

MEETING MINUTES
Rural Structural Fire Protection Review Taskforce (HB 2522)

Meeting: Wednesday, May 15, 2024, 9:30 a.m.
 Location: Salem OSFM HQ, Mt. Hood Conference Room

Introduction

CALL TO ORDER

Chief Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:36 AM

Attendance

MEMBERS & ALTERNATES

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Roger Johnson, Chair	X	
Christopher Griffin, OFDDA	Virtual	
Ty Darby, OFMA	Virtual	
Genoa Ingram, OFDDA/OFVA	X	
Mike Cook, OFVA	Virtual	
Karl Koenig, OSFFC		X
Ben Stange, SDAO		X
Mike Hussey, OFCA	Virtual	
James Cleavenger, LOC		X
Brian Stewart, OFCA	X	
Irik Rinnert, OSFFC		X
Kevin Cameron, AOC		X
Mariah Rawlins, OSFM	X	
Travis Medema, OSFM	X	

ALTERNATES

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Rick Huffman, OFCA		X
Alvin Klausen, AOC	Virtual	
Scott Hollett, LOC		X

STAFF

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Mariana Ruiz-Temple, GFSPC Executive Director		X
Eric Gemmil, OSFM	X	
Erik Rau, OSFM	X	
Adam Meyer, OSFM, Administrator	X	
Kassie Keller, OSFM	X	
Amanda Wright, OSFM, Scribe	X	
Christy Monson, DOJ	Virtual	

OTHERS in ATTENDANCE

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Claire McGrew, OSFM	X	
Chad Hawkins, OSFM	X	

Meeting Notes

Notice of this meeting was published through Oregon Transparency Website:
<https://www.oregon.gov/transparency/Pages/Public-Meetings.aspx>

Meeting

On Wednesday May 15, 2024, at 9:36 a.m. Chair Chief Roger Johnson called the HB2522 Task Force Committee Meeting to order.

Meeting Minutes Review

Task Force Chair, Chief Johnson

The meeting minutes from April 17, 2024, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously. The minutes can be viewed at the following link: [Oregon State Fire Marshal : State of Oregon](#)

ORS 478 Review

Task Force Chair Chief Johnson, Adam Meyer

478.340: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

- DOJ spoke with Labor and Employment; ORS allows to collect from the salaries. This does not apply to Paid Leave Oregon; this is for health insurance cover.

478.470: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

478.920: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

478.924: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

- Fire districts have no authority to make laws and rules within a city.

478.927: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

478.930: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

478.940: Recommendation is to modify the code to be available digitally. Clarity on “if a fire district adopts code. OSFM staff will work on verbiage with the help of DOJ.

- Only applies if the local fire district adopts the code. Need to modernize the terms available online or at the district office. Need to have a copy of the code in the format that the requestor wants.

478.960: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

- Language is consistent.

478.990: The committee unanimously recommended moving forward as written.

Top Priorities Report and Exercise

Task Force Chair, Chief Johnson

Cost Recovery for Services Performed & Response

One of the challenges from some is that they are EMS and fire. Mob plan used statues wording. The mob plan defines cost but is very flexible. Cost is not decided by the OSFM.

What about system development charges? Is it allowable.

478.310

- Contradicts another section which says you can charge 3x. The new language from the latest legislation that was added allows you to charge three times, but this is very clearly saying you cannot charge more than your cost.
- Cost recovery is a big challenge for fire districts because of insurance information if the injured had any. Even with the ability to bill it is difficult to collect.
- As mentioned there are a couple different sections that all point to each other or give contradicting information such as: Standardized Cost Schedule [ORS 476.290](#), [Chapter 837](#), [SB1068](#).

The governor directed a work group to be created stemming from HB 4133. The new budget note work group is between ODF/OSFM/fire industry. The work group will have one main group and two working groups. One of the groups is strictly funding. The work on HB2522 is specific to these statutes; classification was one of those topics in the budget note this work group reports to the agencies and again it's focused on funding mitigation, funding or response, funding wildfire systems, and classification. The first meeting will be on June 3, 2024, at the Riverhouse in Bend, OR.

