in the event of direct exposure to fire. Those turnouts can be legally worn outside a burning structure, but to fight a fire from inside the law requires turnouts certified to provide adequate protection, which means they must be current.*

*Our District cannot and does not condone the practice of exposing underage cadets to these risks and must go on record to be clear about that, to verify that we have taken steps to correct those practices, and to confirm that such practices will not continue at Elsie Vinemaple RFPD.”*

1. **Motion to authorize changes to authorized signers on District bank accounts with Lewis and Clark Bank**. Changes needed were read by Vivian McCann as follows: *“For all Elsie Vinemaple accounts with a Tax ID number ending in 4699, the only authorized signers are Vivian McCann, Thomas Hecox, Wayne Carmichael, Staciy Morrison, and Kerry Walsh. Please remove all other signatories from the account.”*Motion to accept from TJ, seconded Kerry. Motion passed 5 yes, 0 no.
2. **Motion to adopt Surplus Property policy.** Policy statement read by Vivian McCann. E-copy available by request and will be entered into our By Law/Policy Document. Motion to accept made by Kerry, seconded by Staciy. Motion passed 5 yes, 0 no.
3. **Consideration of Appointment of Interim Chief.**

Before Vivian initiated discussion, Staciy read a statement for the meeting and record:

*A few of you have asked why we didn’t move forward with Hans Mulder as Chief. In some situations the Assistant Chief would take over in the absence of a Chief. However, our policies or by- laws do not dictate that. As many of you have heard much of the unpermitted work at Station2 was completed by the Assistant Chief. In addition, as you have seen or heard at meetings, the assistant chief has been quite combative. For these reasons we did not feel he would be a good candidate to help move forward in working with the county or the community.*

Vivian then initiated the discussion by summarizing our process as follows: The search was an SDAO advised recruitment process. We received 4 letters of interest, including from a retired Chief, a retired Deputy Chief, a current Acting Chief and one incomplete application. All their resumes were impressive, but the two retired candidates had retired in 2011 and in 2015. We were advised by SDAO that there would be a learning curve involved in their ability to jump right in and help us administratively, and it was also a concern that their certifications weren’t current.

Discussion then centered on the current Acting Chief-Robert (Rob) Davis at Vernonia fire department. Vivian initiated the discussion by stating Robert Davis has numerous current certifications, including Fire Officer 1 and 2, and Fire Instructor, Wildland Firefighter and Apparatus Operator, and other certifications for skills needed in our area such as rope rescue, confined space rescue, and swift water rescue - just to name a few. He has worked for and/or closely with several of our neighboring fire districts, and everyone we spoke with thought he would be a great fit for our current needs.

With that in mind, we’ve all met with him individually or in pairs, and now the Board members will share their thoughts about him. After everyone has had a chance to weigh in, we’ll see where we are, and determine whether we want to take the next steps with him at this time.

**Vivian:**

* After looking at our budget, he immediately had a number of suggestions with possible action plans to help us not just stay afloat, but function more effectively in the long run.
* He has good relationships with the Chiefs of our surrounding districts in all directions.
* He has the boots-on-the-ground skill sets and training we need to rebuild our own team of volunteers.
* He is well-versed in the day-to-day administrative needs required to keep a small rural fire department healthy, compliant, and sustainable.
* Our only concern is the fact that Chief Davis is currently on administrative leave since October of 2023 due to an anonymous complaint following his appointment as acting Chief in June of 2023. That investigation in Vernonia hasn’t yet been completed. However every indication we’ve received from people we’ve spoken with suggests that he will be cleared of all allegations. If, however, in the event that he is not cleared, or that the final report contains any concerns at all, we have agreed that any contract we enter into with him would allow for his immediate termination, and that he would willingly step down. So, that caveat satisfies that concern for me.

**Wayne: Interim Chief Recruitment**

1. I have reviewed the applicants’ materials and agree that the better candidate would be someone who is still active or very recently active. Only one of those candidates is in that category.
2. The following areas are those that I feel most needed in someone for our interim position. Chief Davis is well qualified in all of these. They are listed in order of importance:
3. Upgrading our budget and accounting process. Suggestions for increasing our budget.
4. Responder training/certification and willingness to self-respond
5. Equipment and operations. Suggestions for improving the insurance status of our equipment and surplusing equipment, that is not needed and is a financial burden.
6. Working with our districts community to explain what we do and need-i.e., public relations.
7. Maintain good working relations with neighboring districts. i.e maintain the vital function that neighboring districts have expressed for our pumper/tender capability.
8. Suggestions and help with securing grants.

**Staciy-Interim Chief Recruitment**

I don’t have a prepared statement, just bullet points.

- we walked Station 1 together and he quickly saw where we could recoup money

- he identified we had way too many vehicles which means storage, maintenance & insurance costs

- he didn’t seem overwhelmed by the enormous task at hand

- he talked about how valuable volunteers are & that it’s important to foster them

- he was energetic & upbeat, eager to make a difference

**TJ and Kerry-Interim Chief Recruitment**

Both TJ and Kerry paraphrased the qualifications listed by Wayne, that we are looking for in an interim Chief and supported Robert Davis as that person.

1. **Next Steps.** Vivian read a motion that we pursue a contract with Chief Robert Davis as our interim chief. Wayne Carmichael and Kerry Walsh are appointed to work out the details of that contract with Chief Davis and the Board so that he can start the position as soon as possible. Motion made by Kerry and seconded by Staciy. Motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

Vivian then read a closing statement: *Assuming he accepts our offer, Chief Davis will be immediately connecting with current volunteers and those who have taken a leave of absence from the District, to set up in-person meetings to discuss the past and future challenges of the district, with the intent of holding open public forums in the near future to gain community insight and hear the concerns of our citizens to establish a clear path into the future.*

1. **Motion to Adjourn.** Motion made by Wayne and seconded by Kerry. Motion passed 5 yes, 0 no. Meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.