

**BOARDS from page 1A**

“Certainly, it is illegal to use public funds, including the LifeMed funds for political or PAC (political action committee) expenses anticipated and advocated by the Turell Group in the amounts of \$20,350, or \$36,350 or \$46,350,” Farnsworth stated. “In order to avoid personal liability, you will want to make sure that you do your own fundraising of private funds. Perhaps you will be willing to donate to the levy renewal campaign using your own funds or funds from the union.”

At the July meeting, WLAD directors voted to go with option 1, which will pay Turell Group \$20,350 for community engagement, media interaction, social media, photography and print advertisements to secure the WLAD levy renewal and, later, to “work toward the future merger of the fire department and EMS.”

There was no direct response to these public comments, although later in the meeting WLAD Director Jon Murphey did point out that all financial decisions made by the WLFEA board,

and the boards of both SFVR and WLAD, were vetted by legal advisors and all current practices were allowed and legal.

The meeting continued with a brief financial report from Office Manager Dina McClure, the first of the new fiscal year, showing WLFEA’s expenses for July were \$119,219.

Next, Operations Chief Matt House gave a brief report to recap the increasing number of calls from an average of approximately 325 a month last year, to the 442 calls WLAD responded to last month.

He and Fire/EMS Chief Michael Schick both mentioned that July was the busiest month ever for call outs and the trend seems to be increasing.

This rise in emergency calls comes at a time when there are some employees of WLAD on leave for an extended period of time, for different reasons, which is presenting some challenges, according to Schick.

“It’s interesting because this comes at a time, right now, when we really are having a struggle with some staffing issues on the ambulance side,” he said. “Our minimal staffing is OK; it’s

these surge events where we have had to rely on the fire department. And it’s worked out really well. Matt has done a fantastic job of mixing and moving people where he needs them to be.”

The chief also asked the WLFEA directors to consider approving the next step in the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) which exists between SVFR and WLAD, the integration of the operational functions of the two entities.

“This was anticipated when the IGA was approved, which went into effect in October 2019.

The first step was to move administration to the authority and the second step would be to move operations,” Schick said. “We think that makes sense and we would like the board to approve that — where we would move all operations of people, both from fire and ambulance under the authority. We’ve done that with the admin folks, so we know what to do and how to do it.”

In response, WLAD Director Mike Webb, one of the longest tenured directors of either board, suggested a workshop might be in order to bring new directors up to date on the history of the IGA, its intent and where the process is at this point in the timeline.

This suggestion was embraced by all attendees,

and Schick agreed to set up a meeting to share all IGA-related information with directors and to answer any questions which they might have.

Schick also asked for and received the authority to establish incentive scales for firefighter and paramedics. This was done in the hope that the financial incentives would lead to greater levels of professional certification among employees of both districts.

One final update provided by Schick came at the end of the meeting.

“We’ve just been notified by the state that there is a vaccine mandate for all health care providers — and that includes paramedics, firefighters and EMTs — which goes into effect Oct. 18,” he said. “We are 100% vaccinated on the ambulance side, which is fantastic. We are a little bit low on the firefighter side, so we are working with those individuals. We don’t want to lose anybody and we are hopeful that everybody will go through with the vaccination. But if they don’t, the state has been very clear about what the consequences are: there is a \$500 per day, per violation fine.” Schick said.

The next WLFEA meeting is scheduled for Sept. 23 at 6 p.m. For more information, visit [www.wlfea.org](http://www.wlfea.org).



**Local pit-fired ceramics studio hosts Labor Day Sale**

On Friday, Sept. 3, and Saturday, Sept. 4, local ceramic artist Mike Schwartz will once again host his annual sale at his Mudmusic Studio.

This will be an outdoor sale, rain or shine, so that social distancing may be maintained. Since the weather may be uncertain, the sale will be set up at the front of his garage just behind the overhead door, so that both his visitors and ceramic art will be protected from the weather if necessary.

The artwork will be his unique signature pit-fired ceramic pieces. As the term implies, pit firing is an ancient process in which the pieces are not fired in a kiln, but rather in an open fire. No glazes are used; the dramatic colors achieved are due to the interaction of fire and smoke working on salts and metals applied to the ceramics.

The pieces themselves are thrown by Schwartz on his potter’s wheel, so each is a one-of-a-kind work of art.

A psychiatrist in his prior professional life, Schwartz moved to Florence in 1995 and learned to become a potter to fulfill his view of retirement.

“It’s all about reinvention — and retirement should not be spent just sitting around,” he said.

Currently, Schwartz’s work can be seen in five Oregon coast galleries, from Gardiner to Astoria. Locally, his work may be seen at the River Gallery on Bay Street year-round. Preview his art at [www.mudmusicstudio.com](http://www.mudmusicstudio.com).

The two-day sale will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Mudmusic Studio is located at 04899 Heceta Beach Road, 1.3 miles from Highway 101.

For more information, call 541-997-1012.

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**FLORENCE’S 13TH ANNUAL CAR SHOW**

FRIDAY /  
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**12:00 PM TO 6:00 PM**  
**TOP HOT RODS & CLASSIC CARS TO SHINE**  
Port of Siuslaw Parking Lot - 1st and Nopal  
Historic Old Town Florence Pre-show  
Stand-around, Registration & Check-in  
\*Participants roll in to pick up registration packets and glam bags.

SATURDAY /  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2021  
**7:00 AM**  
Participant Gate Opens - Enter only at the bridge on Bay St.  
\*Have your registration card available, or park outside and check-in or register at stage area

**9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM**  
• Car Show • Cool Music  
• Raffle Tickets for Sale - Winner pulled every half hour  
• 50/50 Raffle

**4:00 PM**  
• Merchant Awards, People’s Choice & Best of Show Presentation  
\*Vote for Best of Show or People’s Choice - Turn in ballot by 3pm

**4:15 PM**  
• Cruise in Historic Old Town Florence, cool sights, awesome sounds!  
\*Low and slow is the goal.