Jackson County Fire District 1

Minutes – Board of Directors Regular Session
Meeting of September 9, 2026 at 7:30am

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by President, John Ellis.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGENCE

ROLL CALL:
John Foster, Randy Cort, John Ellis, Jim Stearns, Craig Berry, present.
Also in attendance: Mike Hammond, Jenna Kurzyniec, Jeni Darr and guests Rick Brewster, Tom Zimmer, Kenny Herinckx, Grace Howell, Brian Mortensen, John Holmes, Mike Gavlik, Lane Augustson and Austin Champion.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:
Captain Gavlik was recognized for resolving a technical issue at a recent Gold Hill Irrigation District meeting.

RICK BREWSTER – 2025/26 AUDIT PRESENTATION:
Rick Brewster presented the audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026. The report included the Management Discussion and Analysis, financial statements, and budget section. The auditors issued a clean opinion and reported no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.

Some of the key points from the audit included:

- The ending cash balance was approximately $141,000 lower than the previous year, primarily because restricted grant funds were spent as planned.
- Restricted fund balances decreased from about $416,000 to $216,000 as grant funds were used for their intended projects and purposes.
- Revenues remained fairly consistent with the prior year. Property tax revenue increased by about 3%, membership fee revenue saw a slight increase, and grant and contribution revenue decreased from approximately $110,000 to $35,000.
- Personal services expenses increased about 7%, mainly due to wage increases, paid leave costs, insurance, and workers' compensation expenses.
- Materials and services expenses increased from approximately $601,000 to $711,000, while capital outlay expenses decreased from about $199,000 to $59,000. The Board discussed fund balance carryover, grant budgeting, and overall financial planning. Rick explained that budgeting for grants before they are actually awarded can make both revenue and expenditure projections look higher than they will ultimately be.

Board members noted that the budget projected an ending General Fund balance of approximately $188,000. If the District had spent to that level, it would have left less than one month's worth of operating funds in reserve. In reality, the District maintained a much stronger carryover balance of approximately $1.37 million.

The conversation also focused on the importance of conservative budgeting practices to help avoid cash flow challenges before property tax revenues are received. Board members discussed how staffing levels and future levy revenues may impact upcoming budgets and long-term financial planning.

The Board agreed that future budgets should more accurately reflect anticipated grant revenues and expenditures and emphasized the importance of monitoring fund balances and maintaining adequate reserves to support the District's financial stability.

MINUTES:

-***Safety Committee Minutes of August 11, 2026*** – Jim Stearns made a motion to accept the safety committee minutes, Randy Cort 2nd, all in favor, motion passed.

-***Regular BOD session of August 12, 2026*** – Randy Cort made a motion to accept the minutes, Jim Stearns 2nd. All in favor, motion passed.

FINANCE:

The financial report was discussed, highlighting high overtime costs due to fire season and up-staffing, increased fuel prices, a $9,200 gurney repair, and legal expenses related to annexation, grants, and elections.
Damaged fire hoses from the Fielder fire were replaced by ODF, with some expenses for burned hose bags.
Jim Stearns made a motion to accept the finance report of August 2026, Randy Cort 2nd. Roll call vote: Craig Berry-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis- yes, John Foster-yes, Randy Cort-yes. Motion passed.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS:

-Chief Recruitment Process- Timeline for chief recruitment was confirmed, with finalist scheduled for the 23rd and 24th. Panels were formed from board-nominated names, including community and technical panels. Procedures for panelist selection and interview question compilation were reviewed. The board concurred to use a retired Grants Pass police chief for an in-depth, in-person background check of the chief finalist, along with a medical and possible psychological evaluation. Jim Stearns presented the proposal from background investigator. Board of Directors agreed to move forward with in depth, in person, and look into psych evaluation.

-Solar Grant - Solar project update: a 30% grant distribution request was submitted; if not received by the end of September, the board may consider fronting $65,000 for panels to avoid tariffs (estimated at 10-15%). The board discussed getting documentation on panel origin and tariff applicability and confirmed grant coverage confidence. The board requested an email update on panel tariffs and insurance coverage for the new solar equipment.

-Annexation of Properties- Annexation letters for Savage Creek Road properties saw only one response in favor; some were undeliverable, and alternative address-finding methods are being considered.

NEW BUSINESS:

-Resolution R26-27-003 – Craig Berry made a motion to approve R26-27-003, $50.00 patron donation into the general fund for incentives, Randy Cort 2nd. Roll call vote: Craig Berry-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis- yes, John Foster-yes, Randy Cort-yes. Motion passed.

-***Resolution R26-27-004*** – Jim Stearns made a motion to approve R26-27-004, to transfer $623,630 within the general fund from material and services to capital outlay for the solar project, Craig Berry 2nd. Roll call vote: Craig Berry-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis- yes, John Foster-yes, Randy Cort-yes. Motion passed.

CHIEF COMMENTS: Chief Hammond presented his monthly report.

-GEMT funding approved for 2026. The district has received $203,000 (minus $54,000 fees) for 2025 CCO program.
-Starlink satellite internet is being added to command vehicles, helped by a $2,500 SDAO. Plan is to phase out existing cellular service if Starlink proves reliable.
-Recap of the Fielder Mountain Fire: strong multi-agency response, no structures lost, with particular focus on rapid structure protection and coordination. Board and public praised the department's response. Efforts to secure FEMA reimbursement are underway, estimated to take two years. Discussion on challenges related to single-lane access, community evacuation, and city congestion during major incidents.

MONTHLY REPORTS: Monthly Captain's reports were reviewed. Jim Stearns made a motion to approve the monthly reports, John Foster 2nd. All in favor, motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Grace Howell, the city representative, expressed appreciation for the department's work during the fire and emphasized the positive relationship with city leadership.

ITEMS THAT CAME UP AFTER AGENDA POSTED: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Regular session closed at 8:56am

Regular session reopened at 9:00am

Jim Stearns made a motion to approve what was discussed and not to exceed $1500.00 on incentives, John Foster 2nd.
Roll call vote: Craig Berry-yes, Jim Stearns-yes, John Ellis- yes, John Foster-yes, Randy Cort-yes. Motion passed.

SUGGESTED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 9:01 a.m. by Randy Cort, 2nd by John Foster. Motion passed.

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Jenna Kurzyniec
Clerk to the Board

Craig Berry
Secretary/Treasurer - Board of Directors