



EAST UMATILLA  
FIRE & RESCUE

EAST UMATILLA COUNTY AMBULANCE  
AREA HEALTH DISTRICT



**JOINT SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**February 21, 2023, 7:00 PM**  
**Athena Medic Station**  
**431 E. Main Street**  
**Athena, OR 97813**

**Mission Statement**

East Umatilla Fire and Rescue is committed to preserving life, property, and the environment by providing and supporting the best possible emergency services to the communities in our district. Volunteer fire fighters are dedicated to safely minimizing suffering, loss of life, and loss of property incurred by fire, accidents, disasters, and medical emergencies. Fire fighters do this through fire training, suppression, preparation, education, and prevention.

**Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the East Umatilla County Ambulance Area Health District (EUCAAHD) to provide the highest quality Advanced Life Support care in a timely manner while maintaining public trust through sound financial practices and accountability to those citizens we serve.

*In Attendance*

<i>EUFR</i>		<i>EUCAAHD</i>	
<u>X</u>	<i>Matt Hoehna, President</i>	<u>X</u>	<i>Chrys Wernlund, President</i>
<u>X</u>	<i>Terry Case, Vice President</i>	<u>X</u>	<i>Chris Williams, Vice President</i>
<u>X</u>	<i>Carol Kirk, Secretary/Treasurer</i>	<u>X</u>	<i>Carol Kirk, Secretary/Treasurer</i>
<u>X</u>	<i>Greg Phillips, Director</i>	<u>X</u>	<i>Christine Erb, Director</i>
<u>X</u>	<i>Chris Williams, Director</i>		<i>Kim Herron, Director</i>

**MINUTES**

**1) MEETING TO ORDER**

EUFR Board President, Matt Hoehna called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2) ROLL CALL**

A quorum was determined as indicated above, and the meeting continued. Guests included members of the public and staff members.

**3) APPROVE/EDIT/ADD TO THE ADGENDA**

**MOTION:** Greg Phillips moved to approve the agenda

**SECOND:** Terry Case

**VOTE:** Unanimously Approved

**4) PUBLIC COMMENT (re: this agenda – IGA Only)**

Stacy Smith asked for clarification on what an IGA was. Matt Hoehna provided clarification that an IGA is an Inter-Governmental Agreement between the two districts, between Fire and Ambulance. Stacy Smith voiced a concern over how many employees and volunteers are leaving at a rapid rate. Felt the District's should split up and that having ambulances go out on fire calls for wildland fire, they were grabbing for money and it was a waste of money. Mark Woolbright responded to Stacy's statement on ambulances out on fire calls for wildland fire. Anytime you have personnel on a fire line where they could be injured is probably standard protocol. Structure fires and wildland fires you have a medical triage to check firefighters, that they are staying healthy, cooling off, take their blood pressure, it is kind of standard practice. If you look at Pendleton and a lot of the other districts the medical staff are on line with the fire.



Stacy felt he understood for structure fires, but not for wildland fire. Mark Woolbright explained on wildland fires there is a lot of exersion there and that there were probably more line-of-duty deaths with wildland firefighting than structure firefighting in the United States. He felt it wouldn't be doing "due diligence" to not have medical personnel on line when you have a structure fire or wildland fire to take care of the firefighters. Matt Hoehna thanked Mark for his response and clarified that we wouldn't be able to answer all the questions tonight and that the meeting was for awareness to the boards. Stacey said he talked to a few of the farmers around who have some pretty major concerns and wished that some had showed up tonight. He then reiterated his initial concern on volunteers and staff leaving. Why? Matt assured Stacy they were goin to discuss that, and asked if there was any other public comment. No other public comment was given and Stacy was thanked for his comment.

## **BUSINESS**

The history of the District's was lined out – 2017 IGA between Helix and East Umatilla Rural Fire Department. 2019 IGA between Helix, Athena Volunteer Fire Department, ambulance district, & East Umatilla Rural Fire Department. 2020 vote for Fire Districts combining. 2020 IGA between EUCAAHD and EUFR

Reasons provided for staffing/volunteer issues - national trend for volunteers declining / volunteers declining due to moving / certification process is rigorous (these were all given as related but not spceific to the IGA as reasons why, instead of the IGA as the reason)

Board wants/needs to do a better job of communicating that this IGA isn't going away, the meetings are there as a way to fulfill their duties as board members to be good stewards of the agreement and making sure it is serving the needs of the districts and if it isn't how do we make it so.

Board needs to think through... is the IGA the cause of the districts losing people or is it personality problems, is it the IGA or people. In order to find that out need to have an idependent review, possibly SDAO. Board really needs to find out, is it the IGA causing personnel problems, or is it people within the IGA causing personnel problems.

### **a. Positive Attributes of the IGA**

Sharing of bookkeeping/payroll staff one district doesn't have to foot the entire cost / administrative side / mechanical / grant writer / utilizing cross trained employees to fill position needs – seamless interaction / not dropeed any 1<sup>st</sup> out calls / response time has dropped / more efficient all around (books, employees, everybody intertwining) feel like a team / from EMT & Firefighter point of view when they are joined, it is a richer environment, more fulfilling (cross trained) / greater coverage / board members on both boards / good working relationship between boards / grant writings for both districts – the amount of grants received since IGA are pretty good – both have reaped the benefit / new station – camaraderie will be very open / certain things each district can do that if combined they wouldn't be able to do (use the best of both worlds)

### **b. Challenging Attributes of the IGA**

Labor poor due to location and size / staff conflict & leaving – not sure if result of IGA or personnel / staffing is a challenge / still putting together two separate budgets and 2 sets of bookkeeping / since administration is through fire district, medic board feels like they are taking a back seat (medic board can only control the money) – have been made to feel they cannot take care of personnel issues as technically no employees / board members on both boards – advocating for two separate boards / when organization has more people, less focused on hiring from outside, whereas if they were completely separate the need to hire from outside would be greater / time – takes a long time to do anything, change attitude, fix something, iron out issues / communication challenges / strong leadership is lacking – one side is not being monitored as well as it should be – district leadership is lacking / working out of two houses

### **c. Board - Specific Feedback received from constituents/community on IGA**

Not had any complaints / most don't understand how it works / just want it to work / when they make a call, they just want someone to show up

Board Suggested Solutions: Joint Meetings (would provide more mutual respect from/for both entities) – check into the legallity of whether it is possible / quarterly IGA meetings if jointly meeting / cross train employees (currently occuring) / find a solution for medic board members on personnel as amination is through fire district

Board went into IGA to provide efficiencies and provide the best level of service they could – need to identify where they are missing those marks. By the metrix, they are providing pretty good



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service (call times down, not dropping calls more efficient with administrative staff) Service side – doing well. Problems that are occurring come from communication. Contract with SDAO for independent review on IGA.

A discussion was had about employees on both sides being more assertive in their concerns or frustrations. There is a chain of command and it should be effective and followed. Try to solve problems at their lowest level and run them through the chain of command. If Boards are brought in, board members need to weigh if “sour grapes” or is this a structural issue within the organization that needs a policy or other outlet to fix. Board will not step in and make operational decisions and they won’t let each other do that, but if operations needs a change in policy or needs to be an operational change overall to solve a problem, then the board needs to know about it.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: Chris Williams moved to adjourn the meeting**

**SECOND: Greg Phillips**

**VOTE: Unanimously Approved**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.


Next Regular Scheduled Meeting is March 16, 2023, 7:00 pm at the Weston Fire Station.

  
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PRESIDENT

3/16/23  
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DATE

  
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PRESIDENT

3/16/23  
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BOARD SECRETARY (Both Boards)

3/16/23  
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DATE