



**FIRE-EMS CONSOLIDATION WORKING GROUP (CWG)  
Official Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 2022**

*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 Rick Allen at 5:35 p.m. on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at Jefferson County Fire District 1, 765 SE 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Madras, Oregon.

**II. Roll Call of Members**

**Members:** (11 Members present; 2 Absent; Quorum reached)

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

**Others:**

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

**Guests:**

**In person:** George Dunkel (SDAO); Kasey Skaar (JCFD1); Mike Lepin (JCEMS); Fire Chief Jeff Blake (JCFD1); Marc Heckathorn (Jefferson County Sheriff).

**On Zoom:** Bob Keefer (SDAO); Andrew Glen; Earl; Sam Scheideman; Abdullah.

**III. Old Business**

A. Approval of January 26, 2022 Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes from the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
**MOVED:** Jeff Rasmussen  
**SECONDED:** Janet Brown  
**AYES:** Members Ahern, Allen, Bowen, Felton, Gardner, Miller, Schlie, Stout, Stovall  
**NAYS:** 0  
**ABSENT:** 2  
**PASSED:** Unanimously, 11/0

**IV. First Draft Intergovernmental Agreement**

George Dunkel, SDAO shared the first draft of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). This is the first draft reviewed by Chief Blake, Chief Lepin and the CWG Executive Committee.

Ben Ochs, facilitated the group in reviewing the IGA. The main goal is to ensure the committee generally understands the agreement and to review it for any errors or omissions. He noted that the term indefinite means renew annually. There are three entities involved – Fire, EMS, and the oversight board. The purpose of the oversight board is to assist the department on an as-needed basis. The oversight board would terminate when the IGA terminates and the agencies have fully merged. As the group went through the IGA, the following items were identified for changes or noted for understanding:

Item 3: Section 3d

- add dispose of "...at the discretion of the governing board."

Item 4: No comments.

The FC will be answering to both Boards throughout the term of the IGA.

- **QUESTION:** Regarding transferring the ASA. Janet Brown stated she would like to transfer the ASA on July 1, 2022. Jeff Rasmussen stated a legal review would be needed to determine the particulars. This question would be presented to the Committee's attorney if the committee supports having the ASA transferred on July 1<sup>st</sup> so it could be included in the IGA, or through a transfer process.
- **ACTION:** Chief Blake will ask the Committee attorney to research the steps needed to transfer the ASA during this transition period and will coordinate with SDAO to have an update by the next CWG meeting. He stated that his preference would be to have the ASA locked down for 10 years if possible.

Exhibit A Real Property Transfer: No comments.

Item 6: (See Exhibit B DRAFT Employee Transfer Issues)

George Dunkel, SDAO distributed Exhibit B: Employee Transfer Issues (See Attachment A-this item was not completed in time for the packet).

- The EMS PERS debt will transfer to the Fire Department.
- Transferred employees retain their compensation, time off, benefits, etc. The Fire Chief is researching insurance options that would bring all employees under one carrier, but the coverage would be the same or better. If deductibles would change, it would be put to the employees for a vote.
- Some blending of policies will need to occur to help with the transition, so employees feel comfortable with the process.

Item 7: No comments

Item 8:

- There will be a combined working budget, but separate budgets for the purpose of filing LB1's.
- The Fire Chief is pursuing some expert support to set up this budget due to its complexity so it starts off correctly.

Item 9: No comments

Item 10: No comments

Item 11: Section 11a

- Add "Board" after JCEMS for clarification of who can request records.

Item 12: Section 12c

- Initially, there will be some changes at the Madras station to accommodate the consolidation of crews.
- The Fire Chief has concerns about bringing the Culver station up to speed to accommodate a medic without incurring significant expense. Currently, he doesn't believe the facilities are ready to accommodate a medic right now. It cannot accommodate female employees comfortably.

Item 13: Ambulance Service Area

- Add verbiage to address Wasco County.

Item 14: No comments

Item 15: No comments

Item 16: No comments

Item 17: No comments

New Item # Amendments.

