

EMERGENCY FIRE COST COMMITTEE

January 2, 2024

In accordance with the provisions of ORS 477.455, a meeting of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee (EFCC) was held in the Tillamook Room of the Oregon Department of Forestry Headquarters in Salem and via Zoom Video Conferencing on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Committee Members Present

Brennan Garrelts, Chair
Kathryn VanNatta
Erik Lease (via Zoom)
Chris Johnson (via Zoom)

Others Present (in person)

Nancy Hirsch, EFCC Administrator
Lorna Hobbs, EFCC Finance Coordinator
Mike Shaw, Deputy State Forester, ODF
Ryan Miller, Acting Chief of Fire Protection, ODF
Ron Graham, Deputy Chief, Operations, Fire Protection, ODF

Neal Miller, Fire Cost Recovery Specialist, ODF
Kiel Nairns, Fire Protection Division, ODF
Levi Hopkins, Prevention & Policy Manager, Fire Protection, ODF

Others Present (via Zoom)

Tracy Wrolson, Protection Finance Unit Manager
Courtney Odom, SWO District, ODF
Karen Jarratt, SWO District Business Manager, ODF
April McDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
Shelby Berry, Admin Support, Fire Protection, ODF
Jerilee Johnson, ODF
Eric Kranzush, Giustina
Justin Hallet, ODF
Teresa Williams, ODF
Kyle Williams, OFIC

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER, CHAIR COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Garrelts called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. He and new committee member Kathryn VanNatta were present in the room. Committee members Chris Johnson and Erik Lease were present via Zoom video conference and there was a quorum.

Chair Garrelts welcomed the newest committee member Kathryn VanNatta, who was accepted by the Board of Forestry. She is representing NW Oregon and all Oregon Small Woodland owners, and she currently serves as president of the Northwest Forest Protective Association. She has a lot of relative experiences and is an excellent addition to our committee.

All meeting materials will be available on the EFCC website as soon as possible following the conclusion of this meeting.

Chair Garrelts congratulated Mike Shaw, former Division Chief, who is now the Deputy State Forester.

Chair Garrelts provided an update on Senator Steiner's fire funding committee stating EFCC is a member of this committee. The committee recognizes the intolerable nature that resulted in many landowners

across the state have been stating that their pro rata fire costs have increased. This committee has met twelve times for 3-hour meetings, and we have done a lot of brainstorming and discussion in coming to understand how costs work, how they function and what that means for all types of landowners (from industrial working forestland to small acre lots on both west and east side) and the grazing community. Significant progress has been made and Senator Steiner has put forth a legislative concept (LC) and we expect an initial draft back next week. There will be a thorough review of the LC to ensure it is in alignment with the vision of the committee. The LC will be submitted for short legislative session. Brennan is optimistic to see some balance in expected rates in the future and is hopeful to help address ODF's cash flow challenges. This group, which included primarily rate payers in the system, and many ODF staff, will review the draft language to ensure the LC meets all needs. He is optimistic that this could pass this session.

Chair Garrelts added that his appointment expires the end of January 2024. His reappointment has been submitted to the Board of Forestry for approval at their January 3 meeting.

ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 EFCC MEETING *[Decision Item]*

Committee member Kathryn VanNatta motioned to approve the September 5, 2023 Emergency Fire Cost Committee meeting minutes as emailed to committee members. The updated minutes made changes in attendees. There were no changes in administrative content. Erik Lease seconded. All approved and none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 3: FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE OREGON FOREST LAND PROTECTION FUND *[Information Item]*

The financial status of the Oregon Forestland Protection Fund was reported by Lorna Hobbs, EFCC Finance Coordinator and reviewed by the committee. Lorna noted the report covers the current fiscal year actual revenues and expenditures through November 30, 2023 and projected revenues and expenditures through the end of the fiscal year.

The beginning balance on July 1, 2023 was **\$12,029,626**.

