

**Western Lane Ambulance District  
Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue  
Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority  
2625 Highway 101 North, Florence, OR 97439  
Joint Board Meeting Minutes, January 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m.  
The Zoom recording will be on the WLFEA Website.**

**SVFR & WLFEA BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Director Jim Palisi, Director David Carrillo, and Director Keith Stanton  
**Not Present:** Director Stephanie Restrepo and Director Laurie Heppel

**WLAD & WLFEA BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Director Cindy Russell, Director Linda Stent, Director Mike Webb, Director Adam Holbrook (arrived at 6:08 p.m.), and Director Vanessa Buss

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Fire and EMS Chief Michael Schick, Deputy Chief Rob Chance, Division Chief Andy Gray, Office Manager Trish Lutgen, and Recording Secretary Holly Lais

**Chief Schick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The flag salute was completed, and a roll call established a quorum for SVFR, WLAD, and WLFEA.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**AUDITOR PRESENTATION:**

Chief Schick introduced Kori Sarrette, the District's Auditor from Accuity, LLC. She presented the Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority (WLFEA), Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD), and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) Audit for Fiscal Year 2024-25. She praised the staff for their hard work and reconciliation between the three entities while changing accounting software. She stated that having real Fund Accounting software makes the process easier for the audit.

SVFR had no specific findings. All the funds had a net income. The General Fund had an ending fund balance of \$600,000, and the other reserved funds combined had about \$1.2 million. Most of the transactions are found in WLFEA.

WLAD had recorded journal entries related to the cleanup associated with the transition to cash-basis accounting and the system conversion. She does not anticipate any journal entries for next year, and noted that the journal entries do not make significant changes to the numbers the board already received. The General Fund had a net income of \$561,000 and an ending fund balance of \$700,000. The Capital Fund, after the transfers for the year, ended with \$300,000.

Sarrette reviewed the WLAD LifeMed Fund and reported that they researched historical budget transfers with the Oregon Secretary of State, reviewing records back to 2004, when electronic audit filings became available. The review showed that each year, a transfer from the LifeMed Fund to the General Fund was made, but was not adjusted in the budget. As a result, the LifeMed ending fund in the audit is larger than the bank account balance. Management's current intent is to transfer the amount earned by the LifeMed Fund each year to the General Fund. Sarrette recommended either adopting a supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 to recognize the additional fund balance and related transfers or increasing the transfer amount in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget. Either approach would substantially reduce the ending fund balance to align with the desired carryover amount.

WLAD had no budget, public contracting, or minimum standard issues.

WLFEA experienced a one-time, significant journal entry resulting from the transition from an accrual basis to a cash basis accounting system. Sarrette stated that this adjustment is not expected to recur in future fiscal years. The General Fund reported a loss of approximately \$430,000; however, the fund maintains an estimated five months of carryover, which was noted as a positive financial position.

The Directors had no questions, and Sarrette thanked the staff again for a job well done.

**CONSENT AGENDA: Approved**

**Meeting Minutes:** Special Meeting January 8, 2026, Regular Meeting December 18, 2025, Work Session November 13, 2025, and Work Session November 6, 2025

**Staff Reports**

**Correspondence**

**REVIEW OF FINANCIALS – WLAD, SVFR, WLFEA:**

Office Manager Trish Lutgen reported that the financials are halfway through the budget year, and the majority of the tax dollars have been received.

The WLFEA balance sheet reflects a negative clearing balance attributable to the timing of payroll processing. Payroll is typically disbursed on the fourth of each month; however, January's payroll was disbursed on January 2. As a result, the bank withdrawal occurred on December 31 rather than in January. Under normal circumstances, payroll disbursement and bank withdrawal dates align. To properly reconcile the bank accounts within the accounting system, WLFEA adjusted the payroll clearing journal entry date to January.

Office Manager Lutgen reported that the WLFEA business consulting line item increased due to the receipt of the final invoice for the 360 review, which was previously discussed at the prior Board meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Polices reviewed from the December 18, 2025, meeting:**

- a) 710 – Non-Official Use of Authority Property
- b) 711 - Privately Owned Muster Trucks
- c) 712 – Authority Use of Social Media
- d) 713 – Body-Worn Cameras

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Audit FY 2024-25**

The full Audit reports for all three entities were provided in the Board of Directors' Joint Board Meeting Packet. Chief Schick said there was no action needed.