- Add a section (Item) to accommodate Amendments to the agreement that states they must comply with ORS (appropriate).

Item 18: Termination.

- There was discussion about changing "unanimous" vote of the board to "majority" but the committee agreed to keep it unanimous.

Once the attorney makes the changes discussed tonight, the committee will review one more time and make a recommendation to the boards to sign and approve.

Ben Ochs reminded the committee that the hope is that the consolidation will go as planned, but everyone is prepared for unanticipated issues that will arise.

Mat Felton suggested that the attorneys of both boards have a chance to review the IGA even after the attorney of record for the committee approves it. The committee agreed to allow limited review by each board attorney for any items that may be "deal killers."

**V. Operations Update**

Fire Chief Blake asked everyone to invite the community to the open house as a way to answer questions about the consolidation. The Bend Fire Pipes & Drum band is coming.

He added that the energy level among all employees as skyrocketed – people are excited. Next Monday, the chiefs are meeting with EMS employees to discuss plans and expectations. They are continuing to:

- Develop a working budget for the consolidation.
- Review compensation issues and insurance.
- Examine livability at both Madras and Culver stations.
- Apply for grants:
  - A SAFER Grant that can help fund firefighters for the next three years. Notifications of awards come out in June.
  - A grant for firefighting apparatus. Notifications come out in May.
  - A grant for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Work on relocating the BLM office out of the Madras station so they can bring Chief Lepin over soon.
- Merge policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) so they have a foundation to work from.
- Discuss branding, a new name, etc. (which includes patches, logos, uniforms, etc.). As they work together to build a new organization, they want to respect the history that has gotten them to this point.
- Look for redundancies, so they can create efficiencies and cost savings.
- Work on the ambulance transport issue and are reviewing the idea of a 12-hour transport car.

**VI. Review of Draft Marketing Materials**

Janet Brown shared a one-page flyer that the marketing subcommittee developed. She would like to have it ready for the March 3<sup>rd</sup> fire station event. The group provided a variety of input. The Fire Chief asked for the updated version by Friday for Coffee Cuppers. She passed around a list of opportunities to present and asked people to sign up.

**VII. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**VIII. Additional Announcements**

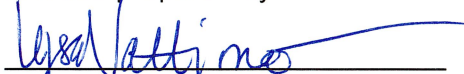
The next Committee meeting is scheduled for March 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at Jefferson County Fire District 1.

Swearing in ceremony for the Fire Chief and Open House at the fire station in Madras. March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Open House from 3:30 to 6:00 pm, Swearing in ceremony at 4:30 pm.

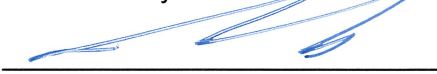
**IX. Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lysa Vattimo

Reviewed By:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dustin Miller, Co-Chair

## **ATTACHMENT A – EXHIBIT “B” TO DRAFT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT**

### **EMPLOYEE TRANSFER ISSUES**

ORS 236.605 to ORS 236.640 establishes the rights of employees and the obligations of employers when public employees are transferred. The following summarizes those provisions as well as suggestions for action items.

#### **Rights of Employee When Duties Assumed by Different Public Employer**

No public employee shall be deprived of employment solely because the duties of employment have been assumed or acquired by another public employer. The public employee shall be transferred to the employment of the public employer that assumed or acquired the duties of the public employee.

#### **Status of Transferred Employee**

The transferred employee shall enjoy the same privileges, including benefits, hours and conditions of employment, and be subject to the same regulations as other employees of the receiving employer. The time of transfer shall be by written agreement between the public employers involved.

A public employer who receives a transferred public employee shall place that employee in a position comparable to the position the employee enjoyed under prior employment.

- For a probationary employee, the past service of the employee on probation shall apply on the regular probation requirements of the receiving employer.
- The employee shall retain the seniority the employee accrued under prior employment.
- The employee’s seniority from the transferring employer shall be regarded as seniority acquired under the receiving employer.

