

**Evergreen Fire District
Board of Trustees
Meeting**

Meeting Minutes
Special Board Meeting of September 21, 2017

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Jon Foust calls the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Jon Foust
Dave Adams
Jack Fallon
Kyle Nace
Dave Edwards

RECOGNIZE PUBLIC/EFD STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Fire Chief Craig Williams	Captain James Boyce	Kim Vierra	Rachel Burns
Colin Christopoulos	Jack Knuffke	Brandon Hoerling	Maddie Wamsley
Nick Tucker	Irina Korchmar	Jacob Pitcher	Wayne Evert
Jared Pitcher	Jackson Corne	Tommy Hodges	Teryn Cothorn

PUBLIC COMMENT:

(none)

At this time, public may comment on any public matter that is not on the Agenda of the Meeting and that is within the jurisdiction of the District.

FINANCIALS:

(none)

PAST ITEMS/UPDATES:

1. Levy Discussion

Craig begins the discussion by stating that he wants to make sure that the Board is aware of the Plan and that if anyone has any input; now is the time to understand the plan, add any input, and/or make any suggestions. Craig states that several of the firefighters have been out on wildland fires and are not up to date on the process but that they will be brought up to speed at the next EFD business meeting. Craig tells the Board that he would really like to focus on the CIP to make sure that everyone has an understanding of NFPA statutes in year of the equipment and to make sure the Board is comfortable with the Plan as presented. He states that the Plan being presented puts approximately \$200,000.00 per year into CIP and tells the Board that he has included an Equipment Replacement Schedule into the meeting packets. He states that there is about \$205,000.00 in CIP, currently. Craig states that the column he would like to focus on is the 'Annual Payment To Reserves' and what EFD should be putting into it each year and states that it has historically, the annual payment has not been being met. Craig also focuses on the bolded items for each calendar year represented; that is the year that it *should* be replaced based on NFPA standard. He states that for example; if everyone

followed back to the 2 Type 1 engines showing an estimated cost and a column that says 'financed' and that everyone recognized that the first piece of equipment that is most needed is a replacement for 831. Craig states that even with the current balance in CIP and the wildland revenue combined; EFD is still at least 3 or 4 years out if purchasing an engine with cash and doesn't think EFD has that much time. Jon Foust states that he takes issue with all of the money that has put into 831 and that at least a couple of payments could have possibly been made on a lease for a newer, working apparatus. Jon reiterates that he is not opposed to leasing. Craig states that there are government loans and leases available as well. He states, "We have been kind of hamstrung to a degree because of our sun-setting levies it has been difficult to secure long-term financing." He states that he ran into the problem during this past Spring when he started researching the options. The problem is that EFD doesn't have guaranteed income after a 5 year basis for leasing or financing options. He states that it "could be difficult" but won't say that "it's improbable" but that it is definitely a concern. Jon asks Craig when ISO is due to visit again. Craig tells Jon that EFD is not due for several more years but that a follow-up visit will happen in about 18 months. Craig states that there are several things that will need to be replaced in 5, 7, to 10 years and that a big concern he has is that they will all need to be replaced at the same time. Jon states "It seems we've got ourselves in a pickle with our aging equipment." Craig answers, "We do." Jon states, "ISO's a big thing."... "I 100% agree with you. You should have...when it reaches a certain age, you should have the money there. I don't know what the proper formula to do that is but, like I said, we're in a pickle because everything's going." Kyle states, "Well, even some things that show that they aren't that old, like Craig's Tundra, isn't going to make it 11 more years." Craig tells that Board that ambulances can be flipped pretty easily and that EFD will continue to chase grants for anything that is applicable. Craig reminds the Board that CIP can also be used for other purchases such as turnouts and SCBA's and etc. Jon asks Craig if the turnouts were on a 10 year plan and Craig confirms that is correct. He states, "For the turnouts we are pretty good. We can fund that, currently." He adds that the SCBA's need to be addressed as well. He tells that Board that he does not want to get into a the situation of 30 SCBA's all needing to be replaced at one time because they are \$7,500.00 a piece. He tells the Board that the SCBA concern may be funded as well due to an AFG grant that EFD can pursue this year after a 5 year wait-period from previously receiving the grant. He will apply this Spring with the intent of purchasing several SCBA's.

