

EMERGENCY FIRE COST COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING

November 6, 2024

In accordance with the provisions of ORS 477.455, a special meeting of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee (EFCC) was held via Zoom Video Conferencing on Wednesday, November 6, 2023.

Committee Members Present (via Zoom)

Brennan Garrelts, Chair
Kathryn VanNatta
Erik Lease
Chris Johnson

Others Present (via Zoom)

Nancy Hirsch, EFCC Administrator
Lorna Hobbs, EFCC Finance Coordinator
Berta Bodi, Observer, ODF
Emily Source, ODF
Chris Cline, Acting Chief of Fire Protection, ODF
Levi Hopkins, Prevention & Policy Manager, Fire Protection, ODF
Eric Kranzush, Roseburg Resources
Kyle Williams, ODF
Andrea Lively, ODF
Jake Barnett, ODF
Tracy Wrolson, ODF
Ron Graham, ODF
Deanna Drinkwater, ODF
Karen Jarratt, ODF
Nicole Mann, ODF
Mike Cafferata, ODF
Jessica Neujahr, ODF
Teresa Williams, ODF
Matt Howard, ODF
Echo Murray, ODF
Chad Washington, OFIC
Pat Skrip, Association Manager, DFPA
Gina Miner, COD District Business Manager, ODF
Jamie Paul, Detection Camera Coordinator, ODF
Dominique Ray, Office Manager, CFPA
April McDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
TJ Ramos, Assistant SOA Director, ODF
Dan Goody, Astoria District Forester, ODF
Randy Hereford, retired

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER, CHAIR COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Garrelts called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. All committee members were present and there was a quorum. He mentioned that if someone from the public wants to make comments, it would be taken care of in Agenda Item #5. Please use the Chat Feature or Raise your hand feature and I will ask and give a quick moment to allow for people to do that, but as we near that Agenda Item please be ready to do so. He also mentioned that meeting materials were emailed out to Committee members available on the Board of Forestry website under committees, EFCC.

Chair Comments: Today as this is a special meeting, we face the critical task of evaluating the proposals that implement essential recommendations from MGO's comprehensive review of fire cost management practices. These recommendations are designed to enhance transparency and accountability, and ensuring that our fire suppression expenses are tracked, reported, and funded accurately and equitably across the state. Those are the same values that this committee has as well.

He recognized the outstanding dedication of the EFCC staff, the protection policy and business services protection finance unit manager and ODF district staff that contributed to this effort. He extended his sincere thanks to all involved.

Kyle Williams was asked if he had any comments. He acknowledged the collaborative process and thanked EFCC staff, Brennan, EFCC members and staff for their engagement. He also acknowledged that it brings us well in line with the MGO recommendations. This is an opportunity over time to help us with alignment between our Biennial budgets and our Fiscal budgeting process. To me, those are the highlights of this effort, and should the committee choose to adopt this policy I would commit that our Districts would comply with that effort.

ITEM 2: OREGON FOREST LAND PROTECTION FUND PROPOSED RULES *[Decision Item]*

Chair Garrelts stated that the agenda contains 3 interconnected decision items, each requiring careful consideration, and it is designed as a cohesive package. Given their interdependence I have asked our administrator to present the staff reports for agenda items 2-4 before we move forward with motions.

Chair Garrelts mentioned that if any part of the rule change does not pass or gets altered or modified in a significant manner, we will need to forgo today's decisions as the authority sought in the new policy depends on the approval of all three.

Nancy Hirsch said she has appreciated the support of Chair Garrelts and the committee over the last few months for her and Lorna as they work through this policy and, also appreciate the true collaboration and leadership that Tracy Wrolson has provided.

She provided a brief background on how we got to this point today, and then discussed the specific policy pieces, recognizing that they are interdependent.

Chair Garrelts asked if there were any comments or questions or motions by committee members. Since there were none, he gave the floor to Nancy to discuss Agenda Item #3.

