

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Klickitat County Emergency Medical Services District No. 1

December 27, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Klickitat County Emergency Medical Services District No. 1 (KCEMSD1) Board of Directors was held on Wednesday, December 27, 2023, at 3:00 pm at the White Salmon Fire Station at 119 NE Church Ave in White Salmon, Washington with Zoom option.

Director Chuck Virts was the presiding officer. A quorum was present including Director Tony Gilmer and Director JJ McCray. Director Adam Wagner joined the meeting at 15:40. Director Dr. Alia Breon was absent. All directors in attendance noted they were able to hear and be heard over Zoom conferencing.

Also, present William Harryman, EMS Chief, Erika Cooper, Finance Administrator, Suzie Gilmer, Nate Herbeck, Dave West, EMS Services, Chief Sarah Hancock, High Prairie Fire & EMS Ex-Officio.

CALL TO ORDER

Director Virts called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Director Gilmer made a motion to approve the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Director McCray. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Virts continued by requesting disclosure from the Directors of any conflict of interest with items on the agenda. Director Gilmer said he was married to Suzie. He said he does not have a supervisory capacity and has not negotiated or participated in the collective bargaining agreement. He said he has made a motion and seconded a motion but is abstaining from voting where personal gain is involved. There is a letter on file from the District's attorney regarding this potential conflict.

BUSINESS FROM AUDIENCE

None noted.

CORRESPONDENCE

None noted.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Director Gilmer moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from November 29, 2023. Also, to approve; November Accounts Payable in the amount of \$71,209.11. November electronic transfers in the amount of \$3,619,542.65. Bad Debt in the amount of \$16,826.81 and

no Charity Care. The motion was seconded by Director McCray. The motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Financial Report

Erika reviewed the November 2023 financials.

Chief of EMS Operations Report

The Chief report was provided.

Vehicle Report

The vehicle report was provided.

Data/Run Report

The data run report was provided.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- **KCIFA Report** – Chief Hancock said KCIFA has had an increase in attendance at its meetings. November had the highest attendance that it's ever had. Chief Hancock said they had 11 volunteers going through the EMT course starting in January with Maria.
- **Union Local Report** – Nate wanted to bring the WA Gap meeting to the board's attention. Basically, they were told by someone that attended the meeting that a County Commissioner had stated that the public should not vote for any EMS levies in the future. Nate said he had not seen the video but there are several articles written on it. It's very critical that we get the straight story of what really happened and contact the County Commissioners for a meeting.
- **Strategic Planning** – We need to have a full board in attendance so we can designate committee members.
- **Interfacility Transfer Policy** – No update currently.

NEW BUSINESS

- **System Status Management Review Committee** – The board would like to pursue forming a committee. However, we need to wait until we have a full board in attendance.
- **Reaffirm Director #1 position (Dr Breon) and Director #3 position (Adam Wagner)** – Director McCray made a motion to approve the appointment of Dr Breon and Adam

Wagner to their positions. Director Gilmer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. We will contact the Commissioners to get an updated letter from them.

- **2024 Employment Agreement-Finance Adm** – Director Virts said he wanted to apologize to the group as he failed to meet with Erika at the end of the year to discuss terms for the new agreement. Director Gilmer wanted to thank Erika for sending out the proposal providing additional information on her position.

Erika said she was upset because last year the Board told her to do a market analysis for this year's salaries, which is exactly what the union did. However, she was told she'd only get a 3% raise when in all previous years, her raise percentage has matched the unions'. Director Virts apologized and said he misspoke at the last meeting and he wasn't taking into consideration the 3.5% COLA. He was considering 6.5%-7%. Director Virts said Erika does a lot for the district. Her services are worth a lot so we need to acknowledge that to some degree. Erika said she didn't understand why it was an issue when the board approved the market analysis salary of \$92,000 for her and \$124,000 for the Chief. Erika said every year their salaries have been budgeted through it and that was the amount that was paid. Director Virts said the budgeted amount was a line item only, an estimate. She said the budget amount for the union was approved and it was also done by market analysis. Director Wagner asked about the comps that were done. Erika shared her screen and showed the comparable. She also reviewed the one she sent to the board which was personalized with her education and 30 years of experience. It showed she was making 78% less than people with the same education and experience. Erika said 7% was not fair when the union staff received an average of 28%, that's a difference of 21%. She said it sent quite a message to her. All her past raises have matched the unions' percentages. Director Virts said he thought 7% was a reasonable amount. He said there was no reason another board member couldn't propose 8%, 10% or 15% or whatever another board member might think is appropriate compensation. Director Virts said the \$90k number that Erika pointed out was erroneous. It was not a compensation number it was a budget item. Director Gilmer said it's a very competitive market, Erika answers his questions and he values that tremendously. She may not have a CPA but the salary is not up to standards and he thinks we're a little short at 7%.

Erika said the wording of their agreements should not be linked to the union agreement. Her and the Chief would still receive same benefits they have but doesn't want their agreements to be linked to the union. It's a conflict of interest.

