

**Approved Meeting Minutes
Deschutes County R.F.P.D. #2
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 11:30 A.M.**

1. **For the Record:** Open Meeting and Introductions by Vice President Tatom at 11:30 A.M.

Present: Oliver Tatom, Vice President; Ray Miao, Director; Steve Davidson, Director; Roger Johnson, CEO; Gary Marshall, Executive Director; Todd Riley, Fire Chief; Betsy Tucker, Bend Fire; Kevin Stock, USFS; Mayor Kebler, City of Bend; T.J. Kennedy, DCRFPD#2 Budget Committee; Scott Wyman, Bend Fire; Dave Howe, Guest; Robin Church, Guest; Greg Bryant, Guest; Sandy Baxter, Guest; Gary Marshall, Executive Director DCRFPD#2; Roger Johnson, CEO DCRFPD#2; Samantha Nelson, CFO City of Bend; Matt Stewart, City of Bend; Eric King, City Manager, City of Bend; Jim Anthony, Guest.

2. **Public Comment:**

Robin Church thanked the Board for endorsing a letter to the City of Bend regarding wildfire resilience within the city.

3. **Eric King and Matt Stewart Update on Juniper Ridge:**

Stewart provided an overview of plans for a Temporary Safe Stay Area in the Juniper Ridge area. The city owns approximately 1,500 acres of land in the area adjacent to Hwy 97. The city is working with Deschutes County and service providers regarding the project. The city plans to close access to lands east of the railroad tracks by May 31, 2025. An estimated 200 people are living in the area, with approximately 30 residing east of the railroad tracks. The city is expanding its health and safety team to four members who will work with people in the impacted area. Once people are moved from the area east of the railroad tracks, a cleanup of the area will occur. The city is collaborating with Neighbor Impact to provide support to people in the area in hopes of transitioning them into more permanent housing. People will be moved into a smaller area that will be easier to support. The area available for people will be reduced from the current 1,500 acres down to 40 acres, and then down to 20 acres, reducing overall impacts on the area. The goal is to have all people moved out by the end of 2026.

Miao questioned why the area was being removed as a resource, and King advised that the city has increased emergency shelter capacity from 120 to 500 spaces. Miao asked if people would be allowed to re-enter the area or if people from the China Hat area might relocate to Juniper Ridge. Stewart advised that the goal is to prevent new people from entering the area.

Tatom had questions regarding the storage area. Stewart explained that the storage area would be a secure, fenced area with some Conex boxes. The city is required to store personal belongings for 30 days if people are required to move. The storage area could also temporarily store abandoned vehicles once an area is cleared. An audience member asked about hazardous materials left behind. Stewart assured that such materials would be cleaned up.

T.J. Kennedy inquired about vehicle-pedestrian conflicts on Hwy 97, especially at night. Stewart advised that the city is working with ODOT to close some existing access points to the area, which should help reduce conflicts.

4. **Kevin Stock Update on the Cabin Butte Vegetation Management Project:**

Stock, District Ranger for the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, provided an overview of the fire history in the area of the project. The project is 25,804 acres south of Bend and will last for multiple years. The area will be closed for at least one year, after which it will be evaluated based on progress. Dispersed camping is likely to be closed for at least five years. There are an estimated 150–200 camps in the area. The project will take advantage of multiple historic fire scars and will include a combination of mowing, mastication, and prescribed fire. Previous treatments adjacent to homes in the area have proven effective in limiting fire spread.

Stock advised that treatment around homes is a priority and that the USFS has performed numerous fuel treatments around other communities in Deschutes County. In addition to fire risk, there are impacts related to wildlife and noxious weeds in the area. People currently camping in the project area will need to leave by May 1, 2025. The USFS has been working with service providers and people camping in the area.

Stock advised that residents in the adjoining subdivisions will not be allowed to access USFS lands during the closure period. BLM lands will not be impacted. Stock addressed a question regarding the use of prescribed fire, explaining that it is an effective tool to limit fire spread and prevent crown fires for up to 15 years.