On the report under estimated revenues/transfers in, estimated assessment revenues were updated to reflect new data for FY24. Previously, total assessment revenues for the fiscal year were estimated at \$9.2M. They are now estimated at \$9.4M – a \$227,000 increase.

- Item #1: Actual assessment revenues received as of November 30, 2023 total \$7,569,733. This is 80% of the total projected revenue for the fiscal year.
- Item #2: Harvest tax revenues received to date total \$1,088,757, which is 48% of the projected revenue. Additional harvest tax revenue will be received in February and May.
- Item #3: The current amount of interest received is \$198,987. The interest rate rose to 4.8% in September and to 5% in October.

The total revenue to date for FY24 is **\$8,857,477**.

On the report underestimated expenditures for FY24:

- Item #1: Payroll and operating expenses are still estimated at \$185,000 for FY24.
- Item #2: The OFLPF contribution for FY24 severity costs will be \$3M, and will be transferred to ODF now that the majority of assessment revenues have come in.
- Item #3: This is the reallocation of the \$100,873 received from Coos Forest Protective Association for the balance owed on their advance for fire season 2018. This money is part of the OFLPF's \$10M contribution for that fire season.

For the 2023 fire season draft claims, the current estimated net claim total for fiscal year 2024 claims is just over **\$38,000,000**.

\$10M has been transferred to ODF for fire season 2023 in the form of advances or loans to Coos Forest Protective Association and Douglas Forest Protective Association.

Total expenditures to date equal \$10,100,873, including the transfer of the payment from CFPA for FY19. ***The fund balance as of November 30, 2023 was \$10,786,229 and the estimated balance on June 30, 2024 is \$10,719,271.***

There were no questions from committee members.

ITEM 4: WEATHER UPDATE *[Information Item]*

Deputy Chief of Fire Protection, Ron Graham, provided a brief weather update noting the combined effort by ODF meteorologists and the Northwest Coordination Center. The drought this year compared to last year has had significant recovery with less recovery in central Oregon. Northeast Oregon is showing some abnormally dry conditions this year as opposed to last year. This winter hasn't had much precipitation, which is not typical for El Nino. Nationwide, the SE and SW are still showing considerable drought, which is concerning because ODF shares national resources. The agency also has a strong relationship with New Mexico and ODF commonly sends resources there to help prior to the start of fire season in Oregon. Temperature outlooks are still showing a decent chance of above normal temperatures across the U.S. There's no strong indicator of either above or below normal precipitation in January across Oregon, except for the NW down to the south-central part of the state where there's a chance of above normal precipitation.

There will be a cooling trend over the next 14 days, following a warm (not abnormal) December. This cooling will create better chances of precipitation and the lowest snow levels this year.

Ron noted that it is still very early in the year to predict fire season conditions, but he is comfortable with no strong indicators of an early fire season start, which is good news. He affirmed that the agency would continue to track conditions closely each month to be as best prepared as possible for fire season in June.

ITEM 5: UPDATE ON STATUS OF LARGE FIRE COST COLLECTION EFFORTS *[Information Item]*

Neil Miller, Cost Recovery Specialist for ODF provided this update noting this is his last official EFCC meeting. He will be retiring the first of March. Neil then introduced Kiel Nairns who will be replacing him as the Cost Recovery Specialist and providing future reports.

Since the last meeting in September, there have been several new cost collection claims and demands sent to the identified responsible parties. On the report, these fires are listed twice – on the first page, and then again on the second page under New Fire Cost Collection Claims section.

