

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING JUNE 28, 2021 AND SPECIAL MEETING JULY 28, 2021

JUNE 28, 2021 MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: 3:06PM

ROLL CALL: Board trustees Phil Waddell, Paul Silverman, Sue Oemichen, and Tony Patterson; Chief Ben DeVall; Firefighters Ken Wensel and Wayne Perry.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve Minutes of the May 3, 2021 BMFD Board of Trustees meeting was made by Sue Oemichen and seconded by Tony Patterson. The motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- On June 9, 2021, BMFD conducted a table top exercise with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) employees to drill the District's emergency fire plan. There were 11 coaches and around 30 total participants. Chief DeVall and BMFD firefighters Robert Sharp and Ken Wensel represented the District during the training. The exercise was labor-intensive, but Chief received numerous positive comments from participants and coaches. Several areas of preparedness improvement were identified.
- BMFD has received its new ambulance. The vehicle is not in service yet as it must first be registered with the State. It is already insured, so District firefighters have been driving it to familiarize themselves with it.
- Chief DeVall talked with Jennifer Rankowski, Safety Officer, Flathead County Health Department, and was told that approximately 43% of eligible County residents have been vaccinated against Covid-19 to date. At this point, those who want the shot have received it, and the clinics therefore are shutting down. Rankowski believes the County will never exceed a 60% vaccination rate.
- BMFD has received a recall notice for the new District engine due to a hydraulics/leveling problem. The vehicle will be transported back to the manufacturer for warranty work, likely in the middle of July. Chief has been working with the broker to insure that a loaner truck will be available while the engine is away. More will be known about the precise schedule in the next few days. After the repair work has been completed, the District will have an extended warranty on the truck.

- On June 25<sup>th</sup>, a neighborhood brush collection project which was undertaken by 12 volunteers, including nine area residents, two WMR employees, and Chief DeVall. The effort was coordinated by Paul Silverman and resulted in twelve pickup/flatbed trailer loads of debris being transported to a designated WMR burn pile. In addition, Sue Oemichen organized a Firewise Open House event which included fire equipment demonstrations and the distribution of fire safety education material. The firehouse emergency siren also was tested.
- Chief has ordered two additional Fire Danger signs for posting in the District. The signs will cost approximately \$600 each.
- Chief has been working with Chris Grant of the Elk Highlands Homeowners Association (EHHOA) regarding wildfire guidelines. As a result, the HOA has changed language in its guidance to property owners to better define defensible space.
- On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Chief met with Board Treasurer Sue Oemichen and Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong to work on preliminary figures for the upcoming FY-2022 budget.
- Chief DeVall, along with Columbia Falls Fire Chief Carl Weeks, were requested to attend a meeting with a Whitefish Fire Department (WFD) consultant regarding future WFD plans. Many firefighting issues were discussed, including mutual aid procedures. No mention was made of annexation/combination.
- WMR will soon be cutting the lift line for new Chair 4. Chief has spoken with WMR coordinator Doug Yeager, who is working with the logging contractor, and was told they would have a Skidgine on site to deal with possible fires. They plan on getting early starts and ending around noon, even though there are no current fire restrictions.
- BMFD firefighter Wayne Perry is the Department's new training officer.
- The Board's informal negotiation group (Phil Waddell, Tony Patterson, Sue Oemichen) met on June 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss upcoming Union talks. Tony Patterson reviewed the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and suggested some minor, non-substantive edits to the existing contract. When negotiations start, the group will ask for those changes to be made. (See Treasurer's Report below.) Tony Patterson made a motion that the Board formally appoint the committee as its CBA negotiation vehicle. Chairman Waddell seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.
- The Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) continues to receive District resident information for emergency contact.

