

Big Mountain Fire District (BMFD) Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes May 3, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 3:04pm

ROLL CALL: Trustees Phil Waddell, Paul Silverman, Sue Oemichen, Jerry Meislik (via Zoom), and Tony Patterson (via Zoom); Chief Ben DeVall; Firefighters Wayne Perry, Robert Sharp, and Tommy Hodges

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve Minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting of February 22, 2021 was made by Sue Oemichen and seconded by Phil Waddell. The motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- The District is still experiencing problems with its new engine. The broker is working with manufacturer HME to resolve the issues. HME may also be having problems with other engines, and some of their outsourced parts may be the cause.
- All BMFD firefighters who needed to recertify their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) licensure have done so.
- The Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) is in the process of purchasing a replacement ambulance for the District. Payment has been made, but there are a few things that must be done before delivery (decals, tires, some other items). The vehicle is now in Kalispell and is larger than the current ambulance, which will permit BMFD to get all supplies in cabinets and off the floor in the patient compartment. Chief DeVall will be responsible for pricing and selling the old ambulance once the new one is placed in service.
- All BMFD employees have had their National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1582 physicals.
- At the request of the Bigfork Fire Department, Chief DeVall recently served on an interview board for a new Bigfork fire chief.
- On April 28, 2021 there was a field trip showcasing the fuels work which has been done within and around the District. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Stoltze Lumber, BMFD Chief DeVall, and BMFD Board member Paul Silverman were in attendance. Chief provided information to the group regarding BMFD's emergency fire plan and an upcoming exercise (see below).
- The District is planning a table top exercise on June 9, 2021 to test the incident action plan for a wildfire event within the District. It will include Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) and BMFD staff. DNRC, USFS, and Flathead County fire officials will serve as coaches to help small WMR/BMFD discussion groups with their decision process. The session will last around three hours, and there will be an after-action review to identify areas needing improvement. Chief DeVall has held weekly meetings recently with Elyse Knudsen, WMR Risk Control Manager, to plan the exercise.

- All BMFD ambulance billing is up to date. Chief has conferred with Leslie Graves of Pintler Billing Services about the District's rates. Graves believes the BMFD is charging fair rates and is collecting appropriate payments.
- The District has sent a letter requesting property owner contact information in the event of an emergency. 203 responses have been received so far, and Rhona Meislik, BMFA Treasurer, has entered the information into the BMFA database. Firewise Board member Diana Tague will work with BMFD to generate a searchable document, so BMFD can locate property owners requiring contact. The letter also contained defensible space guidance, and BMFD has been contacted by three property owners so far but will wait until the snow is gone to meet with the residents.
- Chief was asked to review and make comments on the Elk Highlands HOA Guidelines regarding wildfire preparedness, and he has done so.
- BMFD firefighters Wayne Perry, Robert Sharp, and Chief DeVall attended an EMS run review at North Valley Hospital.
- Kevin Wise has resigned as the District training officer, and the position has been posted.
- The ski season ended with approximately 10 percent fewer ambulance transports than last year. There were more refusals than ever before.
- Rich Wagner, WMR Maintenance Supervisor, contacted Chief regarding a repair project in Morning Eagle which would hinder access to a unit. A solution was developed which would allow the unit to be occupied during the construction.
- BMFD is currently on a list to provide inter-facility transports, if needed, until the first week of June, when WMR opens for the summer season.
- BMFD firefighters Wayne Perry and Robert Sharp boxed up old, unusable District fire gear to be donated to an organization which will take it to Mexico. Retired U.S. fire supplies and equipment can be used in Mexico, since there are no regulations in the country comparable to those of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- BMFA has two new board members, Tenille Perry and Jim Lockwood. Chief DeVall and Rhona Meislik will continue to serve in their current positions. The group will meet in the near future to welcome the new members and provide them with a BMFA orientation.
- Chief has been invited by the city of Whitefish to participate in a group meeting on June 24th. The city has hired a consultant and wants him to meet with mutual aid partners.
- Chief was shown plans for the new Landmark building but was told they are not yet complete. A final document was promised but has not yet been received.
- The firehouse air raid siren will be tested at noon on Friday June 25th. Feedback from District property owners on its effectiveness will be collected after the test.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

- Chief DeVall has been advised that Flathead County is getting close to COVID herd immunity but that the situation could change in July with the arrival of summer crowds.
 - Chief expects that feedback from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) could take about six months.
 - A meeting between BMFD and Flathead County commissioners to discuss the property tax revenue issue remains on hold.
- A Firewise Board meeting was held earlier on May 3rd. A detailed Action Plan was discussed. It includes distribution of fire safety information packets to new property owners in the District. Big Mountain Water will assist with current address details. The compilation of emergency contact information on new residents is a key part of the initiative. The May Firewise update will be issued shortly. On June 25th, there will be a Firewise display at the firehouse from 10am to 2pm. It will include a compilation of wildland fire prevention literature, community fire emergency procedures, and a tour of the new BMFD engine and ambulance.

