

BIG MOUNTAIN FIRE DISTRICT (BMFD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
JUNE 3, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER – 3:05pm

ROLL CALL – Board Trustees Sue Oemichen, Tony Patterson, Steve Cosby, and Paul Silverman; Chief Ben DeVall

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – A motion was made by Tony Patterson and seconded by Steve Cosby to approve the Minutes, as corrected, of the April 8, 2022 Board meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

FIREFIGHTER REPORT -

- There is still no word on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for County radios or BMFD's request for \$63,500 to purchase airpicks and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Awards were supposed to start being announced on May 13<sup>th</sup>, but nothing has come out yet.
- BMFD submitted a grant request through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation/ Volunteer Firefighters Association (DNRC/VFA). The funds have been increased slightly this year, but the amount is not yet clear. Usually, the District receives around \$1,500. Chief DeVall has asked for \$2,827. Items to be funded include the printing and sending of the Homeowner Packet to all property owners; hose and nozzles; and a weatherproof bulletin board for the exterior of the firehall.
- The replacement window ordered in February for the firehouse back bedroom has arrived. Firefighters attempted to install it but found that the glass company had measured incorrectly. A new replacement window has been ordered.
- BMFD firefighters have been scheduling and getting their annual physicals done. The process is going smoother this time than last year.
- JCCS Accounting Services is unable to perform the District audit. Tony Patterson has contacted another auditing firm, Anderson Zurmuehlen, and Chief DeVall is waiting to hear from a representative of the company. If they are unable to undertake the audit, the District will have to look out of state to get it done.
- Chief was included in a group tasked to identify possible points of containment in the event of a wildfire. Within these areas, fuel treatments, access, and values at risk are to be designated. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), DNRC, and Stoltze Land & Lumber Company are going through this process, so when funds become available, they can begin selected treatment.
- Big Mountain Firefighters Association (BMFA) paid for both the unit and installation of an ambulance cot loading system that is now in service. The system meets all current requirements for securing the cot within the ambulance.
- BMFD's engine is again having issues. The manufacturer's certified local mechanic spent some time with it and believes he has identified the problem. All replacement parts are in, and the truck was dropped off to the mechanic Tuesday morning.
- The Resort Tax group met and was provided a demo from the company which oversees rental compliance with the Big Sky Resort Tax. Tony Patterson will report on the information learned. The group will meet again on June 7th to discuss next steps.

- The Firewise Board met on May 9th. The newsletter has been sent out, and a decision was made to offer “No Fireworks” sign installation to homeowner associations (HOA's) wanting them. The HOA's will cover the signs' cost. One Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) sign has not yet been installed.
- The Community Picnic group met on May 9th and is continuing to plan for the July 21<sup>st</sup> event. Local HOAs will be contributing \$200 each, payable to the District. Any surplus collected funds will accrue to Firewise.
- Chief was asked to facilitate a planning meeting of State, County, and City officials with the Under-the-Big-Sky Music Festival director. The meeting was very well-attended.
- Chief DeVall, along with BMFD Board Trustees Sue Oemichen and Steve Cosby, met to discuss Department billing rates. Some changes were made to the amounts currently charged. (See Old Business.)
- Chief has reviewed the wildfire plan, and only a few changes, mainly regarding personnel, are required. Chief will need updates from Winter Sports, Inc. (WSI) as to who will hold key positions. A replacement for Elyse Knudsen, former Safety Officer, is pending.
- There will be a “Living with Wildfire” event at the O’Shaughnessy Center on June 28th. Chief has been asked to sit on a panel to answer questions. The panel will also include Rick Connell (USFS), Lincoln Chute (Flathead County), and Joe Page (Whitefish Fire Department Chief). Others may be added as the event date gets closer.
- BMFD firefighter Kevin Wise is again acting as the District’s training officer.
- Chief has been unable to schedule a date for the ambulance recall. The local dealer is not doing the recalls work yet.
- Chief met with Morrison-Maierle land development engineers and the owner of the proposed 13-story condo building in the WMR upper subdivision. This would be a 114 foot-tall structure. There were six attendees. Chief voiced concerns on access and height, as well as firefighting manpower available to the District. Chief was told that BMFD would be included in safety decisions as the project plans develop. The owner agreed to heat all exterior sidewalks, after Chief requested that firefighter access be insured to the back of the building, where the suppression system controls will be located.
- The Department’s sprinkler system is still having issues, and the compressor has been running. Kandahar just had a similar system installed. The installer came to the firehouse and made some adjustments after finding two leaks. It seems to be doing better now, but time will tell.
- Board Chair Sue Oemichen changed the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan to an Excel format and is working on equipment replacement cost numbers.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

#### TREASURER’S REPORT –

##### Financial Review

The March and April 2022 Year-To-Date (YTD) Financial Board Packet was distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. The District has not yet received the May 2022 Financials from Flathead County. March and April Financials were discussed. YTD, BMFD should be at 75% and 83.3% of budget respectively.

	March 2022	April 2022
Budget Total Assets (Checking/Savings) YTD	\$325,400.28	\$312,210.29
Total Income YTD	\$493,507.42 (80.4%)	\$516,232.13 (84.1%)
Total Expenses YTD	\$510,445.29 (78.1%)	\$558,037.79 (85.3%)
Net Ordinary Income YTD	\$(16,937.87) (42.0%)	\$(41,805.66) (103.8%)

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

#### OLD BUSINESS –

- A bulletin board will be installed on the firehouse to display public notices including BMFD and Sewer Board upcoming meetings. The notices will also appear on the Big Mountain Community website. A motion to effect minor changes to Rules Section 2.03 was made by Paul Silverman and seconded by Steve Cosby. The motion was passed unanimously.
- The entire list of new District properties on Whitefish city tax rolls will be sent to Chief DeVall shortly.
- The BMFA Annual Report noted that over \$38,000 in donations have been received to date. The Report will be communicated to the Board in writing in the future.
- Work on the BMFD website is progressing. A meeting with a technical consultant is scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup>. An update on the website status will be presented to the Board on August 29<sup>th</sup> prior to publishing it to the community.
- Ambulance and drug fee schedules were discussed. Costs are being bundled by Pintler Billing Services. A motion to increase rates via the revised fee schedule was made by Tony Patterson and seconded by Paul Silverman. The motion was passed unanimously. The policy of not billing District property owners for BMFD services will continue.

#### NEW BUSINESS –

- Sue Oemichen will seek Board member input and prepare Chief DeVall's performance evaluation by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Employee Health Insurance Review concluded that the traditional plan likely will be retained, with no change required. The Review is a responsibility of the Board, not the Union. Western Insurance will continue to be the provider.
- The Board of Trustees Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) team (Tony Patterson and Steve Cosby, plus Chief DeVall) anticipates that few CBA issues will arise. An automatic firefighter pay increase of 3 percent will take

effect July 1, 2022. Sue Oemichen suggested that as a matter of principle, the Board consider term limits for future CBA team members.

EMPLOYEE COMMENT – None

NEXT MEETINGS – August 29, October 24, and December 12, 2022; February 27, April 24, and June 26, 2023; all at 3pm.

ADJOURNMENT – A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Cosby and seconded by Tony Patterson. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 4:45pm.