Craig briefly explains the Package Plans presented in the levy. Plans are A, B, and C with the A Plan being scaled down. The A Plan represents the hand out and the email that was sent out showing the Montana State Comparisons. Craig states to the Board that everything plugged into the spreadsheet they are viewing is based on the Plan A levy and not what's current and is still waiting for 5 other departments within the Valley to send him the requested information he needs to fill in the rest of the boxes on the spreadsheet. He is hoping to get a comparison from Big Fork, Big Mountain, and Smith Valley, who along with Big Fork, will be running a levy this Fall. Craig states that in comparison, EFD Plan A is still mid-line or well under for starting wages vs. call volume and values protected and etc. He adds that EFD will still be mid-line in comparison with Big Fork, Big Mountain, and Smith Valley. He acknowledges that EFD will not be able to compete with the City of Kalispell or City of Whitefish in terms of wages and benefits due to different tax bases. He states that the majority of EFD personnel is working another full-time job and that a good number of those personnel are already invested into their current insurance and retirement programs and that EFD needs to have the ability for those personnel to opt out. Craig acknowledges the difficulty in finding a plan that allows people to opt out and will most likely cost more to do so. Craig tells the Board that he

will need help researching and gathering all of the information; plans/options/companies available. The proposed Plan A has \$700.00 for insurance per month and that is equivalent to what the County would offer for medical benefits but is basically a place holder until information is gathered. He states the 14.4% retirement represents FURS with the understanding that if EFD went with public retirement, personnel would have to first belong to PERS and then petition to go to FURS; once again just a place holder. Craig tells the Board that the only easy part of gathering information and putting in numbers is the fact that as Chief, he understands what EFD needs in terms of staffing. Craig states that he has been researching Cafeteria Plans and asks Jack if he knows anything about Cafeteria Plans. Jack tells the Board that the Cafeteria Plan is part of a health insurance plan and can be added to a plan; not automatically part of a plan. Small group health plans are 'all or nothing'. Jack explain that there are 'elections' if you have a 3rd party administrator which are typically not viable until there are 100 employees or more. Third party administrator has a separate cost structure in addition to the health insurance premiums. So the choices are individual premiums because the group plan won't work because it's 'all or nothing'. Jack states that there are no other group plan options that he is aware of that will allow opting out. The only way would be with a 3rd party administrator and that is typically a self-funded plan with separate sets of administrative costs. Jack states, "That's not viable. I am not aware of anything that's available with an opt-out option for a small group plan." Dave Adams asks Jack if he is saying that a Cafeteria Plan is not an option. Jack tells Dave, "It never stands alone." Craig states that Big Mountain is going to that and he is currently trying to get the language. He has been sent the policy but Craig says he cannot understand the jargin. Dave Adams asks if "You pick what you want for insurance?" Craig says, "No. It's basically ...you give up your social security and it goes into the plan and it's pre-taxed and it's a whole bunch of different stuff and then they've got 2 subsets to it. I'm asking him to send me all of the stuff on it." Craig asks Colin Christopoulos if he can speak to any of what he is saying since Colin also employed by Big Mountain and Colin replies that he doesn't know enough to be able to speak to it. Jack states, "Well, typically...a cafeteria plan allows an employee to have payroll deductions to cover health care costs and sometimes the word 'cafeteria' or sometimes the word 'flex plan' is used. But, it allows for child care expenses, medical expenses...any of the deductibles that would normally occur." Dave Adams states that he understands the 'flex plan'. Jack states that both plans have very similar aspects. Craig reiterates that he will need some more help in researching and gathering information for the best options and cost. He recognizes the potential need to establish a separate committee. Jack suggests just calling different insurances and asking the agents if they can provide a group plan that allows employees to opt out of coverage. Craig states that he has done just that. Jack asks if they are all saying the same thing...'not available'? Craig states, "they are and they aren't...some are available but they require elaborate physicals, elaborate well-being...and then we have to give estimates each year because we have such a broad range of ages in EFD and etc." Jack suggests that what it sounds like is that in lieu of 100% participation, they will require a minimum percentage of participation. Craig tells Jack that he is correct and that is based on the demographic also. Jack asks that the participation will require some type of census as well as exams? Craig tells Jack he is correct. Craig states that the deductibles were also steep...\$10,000.00 and \$12,000.00 deductibles. Craig states that he thinks anything over \$10,000.00 is catastrophic and that the only thing that could be offered at EFD would then be Catastrophic. Jack asks if there is state wide firefighters health insurance consortium? Craig states, "No." Dave Adams states that there is nothing listed in either column for the Ambulance, 7204 for new purchases of radios, pagers or SCBA's. Craig tells Dave that the SCBA's were a stand alone. Dave Adams

