

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES MAY 18, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: 2:04PM (via virtual meeting)

ROLL CALL: Board trustees Jay Johnston, Phil Waddell, Jerry Meislik, Paul Silverman, Sue Oemichen; Chief Ben DeVall; Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong; Firefighter Ken Wensel

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve Minutes of February 10, 2020 Board meeting was made by Phil Waddell and seconded by Jerry Meislik. Motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- Chief Ben DeVall met with Holly Dale of the Montana Department of Revenue/Assessor's Office to follow up on additional property tax revenue potentially available to the District. Dale pledged to provide a detailed accounting as soon as possible, but her office is currently understaffed because of Coronavirus issues. The matter is now in the hands of a Department appraiser, who will evaluate the situation when scheduling permits. Sixty-one District properties may be delinquent in their tax payments.
- Chief also talked with Darren Engellant of Glacier Financial Strategies about health insurance premiums. Engellant said if BMFD budgets a 10% increase for Fiscal Year 2021, it should suffice. He projects around a 5-7% increase.
- Chief additionally spoke with the District's liability insurance agent, John Howard of Payne West. He projects an FY-21 increase in rates of approximately 5-8%.
- Flathead County Commissioner Mitchell is aware of Phil Waddell's and Sue Oemichen's appointments to the BMFD Board of Trustees and is waiting to approve them. Both individuals should receive their confirmation letters soon.
- BMFD received a \$3,800 grant for a washer-extractor from the Flathead Electric Roundup for Safety program. Firefighter Wayne Perry and Chief DeVall plumbed it, and the equipment is now operational. Firefighter Colin Christopoulos put together a rolling base, so the washer-extractor can be moved when it is in use. He also wired a plug and connected the original exhaust system to a timer switch, so it is now fully usable.

- Christopoulos also built additional shelves within BMFD's Emergency Medical Service (EMS) supply closet, so supplies can now be better housed.
- Wayne Perry has been acquiring needed Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) in the event Coronavirus patients proliferate. Chief has been filling out surveys from the State and has received PPE as well.
- A Flathead County Coronavirus response plan has been created. The County can house infected persons at no charge through an agreement with Youth With A Mission properties in Lakeside.
- HME Ahrens-Fox of Wyoming, Michigan has begun work on alterations to the new engine being purchased by Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA). The company will provide videos of their progress to BMFA.
- Winter Sports Inc. (WSI) is re-keying all its electronic locks and is using a different system from the past. BMFD has been provided new keys for WSI buildings using the new system.
- WSI has started a major tree thinning project between Chairs 2 and 3.
- Chief inspected and approved a sprinkler test for the WSI metal shop addition.
- Chief has been in contact with Lacey Dolcater, who represents the Snow Bear building on Gelande Street regarding a sprinkler system. The District does not have jurisdiction over residential structures, but Chief reviewed Snow Bear's plans and communicated his findings to Dolcater. He informed her he could observe the final test for approval purposes.
- Chief has been in contact with Mike West and Manny Mendoza of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Tally Lake Ranger District about burning the slash piles located along Big Mountain Road. USFS has not had enough staff to undertake the burning this spring, but it should happen in the fall, unless it can be accomplished before spring burning season ends. Weather conditions are also a factor. The same contingencies apply to the Haskill Basin prescribed burn.
- Rear brakes on the District ambulance were recently replaced, and new tires will be installed shortly.
- Chief witnessed a residential sprinkler system test at a private Northern Lights residence on Orion Drive.

- Chief submitted and amended the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant application for last year's expenditures, because BMFD purchased different items from those originally projected. He also completed and submitted this year's VFA grant application. The District is requesting gloves and two new fire shelters.
- Chief completed the closeout for BMFA's Whitefish Community Foundation grant.
- Chief has been in contact with WSI Safety Officer Elyse Knutsen to help provide Coronavirus guidance to the WSI staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

TREASURER'S REPORT: (See following financial statements.)