There will be an accompanying North Fort Rock Recreation Planning Area that will address recreational uses in the area going forward. The area is receiving significant use from multiple user groups. The recreation plan will likely restrict camping in certain areas after the project is completed.

Stock advised that some people are already moving out of the area. Prescribed fire will be used around homes where possible, likely early in the project. Stock stated that abandoned campsites and hazardous materials would be cleaned up as the project progresses. He indicated that due to the size of the project and limited access, the agency does not expect displaced campers to relocate to land adjacent to the project due to the area's limited access. Stock stated that the trees in the area are of uniform age and height due to how the area regenerated after past fires. The desired condition is more clumps of trees of various ages and sizes.

Mayor Keebler asked if there have been staff reductions due to federal cost-cutting. Stock confirmed that there have been reductions.

Miao asked how the USFS would notify residents when prescribed fire would be used.

Stock explained that the agency uses multiple methods to communicate with homeowners, including working with HOA's. He also stated that there is often short notice before burning due to changing weather conditions, but the agency tries to notify residents about three days prior to the prescribed burn.

Stock indicated that the first prescribed fire would likely occur in the fall or next spring. The first area to treat will be next to homes.

Tatom expressed appreciation to the USFS for their work and discussed concerns related to recreational shooting in the area. Tatom asked how access would be restricted. Stock explained that 6–7 gates would be installed on roads leading into the area.

5. **Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting:**

Miao made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Davidson. Miao, Tatom, and Davidson voted yes; there were no votes in opposition.

6. Consideration of Monthly Expenses:

Director Davidson reported on the monthly expenses. Davidson has reconciled the accounts, and all balances are in order. He identified an inconsistency with an invoice to Century Link for \$136.53. Johnson will follow up with the district's accountant and report back to the Board.

Motion by Miao to pay the monthly expenses. Motion seconded by Davidson. Tatom, Miao, and Davidson voted yes; there were no votes in opposition.

Davidson transferred \$7,830,738 from the district's LGIP account to the City of Bend for the annual fire service contract fee, invoice dated 1-30-2025. Miao questioned the headings on the financial report, which state "July–June of 2025," reflecting year-to-date spending.

January 2025 Checks Written:

6006 Mastercard - 4425 See below 1,106.00
6007 Mastercard - 5631 See below 1,357.57
6008 Brilliance in Branding Uniforms 121.00
6009 Chris Mahr & Associates Accounting 1,400.00
6010 City of Bend Banquet dinner 2,400.00
6011 CMGEO Oregon LLC Advertising 87.50
6012 Gary Marshall Employee benefits 80.00
6013 Pacific Source Admin Employee benefits 723.93
6014 Roger Johnson Employee benefits 515.50
6015 SDIS Employee benefits 1,689.50
6016 Swalley Irrigation District Water rights 902.25
EFT Payroll Payroll 10,170.54
EFT Payroll Taxes Payroll taxes 8,289.16
EFT Precisely Payroll Payroll Fee 121.20
TOTALS 28,964.15

Mastercard - 4425:

SDAO Conference 230.00
Ed Staub Fuel 93.65
Best Buy Mouse 17.99
Deschutes Brewery Newsletter meeting 67.00
CMS Medicare Insurance Employee benefits 545.40
Microsoft Software 6.99
Ed Staub Fuel 61.98
Olive Garden Board meeting 82.99
TOTAL Mastercard 1,106.00

Mastercard – 5631:

El Caporal Agenda meeting 62.95
SDAO Conference 230.00
SDAO Conference 230.00

SDAO Conference 230.00
Century Link Telephone 204.62
OR Secretary of State Audit fee 400.00
TOTAL Master card 1,357.57

1/31/2025 Bank Balances:

First Interstate Checking 67,073.04
First Interstate Money Market 37,061.77
LGIP Operating Fund 8,827,453.97
LGIP Capital Improvement Fund 1,780,072.66

Transfer from the LGIP General Fund to the City of Bend \$7,830,738.