- Douglas Forest Protective Association (DFPA) – Days Coffee fire – The BLM is involved in this fire, and it took a while to get through the reconciliation process with them. The actual cost of the fire was \$893,186; however, the investigation didn't prove strong negligence, so ODF is seeking the statutory limit of \$300,000 per ORS 477.120 since this occurred on a logging operation.
- Southwest Oregon District (SWO) – Medco B fire – The Department of Justice (DOJ) is assisting with negotiations, but ODF is entitled to the statutory limit since this fire also occurred on a logging operation.
- DFPA – Rice Creek fire – The BLM is also involved in this fire, and it also caused delays. ODF is currently in communication with the responsible party.
- West Oregon District – Kimberling Mountain fire – The DOJ is assisting, and a favorable settlement is expected since this is a strong case of negligence.
- DFPA – Archie Creek / Star Mountain fires – The DOJ mediations are planned for late March with other affected agencies and the responsible party.
- Coos FPA (CFPA)– North Bank Lane MM8 fire – A demand was recently submitted to the responsible party and a favorable settlement is anticipated.

- Tillamook District – Pike Road fire – A demand was recently submitted to the responsible party and a favorable settlement is anticipated.
- DFPA – Mystic Mountain fire – ODF has been communicating with the responsible party's insurance agent and attorney. Documents have been shared with them and they are still being reviewed. No offer has been discussed yet.
- SWO – Fielder Creek fire – A responsible party has offered a reasonable settlement offer of \$300,000. ODF is hopeful that the payment will have been received by the next EFCC meeting.
- DFPA – Cougar Creek fire – A responsible party has been provided the case file and is reviewing currently. No offer has been received yet.
- CFPA – Twelvemile Lane fire – CFPA initially expressed they were going to pursue costs for this fire; however, they have now requested Salem Protection Division seek cost collection. A demand letter has been sent to the responsible party for the statutory limit per ORS 477.120. The actual cost of the fire was \$1.2M. ODF was contacted by the insurance agent stating payment will be sent and released in the new year.

For the remaining fires on page one of this report, ODF has received a total of \$9,316.97 through payment plans since the last EFCC meeting.

For closed fire cost collections:

- SWO – Hugo Road 7251 fire – A payment was officially received. This global settlement included payment to OSFM and ODF. ODF's portion was eighty percent of the claim for a total of \$720,000.
- CFPA – Hensley Hill fire – The tracking of this payment was not recorded initially in the Cost Recover Program, however, after some research, it was discovered that payment was received in full in October 2022.

For significant fire investigations in progress or under DOJ review:

- Klamath Lake District (KLD) – Golden Fire, North Cascade District – 224 fire, and Northeast Oregon – West Campbell fires have been added to the report. The West Campbell fire is waiting on cost certification before demands can be sent.
- SWO – Fielder Creek, West Oregon – Kimberling Mountain, Tillamook – Pike Road, DFPA – Archie Creek / Star Mountain, CFPA – North Bank Lane MM8, and SWO – Medco B fires have all dropped off the list after investigations and cost certifications are now complete.
- SWO – Slater fire – The cost certification was recently received; however, this case is on hold pending the private plaintiffs, who live in California, complete their litigation suit with the responsible party.

Chair Garrelts thanked Neil for his service to EFCC and ODF. He appreciates the focus and dedication he has provided, and he wished Neil a wonderful retirement on behalf of the committee.

ITEM 6: SET DISTRICT DEDUCTIBLE RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 25 *[Decision Item]*

Nancy Hirsch, EFCC Administrator, provided this agenda item, opening with a reminder that per administrative rule, the EFCC is required annually to review the upcoming fiscal year district deductible rates. There were no planned increases allotted in ODF's current biennial budget. Consequently, no changes are recommended. She then asked the committee for a motion to leave the rates at \$0.10 per acre for timber, and \$0.05 per acre for grazing for fiscal year 2025.

