

---

# AGENDA

---

## Joint Special Board Meeting

This meeting will include the Board of Directors for SW Polk Fire District and West Valley Fire District

Hosting agency:

Southwestern Polk County Fire District – 15455 Salt Creek Rd. – Rickreall, OR 97371\*

\*Public attendance is encouraged virtually and attending in person may be limited per COVID requirements.

Face masks are encouraged for those attending the meeting in person.

June 21st, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Join from computer or smartphone: <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1447411449>

Or by phone: +1 (623) 404-9000 Meeting ID: 144 741 1449

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Additions or corrections to the agenda
5. Approval of Minutes/All Agencies (N/A)
6. Audience Participation:  
*This is an opportunity for citizens to make comments. Clearly state your name and home address and the topic you will address. Questions may be referred to staff as appropriate to be answered at a future time. Time is limited to a total of three minutes and speakers are asked not to repeat what others have said.*
7. Old Business
  - A. None
8. New Business
  - A. Apparatus Maintenance Update .....SWP&WVFD.....Discussion
  - B. Employment Guidance.....SWP&WVFD.....Discussion
  - C. Future Direction.....SWP&WVFD.....Discussion/Action
9. Director comments and/or agenda items for next month
10. Adjournment
  - A. Joint SWP & SFD Budget Hearing: June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00 pm
  - B. WVFD Budget Hearing: June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 pm

# Sheridan/SW Polk/West Valley Fire Districts

## Joint Board of Directors

### Staff Report

**MEETING DATE:** 6/21/2021  
**TOPIC:** Delays in maintenance and placing apparatus in service SWP and WVFD  
**PREPARED BY:** Sean Hoxie, Battalion Chief  
**APPROVED BY:** Fred Hertel, Fire Chief  
**ATTACHMENTS:** None

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Information only

**BACKGROUND:** Southwestern Polk purchased three like apparatus with bond funding, which arrived late last year. There was a committee that both designed the apparatus and the layout of these apparatus. During this process, one SWP and one SFD apparatus were outfitted, with the other SWP apparatus to follow. There have been and continue to be delays in this process mostly resulting from global supply chain issues and COVID 19 related delays. As an example, the radio for the SFD apparatus originally quoted as four to six weeks took over five months to arrive. Currently, any equipment with a microchip is back ordered with an unknown arrival date. Our vendor has been trying to keep us informed though they are giving their best guess based on other orders. We have instructed them to send what equipment they do have, and we will have to work with that until such a time as the other equipment is available.

West Valley has a donated ambulance from Keizer Fire District, which will become Medic 183. This unit failed its initial inspection required by the Oregon Health Authority and is currently at Benton County shops for the needed repairs. This unit is also suffering due to the aforementioned global supply issues. The siren head unit is not functioning and is non-repairable. This is a required safety item and will continue to delay the passing of the inspection until replaced.

West Valley also has a 1999 engine that suffered a major mechanical failure in the transfer gear box. This unit is at Forest Glenn repair. They have removed the gear box and sent it to True North for repair. True North found additional repairs that they did not anticipate and is also having issues with supply chains. The anticipated return was the second week of June, but at this point they are unsure if it will return before July.

**SUMMARY TIMELINE:** Informational only

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Informational only

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** None

# Sheridan/SW Polk/West Valley Fire Districts Joint Board of Directors Staff Report

**MEETING DATE:** 6/21/2021  
**TOPIC:** Career Staff/Employees  
**PREPARED BY:** Damon Schulze, Deputy Chief  
**APPROVED BY:** Fred Hertel, Fire Chief  
**ATTACHMENTS:** Letter from Local 4861

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Information only

**BACKGROUND:**

At the last joint board meeting between Sheridan, SW Polk, and West Valley Fire Districts, all three districts voted to pull out of the current IGA. While many responsibilities and reasons were considered to make those decisions, there seems to be almost the same number of ramifications.

I met with the group of employees that make up the local union members 4861 this last week. I could not answer many of their questions involving their working conditions in the coming summer months. Most concerning to them was that I could not answer those same questions just two short weeks out. While they expressed understanding of the decisions made by all three boards, they had a lot of concern about their wellbeing.

