

MEETING MINUTES

Rural Structural Fire Protection Review Taskforce (HB 2522)

Meeting: Monday, October 30, 2023, 9:30am
 Location: Salem OSFM HQ, Mt. Hood Conference Room

Attendance

MEMBERS & ALTERNATES

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

STAFF

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Mariana Ruiz-Temple, GFSPC Executive Director	X	
Eric Gemmil, OSFM	X	
Adam Meyer, OSFM, Administrator	X	
Sabrina Bies, OSFM, Scribe	X	
Kassie Keller, OSFM		X
Alison Green, OSFM		X
Amanda Wright		X

OTHERS in ATTENDANCE

Member	In Attendance	Not in Attendance
Claire McGrew	X	

Meeting Notes

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

Leader's intent and taskforce orientation

- Evolution of fire / emergency response needs / calls
- Tax law changes (measures 5, 47, 50)
- Merges and consolidations
- Wildfire problem and conflagrations
- **Admin support** – Eric, Adam, Sabrina – helping with administration.
- **Data support** from Eric. (Subject matter expert)
- **Charter** – taking a look, getting familiar with it. Feedback plan – reports to GFSPC to their quarterly meetings. Will ultimately reports to Legislature.
- **Roberts rules** – follow for the meeting.
- **Public meetings** – public meeting definition
- **Possible survey** – visualizing the data identify and needs in this meeting for items for him to work on that are data or research related.
- **Meeting timelines** – the goal is to meet monthly, some field trips or meetings around the state.
- Issues related to this work in a particular area to hold the meeting in that area and invite local experts.

Historical Perspective – Mariana Ruiz-Temple shared a PowerPoint

- HB 2522 started as a different bill and became a study bill from Rep. Marsh.
- Conversation about SB 1068 – the bill that passed last session to let districts annex in different lands with criteria.
- Population changes, demographic changes, expectation changes, geographic changes,
- Review of HB 2522
- Statistics
- Maps, population, districts, tax ramifications, volunteer percentages. Possible research areas:
 - Where has population grown more than 5%?
 - combination departments (volunteer and career firefighters)
 - What RFPD's are transport providers?
 - Any data identifying tourist/weekend/snowbird/visitor influence
 - Off-mass or coordinated mobilizing roles?
 - Trying to keep up with complexity and requirements / technology changes.
 - Transient / tourism occupy tax for public safety
 - Timeline graph showing 10-year increments
 - Volunteer to paid departments
 - Visitors/ tourists
 - Collate number of requests in WUI between/ after capacity grant
 - Tax districts in Oregon

Issue scan exercise (*Attachment A*)

One or two things on the wall that resonates with you.

- Annexation or fire district (loss of future income), care and feeding and training of volunteers – reduces risk to FD and getting sustainable FF force. Having foresight into the future to meet the needs of the future and keep community safe.
- How to pay off stuff -tax implications across the board. Need to figure out where we are today/ what we are capable of. Develop a needs list. Service evaluation
- Billing for response outside of your area, tax issues
- Monetary, volunteers, update on 1957, 2040
- Anchoring service into what we provide to the citizens of Oregon.
- Always playing catch up – would be nice to be ahead.
- Financial – taxing and cost recoveries (property taxes, strengthening existing ones)
- Taxation, individual incidents that financial impact fire service
- Education for boards, data, reporting – date of where we are.
- Protect and gain revenue, ambulance business now – surrounding ASA's. Old ORS 478
- The mission is to protect people or Oregon and visitors- service level assessments, service level conversation and barriers to growing expectations.
- Financing and stature needs to be more understandable. Streamline the process.
- A lot revolves around money and would love to see a few understandable recommendations for legislation that can be something.
- Navigate working on a new fire district and integrating EMS work. Cost recovery for things outside of fire district.

Close out/ Future needs

- SDC's and enterprise zone SME
- What are the tax deferment zones in Oregon
- OHA staff to talk about Rep Graber EMF modernization.
- Mutual aid and updated agreements
- Clean up ORS 478
- ASA addresses - billing
- Burning – air quality zones

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM
- Next meeting: November 29th at OSFM

2522 Taskforce Breakout Group Q&A Exercise

Existing challenges RFPDs have experienced involving existing Statute:

1. Mergers and annexation
2. Enterprise zones, local improvement zones, urban renewal
3. Tax caps/ Revenue
4. Tax exempt lands (pay per call)
5. Tax Zones
6. Growth/population increase (and decrease in areas)
7. System complexity/ Public understanding
8. Service level expectations/ Demand
9. Legislative/policy patchwork
10. Loss of volunteers
11. Unprotected properties (SB1068) and development
12. Adapting to new and complex technologies
13. City annexing land
14. Difficult to recover costs for suppressing unlawful fires (+ battling insurance companies)
15. Limitations on ability to increase personnel to protect the public.

How we modernize and improve structural fire protection operations of rural fire protection districts:

1. ORS 478.315 (Parks)
2. District formation assistance
3. City annexation glidepath (ORS 198.882)
4. Exemptions to tax caps for public safety
5. Exemptions to tax improvement districts, enterprise zones...
6. Reporting and notification
7. Fire code and standards (Ex: for stations)
8. Public education (Burning,
9. Include fire/public safety in EMS policy
10. Clean up & modernize ORS 478 (478.002, Allow for 3 member boards, Increase pay for Directors
11. Tax assessor statute / Interpretation (Counties)
12. Service reviews to improve efficiency
13. Shift in focus -- Fire calls have gone down EMS call up.
14. Positive changes from SB 1078, FD placed in districts, and 1068 which took care of annexation.
15. Work with water departments and SDC – charge for lighting.
16. One radio channel – dispatch and operational – one standard for everyone
17. Diversity in districts – monthly reporting – would it make sense – on an annual basis publish report structural fire protection they can provide – report on what you are able to do.

Opportunities to improve efficiencies within rural fire protection districts:

1. System development charges (SDC's) (fire carve out)
2. Give a seat at EMS table
3. Educate policy makers and fire chiefs
4. Volunteer side 390 section – more robust when addressing volunteers, maintaining recruitment capabilities
5. Address need for a continuous fire department board.
6. Improve efficiency – Equipment program, recruitment, and training.

Additional gaps and opportunities for rural fire protection districts:

1. Inter-agency coordination
2. Structure/ forest boundaries
3. Model ASA ordinance

4. Develop standard of coverage (Fire) (ex: “evaluate current service level objectives”)
5. Funding to meet service level needs
6. County responsibility for unprotected lands
7. Small departments need a voice – they cover a lot of Oregon
8. Allow fire districts to charge fees for services, temporary series, someone comes in and adds to, What recourse when a big event happens that will take most of small FD budget?
9. Methodology for types of responses -a hand full of dept. or districts contracts with DOC. Some districts have campgrounds or state parks. Is there a model you are recouped for that work?
10. Is there a larger system that can be built for communications?

Additional discussion items, possibly out of scope:

1. Revenue / cost recovery
2. Forest-structural jurisdiction/ response
3. Every state is different. Maybe look at different revenue streams- tax systems.