ITEM 3: GUIDELINES FOR ELIGIBILITY OF FIREFIGHTING COSTS POLICY *[Decision Item]*

Nancy then provided background information on conversations and meetings that have occurred since the September meeting. EFCC staff and the ODF Protection Finance Unit Manager have had several individual conversations with district and association personnel and, also hosted formal meetings with ODF and operating forest protective association leadership.

Both meetings with leadership were scheduled to ensure a complete understanding of the proposed changes, address questions and concerns and seek feedback for improvements. Based on feedback received there were improvements made to the proposed policy that increased clarity, and an example was added into the not eligible repair section. There were no substantive changes to the policy or fiscal impact.

Lorna and I are committed to continue to work through the implementation process and remain hopeful that any concerns and challenges will be met with innovation and creativity that we so often see from ODF districts and the associations.

She then provided an overview of the changes to the policy since September. A header has been added to be consistent with the Department of Forestry's policy format; we added definitions for emergency use and incident resource agreements; federal and rural fire departments were added to eligibility if they meet the other requirements; we removed a reference to ODF and the State of Oregon policy; we reworded the list of managers not eligible, primarily for clarity; added an example related to repair that is not eligible; also added federal and rural fire department personnel equipment and support costs during mutual aid periods are not eligible; and added recoveries related to the \$25,000 per day under the deductible and incentives to clarify what is already in practice.

Next step will be, if agenda items 2 & 3 are approved, Lorna and I will coordinate with ODF and deliver training across the department and with the associations prior to implementation.

Chair Garrelts asked if there were any comments, questions or individual motions regarding Agenda Item #3. Hearing none, Nancy moved on to Agenda Item #4.

ITEM 4: GUIDELINES FOR ELIGIBILITY OF FIREFIGHTING COSTS FOR THE OREGON FOREST LAND PROTECTION FUND DIRECTIVE *[Decision Item]*

This agenda item is necessary if the committee approves agenda items 2 & 3. We would seek approval to rescind the current directive. The rescinded directive will basically be replaced by the new policy, if approved, and would go into effect January 1, 2025. The new policy serves the same purpose as the directive did historically, the term policy replaced the outdated directive term.

Chair Garrelts asked again if there were any questions, comments or discussions necessary regarding anything that Nancy presented.

Hearing none, he then proceeded to discuss the 3 motions.

Agenda Item #2 – The recommended language for a motion is the EFCC directs the administrator to proceed with the promulgation of the proposed rules and rule changes as presented in the draft language for Chapter 629, Division 165 to go into effect on January 1, 2025. A motion was made by Kathryn VanNatta and seconded by Erik Lease. All were in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 – The recommended motion is EFCC will adopt the new eligibility of firefighting costs for the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund policy with a January 1, 2025, effective date. Motion made by Kathryn VanNatta and seconded by Erik Lease. All were in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item #4 The recommended language for this motion is the EFCC rescinds the guidelines for eligibility of firefighting costs for the Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund Directive effective January 1, 2025. Motion made by Kathryn VanNatta and seconded by Erik Lease. The correct date of the motion should be December 31, 2024. Kathryn VanNatta amended her motion to reflect the date of December 31, 2024, seconded by Erik Lease. All were in favor, both motions carried unanimously.

ITEM 5: PUBLIC COMMENT/GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Garrelts asked if there was anyone wishing to make a comment at this time. Hearing none, for the good of the order he again wanted to give a sincere thank you to all the work that has gone into this effort, and I think this a great step forward to help with the transparency and all those things I mentioned for the value that these rule changes will provide for Oregon's fire cost tracking.

Next quarterly EFCC meeting will be on Tuesday, January 7th and the Board of Forestry will meet on January 8th and 9th.

Chair Garrelts adjourned the meeting at 10:37.

Minutes drafted by: Berta Bodi

Minutes reviewed by: Nancy Hirsch and Lorna Hobbs

Minutes amended per committee recommendation by: Kelsey Ramos

Amended minutes approved by: Nancy Hirsch