Chair Garrelts noted that fiscal year 2025 is July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. He asked for a motion. Kathryn VanNatta motioned to approve the current amount of \$.10 for timber, \$.05 for grazing for fiscal year 2025. Erik Lease seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none opposed and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 7: FISCAL YEARS 22 AND 23 AUDIT REPORTS [*Decision Item*]

Nancy Hirsch provided an overview of the audit reports. For FY22 (fire season 2021), this report is coming later than we try to do because fire season 2021 was also an insurance claim year, and the insurance claim year runs on a different timeline than the fiscal years. The EFCC staff were prioritizing the insurance claim first to ensure accuracy and timeliness towards closing the insurance claim. In fire season 21 (FY22), Nancy was the Acting State Forester and Tim Keith had returned as the Interim EFCC Administrator. Tim worked closely with Lorna Hobbs and other ODF fire business staff, as well as the insurance adjusters and their forensic auditors who were involved due to the claim, in the overall audit. Nancy explained that she will provide an overview of the report and noted the audit reports are available on the EFCC's website now. She also mentioned that all the audits were performed remotely due to Covid-19.

Fiscal Year 22 (fire season 2021):

- Total extra costs were \$116,570,566. After reductions were made, district deductibles, and fire cost recoveries, the total estimated net claim to the Oregon Forestland Protection Fund and General Fund was \$58,904,877. Details are included in the table on page 1 of the audit report.
- Total cost under the insurance claim is currently at \$65,678,904 and has been validated by the insurance auditors. Of that amount, ODF will soon be receiving a \$12 million partial payment.

FY22 audit results are as follows:

- Total reversals for charges in FY22 was \$136,479.83, which is less than 1% of the fiscal year net claim. This low percentage is a result of improvements made in processes, training and communication between Salem central staff and district staff over the last few years. Lessons learned for future fire seasons are noted on page 3.
- There were 9 large fires in FY22, plus 3 early spring fires ranging from \$1M to \$40M in gross costs. Two fires – Bootleg and Patton Meadow, part of the Fox Complex in Klamath-Lake District – were eligible for Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) through FEMA.
- There were discussions with districts on successful fire stops. These were shared with the committee shortly after the audit concluded and are shown in Attachment 1.

Kathryn VanNatta asked if now the proper time would be now to ask about the identified issues on pages 5 and 6. She looked for the largest amounts of things that repeated themselves – actions – and the largest amount was a reimbursement by the Forest Service, but after that it was helicopters and helicopter deductibles. She asked if this issue has been resolved for working on fires since then, and offered because it was a continuing theme in the audits, it could be an opportunity to learn how to correctly accomplish that going forward. Nancy responded that there will be a better answer to that after the audits are completed for fire season 2023 as ODF instituted a new helicopter deductible tracking system, and the results won't be available until she gets to the audits.

Fiscal Year 23 (fire season 2022):

Nancy opened this section of the report by noting there were new staff engaged this year due to new biennial budget positions, which were the 3 ODF Area Accountants. These accountants attended training, along with Tracy Wrolson, prior to the audits. Andrea Lively, Western Lane District Business Manager, was also brought on to assist with some of the audits. The audits provided a good opportunity for the Area Accountants to meet district staff.

The audits were a hybrid of in-person and virtual attendance. Nancy reiterated her commitment to continue to strive to do audits in person moving forward.

- Total extra costs for fire season 2022 were just over \$39M.
- After reductions, district deductibles and fire cost recoveries, the total estimated claim to the OFLFP and General Fund is at \$18,696,913.
- The statewide total for reversal of charges was down to \$36,473.66.

Lessons learned during this audit process remained consistent with the findings from FY22.

Lessons learned remain consistent with the findings from 2022. These lessons and reminders are updated annually in the Audit Preparation Document which is shared with the districts at the beginning of each year (now) for their readiness work related to the April and May audits.

From a financial perspective Oregon 2022 fire season was very successful. ODF Incident Management Teams were mobilized twice to Oregon large fires, including the Van Meter fire in the Klamath-Lake District and Rum Creek in the Southwest Oregon District.

The 2022 fire season statistics highlight ODF and association preparedness efforts and initial attack successes despite favorable conditions for large incident wildfires.

- ODF protected acres burned were just over 34,000 and only 29% of their 10-year average acres burned.
- For all jurisdictions in Oregon for the 2022 fire season, there were just over 2,000 fires and over 500,000 acres were consumed.
- 95% of fires were caught at 10 acres or less.