- Chief has looked into a multiple-siren system for the District. It does not look like a good option for fire emergency notification.
- BMFD is still waiting to hear on the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). The submittals are being reviewed, and awards should be out within the month.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

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



**Big Mountain Fire District**  
**Statement of Net Assets**  
As of May 31, 2021

	May 31, 21
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings	
1017213 · County Fund #7213	207,608.11
1027243 · County Fund #7243 (PR Accrual)	117,900.91
1027248 · County Fund #7248 (Capital A/C)	54,416.37
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	379,925.39
Accounts Receivable	
122000 · Ambulance Fees Receivable	20,001.85
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	20,001.85
Other Current Assets	
113020 · 2020 Real Estate Tax Rec	44,382.27
113019 · 2019 Real Estate Tax Rec	3,306.36
101499 · Undeposited Funds	2,345.93
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	50,034.56
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	449,961.80
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
180000 · Investment in Fixed Assets	656,117.66
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	656,117.66
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,106,079.46</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	
202100 · Accounts Payable	2,891.73
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	2,891.73
Other Current Liabilities	
206130 · Payroll Liabilities	1,037.56
215000 · Accrued Vacation/Sick Pay	74,507.99
223000 · Deferred Tax Revenue	47,688.63
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	123,234.18
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	126,125.91
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	126,125.91
<b>Equity</b>	
272000 · Unreserved Retained Earnings	378,473.71
Net Income	601,479.84
<b>Total Equity</b>	979,953.55
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>1,106,079.46</b>

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

	Jul '20 - May 21	Jul '19 - May 20	\$ Change	% Change
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	449,237.96	410,805.00	38,432.96	9.4%
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	7,096.51	7,283.09	(186.58)	(2.6)%
342000 · Public Safety	66,328.70	56,176.56	10,152.14	18.1%
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	325.00	3,938.00	(3,613.00)	(91.8)%
365000 · Contribution and Donations	537,853.17	0.00	537,853.17	100.0%
370000 · Interest Income	1,416.21	4,630.78	(3,214.57)	(69.4)%
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>1,062,257.55</u>	<u>482,833.43</u>	<u>579,424.12</u>	<u>120.0%</u>
<b>Expense</b>				
420100 · Labor	370,708.22	411,718.77	(41,010.55)	(10.0)%
420210 · Office Supplies	154.73	294.26	(139.53)	(47.4)%
420220 · Operations - General	13,251.28	6,629.39	6,621.89	99.9%
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,882.00	2,118.67	(236.67)	(11.2)%
420222 · Personal Equipment	727.95	5,122.71	(4,394.76)	(85.8)%
420231 · Fuel	2,276.42	2,122.83	153.59	7.2%
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	143.00	95.00	48.00	50.5%
420350 · Administrative Expense	11,457.97	10,371.14	1,086.83	10.5%
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	69.20	0.00	69.20	100.0%
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	4,178.04	7,548.87	(3,370.83)	(44.7)%
420510 · Health Insurance	34,307.03	37,281.01	(2,973.98)	(8.0)%
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	11,164.00	9,256.00	1,908.00	20.6%
420390 · Taxes	330.89	0.00	330.89	100.0%
420430 · Personnel Training	885.68	320.00	565.68	176.8%
420340 · Utilities	6,810.24	6,573.88	236.36	3.6%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>458,346.65</u>	<u>499,452.53</u>	<u>(41,105.88)</u>	<u>(8.2)%</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>603,910.90</u>	<u>(16,619.10)</u>	<u>620,530.00</u>	<u>3,733.8%</u>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Other Expense</b>				
600620 · Interest Expense	717.64	0.00	717.64	100.0%
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	1,713.42	7,589.99	(5,876.57)	(77.4)%
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<u>2,431.06</u>	<u>7,589.99</u>	<u>(5,158.93)</u>	<u>(68.0)%</u>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<u>(2,431.06)</u>	<u>(7,589.99)</u>	<u>5,158.93</u>	<u>68.0%</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><u>601,479.84</u></u>	<u><u>(24,209.09)</u></u>	<u><u>625,688.93</u></u>	<u><u>2,584.5%</u></u>

