



Lane Fire Authority

88050 Territorial Rd., Veneta, Oregon 97487
541.935.2226
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June 8, 2021

TO: Board of Directors, Lane Fire Authority

Lane Fire Authority (LFA) is in the process of revisiting and updating the hydrant maintenance contracts with Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) for the hydrant system located within the boundary of LFA's service area. While we are aware of some private systems located in our service district, this report only addresses the contract with EWEB as it is the largest system in North Battalion and is government owned.

To start the process, we have attempted to locate any previous contracts, discover who owns the hydrant system and who performs what maintenance functions to said hydrants. Answers to these questions are being deciphered by both Lieutenant Nelson and Asst. Chief Randy Wood based on discussions with staff and paperwork located at LFA offices.

At this time, we have been unable to locate any signed contracts between Eugene Water and Electric Board, Lane Fire Authority predecessors, or Lane Fire Authority for maintenance. If this contract exists, EWEB will need to have the copy.

We do have limited information regarding the final two questions.

Question #1: Who owns the system?

According to paperwork from EWEB dated the year 1964, there was discussion regarding the Bethel Water District (BWD) transferring ownership to EWEB by dissolving BWD. If BWD dissolved at this time is difficult to verify as there is some evidence that it happened in 1975.

A letter addressed to Irving Fire District, Sec/Tres Mr. Paul Dieterle, dated March 9, 1964 states that when EWEB takes over ownership of the BWD system, that EWEB will consult with Irving Fire District for future hydrant placement, after BWD is dissolved. The letter further states that Irving Fire District "would not provide anything more than presently". (That is the wording from the letter.)

Based on this information we surmise that EWEB owns the water system in North Battalion.

Question #2:

What maintenance functions have been agreed to by LFA?

In our reading, no agreements have been signed by LFA that reflect what general maintenance the district agrees to.



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In a letter address to Fire Chief Bob Kirk, dated January 4, 1985, a draft proposal between Lane Rural Fire District #1 and EWEB, spelled out some of the responsibilities LFA completes now, on a limited basis, without a contract. In the draft, there is no provision for termination. It appears that the draft was never signed as an enforceable contract. At this point LFA has no legal responsibility to perform hydrant maintenance at all. We do not know if EWEB has signed copies of the draft or if those copies have a termination clause.

Here is what we do know. Just like Santa Clara Fire District, LFA has never done full hydrant testing that we are aware of. A full hydrant test includes a water flow test where gallons per minute are calculated using specific testing equipment. The only full hydrant tests completed, were completed by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO), for the purpose of aiding in the determination of fire ratings in a given area and only a small handful of hydrants are tested.

We don't believe that LFA ever painted hydrants or greased caps on hydrants; as our staff is not trained/certified in hydrant repair. Further if they were, LFA is not willing to accept the liability established by testing and maintaining a hydrant system not owned by the District.

Chief Borland spoke with Kristina Deschaine, who works for the State Fire Marshal's office and is a volunteer in Central Battalion, about the hydrant testing issue. She is concerned that liability could be inherited by doing any maintenance on the hydrants. She does not believe there is a state or federal mandate that places that responsibility on fire districts.

Our plan is to clean around the hydrants, which will make them visible to LFA responders and report any visible damage to EWEB for repair.

We are still in the process of contacting EWEB and SCWB for the purpose of a defining a new contract. Their "Water Operations Manager" has been on vacation and we are awaiting a new meeting time. We will keep you updated.

If you feel we have not exhausted all options regarding research or if there is any information you may have that may be beneficial to our project, please email Asst. Chief Randy Wood, randywood@lanefire.org.

Thank you,

Randy Wood