#### **PERS**

The transferring employer and the receiving employer must enter into a written agreement that addresses the way any unfunded Public Employees Retirement System liability or surplus of the transferring public employer will be paid or credited, as required by ORS 238.235.

Note: Assumes that employees of both districts are participating in the PERS system. Additional research is needed if any employees of Jefferson EMS have non-PERS retirement benefits.

Note: EMS employees are not a police officer or firefighter for purposes of PERS benefits. However, that could change if EMS employees will take on firefighter duties.

#### **Compensation**

The transferred public employee shall not have the employee's salary reduced as a result of a transfer under this section during the first 12 months of employment with the receiving employer. After the first 12 months of employment with the receiving employer, the transferred public employee shall be placed at the closest salary for the position as designated under the receiving employer's salary schedule.

### **Compensatory Leave**

After the transfer, the receiving employer shall grant any leaves according to its Personnel Policy and Procedures governing use of leaves.

It is the responsibility of the transferring employer to liquidate accrued compensatory leave at the time of transfer, consistent with any applicable statute or collective bargaining agreement.

- At the time of transfer, the transferred public employee may elect to:
  - Retain any accrued sick leave;
  - Retain up to 80 hours of vacation leave; and
  - Retain additional vacation leave if agreed to by the transferring employer, the receiving employer and the transferred public employee.
- At the time of transfer, the transferring employer shall pay to the receiving employer a sum equal to the number of hours of accrued leave retained times the employee's hourly rate of pay.

### **Workers Compensation**

ORS Chapter 236 is silent regarding workers compensation. Ambulance workers may have high injury rates due to frequent lifting.

### **Health Insurance**

Because the transferred employee shall enjoy the same privileges, including benefits, hours and conditions of employment, and be subject to the same regulations as other employees of the receiving employer, the transferred employee will receive the Jefferson Fire health benefits.

In the event that any transferred employee is subject to a waiting period for coverage of preexisting conditions under the health insurance plan of the receiving employer, the receiving employer shall arrange for a waiver of such waiting period with its health insurer. The transferring employer shall reimburse the receiving employer for the additional premium costs, if any, resulting from such waiver, for a period of not to exceed 12 months.

Note: I understand that both districts have health insurance using SDIS but have chosen different plans.

### **Employment Records**

In transferring a public employee under subsection (1) of this section, the employer shall furnish the employment records of that employee to the receiving employer at the time of transfer.

### **Reemployment Right of Employees.**

At the end of a cooperation agreement the employee transferred shall be entitled to the position of the employee with the transferring employer prior to transfer, if the employee has remained an employee of the transferee employer in good standing to the termination of the agreement.

### **Volunteers**

ORS Chapter 236 defines a “public employee” as an employee whose compensation is paid from public funds but is silent regarding volunteers.



## ATTACHMENT B – DRAFT INFORMATIONAL FLYER



**Strength in numbers by consolidating our emergency responders**  
**Enhanced service for all communities**  
**Fully utilize current staff, student interns & volunteers**  
**Cross-training for improved readiness**  
**One 911 dispatch channel eliminates confusion during emergencies**

### **“WE” Is The New Norm**

Serve people in emergencies as one cohesive team  
Reduces duplication of services  
No additional tax dollars required due to consolidation  
Supported by JC Fire and EMS first responders

- JC Fire & EMS Boards jointly formed a community based “Consolidation Working Group”
- Consolidation Working Group includes members from throughout Jefferson County
- Professionals experienced in merging districts are helping to make sure we do it right
- JC Fire & EMS Boards, working in partnership with the Consolidation Working Group, have adopted a timeline for successful consolidation of fire and EMS
- JC Fire District hired a new chief with experience in both fire and EMS services which will facilitate achievement of our goals
- JC Fire & EMS responders have begun joint training sessions on a daily, weekly and monthly basis as they prepare for a complete consolidation of services
- JC Fire & EMS administrators and staff have moved forward to begin operating primarily out of the fire station starting this spring to facilitate a smooth transition this summer
- A major goal in the timeline is merge operations by summer of 2022
- Consolidation will be completed in 2023