

Mosier Fire District Board Meeting

Thursday, June 10th, 2021 at 6:00pm
Held as a Zoom Meeting

Minutes

In attendance:

Board: Phil Evans, Barb Ayers, Joanne Rubin, Todd Reeves. Steve Fisher absent.

Staff: Chief Renault, Maggie Goter

Volunteers: Kris McNall

Guests: Colleen Coleman and Jill Burnette

Public: Jim Appleton

Minutes taken by Goter & McNall

Call to Order at 18:08

Agenda additions or corrections

- No additions or corrections.

Comments from the public

- Written comment from Appleton submitted June 8th by email:

"I ask that the public record publish each of the following paragraphs, in order, verbatim.

1. I have volunteered to staff the little-used \$250k 2017 Spartan engine which MFD's board is considering surplussing and selling off.

2. I request that reporting of that record either publish the entire correspondence in which this offer was made, or refer to the entire correspondence while, by statute, accurately summarizing it as raising the question of how current practices compare with detailed records of responses five-plus years ago.

Thank you"

- Oral comment from Appleton: He prefers the term "Spartan Engine" to "the Squad," which he thinks is a misnomer. He wants to make sure the board understands why he's offering to staff that piece of apparatus. He would prefer that the minutes not refer to people only by last name.
- Comment from McNall: This comment is made as a member of the public, not as a volunteer. First, it would be useful to the public to spell out Board and Chief Renault's operational position re the Squad. Second, re the JUF: there are lots of rumors circulating, specifically that current plans are for a very expensive facility. She's in favor of us getting a better facility and going for a bond, but she doesn't currently understand financials or what current plans are, so the public probably doesn't either. These are comments about communication, not disagreeing with decisions being made.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Minutes from May Board Meeting

- o Appleton requested that the summary of his public comment from the May board meeting be entirely struck from the record and replaced with text he submitted by email. The Board agreed to strike the word “pyramid” but otherwise included the written summary from the draft May minutes in addition to his written statement.
- Review and approve bills for payment from April and May.
 - o Clarifications: TWGW is the billing name associated with Napa Auto Parts. The April charge from Land Electric is for work done to change lights in Station 11 from a timer to a motion sensor which should be greener. \$6100 from Sea Western is for gear.

Motion to approve consent agenda with changes to May minutes as described above: Rubin moves, Evans seconds, all approved.

Business:

Note: After discussing Item 1: Mosier Center fundraising update, the Board segued into Item 3: Bond Discussion for approximately 40 minutes, then discussed Item 2: Future of the Squad, then returned to Item 3: Bond discussion. The minutes are organized by agenda item for clarity.

1. Mosier Center fundraising update - Jill Burnette & Colleen Coleman

We are hoping to be able to get into final design and construction in the next 12-18 months.

Coleman: The architect has done schematic design through the public process, but the construction cost estimator for those schematics gave a much higher cost estimate than we had anticipated. Asked the architect to do some redesign to get costs down, and those drawings came back today.

At the last public meeting the bays were coming out on the east side with a large apron. Architect has turned the building so it comes straight out to Hwy 30. The apron is now going to be 25’.

Solar panel configuration has changed but we’re still going for Net Zero - Oregon Energy Trust gave us \$25K to explore that option and they will give us another \$25K for that.

Community side has a longer shed roof with a much shallower roof than before. Fire bays are now separated from offices and community center by a covered outdoor corridor. Roof structure has been changed to reduce cost. The look now fits more closely with Mosier Fruit Growers. Drawings don’t show parking, but there will be parking for Chief/Volunteers/ADA accessibility on the east side.

They haven’t been doing public meetings because of COVID, but Chief Renault & Colleen have been working with architect and Jill & Colleen have been writing grants. They got a grant for \$750K grant from Oregon parks. Includes 450 K to site work.

We do not have a price estimate for the updated design yet.