**Big Mountain Fire District
 Statement of Net Assets
 As of March 31, 2020**

	<u>Mar 31, 20</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017213 · County Fund #7213	107,959.22
1027243 · County Fund #7243 (PR Accrual)	116,977.48
1027248 · County Fund #7248 (Capital A/C)	<u>53,990.18</u>
Total Checking/Savings	278,926.88
Accounts Receivable	
122000 · Ambulance Fees Receivable	<u>31,410.83</u>
Total Accounts Receivable	31,410.83
Other Current Assets	
113019 · 2019 Real Estate Tax Rec	<u>180,888.50</u>
Total Other Current Assets	180,888.50
Total Current Assets	<u>491,226.21</u>
Fixed Assets	
180000 · Investment in Fixed Assets	<u>191,197.33</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>191,197.33</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>682,423.54</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
202100 · Accounts Payable	<u>1,099.20</u>
Total Accounts Payable	1,099.20
Other Current Liabilities	
206100 · Payroll Liabilities	866.90
204400 · Current Portion of Loans Pay	3,349.39
215000 · Accrued Vacation/Sick Pay	116,953.17
223000 · Deferred Tax Revenue	180,888.50
Offset to Capital Outlay	<u>3,993.27</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	306,051.23
Total Current Liabilities	307,150.43
Long Term Liabilities	
235405 · TRB Mortgage Loan #62456301	<u>12,452.59</u>
Total Long Term Liabilities	12,452.59
Total Liabilities	319,603.02
Equity	
272000 · Unreserved Retained Earnings	432,179.25
Net Income	<u>(69,358.73)</u>
Total Equity	362,820.52
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>682,423.54</u>

9:08 AM
05/13/20
Accrual Basis

Big Mountain Fire District
Statement of Activities - Prev Year Comparison
July 2019 through March 2020

	Jul '19 - Mar 20	Jul '18 - Mar 19	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	286,248.65	275,203.73	11,044.92
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	7,283.09	6,501.00	782.09
342000 · Public Safety	53,643.03	41,098.27	12,544.76
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	138.00	185.00	(47.00)
365000 · Contribution and Donations	0.00	13,134.11	(13,134.11)
370000 · Interest Income	3,782.17	3,962.23	(180.06)
Total Income	351,094.94	340,084.34	11,010.60
Expense			
420100 · Labor	330,651.54	312,282.70	18,368.84
420210 · Office Supplies	294.26	143.49	150.77
420220 · Operations - General	5,989.37	5,669.48	319.89
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,813.13	1,988.04	(174.91)
420222 · Personal Equipment	5,122.71	0.00	5,122.71
420231 · Fuel	1,817.41	1,810.23	7.18
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	95.00	223.50	(128.50)
420350 · Administrative Expense	7,552.95	9,838.86	(2,285.91)
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	25.18	(25.18)
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	7,548.87	861.21	6,687.66
420510 · Health Insurance	30,411.76	27,722.31	2,689.45
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	9,256.00	6,810.50	2,445.50
420390 · Taxes	898.00	161.46	736.54
420430 · Personnel Training	320.00	558.28	(238.28)
420340 · Utilities	5,404.95	5,723.16	(318.21)
Total Expense	407,175.95	373,818.40	33,357.55
Net Ordinary Income	(56,081.01)	(33,734.06)	(22,346.95)
Other Income/Expense			
Other Expense			
600610 · Debt Service	5,687.73	4,518.56	1,169.17
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	7,589.99	3,170.97	4,419.02
Total Other Expense	13,277.72	7,689.53	5,588.19
Net Other Income	(13,277.72)	(7,689.53)	(5,588.19)
Net Income	(69,358.73)	(41,423.59)	(27,935.14)

9:09 AM
 05/13/20
 Accrual Basis

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

	Jul '19 - Mar 20	Jul '18 - Mar 19	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Expense			
420100 · Labor			
420121 · HSA Contributions	9,500.00	7,000.00	2,500.00
420111 · Salaries and Wages - Permanent	221,527.12	217,606.61	3,920.51
420120 · Overtime - Permanent	35,072.77	30,205.81	4,866.96
420130 · Post-Employment Vac/sick	13,114.64	8,778.89	4,335.75
420131 · Holiday Pay	5,994.37	6,532.17	(537.80)
420141 · MT Unemployment	384.60	870.45	(485.85)
420142 · Soc Sec/Medicare	3,713.90	3,604.81	109.09
420900 · Employee Retirement (FURS)	31,811.11	31,278.20	532.91
420140 · Worker's Comp	9,533.03	5,956.66	3,576.37
Total 420100 · Labor	330,651.54	311,833.60	18,817.94
Total Expense	330,651.54	311,833.60	18,817.94
Net Ordinary Income	(330,651.54)	(311,833.60)	(18,817.94)
Net Income	(330,651.54)	(311,833.60)	(18,817.94)

