



**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Fire-EMS Consolidation Working Group (CWG)**  
**October 27, 2021**

*Full video record of minutes is available online at [www.jeffco.net](http://www.jeffco.net)*

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Dustin Miller at 5:34 p.m. on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 in the Jefferson County Commission Chambers, 66 SE "D" Street in Madras, Oregon.

**II. Roll Call of Members**

**Members (13):**

✓	Rick Allen, Co-Chair	✓	Bob Buckner
✓	Dustin Miller, Co-Chair	✓	Mat Felton
✓*	Joe Krenowicz [for Janet Brown], Exec Comm	✓	Mack Gardner
A	Mark Carman, Exec Comm	✓	Gretchen Schlie [for Jake Schwab]
✓	Jeff Rasmussen, Exec Comm	✓	Kim Stout
✓	Mike Ahern	✓	Susan Stovall
✓	Devon Bowen		

\* Joe Krenowicz entered the meeting at 6:04 pm so he was not present for the motions.

**Others:**

Ben Ochs (Meeting Facilitator); Lysa Vattimo (Meeting Recorder).

**Guests:**

Shanta Carter and Bob Keefer (SDAO); Kasey Skaar; Mike Lepin; Sam Scheideman; Andrew Glen; Penny Codemo; Kirk Hagman.

**III. Old Business**

A. Approval of September 29, 2021 Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the September 29, 2021 minutes.  
**MOVED:** Mack Gardner  
**SECONDED:** Mike Ahern  
**ABSENT:** Joe Krenowicz, Mark Carman  
**PASSED:** 11/0

B. Approval of October 20, 2021 Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the October 20, 2021 minutes.  
**MOVED:** Mike Ahern  
**SECONDED:** Bob Buckner  
**ABSENT:** Joe Krenowicz, Mark Carman  
**PASSED:** 11/0

#### **IV. Presentation by Special Districts Association of Oregon**

Shanta Carter, SDAO Consulting Services Administrator introduced the types of services SDAO provides and gave brief bios of some of the consultants on their staff who work on consolidations like the CWG is considering. She stated that SDAO would need to know the goals of the CWG in order to develop a plan and timeline.

Bob Keefer, SDAO stated that the more the SDAO understands what the CWG wants to achieve, the better they can serve the needs and help the group move forward.

Co-Chair Allen asked how specific the SDAO would like the CWG to be when defining a scope of work.

Ms. Carter responded that they would like at least a skeleton (basic expectations, how many meetings, etc.) of what the CWG needs recognizing that mid-way, the scope could change. This will also help them develop a fee schedule.

Co-Chair Allen stated the CWG's goals will probably be in phases with Phase I being completed by July 1, 2022.

Mr. Keefer added that if any of CWG's goals include items that will need to go to voters, then the timelines need to be developed around election dates. Having this kind of information will be very helpful to SDAO.

Co-Chair Allen stated that one option may be to start with a functional consolidation through a contract (which doesn't require going to voters) and then move to a full consolidation (which would require going to voters) at a later date. Once the group provides SDAO with a scope of work, they can help by providing organizational structures, compensation, etc., if the group requests those services. They will need data, current structures, budgets, etc.

Co-Chair Miller stated that the group will work on a scope of work that includes expectations, goals and a timeline.

#### **V. Identify Main Objectives/Goals of Consolidation**

Ben Ochs, Facilitator began the discussion by laying out ground rules for the discussion and interaction. He stated that everyone in the room is talented and experienced and it's important to use that to work together and be flexible. Important points:

- If a topic has merit, debate is encouraged.
- Passion and high commitment don't always equal wisdom.
- Looking for unemotional, metrics-based decisions.
- Financial discussions can cause tension due to people's own interpretations about money.
- Taxes can also bring about difficult conversations.

The first question the CWG should answer is, "Why will the new organization exist?" The group responded with the following:

- To improve public services
- Customer service
- Save lives
- Better utilize public funds
- Improve efficiencies

As the group goes through the process, it will be important to ensure that the things being discussed are relevant to these goals.

The next question should be, "What do we want to achieve?"

- To bring the two entities together as quickly, seamlessly, and efficiently as possible to achieve better outcomes.

He added that as these goals are debated, it is imperative that once decisions are made, everyone represents those decisions outside these meetings responsibly and uniformly whether or not their ideas were part of the final decisions.

Co-Chair Miller suggested the group work on 6, 12, 18 and 24-month goals to help keep the group on task.