The concept design from about 4 years ago was just a floor plan, not a complete design. Materials costs were not today’s numbers. Jill’s number also includes ~\$800K in “soft costs.” including architects attending public meetings, etc.

Reeves asks why don’t we try to get cheap fill dirt from other local construction while we’re waiting? Coleman: Rock Creek Road realignment will be getting built in Sept. ODOT will have 450 yards of fill dirt they could stage on our property rather than the quarry. Also, \$450K of the site work will be covered in the \$750K Oregon Parks grant. We also may be able to get some of that work donated. We also still haven’t done the more detailed geotech study to make sure we have the right base, and we’d need to do that before adding fill.

Burnette went over the fundraising plan. We are staging fundraising and working on when to ask various actors for funds because donors have more confidence if you already have funds committed.

Without new design revisions, the cost is \$6.5 million. We have 45% in hand to date.

Public funders in Salem want to see “skin in the game,” i.e. evidence of local support. Burnette & Arlene Burns are seeking major gifts from local donors. Some funds and pledges in hand. Will continue through the summer. There will be a donor wall and opportunities for named spaces.

Foundation grants will be requested after we have 60% of needed funds, probably at the end of summer or early fall. They’ve been communicating with people at the Ford Family Foundation as to how to best make those requests.

Visible public campaign for smaller gifts around 90% mark for the last 10%.

We reduced our request for state lottery funds from \$2 million to \$750K - Senator Finley & Rep Bonham both support that. Expecting June decision.

Senators Wyden and Merkley are helping us with requests for congressional spending. We’ve got lots of local letters of support, support esp from Merkley’s office, decision probably in Sept. Very competitive. We’d get funds around the end of the year.

Proposed fire bond for \$1.3 million is specifically for the fire portion of the project.

The UP Rock Creek Settlement is complete for an additional \$1.1 mil. Also gives us the deed to the property north of the railway.

Percent funded table on page 2 of the Fundraising Plan is a cumulative rolling total. Burnette emphasizes that this is a rolling document and is subject to change as funds come in.

Ayers: What is the breakdown of \$6.5 million? How did it go up from the feasibility study several years ago?

Evans: The new architectural drawings will be dropped off with the contractor to try to cut that cost. Some of the costs are materials costs increases. We’re hoping the cost of lumber, etc. may come down somewhat in the next 6 months.

Burnette: once we have material specifications we can approach local suppliers, e.g. Cardinal Glass. Interesting options for savings: e.g. site harvested rock saved money on materials and transport for prior project.

Coleman: The feasibility study with Hennebery Eddy was ~\$4 million based on floor plan only. That’s for basically a prefab metal building. When we went to the public they wanted something more “stately” than prefab metal, though maybe some of the bays could be metal to save costs.

Initial schematic design is conceptual. Contractor takes that design and estimates costs, but that doesn’t include lots of specifics (e.g. materials, flooring, electrical...). That came in at \$5.2 million, plus \$850K in soft costs (Jill’s time over 3 years, architects at public meetings, etc.). We still need the contractor to give a cost estimate based on new schematic design. New cost estimate also incorporates higher materials costs now (e.g. wood & concrete have tripled).

If we have commitment from the fire district, we can move forward to next phase of design. Can ID some suppliers, fill dirt, glass, etc. But we have to go through this design phase to figure out these details.

If we get to 70%-80% design, we go to a professional construction cost estimator to verify the contractor’s estimate for due diligence. If it’s verified and we’ve made progress on funding, we can decide what we can cut out.

The Hennebery Eddy Architects had 4 different cost tiers from \$2.6 million to \$3.96 million, but escalation has been 50% and those estimates assumed 10%. Soft costs were similar on those estimates, though. Faster construction will mean less escalation.

Appleton cursed at Ayers and was asked by Evans to remain muted if making obscene comments. Goter muted Appleton.

Coleman: \$800-850K soft costs is probably really generous & includes buffer in case it goes another year.

