

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 9:04 am.

ROLL CALL: Board members Paul Okerberg, Jay Johnston, Phil Waddell, Jerry Meislik, and Paul Silverman; Chief Ben DeVall; Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong; Firefighters Brodie Verworn, Wayne Perry, and Ken Wensel (by phone); Sunrise Ridge resident Sue Oemichen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve Minutes of the December 9, 2019 Board meeting was made by Phil Waddell and seconded by Jerry Meislik. Motion was passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Sue Oemichen, a resident of Sunrise Ridge, was introduced to the Board and expressed her interest in BMFD's mission and contributing to it. She is a former nurse and hospital administrator who once directed a Level 2 Trauma Center. Chief will submit a letter to Flathead County nominating Sue for a soon-to-be-vacant Board position.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) fundraising is going well. Chief DeVall and BMFA Treasurer Rhona Meislik met with Sheila Schwegel from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The organization donated \$15,000.00 toward a new District fire engine. Schwegel said the VFW is looking to partner with local nonprofits and is planning to contribute yearly.
- Chief DeVall was asked to review updates to the Flathead County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) protocols before they are implemented.
- Chief attended a FireSafe Flathead meeting at which he met with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) officials Manny Mendoza and Mike West. They advised that the piles on the side of Big Mountain Road will be burned this spring or fall, weather dependent. The large prescribed burns in Haskill Basin are scheduled in the fall, also weather dependent. In addition, major thinning projects in both Ptarmigan Village and North Woods are planned. Chief is working with the Flathead Economic Policy Center (FEPC), which administers hazardous fuel reduction grants on behalf of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and Doug Yeager of Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR), to possibly bring Ptarmigan slash to the WMR burn pile, since it cannot be burned at the thinning locations.
- The County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is almost complete and will be ready for dissemination soon.

- Winter Sports, Inc. (WSI) will be undertaking a tree thinning project between Chairs 2 and 3 soon after the ski season ends. Doug Yeager will be in charge of the project. The total acreage to be treated is not yet known, but it should be significant.
- BMFD firefighters Ken Wensel and Colin Christopoulos attended an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) refresher course. Chief DeVall and firefighter Wensel must recertify their licenses in calendar year 2020.
- BMFD firefighter and training officer Kevin Wise arranged BMFD staff training by a Northwestern Energy gas technician, who presented valuable information and answered many questions.
- Chief DeVall and Board Treasurer Johnston are in continuing discussions with Flathead County and the Montana Department of Revenue regarding the District 2020/2021 budget, BMFD's marginal financial situation, and possible sources of additional funding. A new mill levy and/or more efficient County collection of District property taxes are possible solutions to the problem.
- Chief DeVall and firefighters Wayne Perry and Brodie Verworn attended an ambulance run review sponsored by North Valley Hospital for the WMR Ski Patrol.
- The BMFD ambulance has had some mechanical issues. It was towed to a repair shop, which resolved the issues after several attempts.
- The District's Explorer vehicle, with Chief at the wheel, collided with a deer. The windshield was shattered, but no other damage occurred, and Chief was not injured.
- BMFD received a \$3,800.00 Roundup for Safety grant to purchase an extractor/washer. The District will pay a shipping charge of \$635.00 for delivery of the equipment.
- BMFD's Fire Response Plans have been modified to permit dispatch, even if resources are out of service or occupied by other events.
- Flathead County in the past received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regional Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to cover the cost of handheld and mobile radios purchased by area fire departments 11 years ago. The radios are no longer serviceable and are coming to the end of their usable life. Columbia Falls Fire Department has agreed to coordinate an application for a new AFG to fund replacement radios. However, the County is looking for an individual to oversee submittal, and BMFD Chief DeVall was approached to serve in this capacity, since he has been previously successful in obtaining AFGs. He is considering the proposed role. The application would be for next year's grant period because of the large amount of material that must be submitted. The County and local fire departments must collect such information as financial statements and programming/service agreements. The requested package would be for around \$1.5 million.

