

**HIGHLAND RESCUE TEAM AMBULANCE DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
Highland Station 317 S Lookout Mountain Rd  
December 14, 2021, 3:30pm**

**Chairman Robert Keating called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.**

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

**Others present:** Chief Bob Fager, Asst Chief Alan Feldman, Captain Damon Brown, Lt Carl Joyce, Christina Jantzef (via zoom), Hanako Wyles, Kara Cooper

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

November meeting minutes were approved by the Board as written (1<sup>st</sup> Terry McCarthy, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Zima, unanimous approval).

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

*November Financials* - see financial packet by Christina Jantzef

We are ~92% through the year.

Total Revenues are above target at 96%. With this trend, we are likely to hit 100% by end of year.

Operation Expenses are above target mostly due to wildland team outsourcing.

Capital Expenditures and LOSAP expenses are below target due to timing.

With the ambulance purchase pushed to 2022, total Expenses are well below target

Net change in Fund Balance is \$213K.

Change in Net Assets or Net Income/(Loss) of \$229K.

Ending Cash Balance is \$644K.

*Wildland* –State payments for several 2021 deployments remain outstanding. If they arrive and post in 2021, the process of paying the Wildland Team for their deployments in 2021 is straight forward. If the State payments do not arrive before the year's end, they can still be posted in 2021 on accrual and Team payments will still come from the 2021 budget.

Director Keating asked Lt Joyce if the Wildland billing that is submitted is close to what the State ultimately pays. Lt Joyce confirmed that the amount he submits is very close to what the State pays and that there have been times the State reimburses at a higher rate. Lt Joyce explained he submits payment requests to the State depending on resources deployed e.g., the QRV (Utility) is billed at \$60/day plus gas.

*2021 Budget* – With the ambulance purchase pushed into 2022, amendment of the 2021 Budget no longer needed.

*November Billing* - see Billing Analysis by Hanako Wyles

November billing was low (\$16,839 vs \$29,737 in October) with only 11 transports. Cash receipts were low as well at only \$8,779. But overall, all numbers (billed, cash receipts, write-offs, disallowed, etc.) are comparable to YTD numbers of the past 3 years.

Looking at collection efforts by BC Services, they are collecting about 10% on outstanding debts (\$10,122 on \$96,166 principal on the primary account, \$8,245 on \$94,345 principal on the secondary account since Oct 2020). BC Services takes 25% commission on any amount collected, charges no other fees. Director McCarthy asked Hanako to investigate other collections agencies' success rates and if the 10% debt collection rate is industry average.

**CHIEF'S REPORT** – See written report by Chief Fager

YTD calls are 682 with 236 transports. 44 calls but only 11 transports in November.

*Staffing*- Currently we have 6 paid paramedics (3 FT, 1 PT, 2 PRN), 8 volunteer paramedics (2 newly certified), 1 volunteer EMT-I, 5 volunteer AEMTs (1 LOA, 1 Probationary), 26 volunteer EMTs (1 Reserve, 1 LOA, 3 Probationary) and 3 EMRs. Our next Rookie Class starts in January 2022. New member interviews are in progress, about 50% done. Interest remains high. We had a lot of 3<sup>rd</sup> riders these past weeks and 6 confirmed applicants for the new Rookie Class so far.

*New Ambulance* – The project manager gave us a new completion and delivery date of “very close to the end of January.” Once assembly begins, they will have a more solid delivery date for us and will post progress pictures online for us to view. Chief will share the link with the Board. Once the ambulance is delivered from Washington State to Highland, the ambulance will go on the “road trip” as part of the contract. The “road trip” is 6000mi or 30 days whichever comes first. The mileage of the drive from WA to CO is counted towards the 6000mi.