Nancy noted that a few of these successes are highlighted in attachment 1. The EFCC worked closely with ODF staff and public affairs to get these success stories out as quickly as possible.

- Lost Creek fire (NEO) - This was a good catch in a logging unit with ingress challenges in Umatilla country with heavy timber and at the top of a ridge with houses in the area. If the fire had not been caught within the unit, it would have become a large fire. At this time, the district had a new Incident Commander who did a great job, and the fire was caught at just over an acre. There was good interagency response, aviation support, and the use of the local Oregon Youth Authority crews. Succession management is critical and this IC, on this day, demonstrated readiness.
- COD - Despite a low fire occurrence year due to wet thunderstorms and decreased lightning activity overall, the district wanted to share their testament to strategic investments and the multi-mission aircraft (MMA) in helping them detect fires. These strategic investments in the MMA were made by EFCC in 2018/2019. The photos provided (page 6) show the Old Camp Fire and demonstrate the success of identifying fires before the witching hour when they are established and require only one engine to put out instead of multiple resources.
- 98-Delta fire (NWOA – Astoria District) – This fire was described as one of the better saves. The fire appeared to have ignited on a slash pile on a state forest land timber sale unit. A pile was lit on the east end with an east wind in play and heavy slash at the bottom of the unit kept pulling the fire into itself. There was high potential with wildlife trees torching combined with the east wind though there was only one spot that crossed the draw. After the east winds picked up and humidity dropped, a decision was made that if the fire was not contained by 7:00 am the next day, an incident management team would be ordered. There was a rocky road at the top and a riparian area at the bottom and suppression on the ridge was successful in minimizing fire growth. Crews successfully completed the hand lines with seamless coordination with State Forest Division employees who brought their IMT experience in operations and planning. Southwest Oregon District resources were also brought in to assist, which provides another example of the success of a complete and coordinated system.

Chair Garrelts thanked Nancy and noted his attendance at a few of these audits. He understands they are a significant investment of her and Lorna's time and the district's time and appreciates Nancy's holistic approach to learning and understanding each fire prior to beginning the audits. He also provided his appreciation for the audit report as it provides the committee with an opportunity to see some of the details of the work that people do, and they offer a good understanding of the successes for the entire organization and associations. He encouraged reading this audit report cover to cover because it is a good window to other districts who may be unfamiliar with the complexities of finances.

Chair Garrelts then specifically addressed the District Foresters in attendance noting this a good example of leader's intent for IRA contractors in understanding the importance of filling out shift tickets correctly,

which is key to making for a smoother audit and ensuring costs are properly accounted for. These successes can potentially be viewed by other states as an example and a model of what ODF does.

There were no questions from committee members, however, Kathryn VanNatta appreciated this write up as a new member of the committee. She suggested one improvement, mostly due to her lack of knowledge, of including the start dates. This information highlights that there were multiple fires going on at the same time during critical fire weather.

Chair Garrelts addressed the committee looking for a motion to approve the 2022 and 2023 audit reports. Chris Johnson moved to approve FY22 and FY23 audit reports. Kathryn VanNatta seconded the motion. All approved and none opposed, and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 8: BUSINESS SERVICES REPORT *[Information Item]*

Mike Shaw, Deputy State Forester, opened this agenda item by thanking the committee for their work. He commented on the partnership between this committee and the agency which continues to be instrumental in helping ODF to be successful. Mike then congratulated Neil Miller on his retirement and thanked him for his exceptional service. He then congratulated Kiel Nairns on his new position taking over as Cost Recovery Coordinator for ODF.

Mike then expressed his excitement with the energy and work of the fire funding workgroup and is looking forward to the first version of the LC, recognizing there will be much more work due to the complexity of fire funding in Oregon.

- ODF Financial Report

James Short, Chief Financial Officer for ODF, provided the financial report for the agency noting the data he is reporting on is as of December 19, 2023.

