

**HIGHLAND RESCUE TEAM AMBULANCE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Highland Station 317 S Lookout Mountain Rd
August 10, 2021, 3:30pm**

Chairman Robert Keating called the meeting to order at 3:34.

Other Directors present: John Zima, Roxanne Lenny, Terry McCarthy, and Patty Hall.

Others present: Chief Bob Fager, Assistant Chief Alan Feldman, Captain Damon Brown, Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace, Barbara DeBoer, Christina Jantze

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Paramedic Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace was introduced to the board. She has been hired as the new part time paramedic.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

July meeting minutes were approved as written by the board.

FINANCIAL REPORT

June Financials - see financial packet by Christina Jantze

We are 58% through the year.

Fee revenues are slightly below target at 57 %.

Total revenue is above target at 79% Due to tax revenue timing.

Operation expenses are under budget at 52%.

Rob Keating asked Christina about Health and Life being over budget. Christina typically reconciles this at year end. Some of these charges belong in Admin. Chief Fager asked if it was necessary to have admin and operations personnel separate or if we can group them together. Christina suggested we discuss this when we prepare next year's budget.

Safety and Training expenses are below target at 21%.

Apparatus and Equipment expenses are well below target at 18%.

Facilities expenses are slightly above target at 58%.

Administrative Expenses are below target at 52%.

Capital Expenditures are still very low waiting for the purchase of the new ambulance.

Total expenses are under budget at 35%.

Net change in fund balance is \$382K.

Change in net assets or Net Income/(Loss) of \$396K.

Ending cash balance is high at \$808K.

Rob Keating asked when the next ambulance would need to be replaced. Captain Damon Brown said we are on a 4-year cycle. The board asked if \$40K a year set aside annually is enough for a new ambulance every four years. No- but Chief Fager feels there is a good chance we could get a grant. The next ambulance that will be replaced will be a remount and that is significantly less expensive at 150K.

Rob Keating asked about the new HAS account and why the balance sheet in assets does not equal the liabilities.

Barb explained that the HAS bank account had just been set up and the process had changed. Now instead of the HSA administration company holding the cash balances until used, Highland had to account for the money, and it will be pulled from the account when the employees use the money. Christina has just gotten the paperwork this week and Barbara is working on reconciling these accounts.

Billing Report- July Billing - see written report by Barbara DeBoer

July charges were strong at \$44,683. Cash receipts came in at \$13,291 and disallowed/ contractual allowances were \$8256. \$ 15,597 was sent to collections.

We gained a lot of ground on YTD "Total Billed". We are just \$5K under than last year at this same time. Total Cash Receipts continues to trend higher as well at total write offs and contractual allowances.

CHIEF'S REPORT – See written report by Chief Fager

YTD calls are 408 with 136 transports. We had 79 calls in July and 28 transports.

Staffing- Currently have 6 paid paramedics (3 FT, 1 PT, 3PRN), 5 volunteer paramedics (1 LOA), 1 volunteer EMT-I, 5 AEMTs (1 LOA), 33 volunteer EMT's (2 reserve/ 2 LOA and 6 probationary) and 2 EMRs (1 probationary).

We have hired Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace for the part time paramedic opening. She started this week and will be training for several more shifts before she begins to run on her own.

New Ambulance – No progress with manufacture. Chassis is expected to arrive at the vendor Aug/Sept. It is still on track to be completed in December

HR Policies- Patty, Roxanne and Chief Fager met last week and updated the policies for hourly employees giving them an additional holiday, additional vacation, and clarified some of the existing policies.

Wildland Team – 10 members are currently on the team. Lt. Carl Joyce has been deployed to Montana, Liam Sharkey went from Montana to Idaho this week, Nickolas Becker just got back from his deployment. Highland has had 4 deployments this year so far and has helped on 7 fires.

NEW Business

Budget- Bob and Christina have a meeting tomorrow with Chief Puffet. Genesee uses an electronic model. Rob Keating asked how the two approached compared.

We have been using a paper model which worked well for assigning components to different people. Rob asked about viewing the history and Christina explained it is all built into the worksheets in Excel.

Designated budget officer.