*2022 Budget*- Chief Fager made the following changes to the 2022 Budget:

- Added funds to Capital Expenditures - Chief Fager attended a 2-day EMS Financial Symposium in November. One of the speakers emphasized that one way to make a grant application more competitive is to add all monies from prospective grants and the entire cost of an item/project utilizing these prospective grants into a budget. This shows grant reviewers that you have put thought into the grant, the item/project, the amount it will cost and how the grant will help you get the item/project. Therefore, Chief has added the full cost of the new QRV along with the potential funds from the EMTS grant we are hoping to get under Capital Expenditures.
- Lowered funds for Property and Liability Insurance- During the renewal process for our 2022 Property & Liability coverage, we changed the deductibles (mistakenly set low at \$0 - \$250 during the switch from Pinnacol to CSD Pool in July 2021) back to the levels we had on our previous P&L plan with Pinnacol. This lowered the insurance cost for 2022 significantly (several thousand dollars).
- Added funds to Training – Damon is working on putting a rope rescue team together and asked to attend a weeklong rope rescue training next summer where he will learn the newest standards and equipment in rope rescue. He will then be certified to teach our members. The cost for this training has been added to the training budget.
- Added funds to Salaries
- Adjusted number for Tax Revenue - Jefferson County Assessor's office sent the final Certification of Tax Valuation.

***Merger with Neighboring Departments***- The Chiefs of Highland Rescue, Genesee Fire, Foothills Fire and Evergreen Fire met to discuss a merger/consolidation of all 4 departments. As with any merger there are pros and cons. Evergreen brings a well-established administration department, training facility, mechanic shop and established Community Paramedic program. All of which would benefit the smaller fire depts and Highland. A concern is that traditionally Evergreen Fire has only had paid medics and all medics must also be fire fighters. Starting January, however, Evergreen plans to recruit volunteer medics and will have a similar set up as Highland in that volunteers and paid medic work side by side. The four Chiefs plan on keeping this dialog open. Consolidating smaller fire departments to one larger department seems to be the trend. The Golden area fire departments (Golden, Fairmount, Pleasant View) have already begun the consolidation process. Golden Gate Fire is merging with Timberline Fire. The 285 corridor departments have been working on a merger as well.

A consolidation of Evergreen Fire, Genesee Fire, Foothills Fire and Highland is years out if it happens at all. There are a lot of variables to consider. Focusing on call volume, consolidating with Evergreen will give our members a significant increase in call volume (700 Highland vs 3500 Evergreen Fire). Most Highland members would welcome more calls while the Evergreen medics would welcome the extra medics to lessen their load. The possibility of establishing a station in Kittridge staffed by Indian Hills Fire was discussed as well.

The next step in the consolidation process is for the four Chiefs to meet again to have a more in-depth discussion on the pros and cons of consolidating and the various consolidation options. If the plans move forward, a study group to review what it would take to consolidate would be commissioned in 2023. The study should take about a year to complete. The final report would be passed on to the various Boards to approve. Once approved by all Boards, then the step of working out merge options would begin. Option one, form a Fire Authority (Each District remains independent with their own Board. Funds would be passed up to the Authority and managed by the Fire Authority Board). Option two, dissolve all Districts and form one new, big District and adopt the Mill Levy of the District with the lowest Mill Levy. This can be done without voter input. In our potential merge scenario, this would be Highland's Mill Levy of 3.5 which is too low for the fire departments. Option three, dissolve all Districts and form one new, big District with a Mill Levy set by the 4 Districts. This option must get voter approval. Chief Fager will keep the Board and membership in the loop as discussions with the other area Chiefs moves forward.

***ROSC-U CPR Devices***- Unfortunately, the maker of our units folded. We have 3 units at 10K each in our inventory with the last unit purchased only in April of this year. Chief Fager and Captain Brown decided to place a bulk purchase for the disposable supplies needed for their use while still available. This came at a cost of \$1800 putting the 2021 EMS Equipment line item over budget but gave us 5 years-worth of supplies. We will need to look at replacement devices the in next years.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

***2021 Audit*** – Prior to voting on the engagement of Haynie & Company to complete Highland's 2021 audit, Director Keating asked Christina for her thoughts on Haynie & Company. Christina gave an overall positive review and recommended continuing their engagement certainly for this audit cycle as Hanako is new in her position and it is close to the begin of the audit process. Additionally, it was noted that Barbara DeBoer and Chief Fager also had positive feedback for Haynie & Company. The company was deemed "good to work with," "reliable," "knowledgeable", and "straight forward". As a government entity, Highland falls under very strict rules set by the government. To comply with these rules, Haynie must add extra steps and work which is reflected in their invoices. Moving forward, however, Christina felt collecting bids from other audit companies to see if Haynie & Company is still competitive in their pricing would be a good move. Director Lenny agreed. We are required to do an audit every year.