Account Balances as of December 19, 2023:

- ODF main cash account balance is \$31.9M.
- OFLPF cash account balance is \$10.8M.
- \$1.8M pending deposits currently at the Oregon State Treasury.
- ODF's total cash balance is \$44.5M. James noted that this balance would be higher except for the advance of \$26.9M for the Tye Ridge Complex fire in DFPA as they were the paying agent on that incident.
- General Fund balance for ODF in the main fire account is at \$14.7M.

Accounts Receivable (AR) totals as of December 19, 2023:

Total outstanding amount is \$47.4M, which includes:

- \$12M outstanding in FEMA residential claims due from Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM). Tracy Wrolson and finance staff are working with ODEM to get the reimbursement by the end of the first quarter, however ODEM is going through some staff changes which is creating some delays.
- \$38k in outstanding FMAG claims have been invoiced with more expected as the agency processes additional claims.
- Total outstanding AR agency-wide (all agency business, not just fire protection) is \$35.3M.

Accounts Payable (AP) & Short-term liabilities as of December 19, 2023:

- \$7.4M overall total due:
 - \$6.6M due to DAS and holding until agency has proper cash flow to pay DAS, including risk charges and state government service charges for agency operations.

- \$770K due in vendor payments with turnaround time of roughly 30 days, which is well within our statutory requirement.

Short-term estimated cash revenue in through first quarter 2024:

- \$41M revenue coming back to the agency:
 - \$12M from ODEM, as mentioned above.
 - \$3M from the OFLPF portion of the severity claim.
 - \$12M from fire season 2021 insurance claim; paperwork sent on December 27, 2023 to Lloyd's of London; hope to receive in the first quarter of this year.
 - \$6M due in FPA forest patrol assessments.
 - \$2M due in direct bill assessments.
 - Approximately \$6M due in grant reimbursements.

Short-term estimated cash outflows for next quarter 2024:

- \$17M to counties for state timber sale harvests from State Forests Division.
- \$6 in payroll for December 2023.

- Strategic Investments Financial Report

Tracy Wrolson, Protection Unit Finance Manager for ODF, provided this report noting information has been provided in the handouts and is through November 28, 2023. Tracy also pulled numbers for December and noted there was no change.

2017 Strategic Investments update:

Tracy noted these investments still appear on this report because there remains one open project:

- Aerial IR detection technology project through the Salem Protection Division.
 - Initial project investment amount was \$1.5M.
 - Of that, \$1.47M has been spent to date.

While this project is still a work in progress, expenditures have been accounted for.

2020 Strategic Investments update:

- \$1.5M total available for SI projects.
- Actual amount spent through December 2023 was \$416K with no pending expenditures.
- Total project balance remaining is just over \$1M.

5 projects currently in progress:

- 3 of these projects have been competed: SWO detection center, CFPA microwave, and COD grapple dozer.
- Remaining project balance of \$57K in undistributed funds is available.

- FEMA Update

Tracy Wrolson also provided this report which is through mid-December 2023 with minor movement of dollars since, but no drastic changes worth noting.

Open fire protection claims for fire seasons 2018 through 2023:

- Outstanding suppression costs remain for fire seasons 2020 and 2023, of which the 2023 fire season is new business with audits still in progress on the Golden fire specifically.
- Remaining years with outstanding claims are for administrative staff work on FEMA claims, which won't be known until the work is done.
- Total outstanding between FEMA and public assistance grants is \$18.7M, which includes:
 - \$13.5M for the 2020 fires, which are still going through ODEM's claim process. ODF is in constant communication with ODEM and hopes to receive most of the total reimbursement amount by the end of the first quarter, 2024.

ODF outstanding audits and claim submissions:

- \$6.6M to be submitted for FEMA and public assistance claims:
 - \$4.2M for new business (Golden).
 - \$750K for old business (administrative claims which are prepped and ready to go when exact numbers are available).
- \$1.7M to be submitted for 2020 fire season public assistance grants.

We are still finalizing a few cost shares and other billings but most of the information is prepped, we are just waiting for final numbers from cost share reconciliations.