Due date for plaza section is May 2023. If we press hard on fundraising campaign we can do it all at once along with the Hub across the street.

Ayers: costs to go Net Zero versus some other sustainable level, like LEED? Coleman estimates \$200K max for Net Zero. Main costs triple glazed glass, solar panels.

Burnette: budget she has is more lump sums. She's more focused on micro detail of fundraising.

Ayers: We need a more detailed budget since this is a high price tag. We need to know that inside and out before we talk to the community about a bond.

Evans: We'll have a better budget in 2-4 weeks from Kirby Nagelhout.

Coleman: Construction costs even for houses are more than you would expect recently. We're also working really hard to reduce costs and raise money over the last year. OR legislature is surprised we're only asking for \$750K.

2. Future of the Squad - Evans

This discussion regards the Spartan engine, more commonly known as the Squad. It stems from the lack of efficient use of this vehicle over the last 5 yrs. We are discussing the possibility of surplus and selling this vehicle, how much money we could get, and what we could purchase with these funds that would better serve our needs (and avoid ongoing payments of approx \$27,000 per year).

Renault: Vehicle has just under 6000 miles, mostly delivery and driving back to True North (in Hillsboro) for warranty repairs or vehicle issues. In the aftermath of the Mosier Creek Fire last summer, the oil cooler for the CAFS system got caught & high-centered and the vehicle had to be dug out and towed. We decided operationally that it was better to remove CAFS at a cost of \$1000 vs \$10K to repair. It still has foam, just not the compressed air foam system. If we surplus it, CAFS can be reinstalled by the buyer. It is currently staged at Station 12 as it is too long/wide to fit easily in Station 11 or Station 13. Renault hopes that with more volunteers we can staff from Station 12 and use it more. Last week it responded to MVC on freeway as 2nd out.

Evans: We still owe \$127,739. Purchased it for close to \$250K.

Renault thinks we could sell for \$160-180K. \$200K would be pushing it, \$175-180K would be good. Talking with broker and sales reps: these vehicles are more commonly seen on east coast. Start of fire season might see demand from a department with more paved roads, not necessarily mobile operation through wheat fields or grasses.

We'd pay off debt plus \$35-55K - Renault thinks that is enough to replace it with something more usable. We could have bought 2 new, complete Type 6 engines for the cost of the Squad, and we'd look to replace it with a couple Type 6's.

Sales rep thinks this sort of thing would be perfect for smaller depts on the east coast. Small streets have less accessibility for big Type 1's.

Sales rep talked about a comparable rig for \$150K new. The Squad is a newer rig, low miles, more features than that \$150K rig, which is why we're hoping we can get \$180K. Reeves questions why we paid so much for the Squad if a comp is \$150K; Renault isn't sure.

Appleton: this is all about response plan, not this piece of equipment per se. Chief Renault's statements are irrelevant to this piece of equipment. The value of what it can do in the proper hands is what it's about.

Ayers asked what the volunteers think. Appleton interjects: Who cares what they say? Who cares about the loss? It's what the function is. Appleton was asked to refrain from interrupting. Ayers asked if Appleton can be muted.

Evans: it was designed for a different vision of the department and we've moved on from that.

Renault: Functioning is limited by lack of pump and roll. Would be useless for a mobile operation. Pump is too big for the vehicle for its function. That's part of why CAFS is so low to the ground. Hoses were getting abraded from going over speed bumps.

The district needed a new vehicle at the time, but since the purchase of this "Swiss army knife," we've added a lot of new equipment that replaces the functioning of this. Better platforms to get the job done. Appleton interrupted the discussion again. Ayers and Evans authorized Goter to mute Appleton again.

It's the same length as Engine 11: 23+ feet. Hard to just roll down the road. Brush rigs are smaller, more mobile, quicker.

Reeves asks about broker fee & if we can list it for sale and keep it in service in the meantime. Yes, we can list it with the broker as still in service and release it after purchase.