TREASURER'S REPORT (See following financial statements):

2:14 PM  
01:30:20  
Accrual Basis

**Big Mountain Fire District**  
**Statement of Net Assets**  
As of December 31, 2019

	<u>Dec 31, 19</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings	
4017213 - County Fund #7213	166,601.16
1027243 - County Fund #7243 (PR Accrual)	118,414.10
1027248 - County Fund #7248 (Capital A/C)	53,730.16
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<u>366,745.42</u>
Accounts Receivable	
122000 - Ambulance Fees Receivable	18,828.51
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<u>18,828.51</u>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
113018 - 2019 Real Estate Tax Rec	200,048.79
101499 - Undeposited Funds	1,120.85
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<u>201,169.64</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>584,543.57</u>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
180000 - Investment in Fixed Assets	191,197.33
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>191,197.33</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>775,740.90</u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	
202100 - Accounts Payable	2,284.30
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<u>2,284.30</u>
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
206130 - Payroll Liabilities	736.60
204400 - Current Portion of Loans Pay	5,606.67
215000 - Accrued Vacation/Sick Pay	101,115.45
223000 - Deferred Tax Revenue	200,046.79
Offset to Capital Outlay	1,733.99
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<u>309,243.40</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>311,527.70</u>
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>	
235405 - TRB Mortgage Loan #82456311	12,452.59
<b>Total Long Term Liabilities</b>	<u>12,452.59</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>323,980.29</u>
<b>Equity</b>	
272000 - Unreserved Retained Earnings	453,179.25
Net Income	18,561.36
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u>451,740.61</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<u>775,740.90</u>

2:14 PM  
01/30/20  
Accrual Basis

Big Mountain Fire District  
Statement of Activities - Prev Year Comparison  
July through December 2019

	Jul - Dec 18	Jul - Dec 19	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
310000 - Tax Assessment Revenue	261,128.07	248,932.84	12,195.23
342000 - Public Safety	20,775.16	17,612.42	3,262.74
362000 - Insurance Reimbursement	138.00	185.00	(47.00)
365000 - Contribution and Donations	0.00	13,134.11	(13,134.11)
370000 - Interest Income	2,364.67	2,071.82	292.85
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>284,405.90</b>	<b>281,835.98</b>	<b>2,569.91</b>
Expense			
420100 - Labor	211,286.26	211,153.15	160.11
420210 - Office Supplies	0.00	108.99	(108.99)
420220 - Operations - General	1,313.18	3,987.92	(2,684.74)
420221 - Operations - Ambulance	1,712.36	959.44	722.92
420222 - Personal Equipment	887.71	0.00	887.71
420231 - Fuel	945.06	1,179.00	(232.94)
420350 - Administrative Expense	5,243.21	7,102.01	(1,858.80)
420361 - Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	25.18	(25.18)
420362 - Vehicle Maintenance	4,658.62	604.96	4,053.66
420510 - Health Insurance	19,597.66	17,813.21	1,604.45
420511 - Liability/Property Insurance	8,258.00	4,539.50	4,716.50
420390 - Taxes	0.00	161.46	(161.46)
420430 - Personnel Training	150.00	458.28	(288.28)
420340 - Utilities	3,324.85	3,726.11	(403.26)
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>258,222.11</b>	<b>251,540.21</b>	<b>6,291.90</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>26,183.79</b>	<b>29,895.78</b>	<b>(3,711.99)</b>
Other Income/Expense			
Other Expense			
600610 - Debt Service	3,426.45	2,824.10	604.35
600810 - Bad Debt Write Offs	4,173.86	2,836.80	1,537.18
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>7,602.43</b>	<b>5,460.90</b>	<b>2,141.53</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>(7,602.43)</b>	<b>(5,460.90)</b>	<b>(2,141.53)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>18,581.36</b>	<b>24,434.88</b>	<b>(6,853.52)</b>

2:15 PM  
 01/30/20  
 Accrual Basis

**Big Mountain Fire District**  
**Labor Detail - Previous Year Comparison**  
 July through August 2016 & 2015

	Jul - Dec 19	Jul - Dec 18	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Expense			
420100 · Labor			
420121 · HSA Contributions	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
420111 · Salaries and Wages - Permanent	151,430.88	148,983.45	2,447.23
420120 · Overt ime - Permanent	24,681.00	20,824.18	3,856.82
420130 · Post-Employment Vac/sick	(2,723.08)	5,351.40	(8,074.48)
420131 · Holiday Pay	4,005.86	4,577.28	(571.42)
420141 · MT Unemployment	263.95	587.41	(333.46)
420142 · Soc Sec/Medicare	2,547.58	2,474.99	72.59
420900 · Employee Retirement (FURS)	21,745.33	21,458.58	286.75
420140 · Worker's Comp	5,841.94	2,916.76	2,925.18
Total 420100 · Labor	211,293.26	210,684.05	609.21
Total Expense	211,293.26	210,684.05	609.21
Net Ordinary Income	(211,293.26)	(210,684.05)	(609.21)
Net Income	(211,293.26)	(210,684.05)	(609.21)