***The Board of Directors voted and unanimously approved to engage Haynie & Company to complete our 2021 Audit.***

**Bank Accounts** - 1<sup>st</sup> Bank account profile clean-up: on all 1<sup>st</sup> Bank accounts, the two authorized signers are now Director Lenny and Director McCarthy, Hanako and Christina have viewing rights (they can see account balances and transactions only). Checks need to be signed by both authorized signers. In May, when Director Lenny leaves the Board, she will need to be replaced by another Board member. Chase Bank account profile clean-up: Director Zima and Director McCarthy are the two authorized signers on the Chase checking account (used for patient payments), Christina and Hanako have viewing rights.

**2022 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule** – Hanako made the date revision as requested in the November Board Meeting. The new version was approved and can now be added to our Transparency Notice and filed with DOLA.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**2022 Budget** – Prior to a vote on approving the 2022 Budget, Director Keating wanted the following points of the 2022 Budget clarified:

- Fuel- Director Keating confirmed with Chief Fager that enough funds had been added to the Fuel line item to accommodate the rising costs on propane and diesel. -yes, they have.
- Station Improvements- Director Keating wanted clarified what the funds in the Station Improvement line item were for. Chief Fager responded that the wish list includes adding storage cabinets in the training room, upgrading the old furniture in the bedrooms, adding lockable cabinets for the paid staff who spend regular overnight shifts at the station, and investing in stainless steel appliances to make the kitchen appliances match. Chief Fager added that not all projects will get checked off the list in one year, but these are projects that will improve the look and quality of the station. Director Lenny added that polishing up the station is a worthwhile endeavor. It shows we value our volunteers, members. They spend long shifts at the station volunteering their time. Also, it looks attractive to new applicants and visitors. They see a professional, well put together agency.
- Rope Rescue Training- Director Keating asked Captain Brown to elaborate on the rope rescue training he wants to attend next summer. Cpt Brown explained there is high demand among Highland members to form a rope rescue team. Years ago, Cpt Brown was a certified instructor. However, new technology standards and equipment have been added to rope rescue. This course will bring his knowledge up to date with the newest National standards. Two officers from Foothills Fire attended the same rope rescue training last summer and highly recommended this training. Cpt Brown will bring all he learned back to Highland, train all interested members to the newest standard. This ensures Highland and Foothills Fire members are operating with the same set of skills and methods on scene unifying rescue efforts and ultimately benefitting the patient.

***Vote to approve Resolution No. 2021-03, Combined Resolutions of The Highland Rescue Team Ambulance District Adopting the Budget, Setting the Mill Levy and Appropriating Sums of Money. Director McCarthy made the motion to approve, Director Lenny seconded. Unanimously approved.***

**Annual Awards Party**- Director Keating inquired when and where the annual awards party will be held this year: back at Mt Vernon Canyon Club in February as has been traditionally or again as a summer picnic as

last summer due to COVID restrictions on indoor gatherings? Captain Brown reported that feedback from the membership on location preference is inconclusive. Captain Brown who is the main organizer of the annual awards party will put some thought into this in the next weeks. Director Lenny voiced her preference for hosting the event at MVCC to strengthen Highland's relationship with the Club.

*Septic Tank project*- Captain Brown reported no further progress yet. The landowner is in dispute with the County regarding water source to his property. The owner wants to drill a well, but the County will not issue a well permit, asks him to tap into LMWD instead. Once the owner has his water issues sorted with the County, he will refocus on the septic tank installation. Overall, the owner continues to be very motivated and willing to work with Highland on installing a jointly used septic tank set up. Timeline is still not firm though.

*QRV 286 Replacement*- The most current quote for purchasing a new vehicle to replace the old QRV is 58K which is higher than the original quote. According to EMTS grant stipulation, we can only spend 25% of the MRSP on extras to outfit the QRV such as extra lights, compartments, and sirens. Therefore, bumping the base model up, gave us a higher MSRP rate which gives us more funds to pay for needed extras. The EMTS grant, if awarded to us, covers 50%.

*Election 2022* – Director Zima reminded the Board that a vote to adopt a resolution to appoint a DOE for the 2022 election is needed during the next Board meeting.

**The Meeting was adjourned 4:46pm**