A swiss army knife isn't necessarily the tool we need to do the job, e.g. the compartments aren't big enough for long tools so we had to build a coffin box on the hose bed. It's also over the legal width limit of 8'6". Technically we should have an "over width" permit from the state every year.

Appleton unmuted himself to curse at the Fire Chief and was muted again by Goter. Renault says he does not take decisions like this lightly. He asks everyone to remain polite and professional. Appleton left the meeting.

Reeves: Can we glean the light system or anything else to repurpose and get some money back? He hates to take a loss on the first new rig Mosier has had in ages.

Evans: Question isn't whether this is a valuable vehicle or not, but it doesn't work for us. We've had five years to use it or not use it. Dollars per mile is expensive. Renault: it's not for lack of training. We do lots of driver training.

How do we set the price? What's the minimum price we'd accept? Renault would want to talk to the broker. They'll be incentivized to sell it.

Reeves asks if going through Spartan could be better; Renault thinks broker is best option.

Ayers: loss will only continue and escalate. We're losing the ability to resell it while it's fairly new.

Motion: Chief Renault is authorized to surplus and complete the sale of the squad as long as it nets us \$180k or up (i.e. the sale price has to be \$180K plus broker fees). If there are offers lower than that he has to come to the board and discuss. Evans moves, Ayers seconds. Reeves abstains; all others vote to approve.

3. Bond Discussion - Evans

Evans references the packet from David Ulbricht/SDAO with bond estimates for a \$1 million, \$1.5 million, or \$2 million loan. From April. Evans clarifies that the dollar amount per 100K won't stay consistent over the life of the bond. Originally it said \$58 or so. It will actually start at \$61 or 62 and go up to about \$90 per 100K by 2042.

Evans addressed questions from other board members. Ayers wouldn't want to vote on it until we have a firm budget and can do more due diligence. Evans: We can hold a bond vote before we issue the bonds and incur the debt. E.g. if we pass a bond for \$1.5 million and don't need it we don't have to borrow up to that point and there's no penalty. Depends on how fundraising goes. But it might be harder to ensure bond success without a firm budget, outreach campaign. Ayers talked to a lot of locals while campaigning, feels we need to engage with the public more.

Appleton interjects that the board should be looking at the county assessor's spreadsheet of taxable assessed value (TAV) for every tax lot in the district. Appleton does not think the board understands TAV, MAV, and the idea that someone who has owned multiple lots for a long time might pay less in property taxes than someone who purchased property recently. Evans and

Ayers are familiar with this, assure Appleton that David Ulbricht will be familiar with this. Evans asks Appleton to stop interrupting.

Re engaging in the bond process with SDAO: Reeves wants to ask for the least amount of money possible to fund a center that works for us and we'll be able to afford.

The SDAO contract with David Ulbricht is for \$10K which will provide background/support in many areas. We still have to be boots on the ground.

If construction costs continue to increase and our bond isn't enough money, we can address at the time with continued fundraising or trimming from the design.

Rubin is in support of working with SDAO - they've helped us in the past and they have lots of experience.

Ayers isn't worried about SDAO but feels we don't have enough information. Would be concerned voters feel the same way. We would want to give a bond the best shot of success. Would like to have more info and talk to voters more.

Evans clarifies: the question tonight is not to work on the actual costs of the building process but rather whether to move forward towards putting a bond of up to \$1.5 million on the Nov ballot, and whether to use SDAO.

Reeves questions whether there is a better option. Evans looked at other options, but SDAO is a nonprofit which supports us, has an obligation to help us get the lowest interest rate with least fees, and we were pointed to SDAO from multiple people.

Reeves would like to allocate existing money in our budget before going for a bond; Ayers agrees, would like to use UP funds more. Evans: our fundraising numbers include about \$300K from capital reserves including dry hydrant fund & other UP funds.