Overall, Tracy feels the agency is in a good spot overall in the work being done. The Protection Finance Unit is catching up and can now work on new business. He gave special recognition to Amanda Ogden, ODF Fire Protection FEMA Coordinator, as well as the Protection Finance Unit for the great work. He noted Amanda's meticulousness in meeting FEMA standards and her excellent work in communicating, coordinating, and tracking information which enables the agency to provide these easy-to-read reports to the committee.

ITEM 9: PROTECTION DIVISION REPORT *[Information Item]*

Ron Graham, Deputy Chief of Operations for Fire Protection, opened this agenda item noting current Division Chief Chris Cline is taking some pre-scheduled vacation. Tim Holschbach, Deputy Chief of Policy & Planning is also on vacation in preparation of the upcoming legislative session and continued work on the hazard map. Therefore, Ryan Miller is stepping in as Acting Division Chief for the next couple weeks.

- BLM Western Oregon Agreement

January kicks off the final 6 months of the current 5-year BLM Western Oregon Operating Agreement for fire protection of the O & C lands. Prior to this operating plan, ODF was in a series of contracts with BLM, most recently a firm fixed price contract which led to both financial and operational issues for both agencies. When that contract was close to expiration, both agencies agreed that a new mechanism for doing business would be beneficial, which resulted in an operating plan. The current operating plan expires June 30, 2024 and ODF is not anticipating a heavy lift as far as terms for the next operating plan as no major changes will be made thus no legal review requirements. In terms of operational implementation and financial cost recovery, the current plan has worked well and ODF expects only minor operational changes which ODF will present to BLM for consideration in the next operating plan. ODF's intent is to have a proposal submitted to BLM with time for negotiations and legal review and signature by all parties and associations, including opportunities to educate both BLM and ODF staff on the changes, prior to July 1, 2024 start of the new agreement. All things are looking positive towards this and we have not heard of any drastic changes from BLM thus far.

Chair Garrelts commented on behalf of the operating associations, with a reminder of the importance of the signing authority in the agreement.

Ron responded in agreement noting that the current agreement maintains that authority.

- Geoboard

The Geoboard provides additional oversight for ODF IMTs. It is made up of all ODF divisions and programs because the agency draws all of its IMT members from every division and program. This project started in 2019 under former Chief of Fire Protection, Doug Grafe, to help identify the future of ODF IMTs with a main focus on membership and whether ODF IMTs would include ODF personnel only or if they would include personnel from other state agencies or fire service. It was ultimately determined that there is a need for 3 IMTs, primarily made up of ODF personnel and recognize opportunities to include staff from other agencies and fire service as appropriate but to maintain core team members. This is going well and is currently in the final stages for the 2024

rosters and recruitment. We still have a few holes, which is typical this time of year, primarily due to staff moving. Though there is still some work to do we are confident the Protection Operations Unit has provided a great starting point and will finalize IMT rosters. ODF's IMTs are available year-round; with some team members sent out periodically. For example, last November, ODF sent a few IMT members to Kentucky. The new Geoboard is tasked with focusing on sustainability of IMTs. The Geoboard has tasked ICs to work with their Command and General staff to develop succession management plans, which will be ongoing work. The Geoboard is meeting this week to begin identifying where additional bench strength is needed to keep teams fully rostered as well as succession management. It takes a long time to get staff qualified for team positions. We are also watching Complex Incident Management Teams. ODF already trains to that standard, so we don't anticipate any issues. ODF does not send its IMTs into the national rotation, but the agency will occasionally send additional assistance to other states. Chair Garrelts stated he was encouraged as a landowner that ODF is focused on succession management and excited to hear about the proactive work. He also asked if ODF had much interest from other agencies. Ron replied that qualifications limit those possibilities, and that there is some effort nationally to recognize prior learning. Kathryn VanNatta encouraged Ron to report back to the committee on succession management. Chair Garrelts followed, emphasizing its critical to maintain bench strength.