7. Reports:

Fire Department Reports:

Riley thanked the Board for their financial support of the annual awards banquet. Riley indicated that the fourth ALS ambulance is now in service at the North station, which helps balance the workload between units. Future meetings will highlight significant emergency events within the District. Riley recognized Executive Director Gary Marshall for his work with the fire district. Chief Wyman discussed calls outside of response time parameters, noting that some were at the edge of the rural district and needed to be covered by other stations. Betsy provided an update on the state grant for fuels work in Deschutes River Woods. The grant details have been worked out with Burn Bot, and work should begin shortly.

CEO Report:

Johnson thanked the Mayor, Eric, Matt, and Kevin for their presentations. He provided an overview of the SDAO conference and courses attended. Directors Tatom, Miao, and Executive Director Marshall also attended the conference. Johnson attended a pre-session course on public meeting requirements, which will result in changes to virtual meeting options and the recording of votes by the Board. The legislative session is in full swing, with 2,700 bills introduced so far, and upwards of 4,000 expected. Numerous bills have been introduced that could impact the district, including wildfire hazard map changes and associated codes. Johnson provided an overview of HB 2138, the governor's housing bill, which has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. He offered to register directors on the OLIS system if there were bills they were interested in following. Dave Howe continues to work on the district newsletter and will be at next month's Board meeting to take pictures of the Board and staff.

Executive Director Report:

Marshall is processing one new annexation, which may include multiple homeowners under one application and one filing fee. He provided a report on Project Wildfire. There were \$75,000 in grant funds available for 30 communities. Fire-free dates are May 2–11. Melissa Steele instructed an "Own Your Zone" class at the meeting. The Skyliners neighborhood has applied for a fire-free grant. Marshall will be attending the IAFC

Wildfire Conference in Missouri at the end of March, where a focus will be on insurance trends.

8. **Old Business:**

Riley indicated that there is no update on the following items:

A. City-District Consolidation Committee:

Eric suggested establishing a work group to begin meeting on the topic. Miao, Roshak, Johnson, and Marshall will represent the District. Tatom expressed a desire to begin work on the project due to the time before potentially needing to renew the local option. Mayor Keebler stated that long-term funding for fire is on the council's goals.

B. Encampment Fires on Public Lands: Addressed with presenters at the meeting.

C. 306 Station Land Transfer: Eric indicated that the land transfer is on the Council's work plan for the next two years.

D. Board Work Session: Johnson discussed holding a work session at the March Board meeting and contracting with SDAO to help facilitate short-term goals for the next one or two years. The goals would help determine budgeting priorities. After discussion, it was decided that the March 18 Board meeting would be held from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM, followed by a work session from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM. For the longer term, Johnson recommended that the district prepare a long-range strategic plan.

9. **Correspondence:**

The Board packet included a letter of support for a BRIC grant application for the "Building Wildfire Resilient Landscapes for the Protection of Indigenous Cultures and Museums project."

10. **New Business:**

A. Renewal of Auditor Contract with Accuity LLC:

The Board reviewed staff report 25-4 regarding the renewal of the auditor contract with Accuity LLC. Davidson moved to approve the contract renewal with Accuity LLC for \$15,000 per year for three years. Miao seconded the motion. Davidson, Miao, and Tatom voted yes; there were no votes in opposition.

B. Ordinance 25-1 "Adopting Administrative Fees":

The Board held the second reading of Ordinance 25-1, "An Ordinance Adopting Administrative Fees." The Ordinance was read by title, and copies were available for all attendees. Miao moved to adopt Ordinance 25-1. Davidson seconded the motion. Miao, Davidson, and Tatom voted yes; there were no votes in opposition.

11. **Good of the Order:**

Dave Howe thanked the Board for their support of the Bend Fire Pipes and Drums.

Miao recognized Robin for her work with the City on wildfire resilience.

Mayor Keebler expressed concerns about how reductions in federal funding will affect emergency wildfire response this summer. The Mayor asked if the Board would work with other regional stakeholders to advocate for continued federal funding to support wildfire response. Tatom stated that he would look forward to reviewing a letter if presented to the Board.

12. **Board Meeting Adjournment** at 1:10 PM.

13. **Next Regular Board Meeting:** March 18, 2025, at 11:00 AM.