TREASURER'S REPORT: (see following financial statements)

Big Mountain Fire District
Statement of Activities - Prev Year Comparison
July 2020 through March 2021

| | Jul '20 - Mar 21 | Jul '19 - Mar 20 | \$ Change |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | |
| Income | | | |
| 310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue | 308,009.81 | 285,350.65 | 22,659.16 |
| 330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue | 7,096.51 | 7,283.09 | (186.58) |
| 342000 · Public Safety | 65,609.25 | 53,775.81 | 11,833.44 |
| 362000 · Insurance Reimbursement | 325.00 | 138.00 | 187.00 |
| 365000 · Contribution and Donations | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 370000 · Interest Income | 1,288.31 | 3,863.11 | (2,574.80) |
| Total Income | <u>382,328.88</u> | <u>350,410.66</u> | <u>31,918.22</u> |
| Expense | | | |
| 420100 · Labor | 304,369.20 | 330,651.54 | (26,282.34) |
| 420210 · Office Supplies | 0.00 | 294.26 | (294.26) |
| 420220 · Operations - General | 10,524.92 | 5,989.37 | 4,535.55 |
| 420221 · Operations - Ambulance | 1,310.22 | 1,813.13 | (502.91) |
| 420222 · Personal Equipment | 727.95 | 5,122.71 | (4,394.76) |
| 420231 · Fuel | 1,786.24 | 1,817.41 | (31.17) |
| 420330 · Dues & Subscriptions | 45.00 | 95.00 | (50.00) |
| 420350 · Administrative Expense | 8,652.93 | 7,552.95 | 1,099.98 |
| 420362 · Vehicle Maintenance | 4,100.50 | 7,548.87 | (3,448.37) |
| 420510 · Health Insurance | 25,665.03 | 30,411.76 | (4,746.73) |
| 420511 · Liability/Property Insurance | 11,164.00 | 9,256.00 | 1,908.00 |
| 420390 · Taxes | 250.16 | 0.00 | 250.16 |
| 420430 · Personnel Training | 818.00 | 320.00 | 498.00 |
| 420340 · Utilities | 5,548.65 | 5,404.95 | 143.70 |
| Total Expense | <u>374,962.80</u> | <u>406,277.95</u> | <u>(31,315.15)</u> |
| Net Ordinary Income | 7,366.08 | (55,867.29) | 63,233.37 |
| Other Income/Expense | | | |
| Other Expense | | | |
| 600620 · Interest Expense | 717.64 | 0.00 | 717.64 |
| 800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs | 1,713.42 | 7,589.99 | (5,876.57) |
| Total Other Expense | <u>2,431.06</u> | <u>7,589.99</u> | <u>(5,158.93)</u> |
| Net Other Income | <u>(2,431.06)</u> | <u>(7,589.99)</u> | <u>5,158.93</u> |
| Net Income | <u>4,935.02</u> | <u>(63,457.28)</u> | <u>68,392.30</u> |

Big Mountain Fire District Labor Detail - Previous Year Comparison

04/30/21

Accrual Basis

| | Jul '20 - Mar 21 | Jul '19 - Mar 20 | \$ Change |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | |
| Expense | | | |
| 420100 · Labor | | | |
| 420113 · Incentive Pay | 13,185.13 | 0.00 | 13,185.13 |
| 420122 · Shift Differential | 35,165.14 | 0.00 | 35,165.14 |
| 420121 · HSA Contributions | 7,000.00 | 9,500.00 | (2,500.00) |
| 420111 · Salaries and Wages - Permanent | 197,730.06 | 221,527.12 | (23,797.06) |
| 420120 · Overtime - Permanent | 16,557.54 | 35,072.77 | (18,515.23) |
| 420130 · Post-Employment Vac/sick | (16,704.15) | 13,114.64 | (29,818.79) |
| 420131 · Holiday Pay | 6,752.10 | 5,994.37 | 757.73 |
| 420141 · MT Unemployment | 442.80 | 384.60 | 58.20 |
| 420142 · Soc Sec/Medicare | 4,280.44 | 3,713.90 | 566.54 |
| 420900 · Employee Retirement (FURS) | 34,109.58 | 31,811.11 | 2,298.47 |
| 420140 · Worker's Comp | 5,850.56 | 9,533.03 | (3,682.47) |
| Total 420100 · Labor | 304,369.20 | 330,651.54 | (26,282.34) |
| Total Expense | 304,369.20 | 330,651.54 | (26,282.34) |
| Net Ordinary Income | (304,369.20) | (330,651.54) | 26,282.34 |
| Net Income | (304,369.20) | (330,651.54) | 26,282.34 |