- a) Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue
- b) Western Lane Ambulance District
- c) Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority

**2. WLAD Resolution 2025-07 to Amend the Budget**

WLAD Resolution 2025-07 was presented. This is a resolution calling for a supplemental budget adjustment for Fiscal Year 2025-26 of \$310,000. WLAD had a budgeted transfer of \$310,000 from the General Fund to the Equipment Fund in Fiscal Year 2023-24. The physical transfer of those funds did not occur, leaving an audited ending balance in Fiscal Year 2024-25 of \$294,347 in the Capital Equipment Fund. \$310,000 is being utilized in the starting balance of the new Apparatus Fund, which was created in the Fiscal Year 2025-26.

**WLAD: Director Buss made a motion to accept Resolution 2025-07 to Amend the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26. The motion was seconded by Director Stent. A roll-call vote occurred; all WLAD Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

### **3. SVFR Resolution 2026-01 to Amend the Budget**

SVFR Resolution 2026-01 was presented. This is a resolution calling for a supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26. The audit cost for Fiscal Year 2025-26 increased by 45%, and the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's annual billing for July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, which is based on the audit, increased by 38.5%. Office Manager Lutgen reported that the increases are believed to be the result of a contract misclassification between SVFR and WLFEA, as the contract was originally issued under SVFR. As a result, a budget adjustment of \$16,000 is required to cover the additional expense.

**SVFR: Director Carrillo made a motion to accept Resolution 2026-01 to Amend the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26. The motion was seconded by Director Palisi. A roll-call vote occurred; all SVFR Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

Director Stanton requested to return to the Monthly Financials for SVFR, WLAD, and WLFEA. He noted multiple entries for System Design West (SDW) in the WLAD financials and asked for clarification. Office Manager Lutgen explained that SDW is a third-party vendor and the District's ambulance billing service provider, and that the entries reflect daily ambulance revenue deposits.

Director Stanton further inquired whether the combined cash assets from property tax collections totaled approximately \$8.4 million, noting that he had aggregated the balances across all three entities. Office Manager Lutgen clarified that WLFEA does not receive property tax revenue; WLAD receives tax revenues from the local option levy, including both current and prior year collections; and SVFR receives property tax revenues from current and prior year collections.

Discussion followed regarding the movement of funds between accounts, interest rates, and the use of Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) accounts. Director Stanton inquired about current trends in investment interest rates and the reason for maintaining relatively large balances in non-interest-bearing checking accounts. Office Manager Lutgen reported that the majority of funds are held in LGIP accounts, which currently offer interest rates of approximately 4.0% to 4.5%. Funds are periodically transferred to checking accounts to cover monthly operating expenses and payroll, with each account maintaining a minimum balance. On occasion, additional fund transfers are made to cover large, one-time items like SCBAs (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus). Once tax revenues are received, funds are transferred evenly, at approximately \$450,000 per month.

Director Stanton noted that local funds were being held at Oregon Pacific Bank (OPB) and asked why additional banking institutions were not being utilized within the tax district. Office Manager Lutgen explained that, as a public entity, WLFEA is required to use financial institutions approved by the Oregon State Treasury. She noted that it had been several years since WLFEA last conducted a banking Request for Proposals (RFP). Director Buss commented on the operational difficulty of changing banks. Office Manager Lutgen added that the checking accounts are with OPB, and most funds are invested through the LGIP, which is managed by the State. The remaining money market account is maintained for ambulance revenue deposits.

Director Webb asked how quickly funds can be transferred from the LGIP to the checking account. Office Manager Lutgen responded that transfers are completed via ACH, typically available by the next business day, and noted that checks cannot be issued directly from LGIP accounts.

### **4. FY 2026-27 Budget**

#### **a) Approve the Budget Calendar:**

The Board reviewed the Budget Calendar, which applies to all three governing boards.

**Director Webb made a motion to approve the budget calendar. Second by Director Palisi. A roll-call vote occurred; all Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

b) Appoint Budget Officer:

Chief Schick recommended the appointment of Deputy Chief Chance as the designated Budget Officer.

