

BIG MOUNTIAN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: 2:08pm (Zoom meeting)

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve Minutes of June 22, 2020 Board Meeting was made by Jerry Meislik and seconded by Sue Oemichen. The motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- The new BMFD fire truck was delivered on August 18, 2020, and District firefighters have been training regularly on it. On September 1, David Ryder from truck manufacturer HME provided training for the full staff. Required accessories have been identified and are being purchased to get the engine in service. It is garaged at the BMFD fire station, and the old truck, until it is sold, is being stored at Chief Ben DeVall's residence. Chief has had a difficult time getting the new truck registered because he cannot reach Montana Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) by phone. The dialogue must be pursued because the process for registering the truck is different from private vehicles.
- Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) has created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to document donation of the new truck to the District by a private donor. A motion to approve the MOU was made by Jay Johnston and seconded by Jerry Meislik. The motion was passed unanimously. Board Chairman and attorney Phil Waddell is reviewing the MOU text for comments/edits.
- BMFA has paid off the balance of the firehouse mortgage (\$11,500.00).
- The Flathead County/FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for mobile radios is moving forward. Chief is part of the group putting the grant together for 24 regional fire departments. All BMFD Board trustees must sign an MOU agreeing to the stipulated 10% match. Chief and Board Chairman Waddell are authorized to execute follow-up documents after further review. Cost of the radios is around \$3,800.00 apiece. A motion was made by Jay Johnston and seconded by Sue Oemichen to generate the MOU. The motion was passed unanimously.

- Chief and BMFD firefighter Wayne Perry had an initial meeting with the Winter Sports, Inc. (WSI) incident management team (Dan Graves, Bill Cabbage, Elyse Knudsen, Kristi Hanchett) to discuss the District's wildfire plan and the roles WSI personnel could play. The meeting lasted 2 1/2 hours, and more discussions are planned in the future.
- BMFD received a Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant of \$1,181.00 from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). BMFD will have to spend \$1,300.00 to obtain the VFA funds. The money will be used to purchase three fire shelters.
- WSI's tree thinning projects above the fire hall and east of Chair 1 have been completed. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) also is thinning in the area of the Holbrook Overlook off Big Mountain Road.
- Chief talked with USFS official Manny Mendoza and Justin Kaber of WSI about the prescribed burn planned for Haskill Basin. Hopefully, depending on weather, it will get done this fall and will include BMFD firefighters. The USFS/Haney slash piles along Big Mountain Road also may be burned soon.
- Paperwork on the new BMFD engine has been filed with DNRC in the event the department is called to a fire and could be compensated for it.
- Chief is again working with the Flathead County Health Department on its COVID response. He's been asked to serve as Planning Section Chief for the flu clinic scheduled for October 7.
- Chief has obtained a draft of the County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). It is currently being edited before public distribution.
- BMFD will pay increased health insurance premium costs in fiscal year 2021. There will be a \$39.00 monthly increase per individual, or \$3,276.00 per year. The District will receive a 5% rebate from Western Mutual Insurance (WMI) for total premiums paid in 2019. A letter should be sent in the next billing cycle detailing the total amount of funds to be received.
- The Firefighters Union Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiation group has met twice. Firefighter Colin Christopoulos has provided all requested BMFD documents to the group.
- BMFD participated in multiple mutual aid calls to Whitefish this summer.
- District firefighters have been working on a BMFA mailer to be sent out shortly. The letter will be a thank you for community support but will not solicit additional donations.

- Chief will meet with WSI and other Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) businesses to discuss what the ski season will look like with COVID still in the area. After these discussions, Chief will contact Jordan Owen of Flathead County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to discuss any possible changes to BMFD's transport locations.
- Chief will have a Flathead FireSafe Zoom meeting on October 24, to be followed by a field trip to observe fire safety work being done in the local area.
- Chief will attend an EMS advisory meeting on September 21 to discuss the County EMS levy and whether funds will continue to be distributed as they are currently.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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