2:15 PM  
 01/30/20  
 Accrual Basis

**Big Mountain Fire District**  
**Budget vs. Actual**  
 July through December 2019

	Jul - Dec 19	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	261,128.07	432,758.00	(171,629.93)	60.3%
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	0.00	13,800.00	(13,800.00)	0.0%
342000 · Public Safety	20,775.16	50,000.00	(29,224.84)	41.6%
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	138.00	0.00	138.00	100.0%
365000 · Contribution and Donations	0.00	4,700.00	(4,700.00)	0.0%
370000 · Interest Income	2,364.67	1,500.00	864.67	157.6%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>284,405.90</b>	<b>502,758.00</b>	<b>(218,352.10)</b>	<b>56.6%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
420100 · Labor	211,293.26	457,369.00	(246,075.74)	46.2%
420210 · Office Supplies	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	0.0%
420220 · Operations - General	1,313.18	6,000.00	(4,686.82)	21.9%
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,712.36	3,000.00	(1,287.64)	57.1%
420222 · Personal Equipment	687.71	3,000.00	(2,312.29)	22.9%
420231 · Fuel	945.06	3,000.00	(2,054.94)	31.5%
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	0.00	160.00	(160.00)	0.0%
420350 · Administrative Expense	5,243.21	12,500.00	(7,256.79)	41.9%
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	0.0%
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	4,658.82	4,000.00	658.82	116.5%
420400 · Communications	0.00	200.00	(200.00)	0.0%
420510 · Health Insurance	19,597.66	40,000.00	(20,402.34)	49.0%
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	9,256.00	8,600.00	656.00	107.6%
420390 · Taxes	0.00	216.00	(216.00)	0.0%
420430 · Personnel Training	190.00	5,500.00	(5,310.00)	3.5%
420340 · Utilities	3,324.85	8,000.00	(4,675.15)	41.6%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>258,222.11</b>	<b>554,545.00</b>	<b>(296,322.89)</b>	<b>46.6%</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>26,183.79</b>	<b>(51,787.00)</b>	<b>77,970.79</b>	<b>(50.6)%</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Other Expense</b>				
600610 · Debt Service	3,428.45	6,780.00	(3,351.55)	50.6%
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	4,173.98	0.00	4,173.98	100.0%
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>7,602.43</b>	<b>6,780.00</b>	<b>822.43</b>	<b>112.1%</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>(7,602.43)</b>	<b>(6,780.00)</b>	<b>(822.43)</b>	<b>112.1%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>18,581.36</b>	<b>(58,567.00)</b>	<b>77,148.36</b>	<b>(31.7)%</b>

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Paul Okerberg. Motion was passed unanimously.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- Chief and BMFA continue to pursue the acquisition of a new elevated stream fire truck for the District. The old engine, which is a 1996 model and has 30,000 miles on it, could hopefully be sold for approximately \$25,000.00.
- Potential BMFA participation in the Whitefish Community Foundation's (WCF's) Great Fish Challenge would be an extremely labor-intensive effort. Regardless, other grants are available through WCF, without a major expenditure of time. To authenticate BMFD/BMFA as a legitimate recipient of WCF funds, the District has been approved as a Guidestar member at the Silver Level. Individual and/or corporate donors may now contribute to BMFA through WCF or independently.
- The Big Mountain Community (BMC) website is up and running. Membership now includes Morning Eagle, Northern Lights, Elk Highlands, and Lower Subdivision, but not yet Big Mountain HOA. Emergency texts and/or emails will be sent to any members who supply their contact information. BMC may also serve as a forum for discussion of potential Big Mountain annexation by the city of Whitefish. Non-essential and/or frivolous communication will not be permitted via the BMC website.
- Phil Waddell's BMFD Trustee status must be renewed shortly. Board Chairman Paul Okerberg has submitted appropriate paperwork to the County.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- Chairman Paul Okerberg will submit a mandated letter of resignation from the BMFD Board of Trustees because he will be moving in late February to a new residence outside the District. He stated that it has been his honor to serve on the Board and expressed his strong positive assessment of BMFD firefighters and fellow Board members. He also recommended that key future goals of the District should be to raise firefighter salaries and to team with WSI to oppose Whitefish's potential annexation of Big Mountain. Board members in turn thanked Paul for his outstanding contributions to BMFD over an extended period.

EMPLOYMENT COMMENT: Brodie Verworn, on behalf of District firefighters, noted their sincere appreciation for Okerberg's long-term advocacy and excellent leadership.

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for April 20, 2020 at 2pm (rescheduled for May 18th.) Location has yet to be determined. Meeting may be held virtually because of Coronavirus considerations.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Okerberg and seconded by Paul Silverman. Motion was passed unanimously, and meeting was adjourned at 1030am.