asks Craig to go to page 3 and go down to vacation and he will see that there's nothing listed for 11 years or more. Craig states the policy reads that after 11 years another 3 days is added; going from 15 to 18 days. Craig reminds all attendees that the spreadsheet is a work in progress and that he is not seeking the Board to approve anything at this time. Craig tells the Board that a number of agencies do have caps; salary caps in place for specific positions from firefighter all the way up to Chief. He states, "If you're a firefighter/EMT and say you've been here for 20 years...is there an expectation that at some point, there does have to be...somewhere...a cap which is an incentive for that person then to move up to engineer status or lieutenant/Captain. With that being said, if we were able to do that...wanting to move forward with a cap, then I believe there should also be longevity then put in to that. This current plan does not address that. We do not have longevity built into this yet. It's more of a discussion point at this juncture. But, I do believe in my mind, that we've got a number of senior people here...some people that could potentially be approaching a potential salary cap at their position. So, I think it would be unfortunate to have somebody with no chance to move forward at all, financially, and I believe they should be able to get a cost of living or a longevity type law and that hasn't been addressed in this plan." Dave Adams gives an example of the landfill; after 5 years it's a half of a percent per year and then the cost of living as the County sees fit. Dave adds, "Even though it's a bargaining option. It isn't. We've bargained and they say 'You get what you get or you get nothing'." Craig asks Jon what his standpoint is on it and Jon states that he thinks that it is a little more than that. Craig states that he thinks it probably is a good incentive to not get too comfortable in the position. Craig reiterates one of his biggest concerns that he had shared with the Board earlier in the Spring about losing core personnel. He states that since February, EFD has lost 3 more core personnel; core personnel being anyone with 5 or more years at EFD. He states that the 3 lost were officer level personnel. He states that the loss of the 3 combined add up to almost 40 years experience. He added that they were forced to go somewhere else due to higher wages and benefits and that the core group of personnel is eroding. EFD average experience level is now 5.1 years which is the lowest the department has ever been.

Dave Adams states a concern regarding the Equipment Replacement Schedule is that the average payment to CIP over 7 years is \$295,441.56 leaving a deficit for the first 7 years putting EFD behind by 1.25 million dollars if EFD is depositing only \$200,000.00. Craig tells Dave that he is correct and shares the same concern but states that the fact that 'we are in a hole right now' needs to be recognized. Dave Edwards asks what the additional value would be when comparing the current and proposed budgets. Craig states that under Plan A; it is approximately \$972,000.00 with the levy and after it has already been scaled down. He states that since 2011, EFD personnel have recognized that there is need for a minimum of 3 people on shift but weren't able to support it financially but reiterates that the call volume has increased exponentially since then. He also reiterates that a shift crew of 3 is not an ideal number either because everything is done in pairs and another person is needed to drive the second due ambulance. One person just doesn't work. He tells the Board that fortunately EFD has had several reserves and "a lot of help" and that even Fire Marshal Ben Covington and himself will take EMS calls in support of having enough people. Craig states that he wanted to remind everyone that, in terms of the revenue, that while the 911 revenue is listed; inter-facility revenue is not.

Jack states he has a couple of simple questions. He asks, "How's everybody's general math? Do those numbers there all add up to that right there?" "Do those numbers there, all add up to those numbers, right there?" Jon asks Craig, "So 2,080 is your average..." Craig states that 2,080 is 40 hours a week. Jon states, "That's 2,496...is what you're figuring...so is that with the overtime?" Craig states, "Yeah, so...the question on that

would be up top and we'll take a look at that....So that is the equivalent of 4 personnel for Kelly coverage. So those hours are the total of 4 personnel that we would have to identify for a total of 16; four for Kelly Day coverage." Jon states, "Now, for Kelly Days...you don't have to...you can take the overtime, right? How does that work?"