Ordinary Income/Expense	Jul '20 - May 21	Jul '19 - May 20	\$ Change	% Change
<b>Income</b>				
310000 - Tax Assessment Revenue	449,237.96	410,805.00	38,432.96	9.36%
330000 - Intergovernmental Revenue	7,096.51	7,283.09	(186.58)	(2.56%)
342000 - Public Safety	66,328.70	56,176.56	10,152.14	18.07%
362000 - Insurance Reimbursement	325.00	3,938.00	(3,613.00)	(91.75%)
370000 - Interest Income	1,416.21	4,630.78	(3,214.57)	(69.42%)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>524,404.38</b>	<b>482,833.43</b>	<b>41,570.95</b>	<b>8.61%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
420100 - Labor	370,708.22	411,718.77	(41,010.55)	(9.96%)
420210 - Office Supplies	154.73	294.26	(139.53)	(47.42%)
420220 - Operations - General	13,251.28	6,629.39	6,621.89	99.89%
420221 - Operations - Ambulance	1,882.00	2,118.67	(236.67)	(11.17%)
420222 - Personal Equipment	727.95	5,122.71	(4,394.76)	(85.79%)
420231 - Fuel	2,276.42	2,122.83	153.59	7.24%
420330 - Dues & Subscriptions	143.00	95.00	48.00	50.53%
420350 - Administrative Expense	11,457.97	10,371.14	1,086.83	10.48%
420361 - Building Repairs & Maintenance	69.20	0.00	69.20	100.0%
420362 - Vehicle Maintenance	4,178.04	7,548.87	(3,370.83)	(44.65%)
420510 - Health Insurance	34,307.03	37,281.01	(2,973.98)	(7.98%)
420511 - Liability/Property Insurance	11,164.00	9,256.00	1,908.00	20.61%
420390 - Taxes	330.89	0.00	330.89	100.0%
420430 - Personnel Training	885.68	320.00	565.68	176.78%
420340 - Utilities	6,810.24	6,573.88	236.36	3.6%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>458,346.65</b>	<b>499,452.53</b>	<b>(41,105.88)</b>	<b>(8.23%)</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>66,057.73</b>	<b>(16,619.10)</b>	<b>82,676.83</b>	<b>497.48%</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Other Expense</b>				
600620 - Interest Expense	717.64	0.00	717.64	100.0%
800810 - Bad Debt Write Offs	1,713.42	7,589.99	(5,876.57)	(77.43%)
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>2,431.06</b>	<b>7,589.99</b>	<b>(5,158.93)</b>	<b>(67.97%)</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>(2,431.06)</b>	<b>(7,589.99)</b>	<b>5,158.93</b>	<b>67.97%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>63,626.67</b>	<b>(24,209.09)</b>	<b>87,835.76</b>	<b>362.82%</b>

## Big Mountain Fire District Labor Detail - Previous Year Comparison

	<u>Jul '20 - May 21</u>	<u>Jul '19 - May 20</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
Ordinary income/Expense			
Expense			
420100 · Labor			
420113 · Incentive Pay	13,185.13	0.00	13,185.13
420122 · Shift Differential	38,458.42	0.00	38,458.42
420121 · HSA Contributions	7,000.00	9,500.00	(2,500.00)
420111 · Salaries and Wages - Permanent	238,651.25	279,940.82	(41,289.57)
420120 · Overtime - Permanent	20,781.99	46,049.16	(25,267.17)
420130 · Post-Employment Vac/sick	(8,239.78)	13,413.75	(21,653.53)
420131 · Holiday Pay	6,752.10	6,647.10	105.00
420141 · MT Unemployment	520.61	487.10	33.51
420142 · Soc Sec/Medicare	5,032.76	4,704.85	327.91
420900 · Employee Retirement (FURS)	40,682.82	40,199.26	483.56
420140 · Worker's Comp	7,882.92	10,776.73	(2,893.81)
<b>Total 420100 · Labor</b>	<u>370,708.22</u>	<u>411,718.77</u>	<u>(41,010.55)</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>370,708.22</u>	<u>411,718.77</u>	<u>(41,010.55)</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>(370,708.22)</u>	<u>(411,718.77)</u>	<u>41,010.55</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u>(370,708.22)</u>	<u>(411,718.77)</u>	<u>41,010.55</u>