Director McCray apologized for what happened last month. She thought all the numbers had already been discussed and agreed upon. She said it was a difficult situation and who decides the pay raises needs to be determined, the board or the EMS Chief.

Erika said she thought everything was ok going into this because her and the Chief agreed on the dollar amount. Chief Harryman said there is room for clarity on how Erika's ongoing

raises will be handled. He said he didn't have any problems with her review. All the feedback we've received from the audits has been really good and that's a huge amount of her time between the state and private audit. She does those on her own and that's a huge job. The Chief suggested we set up the range she's eligible for within her agreement. Then she knows ahead of time what the minimum and maximum would be and based on her review the Chief would be able to make recommendations. He would expect the board would approve and then if there were questions, the board would ask the Chief and that would eliminate all this, putting Erika on the spot and having to defend herself and what she does. It's very hard to hear all this in a public meeting. He said he apologized to her for not being more proactive. He said he didn't feel like he had the authority to set her pay or make that determination. That's not outlined in our agreements and that was never made clear to the Chief.

Chief Harryman said there could be a percentage step each year, with a percentage based on performance, a COLA and then a discretionary percentage. Then we'd have a formula moving forward. Then there's one other aspect to this, does her position require an adjustment? It's something that Director Gilmer alluded to, are the annual incumbents appropriate for her position and responsibilities? If you are using raises at fixed depths, they aren't really raises if somebody's at minimum and not making enough money. It's a complex issue that none of us have put the appropriate amount of time into to make sure that Erika is getting treated fairly.

Chief Hancock asked if there was an administrative rule that said who makes that decision because it sounds like nobody really knows. In previous years Director Virts sat down with Erika and discussed terms that did not happen this year. Chief Hancock said the number one thing is to get her up to the standard or close to it with the long-term goal that her agreement needs to be redone and a rule needs to be set on who's in charge. She said to have a scale that goes hand in hand with her agreement. She said there are four things going on, we need to bring her up to scale with everyone else and then work on the other three items.

Director Virts said the current compensation is \$64,970 if you use the 15% number that Director Gilmer proposed that moves her compensation to \$74,716. Chief Hancock asked if she worked hourly or salary. Erika said salary with about 10-15 hours a week in overtime. Chief Virts said her agreement specifically says overtime is involved. Erika said she understands that her point was her pay is at the threshold for the overtime cutoff and the 3% increase would make the district responsible for overtime. [Changes to Overtime Rules \(wa.gov\)](#) The current pay might say she makes \$31/hour but if you consider the actual hours worked, she makes \$20/hour. She said the job has gotten much bigger over the years, the pay should as well.

Director Wagner said we need to be around 10-15% at least to get her at a better starting point and then make sure there are incremental raises based on performance. He said he

thought between 10-15% was modest based on the accountants he knows. They get paid quite a bit more.

Director Gilmer asked Director Virts if he'd entertain a motion. Director Virts said he was only one board member and he'd laid his thoughts out to the board. If Director Gilmer had a motion, he suggested he make it. Director Gilmer made a motion to increase Erika's salary to \$75,000 annually. Director Wagner asked what percentage that was. Director Gilmer said it was just above 15%. He said he was very confident that we cannot find or replace Erika for less. Director Wagner agreed. He said we need to keep Erika, she's essential and we need to pay her fairly so I second the motion. The motion passed unanimously. We will institute a pay scale for her agreement for future reference and use.

Director Virts thanked everyone for the discussion and chiming in with their thoughts and ideas. He said he knows it was difficult for everyone but was time well spent.

- **2024 Employment Agreement-Chief** – Chief Harryman's compensation is \$95,261 annually. Director Virts said based on the industry, he thinks Chief Harryman is horribly underpaid. He thinks we, as a district, need to seriously look at increasing his income to a level that would attract folks to that position. Chief Harryman will not be here forever. Someone brought it up that we need to provide salaries that are attractive to the positions and that especially applies to Chief Harryman's position. Director Virts said his personal recommendation is to increase the Chief's salary to \$110,000 annually. Director McCray agreed with Director Virts' proposal. Director Wagner said he liked the proposal and he thought he was underpaid. He said he didn't believe COLAs are raises, they are meant to keep employees at the amount they were hired at. Director Gilmer made a motion to increase Chief Harryman's salary to \$110,000 with the expectations that would include full compliance of the collective bargaining agreement. Director McCray seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Grant/Bond Committee (Gilmer)

This is on hold.

Executive Session

None needed.

Good of the Order

Director Gilmer wants the board to start thinking about the upcoming levy. He would like the district to consider making a video of KCEMS and get it out there to the public via social media.

Director Gilmer said we have a hospital representative on our board, he'd like to see an ambulance representative on the hospital's board. Director McCray said it was a great idea. Nate said the union agreed with his idea. A discussion followed.

Future Meeting Dates

The next regular meeting will be January 31, 2024, at 3:00 pm at the Rural 7 Fire & Rescue Station located at 327 W Brooks St, Goldendale, Washington with Zoom option.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, Director McCray moved that the meeting be adjourned at 4:57 pm. Director Wagner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair of the Board of Directors

Director