**Big Mountain Fire District
Budget vs. Actual
July 2020 through March 2021**

04/27/21

Accrual Basis

| | <u>Jul '20 - Mar 21</u> | <u>Budget</u> | <u>\$ Over Budget</u> | <u>% of Budget</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | | |
| Income | | | | |
| 310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue | 308,009.81 | 479,929.00 | (171,919.19) | 64.2% |
| 330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue | 7,096.51 | 14,741.00 | (7,644.49) | 48.1% |
| 342000 · Public Safety | 65,609.25 | 40,000.00 | 25,609.25 | 164.0% |
| 362000 · Insurance Reimbursement | 325.00 | | | |
| 365000 · Contribution and Donations | 537,853.17 | 5,000.00 | 532,853.17 | 10,757.1% |
| 370000 · Interest Income | 1,288.31 | 2,000.00 | (711.69) | 64.4% |
| Total Income | <u>920,182.05</u> | <u>541,670.00</u> | <u>378,512.05</u> | <u>169.9%</u> |
| Expense | | | | |
| 420100 · Labor | 304,369.20 | 498,093.00 | (193,723.80) | 61.1% |
| 420210 · Office Supplies | 0.00 | 500.00 | (500.00) | 0.0% |
| 420220 · Operations - General | 10,524.92 | 5,000.00 | 5,524.92 | 210.5% |
| 420221 · Operations - Ambulance | 1,310.22 | 2,500.00 | (1,189.78) | 52.4% |
| 420222 · Personal Equipment | 727.95 | 4,500.00 | (3,772.05) | 16.2% |
| 420231 · Fuel | 1,786.24 | 2,300.00 | (513.76) | 77.7% |
| 420330 · Dues & Subscriptions | 45.00 | 160.00 | (115.00) | 28.1% |
| 420350 · Administrative Expense | 8,652.93 | 12,500.00 | (3,847.07) | 69.2% |
| 420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance | 0.00 | 2,500.00 | (2,500.00) | 0.0% |
| 420362 · Vehicle Maintenance | 4,100.50 | 4,000.00 | 100.50 | 102.5% |
| 420480 · Communications | 0.00 | 200.00 | (200.00) | 0.0% |
| 420510 · Health Insurance | 25,665.03 | 44,000.00 | (18,334.97) | 58.3% |
| 420511 · Liability/Property Insurance | 11,164.00 | 11,000.00 | 164.00 | 101.5% |
| 420390 · Taxes | 250.16 | 898.00 | (647.84) | 27.9% |
| 420430 · Personnel Training | 818.00 | 3,000.00 | (2,182.00) | 27.3% |
| 420340 · Utilities | 5,548.65 | 7,000.00 | (1,451.35) | 79.3% |
| Total Expense | <u>374,962.80</u> | <u>598,151.00</u> | <u>(223,188.20)</u> | <u>62.7%</u> |
| Net Ordinary Income | <u>545,219.25</u> | <u>(56,481.00)</u> | <u>601,700.25</u> | <u>(965.3)%</u> |
| Other Income/Expense | | | | |
| Other Expense | | | | |
| 600620 · Interest Expense | 717.64 | | | |
| 800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs | 1,713.42 | 0.00 | 1,713.42 | 100.0% |
| Total Other Expense | <u>2,431.06</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>2,431.06</u> | <u>100.0%</u> |
| Net Other Income | <u>(2,431.06)</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>(2,431.06)</u> | <u>100.0%</u> |
| Net Income | <u>542,788.19</u> | <u>(56,481.00)</u> | <u>599,269.19</u> | <u>(951.0)%</u> |

