

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES SEPT 27, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: 8:04 AM

ROLL CALL: Paul Okerberg, Paul Silverman, Phil Waddell, Glenn Nye

GUESTS: Chief Ben DeVall; CPA Myra Appel; Firefighters Kevin Wise and Cameron Bradley

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve minutes of August 25, 2017 meeting was made by Phil Waddell and seconded by Glenn Nye. Motion passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT - Chief Ben DeVall:

- Wayne Perry has agreed to supervise BMFD vehicle maintenance. He has completed fluid changes on all District trucks.
- BMFD firefighters Brodie Verworn, Kevin Wise, and Cameron Bradley will be providing a day of EMS training for the current class on October 21 at the firehouse.
- Chief DeVall attended an Image Trends class for EMS service directors. The BMFD system is set up, and usage will start at the beginning of October.
- Firefighter Ken Wensel has returned to work after his bike accident.
- Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) has collected almost \$20,000.00 in donations to date. BMFA will be paying to install a backup generator for the firehall.
- Painting of the firehall has been completed at a cost of \$9,000.00, paid by BMFA.
- BMFD health insurance policies have been renewed at an increase of \$10.00 per policy.
- Chief DeVall attended an emergency meeting regarding county wildfire response. A decision was made by County fire chiefs that there will be a minimum of five districts dispatched on all reported wildfires.
- All regional fire restrictions have been lifted. Open burning will be permitted starting October 1, unless authorization is postponed.
- The light bar for the new District transport vehicle has been shipped.

- Chief has been working with Pintler Billing to insure there are no issues when the District transitions to the Image Trends system.
- Chief has spent two days with the Sprague Fire Incident Management Team and will continue for several more days.
- BMFD firefighter Colin Cristopolis has completed his probationary period.
- Chief DeVall and BMFD Board Chairman Paul Okerberg met to complete Chief's annual performance review.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

#### TREASURER'S REPORT – Myra Appel:

- Almost all current Accounts Receivable (A/R) deemed uncollectable (just over \$5,000.00) have been written off. There is \$29,393.65 remaining in A/R on the balance sheet, \$7,179.76 more than at the end of August 2016.
- Cash overall as of August 31 was \$15,949.61 below last year.
- The Payroll Accrual Fund account was underfunded by \$6,393.31 as of August 31.
- Pending approval of Chief's new contract, increased gross wages for July and August 2017 have been accrued.
- Accrued Vacation/Sick Pay is \$6,602.72 more than it was at this time last year.
- Equity after Net Income increased by \$15,851.96 compared to last year.
- Overall income is about 18% (\$2,934.35) more than it was at this time last year.
- Overall expenses have increased by 5% or \$3,793.79.
- Because of outside auditor's injury, the 2016 audit continues to be delayed, with no completion date yet known.

- Motion to accept Treasurer's Report was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Glenn Nye. Motion passed unanimously.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- Final texts of Chief's Duties and Contract were reviewed. Among other specific topics addressed were liability insurance and non-District incidence management team participation. Motion to adopt Contract was made by Glenn Nye and seconded by Paul Silverman. Motion passed unanimously. Chief and Board members executed signature lines on Contract. Absent Board member Jay Johnston will sign document upon his return to the area.
- Chief DeVall's Performance Review was held in closed Board session. Current Board members, along with input from former Chairman Steve Snellen, unanimously evaluated Chief's performance as "Commendable," the highest possible rating. Chief was given high marks for such job functions as his handling of the transition to a union staff; his repair and maintenance of District vehicles and equipment in the interest of taxpayer savings; his identification of new capital equipment needs and coordination of purchases; and his selection, hiring, and supervision of new firefighters.
- Chief has composed written rules for his and BMFD firefighters' use of new District transport vehicle. County guidelines were modified slightly to conform with specific BMFD situation. Final text will be incorporated by Chief into BMFD Policy Manual.
- Subject of employee background checks was again addressed. Pre-employment screening mandated by County (personal data verification and criminal history) is accepted policy for new hires and is documented in employee contracts and District Policy Manual. Related issue of possible periodic checks on current firefighters was discussed at length. Board members concluded that the following three factors eliminate the need for post-hire background checks: 1. firefighters' contractual pledge to self-report any criminal activity occurring during BMFD employment; 2. Firefighters' mandated affirmation every two years to the State of Montana that they have not engaged in criminal actions during their employment; 3. the clear trust Board places in all District firefighters. Phil Waddell discussed the overall matter with Deputy County Attorney David Randall, whose opinion solidified Board's resolution. Key feedback from Randall was as follows: "I don't believe there is an elevated standard of care to provide periodic background checks. In fact, I can't think of instances where there are periodic background checks performed for any County employee – just the duty to report by the employee him/herself." Relevant to an additional Board concern, there is no known

instance of litigation or Board member liability stemming from firefighter negligence with patients or victims. Paul Silverman continues to coordinate with WSI Human Resources BMFD's proposed piggybacking on WSI's outsourced background check system.

- Transition to Pintler Billing is continuing. New provider promises to be significantly more efficient and timely than prior contractor. Pintler is both rigorous and very responsive to BMFD payment/collection requirements. It also incorporates enhanced interactivity features which assist Chief and outside CPA. Moreover, the Image Trends system will permit direct access for firefighters to records not previously available.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- The Elk Highlands Board has requested information on Firewise Program and Big Mountain HOA's procurement of DNRC/U.S. Forest Service hazardous fuels reduction grant money. Paul Silverman is scheduled to brief Board on these subjects October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Possible reinstatement of a BMFD volunteer firefighter program was raised. Chief DeVall noted that such activity, while welcome, would be difficult to standardize and oversee. For the moment at least, the suggestion is being tabled.
- A replacement for the current EMS call system is being installed. Once operational, all BMFD Board members likely will be able to access it.
- Landing sites for Two Bear search and rescue helicopters transferring patients injured on Big Mountain to BMFD ambulances was discussed. The issue may be further coordinated with WSI and Big Mountain HOA.

#### EMPLOYEE COMMENT:

- BMFD firefighters may soon expand their services to include baby car seat installation.

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for October 25, 2017 at 8:00 AM

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Paul Okerberg. Motion passed unanimously, and meeting was adjourned at 10:23 AM.