Coleman reminds the board that at the beginning of this process when we established an IGA we agreed that the fire dept would match the \$500K the City got from the State. The IGA says both entities will pay half until construction for the design process.

Ayers wants to contribute more from the budget or capital reserves so we can do less from a bond, but neither Ayers nor Evans want to draw savings down to scraping the barrel.

The cap for fire levy is higher than we're currently levying and that could cover just under \$1 million over 20 years if we maxed out the tax rate. We want to give people the choice to increase their taxes, rather than just doing it in budget committee. Appleton interrupts Ayers to tell the board again to look at the database from the county he referenced earlier. Ayers wants to have better public messaging and feeling people out for what they want and are willing to pay for. Ayers and Evans ask Appleton to keep comment to public comment period.

Reeves questions where \$10K for SDAO fee comes from. Evans: We have money in the JUF pool that could cover that.

There are still questions and uncertainty about the bond, but much less uncertainty about working with SDAO. Coleman's understanding is that SDAO would start with a survey of the public and use that to inform the public campaign.

Ayers asked about volunteers' opinion and Goter & McNall both deferred to bring this to a volunteers Association meeting. Renault is fully on board. Supports design changes to save money, e.g. making apparatus bay a separate building rather than building negative pressure.

Ulbricht said we should start this outreach by July. Paperwork has to be completely filed by early-mid October.

Vote on a bond and working with SDAO deferred because Rubin lost connection. The board went forward with discussing 2) Future of the Squad in the meantime.

Discussion below this point happened after Item 2.

Evans moved that the district will engage in a contract with David Ulbricht for \$10,000 to obtain a general obligation bond of up to \$1.5 million for the Nov 2021 election. No second - Ayers asks that we defer the vote one month to get better budget numbers and get an opinion from the volunteers. Ayers and Reeves are in favor of working with SDAO but not ready to vote to put \$1.5 million bond on the ballot yet. Further discussion ensued.

Goter asked McNall to take over minutes for a while because she had received an obscenity in her email from Appleton.

The discussion on the JUF bond continued. Reeves stated that he could not put \$1.5 Million on the ballot without knowing more, but he was willing to spend \$10,000 to figure the situation out.

Evans stated that the ballot paperwork needed to be submitted 6-7 weeks before the ballots are mailed.

Coleman suggested that David Ulbricht might be able to include cost information with the services he provided. Evans read from Ulbricht's contract and the group determined that Ulbricht's job was to help with financing and not with determining the budget for the project. Coleman then stated that once the JUF group is ready to share the budget they should hold a public meeting. A discussion of who would do public outreach ensued.

Ayers stated that we need much more public outreach. Her experience in Hood River County showed that extensive communications are required to pass a levy. After further discussion Evans stated that he would try to set up a meeting that David Ulbricht could attend. There were several suggestions on how to get help with communications and also how to get better budget information as \$6.5M seems like a huge amount of money for Mosier.

At this point Goter returned to the meeting and resumed taking notes.

Board agreed to defer the decision until the July 8th meeting.

Brief discussion of Appleton's verbal and emailed harassment of board members and staff. Reeves: "No member of the district should be assaulted by the public." All agree that cursing at board members and staff members is not acceptable. Rubin thinks that this assault should prevent him from ever volunteering with the district. Renault will contact our lawyer re options for limiting interruptions from the public and ejecting disruptive participants in accordance with public meeting laws.

4. Chief's Report – Chief Renault. See written report.
5. Update on Budget Committee – Evans. The committee is meeting on 6/22/21 at 1800 to approve the budget.
6. Volunteer Report: none
7. Committee Reports: none
8. Correspondence: none.

McNall public comment: She appreciates the board doing the hard due diligence on the budget for the JUF. Would have a hard time voting for a \$6.5 million facility based on what she knows today. So she suspects it would not pass in its current state.

Next Month's Board Meeting will be on July 8th.

Adjourned at 2113.