Big Mountain Fire District
Budget vs. Actual
July 2020 through March 2021

| | Jul '20 - Mar 21 | Budget | \$ Over Budget | % of Budget |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | | |
| Income | | | | |
| 310000 - Tax Assessment Revenue | 308,009.81 | 479,929.00 | (171,919.19) | 64.18% |
| 330000 - Intergovernmental Revenue | 7,096.51 | 14,741.00 | (7,644.49) | 48.14% |
| 342000 - Public Safety | 65,609.25 | 40,000.00 | 25,609.25 | 164.02% |
| 362000 - Insurance Reimbursement | 325.00 | | | |
| 365000 - Contribution and Donations | 0.00 | 5,000.00 | (5,000.00) | 0.0% |
| 370000 - Interest Income | 1,288.31 | 2,000.00 | (711.69) | 64.42% |
| Total Income | 382,328.88 | 541,670.00 | (159,341.12) | 70.58% |
| Expense | | | | |
| 420100 - Labor | 304,369.20 | 498,093.00 | (193,723.80) | 61.11% |
| 420210 - Office Supplies | 0.00 | 500.00 | (500.00) | 0.0% |
| 420220 - Operations - General | 10,524.92 | 5,000.00 | 5,524.92 | 210.5% |
| 420221 - Operations - Ambulance | 1,310.22 | 2,500.00 | (1,189.78) | 52.41% |
| 420222 - Personal Equipment | 727.95 | 4,500.00 | (3,772.05) | 16.18% |
| 420231 - Fuel | 1,786.24 | 2,300.00 | (513.76) | 77.66% |
| 420330 - Dues & Subscriptions | 45.00 | 160.00 | (115.00) | 28.13% |
| 420350 - Administrative Expense | 8,652.93 | 12,500.00 | (3,847.07) | 69.22% |
| 420361 - Building Repairs & Maintenance | 0.00 | 2,500.00 | (2,500.00) | 0.0% |
| 420362 - Vehicle Maintenance | 4,100.50 | 4,000.00 | 100.50 | 102.51% |
| 420480 - Communications | 0.00 | 200.00 | (200.00) | 0.0% |
| 420510 - Health Insurance | 25,665.03 | 44,000.00 | (18,334.97) | 58.33% |
| 420511 - Liability/Property Insurance | 11,164.00 | 11,000.00 | 164.00 | 101.49% |
| 420390 - Taxes | 250.16 | 898.00 | (647.84) | 27.86% |
| 420430 - Personnel Training | 818.00 | 3,000.00 | (2,182.00) | 27.27% |
| 420340 - Utilities | 5,548.65 | 7,000.00 | (1,451.35) | 79.27% |
| Total Expense | 374,962.80 | 598,151.00 | (223,188.20) | 62.69% |
| Net Ordinary Income | 7,366.08 | (56,481.00) | 63,847.08 | (13.04%) |
| Other Income/Expense | | | | |
| Other Expense | | | | |
| 600620 - Interest Expense | 717.64 | | | |
| 800810 - Bad Debt Write Offs | 1,713.42 | 0.00 | 1,713.42 | 100.0% |
| Total Other Expense | 2,431.06 | 0.00 | 2,431.06 | 100.0% |
| Net Other Income | (2,431.06) | 0.00 | (2,431.06) | 100.0% |
| Net Income | 4,935.02 | (56,481.00) | 61,416.02 | (8.74%) |

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

NEW BUSINESS:

- The County has requested that future BMFD Board meeting postings appear in three places rather than the current two (firehouse and main mailboxes). After considering a number of candidates for the third location, the Board concluded that the new District Facebook/Instagram page would be the best solution. This updated procedure will be initiated with a posting for the upcoming June 28th Board meeting. BMFD website administrator Wayne Perry will implement the additional notification.
- Strengthening of local fireworks prohibition policy will be undertaken immediately. BMFD and/or Grizzly Security will distribute written notices on the subject to District property owners, and WMR Risk Control Manager Elyse Knudsen will coordinate signage expansion in the area. The Firewise Board already has endorsed these actions, and local HOAs will also be asked to do so. Paul Silverman made a motion to record the Board's formal endorsement of the policy. Jerry Meislik seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.
- Chief DeVall will pursue the expansion of fire danger signage in the District. The goal is to add 2-3 new signs in the area, at a cost of approximately \$600 each. BMFA likely can provide funding for the initiative.
- A suggestion that the Design Review Board (DRB) include guidance to new District property owners on fire safety was discussed. The use of national standards regarding reduction of ladder fuels and removal of dead/dying trees on private property will be encouraged in an effort to maximize defensible/survivable space around residences. It was proposed that BMFD and the Firewise Board jointly send a letter to DRB Chairman Dan Graves requesting this action. Phil Waddell made a motion that the BMFD Board endorse the proposed communication to Graves. Paul Silverman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.
- A discussion was held on potential fire emergency notification procedures. Once the process is defined, the Firewise Board and/or Big Mountain Community will send a policy email to local residents. Chief DeVall will coordinate final resolution of how emergency communication will be implemented. BMFD Board members Jerry Meislik and Tony Patterson expressed concern over legal liability issues for individuals involved in the notification system. It was concluded that sounding the BMFD firehouse siren, possibly to be improved by adding new District sirens, combined with County Amber Alert-like communication to residents, might be the best fire emergency notification procedure.
- The subject of a potential secondary evacuation route from the Mountain via the Stoltze road through Haskill Basin was raised. According to Chief DeVall, the proposed route is not an option for the public, among other reasons because the road must be reserved for emergency fire and rescue equipment.
- A District brush collection and disposal project is scheduled for June 25th and 26th. In the past, it has been undertaken only in Sunrise Ridge and Wood Run, but this year it will be expanded to include the entire Big Mountain Community. Volunteers from the area will help with the effort. WMR has agreed to provide a repository at one of its burn piles for the collected debris.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT: None.

NEXT MEETING: June 28, 2021 at 3pm

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Phil Waddell and seconded by Sue Oemichen. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:16pm.