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

	Jul 31, 20
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017213 - County Fund #7213	145,857.32
1027243 - County Fund #7243 (PR Accrual)	117,399.68
1027248 - County Fund #7248 (Capital A/C)	54,185.03
Total Checking/Savings	<u>317,442.03</u>
Accounts Receivable	
122000 - Ambulance Fees Receivable	12,825.63
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>12,825.63</u>
Other Current Assets	
113019 - 2019 Real Estate Tax Rec	9,695.95
101499 - Undeposited Funds	157.78
Total Other Current Assets	<u>9,853.73</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>340,121.39</u>
Fixed Assets	
180000 - Investment in Fixed Assets	191,197.33
Total Fixed Assets	<u>191,197.33</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>531,318.72</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
202100 - Accounts Payable	957.80
Total Accounts Payable	<u>957.80</u>
Other Current Liabilities	
206130 - Payroll Liabilities	1,035.01
215000 - Accrued Vacation/Sick Pay	122,653.82
223000 - Deferred Tax Revenue	9,695.95
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>133,384.78</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>134,342.58</u>
Long Term Liabilities	
235405 - TRB Mortgage Loan #62456301	12,616.95
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>12,616.95</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>146,959.53</u>
Equity	
272000 - Unreserved Retained Earnings	409,041.83
Net Income	(24,682.64)
Total Equity	<u>384,359.19</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>531,318.72</u></u>

11:00 AM
 09/03/20
 Accrual Basis

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

	Jul 20	Jul 19	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	12,049.06	6,519.08	5,529.98
342000 · Public Safety	2,736.72	5,218.63	(2,481.91)
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	0.00	138.00	(138.00)
Total Income	14,785.78	11,875.71	2,910.07
Expense			
420100 · Labor	32,447.50	40,069.88	(7,622.38)
420210 · Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
420220 · Operations - General	419.15	54.46	364.69
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	0.00	963.28	(963.28)
420231 · Fuel	198.91	193.67	5.24
420350 · Administrative Expense	1,038.63	761.48	277.15
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	0.00	2,059.32	(2,059.32)
420510 · Health Insurance	3,604.70	2,929.61	675.09
420390 · Taxes	171.41	0.00	171.41
420430 · Personnel Training	20.00	0.00	20.00
420340 · Utilities	512.53	495.50	17.03
Total Expense	38,412.83	47,527.20	(9,114.37)
Net Ordinary Income	(23,627.05)	(35,651.49)	12,024.44
Other Income/Expense			
Other Expense			
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	1,055.59	0.00	1,055.59
Total Other Expense	1,055.59	0.00	1,055.59
Net Other Income	(1,055.59)	0.00	(1,055.59)
Net Income	(24,682.64)	(35,651.49)	10,968.85

11:18 AM
 09/03/20
 Accrual Basis

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

	Jul 20	Jul 19	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Expense			
420100 · Labor			
420122 · Shift Differential	1,958.19	0.00	1,958.19
420121 · HSA Contributions	0.00	0.00	0.00
420111 · Salaries and Wages - Permanent	23,495.31	22,920.54	574.77
420120 · Overtime - Permanent	90.09	5,513.67	(5,423.58)
420130 · Post-Employment Vac/sick	2,263.34	3,608.03	(1,344.69)
420131 · Holiday Pay	667.89	651.81	16.08
420141 · MT Unemployment	38.30	42.73	(4.43)
420142 · Soc Sec/Medicare	370.19	411.88	(41.69)
420900 · Employee Retirement (FURS)	3,373.90	3,291.40	82.50
420140 · Worker's Comp	190.29	3,629.82	(3,439.53)
Total 420100 · Labor	32,447.50	40,069.88	(7,622.38)
Total Expense	32,447.50	40,069.88	(7,622.38)
Net Ordinary Income	(32,447.50)	(40,069.88)	7,622.38
Net Income	(32,447.50)	(40,069.88)	7,622.38