06/17/21

Accrual Basis

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

	Jul '20 - May 21	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	449,237.96	479,929.00	(30,691.04)	93.6%
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	7,096.51	14,741.00	(7,644.49)	48.1%
342000 · Public Safety	66,328.70	40,000.00	26,328.70	165.8%
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	325.00			
365000 · Contribution and Donations	537,853.17	5,000.00	532,853.17	10,757.1%
370000 · Interest Income	1,416.21	2,000.00	(583.79)	70.8%
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>1,062,257.55</u>	<u>541,670.00</u>	<u>520,587.55</u>	<u>196.1%</u>
<b>Expense</b>				
420100 · Labor	370,708.22	498,093.00	(127,384.78)	74.4%
420210 · Office Supplies	154.73	500.00	(345.27)	30.9%
420220 · Operations - General	13,251.28	5,000.00	8,251.28	265.0%
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,882.00	2,500.00	(618.00)	75.3%
420222 · Personal Equipment	727.95	4,500.00	(3,772.05)	16.2%
420231 · Fuel	2,276.42	2,300.00	(23.58)	99.0%
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	143.00	160.00	(17.00)	89.4%
420350 · Administrative Expense	11,457.97	12,500.00	(1,042.03)	91.7%
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	69.20	2,500.00	(2,430.80)	2.8%
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	4,178.04	4,000.00	178.04	104.5%
420480 · Communications	0.00	200.00	(200.00)	0.0%
420510 · Health Insurance	34,307.03	44,000.00	(9,692.97)	78.0%
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	11,164.00	11,000.00	164.00	101.5%
420390 · Taxes	330.89	898.00	(567.11)	36.8%
420430 · Personnel Training	885.68	3,000.00	(2,114.32)	29.5%
420340 · Utilities	6,810.24	7,000.00	(189.76)	97.3%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<u>458,346.65</u>	<u>598,151.00</u>	<u>(139,804.35)</u>	<u>76.6%</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<u>603,910.90</u>	<u>(56,481.00)</u>	<u>660,391.90</u>	<u>(1,069.2)%</u>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Other Expense</b>				
600620 · Interest Expense	717.64			
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	1,713.42	0.00	1,713.42	100.0%
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<u>2,431.06</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,431.06</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<u>(2,431.06)</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>(2,431.06)</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u><u>601,479.84</u></u>	<u><u>(56,481.00)</u></u>	<u><u>657,960.84</u></u>	<u><u>(1,064.9)%</u></u>

**Budget vs. Actual**  
**July 2020 through May 2021**

	Jul '20 - May 21	Budget	\$ Over Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
310000 · Tax Assessment Revenue	449,237.96	479,929.00	(30,691.04)
330000 · Intergovernmental Revenue	7,096.51	14,741.00	(7,644.49)
342000 · Public Safety	66,328.70	40,000.00	26,328.70
362000 · Insurance Reimbursement	325.00		
370000 · Interest Income	1,416.21	2,000.00	(583.79)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>524,404.38</b>	<b>536,670.00</b>	<b>(12,265.62)</b>
Expense			
420100 · Labor	370,708.22	498,093.00	(127,384.78)
420210 · Office Supplies	154.73	500.00	(345.27)
420220 · Operations - General	13,251.28	5,000.00	8,251.28
420221 · Operations - Ambulance	1,882.00	2,500.00	(618.00)
420222 · Personal Equipment	727.95	4,500.00	(3,772.05)
420231 · Fuel	2,276.42	2,300.00	(23.58)
420330 · Dues & Subscriptions	143.00	160.00	(17.00)
420350 · Administrative Expense	11,457.97	12,500.00	(1,042.03)
420361 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	69.20	2,500.00	(2,430.80)
420362 · Vehicle Maintenance	4,178.04	4,000.00	178.04
420480 · Communications	0.00	200.00	(200.00)
420510 · Health Insurance	34,307.03	44,000.00	(9,692.97)
420511 · Liability/Property Insurance	11,164.00	11,000.00	164.00
420390 · Taxes	330.89	898.00	(567.11)
420430 · Personnel Training	885.68	3,000.00	(2,114.32)
420340 · Utilities	6,810.24	7,000.00	(189.76)
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>458,346.65</b>	<b>598,151.00</b>	<b>(139,804.35)</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>66,057.73</b>	<b>(61,481.00)</b>	<b>127,538.73</b>
Other Income/Expense			
Other Expense			
600620 · Interest Expense	717.64		
800810 · Bad Debt Write Offs	1,713.42	0.00	1,713.42
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>2,431.06</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,431.06</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>(2,431.06)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>(2,431.06)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>63,626.67</b>	<b>(61,481.00)</b>	<b>125,107.67</b>