John Zima is willing to do it again this year but would like to ask Terry McCarthy to be a backup and train so he can take over this role next year.

Patti Hall made a motion that John Zima be Highland's designated budget officer and that Terry McCarty be the budget officer in training. Roxanne Lenny seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion.

Online Notices of Public Meeting.

There was a discussion about the advantages of posting Highland's monthly board meeting agendas on our website instead of the three posting locations we have been using. It was agreed that Hanako will type up a resolution and the board will vote on it at the September board meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Open House- John Singsheim has volunteered to smoke meat. We will have the bouncy house for the kids. Barb passed out the Highlander that will be sent out by the 18th inviting the district to the open house. Roxanne Lenny mentioned that even though we did not have an open last year we had record donations. Roxanne has rewritten the "Who We Are" article to make it even more user friendly to our residents.

Personnel Policies Updates

Patty, Roxanne and Chief Fager met last week and updated the policies for hourly employees giving them an additional holiday, additional vacation, and clarified some of the existing policies. They have used area non-profits, other ambulance systems as well as state and federal government policies in their calculations of time off rules. Since there is no district that operates/is structured exactly like our Special District, they feel their due diligence has been thorough and fair. They are finalizing Comp time policy relative to carryover and payout. Chief Fager will review the final efforts at the next Board meeting.

They added one paid holiday so there are now eight paid holidays. They added President's day. Our hourly medical staff gets paid time and a half only if they work a holiday.

Highland is required to follow federal guidelines for comp time which includes a payout upon termination. Rob Keating asked if we were going to accrue it these year to year. Federal Policy states you can have up to 480 hours, but it is not clear if we must carry it forward year to year.

Chief Fager explained that they do not want to have to pay sick time to employees if they do not use it, so the group decided not to group sick time and vacation together as PTO.

Chief Fager described how Evergreen Fire does a tiered process of benefits depending on what employee category each member is in. It aligned with the recommendations the group had already agreed on.

Rob Keating asked if they have calculated what the extra cost would be. They have not. These changes would go into effect next year so will be reflected in the 2022 budget.

Chief Fager said vacation time would remain "use it or lose it" and vacation scheduling was subject to management approval.

Rob Keating asked for more information. He would like to see another special district similar to us and compare their vacation and sick time policies. "If we are not competitive in salary, we need to address that also."

Roxanne Lenny stressed that they had already looked at multiple organizations. Chief Fager and Assistant Chief Felman pointed out that each EMS system is very different, so it is hard to compare apples to apples.

Terri McCarthy asked if we have enough staff to handle extra vacation time and the Chief said we do.

Rob Keating wants to see what the financial effect is. He is supportive of employees taking time off, recharging and spending time with family. However, as a board we have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers to keep costs down.

There was a discussion about whether policies needed Board approval or would be defined at the discretion of the Chief. Subsequent discussion indicated that while the Board believes the Chief has the authority to define policy, it would also be shared prior to implementation. The Board would be informed and given an opportunity for input, but the policies did not require Board vote/approval.

Alan Feldman and Rob Keating discussed The Healthy Family Act which also could affect our policies. If a direct family member gets sick, an employee can use their 80 hours paid time off to care for them.

2 min break 5:25.

Review of the Chief's Benefits.

Originally it was planned for the Board to go into Executive session, but it was decided that it was not necessary.

Chief Fager has put in a lot of extra hours, consistently 50-55 per week. The board had originally thought the job would be 45 hours per week. Patty and Roxanne proposed to give Chief Fager an extra week of vacation to compensate him for his extra time worked this year. They also proposed giving him an extra week of vacation every year forward. They feel that three weeks' vacation per year was more in line with other organizations.

John Zima feels it should be in line with the other employee's time off that the board is considering.

John Zima made a motion to increase the Chief's paid vacation by 5 days (1 week) for 2021, Roxanne Lenny seconded the motion, and all voted in favor it.

The Board also wants Chief Fager to review his hours spent working and identify time and activities that could be off-loaded to others. The end goal is to make sure Chief Fager doesn't work excessive hours that could lead to burn out; the Board wants him to have good work personal life balance.

The Meeting was Adjourned 5:55.