

**Crooked River Ranch RFPD
6971 SW Shad Rd
Terrebonne, OR 97760-9250**

August 19, 2024

A Special meeting of the Crooked River Ranch Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors took place on Monday, August 19, 2024, at 2:00 pm. It was held at the Crooked River Ranch Fire District Fire Station, located at 6971 SW Shad Road Crooked River Ranch, Oregon. Brandie McNamee and Gustavo Bautista attended the meeting, via the Zoom platform.

Special Meeting Minutes

Called to Order at 2:00 pm by Director Palmer.

1.1 Flag Salute – led by Director Pahl

1.2 Director Norberg completed the roll call, and the following individuals were in attendance: Directors Palmer, Pahl, Norberg, Costigan and Gayheart, as well as staff members Fire Chief Sean Hartley and Administrative Assistant Dana Schulke. The following members of the public in attendance were Heidi Timberman (from Corbett Fire and Rescue), Steele Hauger (from Central Oregon Daily), John Stevens (press), Lynn and Laura Breeden and Bill Burt.

2.1 Discussion from the Board on PGE tax refund issue – Director Palmer gave a brief overview of the situation, explaining that PGE made an overpayment of taxes to Jefferson County that was discovered after the fact and now must be repaid by all taxing districts whether they received benefit from that or not. Various actions have already been taken, but we are granting the authority to the subcommittees to make independent decisions on behalf of the Board, i.e. reach out to legal advisors and representatives or interact with the County Commissioners. Director Palmer advised that discussions should include determining what outreach is appropriate, and Director Costigan recommended that talking points should be approved by the Board. Director Norberg referred to a letter written by Director Costigan, which could be used to create talking points. It was recommended that this information should be sent in letter form rather than email. Director Norberg will obtain a list of Central Oregon fire chiefs from Chief Hartley, along with appropriate contacts at other agencies. Director Norberg and Chief Hartley volunteered to draw up a list of legislative people to meet with and then decide when appointments should be made, ideally before the legislative session in Salem.

Director Costigan summarized the process so far, noting that the letter he wrote was approved by the Board at the meeting on August 15, 2024. It was sent electronically to the County after the board meeting and was hand-delivered to the County the following morning. Receipt of the letter was confirmed by the County Administrator, who requested clarification on an issue. He further noted that one goal is to determine where and how the system broke down that allowed this overpayment to happen.

Director Costigan asked for clarification regarding the level of authority for individual Board members to speak to the press outside a public meeting. Director Palmer advised that as elected officials, Board members have an obligation to speak to the press or any citizen of the district. However, it must be made clear that we are speaking our personal opinion rather than that of the Board. He further noted that the District policies indicate that someone needs to be appointed to speak on behalf of the Board. Director Palmer further noted that the authority of the subcommittees should be apparent that they are speaking to the points made in Director Costigan's letter. Information gleaned from discussions with other agencies can then be brought back to the Board to get approval to take action.

Director Costigan stated that it is unknown what the end result will be with Jefferson County regarding the overpayment. He further stated that the County has a plan in place to receive these funds regardless of whether we agree to pay it or regardless of any action we may take. He indicated that the greatest impact will be to try to make changes to prevent the situation from happening again.

2.2 Authorize a spokesperson for media relations specifically regarding the PGE tax issue –

It was recommended that Director Costigan be appointed to handle media relations because he is the treasurer, and these are money-related issues. In the event Director Costigan isn't available, it was suggested that Director Pahl be the back-up representative because he is the former treasurer. Director Gayheart moved that Director Costigan be appointed as the official contact to the media to talk about this issue regarding PGE; if Director Costigan is unavailable, Director Pahl will take over for him. Director Norberg seconded the motion. All voted aye: motion carried (5-0).

2.3 Appoint representative to attend upcoming meeting with PGE –

Director Palmer reported that PGE is meeting with the affected special districts on Friday at 9:00 am at the County Annex in Madras. There aren't many details available yet, but it is hoped they will offer some solutions. Directors Gayheart and Costigan volunteered to attend, along with Chief Hartley. Those attending will send an email to recap the PGE meeting prior to the next Board meeting. Director Costigan noted that the special districts are not in a position of negotiation; this is a meeting to gather information.

Meeting adjourned by Director Palmer at 2:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Schulke, Administrative Assistant