- Strategic Investment Status Report

Teresa Williams, District Forester in the ODF Klamath-Lake District, provided an update on the district's current Strategic Investment projects through a PowerPoint presentation showing pictures of the current projects.

- Chiloquin Guard Station
 - 99% complete.
 - Partnership (Chiloquin Fire Station) and ODF signs still need to be put up.
 - Will be move-in ready by the start of fire season 2024.
- Bly Guard Station
 - Currently negotiations of the agreement with the landowner regarding payment terms at 25%, 50%, and 75% completion levels) with the remaining balance due at final walkthrough.
 - Agreement to be signed this month (January 2024) after DOJ review.
 - Expect project to be fully complete by the end of 2025, however, the landowner is already moving forward with installation of power poles, drilling of the well, etc.

Chair Garrelts reminded Teresa that when this project was approved, the committee had asked for a longer lease term to the contract and asked for an update.

Teresa responded that DOJ is currently looking into two options – a 20-year lease and a 50-year lease – and it's looking like it's going to be a 25-year lease.

Chair Garrelts then asked Ron Graham what the process is and what we can expect for updates to the IRA agreements this year – any noteworthy changes.

Ron responded that because it is mid-cycle of the 2-year IRA agreements, not looking at major amendments, revisions, or changes this year, just some operational administrative changes, to tighten up a few things. ODF is encouraging early sign-up during the actual sign-up periods. There continues to be a lot of education happening on that piece. The agency will be sending incident project contract inspectors more frequently so that anytime there are IRA resources assigned to incidents, ODF personnel support will be available on site to assist. The start of the new IRA agreement will be in 2025 so any major changes to the process or agreement will show up then. Ron added there's still time for the Incident Resource Agreement Committee to work through that process and communicate out any changes, work with

landowners and resources. Overall, there is continued improvement as we are still finding our way through IRA agreements that evolved out of change to the Interagency Fire Crew Agreement, but also highlighted Oregon's need to maintain our own contracting authority and the ability to work with landowners, industry, and all contracted resources and not be reliant on our national system for resources. The 2024 key issues is sign up – we need contractors to take ownership & accountability for their resources – whether or not they are truly availability, where they are mobilizing from and, not shifting contracts during an incident.

Kathryn VanNatta asked ODF to be sure to follow up with Associated Oregon Loggers on their request from the December meeting, to have information available when their members start calling asking for what they need to do to be able to sign up. And encouraged the department to reach out to AOL staff and find out the date when that occurs so that ODF staff can respond with the information needed.

Ron Graham acknowledged Kathryn's concerns and noted he also heard that request at the OFIC Winter Protection Committee meeting and assured the committee that ODF staff in the Protection Contract Services Unit will be in touch with AOL to provide information on who to contact both at ODF Salem and ODF field offices.

ITEM 10: EFCC ADMINISTRATOR REPORT *[Information Item]*

Nancy provided a brief report noting great progress has been made to date on the legacy files project. All meeting minutes from 1969 to date have been scanned and saved. These include minutes which reflect an earlier committee dating back to 1961.

We are preparing for the fire season 2023 audits. Lorna will be reaching out to districts and associations to schedule audits during the months of April and May. As the schedule is firmed up we will share with the committee. There has also been outreach to the Protection Division to engage with on the operational breakouts during the audit.

Nancy and Lorna are currently working on the fire season 2021 insurance claim. As James mentioned there is a partial payment underway and there is a goal to close this claim by the end 2024.

ITEM 11: PUBLIC COMMENT / GOOD OF THE ORDER

There being no further business before the committee, Chair Garrelts adjourned the meeting at 11:36 am. The next regular meeting of the Emergency Fire Cost Committee will be held at **10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2024** at the Oregon Department of Forestry Headquarters in Salem and via Zoom Video Conferencing.

Minutes drafted by: Chrystal Bader

Minutes reviewed by: Nancy Hirsch and Erik Lease