Taxing Authority & Enterprise Zones

Often fire districts are not included the discussions when it comes to enterprise zones, and urban renewal. Even after urban renewal areas are established budgets are modified without including local emergency personnel. Urban renewal expands water mains and sewer mains to an area of town that's undeveloped that then brings commercial development which increases the population and structure who will ultimately expect emergency service coverage.

Another challenge is that urban renewal funds take away revenue and increase service demand.

Data centers fall into this.

- Can the services provided be adjusted.
- Maybe a higher level of input when an urban renewal is being developed.

Unprotected Land, Annexation, Service Coverage, District Boundaries

Per the 195 agreement, emergency personnel should have a seat at the table when annexing property, however there is no consulting that is happening. It is imperative that counties understand why 195 is so important. Stronger language would help. https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors195.html

Section 8 of Senate Bill 1068 – where are the counties with it? Is there potential work to be done – Ongoing talks with Oregon counties.

Unprotected vs under protected - funding in Senate Bill 762 for the department to do immediate response, working with the rural fire protection districts on their ownership, that kind of boundary between rural fire protection districts and rangeland fire protection districts. It's historically been called under protected where there was a loosely fitted group of landowners out with tractor plows and discs.

Seante Bill 590 allowed croplands to be included as language in rangeland fire protection districts because historically it was excluded. Also dealt with the liability so if local landowners responded to a fire they were not held liable for damage.

In rural areas, people are purchasing properties and wanting to develop them; they are outside of the fire district service area. We don't want to annex. They are 10 miles away from a fire station. Districts are unable to provide a good ISO rating, so we can't provide effective service. Homes being built in these remote areas now can't afford the home that they built, and they're putting pressure on service providers to annex some. It's creating a growing problem with the cost and impact of insurance in the environment. Representative Marsh has been running into this issue. Maybe we could collaborate.

Adapting to EMS Modernization

Concerns: statutory language was written as if EMS was a part. Feels like the resources are not there. Every spot in Oregon is required to have an EMS plan but not for fire.

Seventy percent of the people transferred are at a capped reimbursement rate because Medicare/Medicaid prevents agencies from seeking some reimbursement where they should receive it, even if it's for the adjuncts and EMS equipment that is used. The ASA tool prevents agencies from getting reimbursement and it's weaponized in some areas. It's not inclusive. Lift assist was pushed out of the conversation in 2020.

Some issues with private vs. public EMS.

This will be discussed further in June. We will ask Dr. Lehrfeld to present.

Recruitment, Workforce, Service Level

2022 Representative Evans hosted firefighter capacity group. LPRO assisted and brought in a survey specialist to build a tool which was distributed statewide to talk about capacity, volunteer issues, challenges it's probably the most comprehensive snapshot of the status of volunteer and firefighter and the state of Oregon. Some 2022. Great data. These studies were the foundational work that led to the .25 tax to help fund capacity.

There was discussion about how to meet the new recruits with where they're at. Some had questions about mental help because of the duties of the job. Not as many people want a career in firefighting, maybe just 10 years and moving on to something else.

Big challenge recruiting career firefighters and admin and ambulance numbers have also decreased.

Mutual Aid, Service Agreements

Related chapters are 478.260, and 478.300.

Some discussion at Fire Defense Board chief level about mutual aid, intercounty mutual aid, and immediate response.

At the local and county levels it continues to evolve, however there are some operational challenges.

Burning, Permits, Prohibited

Coordination and consistency between various state agencies/entities would be beneficial so that all fire districts are doing the same.

Close Out and Future Needs

Task Force Chair Chief Johnson

Send out Rep Evans report.

Invite Dr. Lehrfeld to June meeting as a guest speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

- Next meeting: June 27 at OSFM HQ