- Chief Ben DeVall, Treasurer Sue Oemichen, and Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong have drafted a memo clarifying hourly salary numbers in the 2020-2021 CBA and requesting retroactive upward pay adjustments for BMFD firefighters. Tony Patterson made a motion to approve the memo. The motion was seconded by Phil Waddell and was passed unanimously.
- A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Tony Patterson and seconded by Phil Waddell. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- Sue Oemichen made a motion to approve a BMFD fireworks policy revision. The revision was required because Montana law now permits stick rockets, bottle rockets, and Roman Candles. Tony Patterson seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously. Area HOAs are moving to prohibit fireworks rather than discourage them. BMFD, Grizzly Security, and WMR will all be involved in enforcing fireworks regulations in the future.
- The proposed inclusion of fire safety stipulations in Design Review Board property guidelines was tabled until spring 2022 because of enforcement concerns.
- Chief DeVall reviewed his preliminary conclusions regarding fire emergency communication and evacuation procedures. Learning from past experiences elsewhere, it is clear that early evacuation is critical. The plan is for BMFD/Firewise and the Big Mountain Community to send emergency notifications and instructions to area HOAs for distribution to residents. The ultimate best solution likely is a County reverse-911 or Amber Alert-like system where cellphones of persons in the area would be pinged. The first objective would be to get as many people down Big Mountain Road as quickly as possible, while it is still open. The hiring of a knowledgeable consultant to perform a study of the issue may be advisable.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- A preliminary budget worksheet has been received from the County. Hopefully, final figures will be available in July, but August is more realistic. The Board will hold a special meeting by phone on July 28<sup>th</sup> at 3pm to vote, if possible, on the preliminary 2022 budget.

- A Geographic Information System (GIS) audit shows that 16 new private properties have been recently added to the District. This finding is being communicated to the County by Board Treasurer Sue Oemichen.
- Tony Patterson and Paul Silverman have been formally appointed by the County to new three-year terms as Board trustees.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT: BMFD firefighter and Union representative Ken Wensel requested that the Board seriously consider raising firefighter salaries. He maintained that District staff member compensation, not including benefits, lags behind other area departments. He urged that a solution be found, perhaps via a District budget increase. The topic will be placed on the agenda for the next BMFD Board meeting.

NEXT MEETING: August 30, 2021 (plus special phone meeting on budget July 28)

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Phil Waddell. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:42pm.

#### SPECIAL PHONE MEETING JULY 28, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 3:05pm

ROLL CALL: Board trustees Phil Waddell, Paul Silverman, Sue Oemichen, and Tony Patterson; Chief Ben DeVall; Firefighters Ken Wensel and Wayne Perry.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Deferred to next regular Board meeting

#### FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- Chief DeVall advised there are now no Covid beds available in Flathead County. He will attend a July 29<sup>th</sup> planning meeting on the situation.

- Chief will also participate in a July 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of area fire chiefs to review the status of current wildfires in the region. The 35-acre Big Mountain/Werner Peak fire is under control. Multiple resources helped prevent the fire's spread to Hellroaring Basin and Canyon Creek.
- The old BMFD ambulance has been sold to the Polson Fire Department for \$11,000.
- The new District fire engine was recently transported to the manufacturer's Michigan facility for repair. It is expected to be out of service for 30-90 days. A loaner truck has been obtained on an interim basis from the Montana State University Training School in Great Falls. Insurance will cover the cost of the loaner equipment. Deployment of the new engine will increase the BMFD insurance cost by \$163 per month.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

#### TREASURER'S REPORT:

- The County has not yet finalized year-end budget figures. They are expected in 2-3 weeks. The BMFD Board will discuss the FY-2022 District budget at the August 30<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, or sooner via Zoom if possible.

OLD BUSINESS: Deferred to next regular Board meeting

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- Jerry Meislik's resignation from the BMFD Board has been accepted with great regret. Chairman Phil Waddell made a motion nominating Elk Highlands resident Steve Cosby to fill the remainder of Meislik's term, which ends May 31, 2022. Paul Silverman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously. The County will be advised of the transition.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: The next regular Board meeting will occur as scheduled on August 30, 2021 at 3pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Sue Oemichen. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 3:27pm.