



Dear Board Members,

The Central Oregon Coast Fire and Rescue Volunteer Association feels that it is time to bring to your attention the conduct or lack thereof, of Mr. Gary Woodson. Over the past several years, the district has made some fine accomplishments. He has participated in bringing the district out of a very dark time and made available the ability for the district to have funds at its disposal for future growth. But it has come at a steep price.

Many of the changes and growth have been at the hands of the volunteers and staff of Central Oregon Coast Fire & Rescue without solid direction or through a large struggle. One of the biggest reasons for these struggles is the lack of presence of our Fire Chief. At the time of this letter, Mr. Woodson has not been readily available for more than 7 weeks. As a more recent example of the reasons Mr. Woodson has not been to work, is that he has been quarantined for COVID-19 for the second time this year. We were told that his wife, Sherri Woodson, tested positive for the virus and that his test was "inconclusive".

Mr. Woodson's absence goes far beyond recent weeks. It is routine for him to be gone for weeks at a time and has been this way for several years. He rarely comes in before 11am, when he does come to work, and routinely leaves before 4pm. As volunteers, this lack of presence is overly concerning. Not only should a Fire Chief be present but from a taxpayer point of view, what is the yearly salary that he is being paid doing to help grow and take care of the district?

His call response is next to nothing. When he does respond to a call, he is generally standing directly in the way. Our most recent house fire on Fircrest in Seal Rock, there are pictures of him inside the burning building with an unzipped Turn out jacket, duty pants, regular boots and no SCBA on. This is a serious OSHA violation that could cost the district a large sum in fines. There is a complaint on record of Mr. Woodson standing directly in the way of a hose line team within the burning structure, inhibiting the ability to properly fight the fire. In another incident, on what is dubbed the Sea Wall fire, he ordered a 500 gpm master stream to be used from a 2 ½" line that was running thru 300 feet of line up a very steep hill. He then proceeded to order the team to use two 1 ½" lines from another 300 foot 2 ½" line to be used in conjunction up that same hill. All of this being fed from a single 1500-gallon engine at the bottom of the hill. This clearly shows his lack of knowledge of both his area and apparatus capabilities. In another, EMS type incident, the crews were on a call when another call came in. He stated that he was in a meeting and could not respond. A meeting that was virtual and he had no camera or microphone so that his presence was not productive within the meeting. His presence as a Paramedic, however, could have been used on that call. The patient ended up in the valley with serious medical problems.

Although Mr. Woodson has aided in the return of having a little extra money every budget year to carry the district through, this to has come at an exceedingly high price. The disrepair of many of the apparatus, equipment and structures is a glaring example of his lack of leadership. Many of the problems that exist today, are not because they haven't been noticed or expressed, it is because they have been ignored, delayed or otherwise been stated that we don't have the money to correct them even though there are line items within the approved budget for said items. At many board meetings, you, as the board, have directed Mr. Woodson to correct and do many things. These items are then left undone or ignored. Although, there is a line item in the budget for PPE, Mr. Woodson refuses to ensure we have such showing his lack of regard for those responding to calls. He has cancelled ordered PPE designated to be spent through a grant for active responders forcing them to use expired or improper PPE. For example, when asked to purchase proper and OSHA approved extrication gloves, he stated that leather work gloves from ACE Hardware would be sufficient.

Projects such as Tidewater Station and the boat house at the port have been delayed so many times for one reason or another. These reasons have been manufactured in large part by Mr. Woodson either unintentionally due to the lack of knowledge of these types of projects, or intentionally as to not have to deal with these projects and needs of the district.

After some well-placed phone calls to the proper people, the Tidewater project is underway proving this point. The many years of delays could have been solved long ago had Mr. Woodson taken the initiative to find out the correct answers. The public is elated to finally see the work start at this location. Whether the delays were due to lack of knowledge or not wanting



to commit his time to seeing the project thru remains to be understood but none the less is a district wide issue to our taxpayers who expect more from us.

The new Port of Alsea boat house is yet another project that proper follow thru is not being met. He stated that an engineer would be coming to the station to take measurements of our boat. This is not true. The person that the port director was referring to has no intention of coming to the area and the director told Mr. Woodson this. Rather, he was willing to give suggestions on who to contact. We have a 25' x 25' slip at what will be the new Port of Alsea marina. We are responsible for making the boat house building a reality. The Port of Alsea has funds that are available thru their bond to pay for said building, but we are ultimately responsible for the coordination of the engineering and construction of said building.

In more recent findings, the districts ISO rating change, although an incredibly positive thing for the community, was given based on promises. There must be a heating system, not space heaters, in each building that houses apparatus that we want to deem as a Fire Station. Mr. Woodson told our ISO representative that he would ensure that there was heat in both locations. Under Mr. Woodson's direction, a space heater was plugged into an extension cord (fire code violation) at the Tidewater station and stated that the heat of the generator running once a week at the Fiver Rivers station would be enough. Neither of these solutions would remotely keep the apparatus from the damage of the temperatures and elements under control. An unheated space will eventually cause the very damage that has happened at the Tidewater Station. This is yet another example of the many items that are not being handled properly. ISO could easily call right now and change the rating for the Tidewater and Five Rivers area to a 10 as they can not consider these buildings functional fire stations and would in turn dramatically increase the insurance rates of these areas.

We feel, and the Local Firefighter Union endorses, that Mr. Woodson is not willing or able to continue to make our district keep moving in a forward and positive direction. We ask you to take immediate measures. We would like Mr. Woodson to be offered a retirement or be asked to resign from his position and put on paid administrative leave, effective immediately, while this decision is being made. We feel this is the best course of action and hope that the board sees fit to do so before the issues become much more public via a Vote of No Confidence, citing Conduct Unbecoming a Chief Officer thru lack of leadership and presence. Other items that would be cited are derogatory and sexist messages, racial slurs, recorded and logged times by other Paramedics when he arrived at the station under the influence driving the district vehicle. The district will come under fire again and we do not want to see this happen. Although, with regard to allegations brought forth by other volunteers in the past and a current, expensive lawsuit against Mr. Woodson, we all hope you will see and hear our final demand for help and take action within the next six (6) days. We love our community and the direction that we are helping the district move in. But we do not feel it can continue to do so with Mr. Woodson at the helm and will take further, much more public approach for his removal if necessary. We feel that taking action with this letter is the best course as it is not a single voice but rather a unified voice of all who are apart of and take care of the fire district.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Central Oregon Coast Fire and Rescue Volunteer Association
Central Coast Professional Firefighters of Local 4619

"A great leader doesn't necessarily have the knowledge or solution to each issue but is willing to seek out and empower those that do."

-- Author Unknown