

**City of Port Orford**  
**City Council rural fire District Contract Workshop**  
**In the Gable Chambers**  
**Thursday, December 19, 2019**

<b>Mayor and Council</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>City Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
<i>Gary Burns</i>	X	<i>Terrie Richards, City Admin/Recorder</i>	X
<i>Tim Pogwizd, Mayor</i>	Excused	<i>David Johnson, Finance Director</i>	X
<i>Pat Cox, President</i>	X	<i>Shala McKenzie Kudlac, City Attorney</i>	
<i>Jim Campbell</i>	X		
<i>James Garratt</i>	Excused		
<i>Carolyn LaRoche</i>	Excused		
<i>Travis Williams</i>	X		

Media Present: Port Orford News – Brice Wagner

Others Present:

**1. Call to Order**

President Cox called to order this workshop of the Common Council in the City of Port Orford Gable Chambers on Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 2:32 p.m.

**2. Council Discussion:**

Councilor Williams reports he is on the volunteer fire department and does receive a stipend. He will not be voting.

Councilor Williams clarifies the requested amount is not what the fireboard is currently asking for. The board is asking that in eight to ten years they be at an ending point in the correct amount. The fireboard does not want to end the services to the City of Port Orford. They are concerned with making it more equitable in what the city is paying and what rural is paying. Councilor Cox appreciates the clarification.

The city owns the property the fire hall is on [Cedar Terrace]; however, the building is owned by the Fire District. It was mentioned by the fireboard that the city possibly grant the Fire District the property and remove the value of the property from the contract amount over a period of years until paid off. Putting in improvements and keeping the property versus selling the property is discussed. Currently the contract does not address the use of the property where they park their equipment and have their building. They do not pay for water usage in the building. The current contract does address maintenance. Council will figure out the rate of value per square feet. Dave will bring the square footage of property to the next meeting. Councilor Williams will research and bring in the current Curry County commercial rate.

David Johnson received a letter from the fireboard asking for a change in the way the contract amount is calculated. The fireboard was asking to go for a rate per thousand on the city assessed value in the letter. They asked for 83 cents a thousand of the city assessed value in the new contract amount. Currently that would come to 112,000 dollars. The city is currently paying 34,000 dollars. The current contract is based on the Portland Index. The fireboard is asking to change to assessed value. David Johnson approves of the methodology. It will adjust with the city economy.

David Johnson reviews the history on the difference in funding between city and rural. Originally the city had the fire department and all of the equipment. The city then contracted with the Fire District, gave them the equipment and fire trucks and agreed on a rate. It was originally lower, but changed with the CPI, which resulted in the current difference. The assessed land and structure value in the fire district is currently 84,500,000. The assessed value in the city is now 135,797,000.

There is a slightly higher cost fighting a fire outside of the city versus inside the city. Councilor Williams reports when fighting a fire in the city they might require mutual aid, which incurs a cost to the outside departments coming into the city to assist. Port Orford has a mutual contract with Sixes.

The callout cost provided from station 2, two years ago, was not comparable to the list received by the CAD callout. A new list will need to be obtained.

Councilor Cox asks if the out-of-district users such as Coos Forest Protective or Rural Fire Protection pay more on the tax rate than the City of Port Orford. David Johnson replies that those in the fire district are paying \$1.32 a thousand. The city's current contract amount of 34,000 equates to 26 cents a thousand.

CA Richards inquires about water usage cost. David Johnson reports when the Fire District responds outside the city limits, they use city treated water paid for by the citizens. David Johnson states the current contract does not reimburse for water usage. The Fire District pays a monthly RAW water usage rate to compensate people for dry wells due to consumption. Fire District water consumption is a factor though minimal.

CA Richards reports the Fire District does exercise hydrants once a week, thus eliminating hydrant exercise from Port Orford public works' duties.

The fireboard stated if the Fire District did not exist the citizen's insurance cost would be higher. Councilor Williams explains that the insurance cost depends on Fire District rating. Equipment and Fire District efficiency determines the rating. Port Orford has a very good low rating of 4 in the city and 5 outside the city, which creates a lower insurance.

Councilor Burns reported Chief Duncan is hoping to pay more stipend per call for each responder as an incentive. The new medics in town are using the fire department more often.

These increased number of calls are pulling the fire department members from work and home more often, which is not always practical for the members. The stipend is currently 4.50 dollars per run.

Councilor Williams suggested finding five cities with similar fire contracts and researching what they are paying for services and what their contracts entail.

Councilor Cox suggested considering charging Cal-Ore Life Flight for calls. Councilor Williams reported the area does not produce enough money per use to support the cost of current Cal-Ore services.

The city of Port Orford citizens contract with the rural fire district for services but are not in the fire district. The possibility of annexing Port Orford into the rural district was suggested, thus adjusting the cost from contract rate to a per-thousand rate. The city could bill the district for leasing the property. The city would not have to negotiate future contracts. The city would have the advantage of representation on the fire district board with a voting member. David Johnson will discuss details at a later time after he has time to organize the details. Attorney Kudlac will research legalities of annexing into the fire district.


David Johnson suggested that the Fire District put in the request to renegotiate, thus they should be providing city council with a list of topics for council to react to. Fireboard financials have been reviewed by Mr. Johnson for the last five years. In 2018 they banked 56,000 dollars more than spent. This is the last year of the debt services, after which a new engine will be purchased. It is Fire District policy to put approximately 40,000 dollars each year for equipment improvement and purchases. The 56,000 dollars in 2018 was in excess of the 57,000 dollars they put in their savings for equipment. Mr. Johnson encourages council to find out the specifics the money will be used for.

Councilor Cox suggests getting a list from the Fire District of specific uses of increased cost, have another workshop to discuss what is received, and then invite the fireboard to the following meeting. Councilor Williams asks the councilors for suggestions on items they would like to see on the list. Councilors suggested; 1) justify increase, 2) value of the list to the city, 3) lease agreement, 4) budget numbers, 5) expanding fire district size to cover rural areas they are currently responding to in cases of emergency. 6) annexing the City of Port Orford into the district. Councilors agree with the list.

In the interim while waiting for the board to respond to the list council will present to them, the verbiage on the contract should be reviewed and adjusted. CA Richards refers to the contract presented to the councilors drawing attention to the strikeouts, indicating the cleanup has been started though needs reviewed by City Council.

**Adjourned**

There being no further business, President Cox adjourned the workshop at 3:22 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Pat Cox in blue ink.

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President, Pat Cox

Attest:

Handwritten signature of Terrie Richards in blue ink.

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City Recorder, Terrie Richards