9:10 AM
05/13/20
Accrual Basis

Big Mountain Fire District
Budget vs. Actual
July 2019 through March 2020

	Jul '19 - Mar 20	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	286,248.65	432,758.00	(146,509.35)	66.1%
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	7,283.09	13,800.00	(6,516.91)	52.8%
342000 · Public Safety	53,643.03	50,000.00	3,643.03	107.3%
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	3,782.17	1,500.00	2,282.17	252.1%
Total Income	351,094.94	502,758.00	(151,663.06)	69.8%
Expense				
420100 · Labor	330,651.54	457,369.00	(126,717.46)	72.3%
420210 · Office Supplies	294.26	500.00	(205.74)	58.9%
420220 · Operations - General	5,989.37	6,000.00	(10.63)	99.8%
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,813.13	3,000.00	(1,186.87)	60.4%
420222 · Personal Equipment	5,122.71	3,000.00	2,122.71	170.8%
420231 · Fuel	1,817.41	3,000.00	(1,182.59)	60.6%
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	95.00	160.00	(65.00)	59.4%
420350 · Administrative Expense	7,552.95	12,500.00	(4,947.05)	60.4%
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	0.0%
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	7,548.87	4,000.00	3,548.87	188.7%
420480 · Communications	0.00	200.00	(200.00)	0.0%
420510 · Health Insurance	30,411.76	40,000.00	(9,588.24)	76.0%
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	9,256.00	8,600.00	656.00	107.6%
420390 · Taxes	898.00	216.00	682.00	415.7%
420430 · Personnel Training	320.00	5,500.00	(5,180.00)	5.8%
420340 · Utilities	5,404.95	8,000.00	(2,595.05)	67.6%
Total Expense	407,175.95	554,545.00	(147,369.05)	73.4%
Net Ordinary Income	(56,081.01)	(51,787.00)	(4,294.01)	108.3%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Expense				
600610 · Debt Service	5,687.73	6,780.00	(1,092.27)	83.9%
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	7,589.99	0.00	7,589.99	100.0%
Total Other Expense	13,277.72	6,780.00	6,497.72	195.8%
Net Other Income	(13,277.72)	(6,780.00)	(6,497.72)	195.8%
Net Income	(69,358.73)	(58,567.00)	(10,791.73)	118.4%

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

OLD BUSINESS:

- Phil Waddell has been officially reappointed to the BMFD Board of Trustees, and Sue Oemichen has been newly elected.
- Jerry Meislik made a motion to appoint Phil Waddell as the new Board Chairman, and Paul Silverman seconded it. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Funds for BMFD's new fire truck are on hand. Delivery of the vehicle is expected in the June/July 2020 time frame. Chief probably will not have to travel to the manufacturer's Michigan facility to inspect the truck. Firefighter training will be provided in real time, once the vehicle arrives.
- Leadership of the Big Mountain Community organization is unclear since the departure of Paul Okerberg. Chief DeVall or Board Chairman Waddell will call Okerberg for an update.
- WSI has begun tree thinning along the upper portion of Home Again ski trail, but the bottom section likely will not be thinned until August because of wet conditions. Work on the Hellroaring Chair 8 relocation project will precede the Home Again initiative.
- The process of contractor selection for Big Mountain HOA's common area hazardous fuel reduction project is underway. BMFD Board member and Sunrise Ridge resident, Paul Silverman, is coordinating the effort.

NEW BUSINESS:

- The Whitefish Fire Service Area (WFSA) has raised a significant issue in the rural community it serves. The organization is considering severing its ties with the Whitefish Fire Department because of cost increases. Initial community sentiment is trending against the proposal. WFSA may be a candidate to purchase BMFD's old fire truck.

- Chief's Covid-19 activity with the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is winding down, although a potential new virus spike caused by an influx of summer visitors could require his renewed involvement.
- The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application for new mobile radios currently is stalled, and Chief's proposed regional coordination role among departments in Whitefish, Bigfork, Columbia Falls, and Blankenship is not yet confirmed. The potential grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would facilitate radio purchases at a significant discount and would permit departments to select their own communication channels.
- BMFD investigated a possible gas leak at a private residence in Sunrise Ridge. A faulty alarm was discovered. The incident resulted in clarification of District policy on such events. Cora Arnold, administrative and accounting assistant to Big Mountain HOA, will be asked by BMFD to identify a property owner in Sunrise Ridge or Wood Run impacted by a possible gas leak, so they can be informed by BMFD that the gas has been turned off if a smell is detected. Northwestern Energy would then undertake a detailed investigation and turn the gas back on when safe to do so.
- Sue Oemichen noted that May 4th was International Firefighters Day. She suggested that Board members personally fund gift cards for BMFD firefighters as a gesture of appreciation for their service. The Board unanimously agreed with the initiative.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT:

- Firefighter and Union representative Ken Wensel welcomed Sue Oemichen to the Board.
- Wensel also noted that BMFD firefighter morale is somewhat low, primarily because of salaries not being comparable to those of other area departments. He questioned whether District HOA fees could be increased to help fund salary increases. The Board expressed its commitment to address the issue expeditiously and to research details of the discrepancies described.

NEXT MEETING: To enable consideration of budget issues prior to the June 30 deadline, a Board meeting was scheduled for June 22, 2020 at 2pm.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Jay Johnston. Motion was passed unanimously, and meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.

