

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 8, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 2:05 pm

ROLL CALL: Board Trustees Sue Oemichen, Tony Patterson, Paul Silverman; Community members Steve Cosby, Tom Sato; Chief Ben DeVall; Firefighters Colin Christopoulos, Tommy Hodges.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve Minutes of the August 30, 2021 regular Board meeting and the October 18, 2021 special meeting was made and seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT:

- It appears the BMFD engine repairs are very close to completion. Vehicle manufacturer HME was awaiting wiring harnesses last week, but the engine is now almost completely back together.
- Flathead County fire departments have been denied the FEMA 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for regional mobile radios. The County advisory group has already met, made some application alterations, and is planning to resubmit.
- The District has applied for two Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 grants. One application is to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act requesting funds for COVID response. The other is to the Lawrence Foundation regarding a \$4,000.00 cot-mounting system for the BMFD ambulance. The CARES application is a request for funds, and the amount is determined by the grantor. The District will also apply for an FY-21 AFG to replace the department's Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).
- BMFD's air packs are eligible for replacement via National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) funds because the packs have been through two age change cycles. Chief DeVall is awaiting quotes from manufacturers. The application period opened today (November 8, 2021), and available funds have been increased this year.
- Almost all the slash piles have been burned by the Forest Service around the Holbrook Overlook. Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) has also been burning piles.

- Sue Oemichen has completed and submitted the Firewise recertification packet. Chief has contacted Ernie Nace of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to conduct a District Firewise survey, which must be completed this year for recertification.
- Two fire danger signs have been delivered to the District, and BMFD will install them this spring.
- BMFD continues to be asked to do inter-facility transports.
- Those District firefighters who must recertify their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) status have begun putting their training hours together and are scheduled for the County EMS refreshers.
- The Landmark Whitefish developer requested Chief DeVall's written approval of the Landmark building's planned design. Board Trustee and attorney Tony Patterson counseled Chief not to provide such concurrence but rather to advise the developer that BMFD could respond only to a County or State request regarding required building permitting.
- BMFD firefighter Colin Christopoulos installed a new downstairs front door for the firehouse.
- The Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) purchased new gym equipment for the firehouse.
- The BMFD Mill Levy Task Force met with Amy Dexter, County Finance Director, on October 21, 2021. Lots of useful information was received, and the advisory group has scheduled a second meeting for December. Among other topics to be discussed will be the District's Five-Year Capital Plan.
- Interviews with two BMFD firefighter candidates are scheduled for November 10, 2021.
- The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who completed the last BMFD audit has retired. In 2006, the District used the Whitefish CPA firm JCCS for its audit. Chief has spoken with one of the JCCS accountants, and she is providing information on what they would need from the department to move forward. JCCS subcontracts parts of government audits to other firms and would proceed accordingly in the District's case.

- BMFD has been fighting a leak in the firehouse fire suppression system which causes the compressor to run frequently. Firefighter Robert Sharp found two leaks, one in a pressure relief valve and the other in a joint. Chief contacted SimplexGrinnell and will get a relief valve at the next servicing. Right now, a plug is being used in its place. The department is in the process of fixing the other leak.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Financial Review - The final FYE 6.30.21 Financials and September 2021 YTD Financial Board Packet were distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. Financials were discussed. YTD we should be at 25% of budget. Income will increase as tax revenue increases.

		% Budget
Total Assets (Checking/Savings) YTD	\$271,998.32	
Total Income YTD	\$75,927.78	12.4%
Total Expenses YTD	\$162,720.19	24.9%
Net Ordinary Income YTD	\$(86,792.41)	

- Database Officer Position - No new information to present.
- Audit - We will have an audit this year due to the Fire Truck and Ambulance donations. Ben is coordinating.
- Treasurer Transition - Sue Oemichen and Steve Cosby will work on transitioning the Board Treasurer position. The plan is for the transition to be effective 12/1.

OLD BUSINESS:

- BMFD's Mill Levy Task Force learned from the Flathead County Finance Director that a potential District mill levy increase would be considered by the County if so requested by BMFD.
- Whitefish plans to address the Big Mountain annexation issue in October 2022. The effects of potential annexation are unclear, as are possible community roles in the decision and relevant Montana Code Annotated (MCA) rules.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Sue Oemichen raised several Board Organization issues to be reviewed at the next Board meeting: Trustee powers, duties, and roles (Tony Patterson will check on possible need to update BMFD bylaws and funding implications); regularly-scheduled Board meetings per MCA (Chief DeVall will check with other area fire departments as to their current practices).
- Tony Patterson briefed the Board on suggested modifications to Chief DeVall's contract. The final revised provisions will be considered at the next Board meeting.
- Sue Oemichen suggested that BMFD Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong be given a 3 percent salary increase effective December 1, 2021. Paul Silverman made a motion to that effect, and it was seconded by Tony Patterson. The motion then was passed unanimously.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT: Firefighter Colin Christopoulos raised a question regarding conversion of accrued vacation when the change was made to hourly pay vs. salaried pay in the previous Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Board Chair Sue Oemichen will consult with Bookkeeper Tracy Armstrong to resolve possible issues related to vacation accrual in the salary change process from November 2020. Resolution will be addressed at the next Board meeting.

NEXT MEETINGS: January 7, 2022 3pm; February 18, 2022 3pm; April 8, 2022 3pm; June 3, 2022 3pm

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Tony Patterson and seconded by Paul Silverman. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.