The group expressed disappointment and concern that they would not be able to work as one group, cover each other, and work in all three districts. This action would also cause a change in shift locations and schedules for almost all employees. These will cause some of our employees to miss or rearrange some important life events in a very short time frame. In some cases, our employees will not know if they have to rearrange or reschedule these events because they will not know their schedule until the boards can make more decisions or directions this next week. I'm sure you can understand the frustrations and changes they are facing.

The union has asked to submit a letter to the boards explaining, in their own words, some of the issues they feel this situation has brought to light.

I have attached their letter to this staff report.

**SUMMARY TIMELINE:** Informational only

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Informational only

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** Informational only



## **WEST VALLEY PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS**

To the Southwest Polk and West Valley Boards,

Thank you for finding time to arrange this meeting. Local 4861 would like to acknowledge the time and energy all of the boards have contributed over these past two years. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

For the past two years paid staff have worked tirelessly to improve response times, facilities, training, and community relations. Paid staff of all three districts were essential in helping West Valley's levy pass, which funded three paid firefighters to keep M181 in service and to purchase a new ambulance. We have spent part of our own paychecks and countless hours of personal time to support the PAC's goals of improving public relations and supporting the future of our districts. Paid staff have logged more training hours and have earned more certifications at the highest rate in over 15 years. We routinely perform major improvement projects on outdated facilities such as painting, remodeling, yard work, and reducing safety hazards all because we take pride in our stations.

Historically, staff have been told that we do not have as much invested in the future of the districts compared to volunteers. The reasons above, as well as countless others, proves this is one-hundred percent false. The current paid staff are an incredible group of people who bring a variety of experience, knowledge, and dedication that few districts of this size and pay scale can only dream of. The potential of this consolidation stabilized staffing levels at the highest rates ever in the districts history. To us, this is more than "just a job." This is a career.

We are frustrated that the 190 agreement and the plans for consolidation have stalled. West Valley Professional Firefighters foresee serious long term and short term problems from this derailment. Future staffing issues and inadequate services are inevitable if the districts do not merge. These long term issues are far enough down the road to address before they become unavoidable. However, short term issues have already occurred. Staff morale is in sharp decline after years of hard work has the potential to be undone in just a matter of weeks. Additionally, the last minute schedule changes will directly impact our paid time off and shift trades. Staff members face the risk of missing out on their own weddings, family memorial services, and one member might need to spend more money on legal fees to renegotiate childcare schedules for the third time in less than two years. Morale will continue to decline if these time off requests and trades are cancelled. Finally,

no one can give us clear direction about the future of these three districts, creating instability and fear of what is to come if these issues are not solved.

West Valley Professional Firefighters would like to firmly, but politely, ask the boards to form a temporary IGA agreement. Ideally, this IGA will keep the status quo of our current time off requests, maintain current levels of service, and allow for a smoother transition with minimal interruptions until a new, clear direction is decided. West Valley Professional Firefighters would like to reaffirm our dedication to teamwork for the well-being of our community. They deserve sustainable and reliable fire and EMS services.

Our districts have seen a tremendous change in a short period of time. 4861 believes that these changes have ushered in a more effective and higher quality of service that did not exist before. Firefighter/Paramedic Donna Hammer knows this reality better than anyone at this department. Not only is Donna 4861's longest serving staff member, she also has a personal stake in the quality of local emergency services because she is a Willamina resident.

*"Hello. My name is, Donna Hammer. I began my career with Sheridan Fire District in 2004 as a volunteer and have been a full-time paid Firefighter for the past 12 years. I have seen so much change throughout my time at Sheridan. With each new chief, I have needed to adapt to all of the changes they have attempted to implement. The biggest changes I have seen was the recent consolidation attempt lead by Chief Hertel and his administration team. Changes such as; Battalion Chiefs, response models, training, and intermingling staff. These are just a small portion of the many transformations that have occurred over these two years. I am not going to lie, these new ways of doing things were difficult at first. However, myself and the rest of the line staff have embraced these improvements. That is why it is disheartening to see all of the hard work we have contributed over these two years be ripped apart in a couple of weeks. I have taken care of so many people in this community including; families of line staff, families of board members, and even board members themselves. Knowing this, I hope that you all understand how difficult it will be for the districts without forming a new partnership soon. It is important that the three districts come together, work through our problems, and provide a better service for the community. The truth is, I live in Willamina and one day I will need to use our fire and EMS services. I hope to see our districts work together to build a thriving and effective fire and EMS service."*

Signed,  
West Valley Professional Firefighters.