Ms. Carter stated that SDAO can provide a somewhat generic timeline based on what they've heard tonight and allow the group to edit it to meet their needs.

Co-Chair Allen stated that once the group decides upon a date, that will help SDAO determine what level of a plan can be developed within that timeframe. For instance, if the group wants to see the two districts combined to provide better services by July 2022, SDAO may say a functional consolidation can be done within that timeframe and then develop a plan for that. Then the group can determine what Phase II might be (the Culver issues, Round Butte extended boundaries, etc.), then SDAO would review those and develop a plan with timelines for that phase.

Mat Felton stated that as he was understanding it, the first six months would be working on a plan for a functional consolidation (which does not require going to voters). The next phase would be the Culver annexation and the boundary change (which requires going to voters), after that would be to dissolve EMS (which requires going to the voters).

Mr. Ochs added that the group needs to be careful about not getting caught up in the details right now.

Jeff Rasmussen stated he feels it would be helpful to know what level of detail the group might want. He would like to know what kind of organization can be afforded based on the current revenues of both organizations combined. If SDAO looks at the two budgets combined and provides a structure that raises concerns of not being enough, then the group can look at the other revenue options that might require going to the voters.

Mr. Ochs encouraged the group not to lose their detailed ideas, but to write them down for later discussions. He used the metaphor that the development (shape, size, purpose, etc.) of a building occurs before the foundation is created to support it. It's too early in the process to get into the finer details.

Co-Chair Allen reminded the group that they began this effort to improve services within the community through a coordinated, consolidated effort with a unified response. The group also agreed that they wanted to build a consolidated system by combining the existing budgets without raising taxes for a few years. The first step is to provide SDAO with a goal date for what the group wants to see within the existing revenue. Then possibly the next thing is 24/7 fire coverage, then maybe the next phase is reviewing various options for Culver coverage. Right now, SDAO has budget numbers to work with from the two agencies for Phase I. Phase II might be some annexations, dissolution of the districts and Phase III might be equipment, etc.

The group had lots of concerns and questions around budgets, but it did not change asking SDAO to develop a plan using the current budgets for a consolidated agency functioning by July 2022.

Joe Krenowicz added that the public understands efficiencies when combining departments.

Ms. Carter proposed SDAO draft a proposal based on what they've heard tonight that will include a timeline in order for the group to have a starting point.

Mr. Ochs stated that members should be working on their questions/ideas all month long and have them ready to share at the meetings. It would be great if there was an email group or place for everyone to deposit their ideas. It's better to hear ideas now versus later in case there are potential roadblocks to any particular phase.

Mr. Krenowicz added that the CWG has members from Fire and EMS boards and they should be discussing details at their board meetings and bringing them to the CWG meetings.

SDAO requested that a few people from the CWG assist them in developing the proposal. It was agreed that the Executive Committee will assist SDAO over the next few days. They anticipate the proposal can be developed in about a week.

Mike Lepin provided the group with some of the ideas he and Kasey Skaar have discussed including what their two agencies could achieve working together with regards to staffing, coverage hours, shifts, etc. They recognize there will be some savings realized in materials and services which could then be used to help with staffing. They're hopeful that some bare minimum improvements could be realized using part-timers. Volunteers are helpful, but they can't be counted on as a dependable resource. It's important to note that several part-time EMS workers are gone during the summer working wildland fires.

**VI. Additional Comments or Announcements**

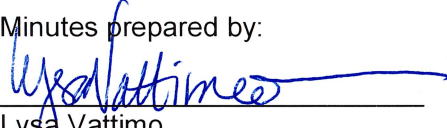
The next meeting is scheduled for November 24<sup>th</sup> which is the Thanksgiving holiday week, so there was a consensus with the group to move the meeting to **November 17<sup>th</sup>** at 5:30.

Co-Chair Miller stated that the Fire District will be interviewing candidates for the vacant Fire Chief position the week of November 15<sup>th</sup>.


**VII. Adjourn**

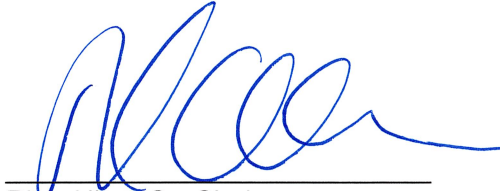
Meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

  
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Lysa Vattimo

Reviewed By:

  
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Dustin Miller, Co-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Allen, Co-Chair