**WLAD: Director Russell made a motion to approve Deputy Chief Chance as the WLAD Budget Officer. Second by Director Buss. A roll-call vote occurred; all WLAD Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

**SVFR: Director Carrillo made a motion to approve Deputy Chief Chance as the SVFR Budget Officer. Second by Director Stanton. A roll-call vote occurred; all SVFR Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

**WLFEA: Director Stent made a motion to approve Deputy Chief Chance as the WLFEA Budget Officer. Second by Director Buss. A roll-call vote occurred; all WLFEA Directors voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

c) Open Committee Positions:

Chief Schick reported that there are two vacancies on the SVFR Budget Committee and that no action was required at this meeting. He noted that one application has been received from Margrett Sorenson, who is involved with the local amateur radio group. Mike Webb suggested contacting Jo Beaudreau about the SVFR Budget Committee opening.

**5. Surplus Scott SCBAs:**

Chief Schick said they were looking to surplus their old Scott SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) masks. He stated that the matter will be revisited at the next Board meeting after staff obtains an estimated value for the equipment. Potential options discussed included declaring the items surplus, donating them, selling them, distributing them to neighboring agencies, or disposing of them. The SCBA masks were acquired through a grant and are approximately 15 years old.

Chief Chance reported that several neighboring districts have expressed interest in the SCBA masks and that he would consult legal counsel regarding potential liability concerns. Director Stanton suggested utilizing a third-party service to surplus the equipment, noting this could present an opportunity for additional revenue. Director Stanton stated that there are companies we can utilize to sell the equipment. Director Palisi expressed concern about selling equipment that was originally acquired through a grant and would prefer us to donate to other departments. Chief Chance noted that we've utilized some of those surplus companies for surplus many of our vehicles.

**6. Policies for Review:**

- a) 800 – Records Management
- b) 801 – Release of Records
- c) 802 – Subpoenas and Court Appearances
- d) 803 – Patient Medical Record Security and Privacy

**7. Fire Chief Interview**

Chief Schick reported that staff held a Fire Chief assessment on January 9. After meeting with the Board Presidents, they decided to initially open the Fire Chief's position to internal candidates. They only had one applicant, Deputy Chief Chance, and he was invited to the assessment center, which had an interview panel,

a budget scenario, and a public speaking/HR scenario. After a thorough interview, the panel felt strong support that Chief Chance was well qualified for the position. Director Webb said Chief Chance had done well.

Director Stanton stated his objection was to the process, not to Chief Chance personally. He emphasized concern about not conducting an exhaustive, external search and referenced the Special District Association of Oregon (SDAO) presentation, "Choosing the Right Fire Chief." Director Russell noted that they were considering internal candidates first, consistent with common practices in many corporations. Discussion followed, during which the board asked Chief Chance questions regarding his background and his future plans. Chief Chance stated that he loves the community, considers Florence his home, and is raising his family locally with the intent to remain long-term. Director Buss shared that it was a rare opportunity to have someone local who was invested in the community. Director Carrillo noted it was beneficial to have a candidate who has an established rapport with stakeholders and is familiar with the district's target hazards. Chief Schick directed that further Board discussion continue in Executive Session.

8. **Executive Session:** Per ORS 192.660(2)(a), to consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent. The board entered into executive session at 6:45 p.m. Executive session ended at 7:05 p.m., and the directors returned to the regular meeting.

Chief Schick informed that no decisions had been made during the Executive Sessions.

**WLFEA: Director Buss made the motion to move forward with the internal candidate, Deputy Chief Rob Chance, for the Fire Chief's position. Seconded by Director Carrillo.**

A brief discussion occurred. Director Webb noted that the next order of business would involve negotiations, which Chief Schick confirmed. Director Stanton stated that he remained opposed to the Chief's hiring process, expressing concern that the process was unclear and unfair in that it did not consider other potential external candidates, even though the internal candidate was well established within the agency.

**A roll-call vote occurred. Director Russell, Director Stent, Director Webb, Director Holbrook, Director Buss, Director Palisi, and Director Carrillo voted Yes. Director Stanton voted No. The motion to move forward with the internal candidate, Deputy Chief Rob Chance, for the Fire Chief's position passed.**

**DIRECTOR COMMENTS:** None

**FUTURE BUSINESS:**

The next regular Joint Board Meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

**The regular meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Lais, Recording Secretary