Big Mountain Fire District
Budget vs. Actual
July 2020

	Jul 20	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	12,049.06	479,929.00	(467,879.94)	2.5%
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	0.00	14,741.00	(14,741.00)	0.0%
342000 · Public Safety	2,736.72	40,000.00	(37,263.28)	6.8%
365000 · Contribution and Donations	0.00	5,000.00	(5,000.00)	0.0%
370000 · Interest Income	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)	0.0%
Total Income	14,785.78	541,670.00	(526,884.22)	2.7%
Expense				
420100 · Labor	32,447.50	498,093.00	(465,645.50)	6.5%
420210 · Office Supplies	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	0.0%
420220 · Operations - General	419.15	5,000.00	(4,580.85)	8.4%
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	0.0%
420222 · Personal Equipment	0.00	4,500.00	(4,500.00)	0.0%
420231 · Fuel	198.91	2,300.00	(2,101.09)	8.6%
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	0.00	160.00	(160.00)	0.0%
420350 · Administrative Expense	1,038.63	12,500.00	(11,461.37)	8.3%
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	0.0%
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	0.00	4,000.00	(4,000.00)	0.0%
420480 · Communications	0.00	200.00	(200.00)	0.0%
420510 · Health Insurance	3,604.70	44,000.00	(40,395.30)	8.2%
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	0.00	11,000.00	(11,000.00)	0.0%
420390 · Taxes	171.41	898.00	(726.59)	19.1%
420430 · Personnel Training	20.00	3,000.00	(2,980.00)	0.7%
420340 · Utilities	512.53	7,000.00	(6,487.47)	7.3%
Total Expense	38,412.83	598,151.00	(559,738.17)	6.4%
Net Ordinary Income	(23,627.05)	(56,481.00)	32,853.95	41.8%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Expense				
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	1,055.59	0.00	1,055.59	100.0%
Total Other Expense	1,055.59	0.00	1,055.59	100.0%
Net Other Income	(1,055.59)	0.00	(1,055.59)	100.0%
Net Income	(24,682.64)	(56,481.00)	31,798.36	43.7%

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Jerry Meislik. The motion was passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Chief DeVall and previous Board Chairman Paul Okerberg will submit the necessary application, due November 20th, to renew the District's Firewise certification. Board member Sue Oemichen volunteered to assist future Firewise community efforts. A replacement for Okerberg in his former Firewise coordinator role will be appointed in the near future.
- Board Chairman Phil Waddell is spearheading BMFD CBA negotiations with the Firefighters Union. The pay system will be on a 24-hour, hourly basis beginning October 1, 2020, with the maximum daily rate being limited by Flathead County. Board Treasurer Jay Johnston noted that the District's overall goal is to reduce expenses while increasing firefighter salaries. The intent is to return labor line savings to BMFD staff. BMFA also was cited as key to budget efficiencies. BMFD firefighters will receive a 6 percent pay increase effective October 1, 2020. A motion was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Jerry Meislik to approve the CBA agreement. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Chairman Waddell reported that a firefighter sleep time complaint has been resolved. Sleep time will not be paid in the future. A motion was made by Jerry Meislik and seconded by Sue Oemichen to approve the sleep time agreement. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Chief DeVall reported that according to Type 2 Incident Commander Lincoln Chute, area fire restrictions are unlikely to be raised from the current Very High level to Extreme because of a favorable humidity outlook.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A 100-acre tree thinning project in the Elk Highlands conservation easement has been approved by the Elk Highlands board. The initiative will require line logging because of the steep slope involved. A contractor has not yet been selected.
- A motion was made by Sue Oemichen and seconded by Jerry Meislik to add 2% to Chief's DeVall's planned 4% salary increase. The change, effective October 1, 2020, would mirror the 6% pay raises approved for BMFD firefighters. Treasurer Johnston noted that funds for the proposed increase have not been budgeted and therefore

would have to come from the District's cash reserve. The motion was passed unanimously.

- Board member Sue Oemichen asked whether BMFD might encourage District residents to employ "File of Life" capability. The system, somewhat similar to a medical bracelet, gives first responders expeditious access to a patient's current medications usage. Chief expressed reservations about the process, because it relies on individuals keeping their information updated continuously and therefore may not always be accurate. Chief and firefighter Brodie Verworn will study cost and possible legal liability issues associated with the system.
- A large slash pile has been assembled adjacent to the Home Again ski trail at the border of the Medicine Rock development and WSI property. Chief will speak with Doug Yeager of WSI about planned disposition of the pile.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT:

- Firefighters Union rep Ken Wensel advised that BMFD employee physicals will now occur at Glacier Medical Associates rather than Kalispell Regional Hospital. The required physicals have not yet happened.
- Wensel also expressed gratitude for the Board's ongoing efforts to increase BMFD firefighter salaries. He conveyed his conclusion that BMFD personnel are vastly underpaid relative to other area departments and that take-home pay is more important than benefits. He projected that as new homes are constructed within the District's jurisdiction, BMFD's budget should increase. Board Treasurer Jay Johnston noted that additional property tax receipts will also benefit BMFA. Sue Oemichen commented that Firefighters Unified Retirement System (FURS) dues are a significant new cost to firefighters.

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled for November 23, 2020 at 2pm

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Jay Johnston and seconded by Paul Silverman. The meeting was adjourned at 4:28pm.