Craig replies, "That's negotiated internally amongst the operational plan; some places do and some places don't. It depends on the organization. I think you can opt for it." (There is some discussion over that math that Jack was asking about and Craig tells the Board that has been an issue at the last several meetings and that he and Ben have been running into this issue while building spreadsheets; the subtotals are not carrying forward on the print out.) Craig continues, "The Kelly coverage would be required for a typical shift that would consist of 24/98. We know, regardless of how the shift is going to actually go, that will have to be addressed amongst the personnel that would be working it. We know we need 4 bodies on shift 24 hours a day but there's 5 different ways that you can stretch it out based on 24/98; a 24/72; a 48/72...there's a combination there that we would just have to find the right mix. I don't think we are quite there yet, in terms of...it's going to pencil out the same...it's just an operational staffing model of what our current folk are able to do in terms of shift work. I can tell you, though, if we do a 48/72...that reduces the amount of Kelly coverage that we would need. So, it would require less personnel and would require less money overall if we chose to go to that model. The difficulty with the 48 is that we are a fairly busy department and it's tough. I know it's working for Whitefish but we're up on Whitefish by 400 calls...pushing 500 calls. It gets tougher as you get busier. The guys are pretty tired after working." James Boyce adds that it is 48/96 that Whitefish is currently working. James asks Craig if that eliminates Kelly Days. Craig states that it doesn't because it's all based on if Whitefish is allowed to work it or work it as overtime or do they bring in someone else. EFD works it because there isn't reserve staff to take care of it. Dave Adams states that they are scheduled out at the beginning of the year 'just like vacation' so that there shouldn't be any conflict unless someone calls in sick."

Craig states that he will work on and get some finality on the insurance piece and that he will get with them individually and try to get a plan established based on willingness for opt-out option. Jack tells Craig, "I wouldn't even talk to the staff because the only question for the insurance agent is "What are your parameters to have not full participation. Put it all down in black and white so that we can see what it is and then you share that with the staff and say 'How many of you are willing to participate and how many not' and if you can get that threshold then you throw that plan out the window. It doesn't work. I mean, to me...there's no sense asking everybody here whether they are going to participate or not until after you know what the limits are with the various things that may be offered; if they even have much variation." Dave Adams states that he doesn't see anything listed for raises for anyone on the spreadsheet. He asks, "Is that going to be covered by permissive levy?" Craig states that is a discussion that has been had but that nothing is final and that is has been left open for discussion on how to do that with the understanding that not everything 'revenue wise' has been listed on the spreadsheet. Craig states that he has learned in the past to 'unnecessarily project each year in the budget for things that we've grown accustomed to but yet could go away; speaking specifically to things like the inter-facility revenue. He states, "I don't know if that would have a significant impact if we do lose that. I am hopeful that will continue but we have to account for it not being there someday. So that was one thing to look at and a number of other things that we could possibly do. Obviously, if we run this we have to have it be non-sun setting and we would have to account for that. But, I really would have a difficult time, I guess, supporting a sun setting levy just based on the difficulty of trying to get any lease or financing for CIP. We're really kind of in a bad

way there.” Craig adds to his answer for Dave Adams, “As far as raises, they are plugged in there. There’s a little bit of work to do there in terms of...you know, longevity is going to fit into that like I discussed...we need to identify what that is. Are we going to go percentage or cents? The bigger discussion is salary cap or not or do we just keep it open ended to where we could potentially have a 30 year fire fighter that might be making sixty or seventy thousand dollars...I don’t know.” Dave Edwards asks Craig how Kalispell is able to achieve what they do with a budget this is only \$500,000.00 more. Craig states that Kalispell runs in the red approximately \$300,000.00 a year for their ambulance and their general fund picks up that tab. So they have been running in the red for 8 years on their ambulance program. Craig reminds the Board that EFD permissive, in lieu of the levy, one will go away. He states that the numbers are projecting a 22.2% increase from a 2010 US census and also accounting for Helena Flats as well as a population between Helena Flats and Evergreen (North toward the airport) that is not a census designated area. GIS will have to account for per household and do their own averages. Dave Edwards adds that we are not trying to do what Kalispell does when they are running on a 3.2 million dollar budget and we are trying to achieve it on a 2.2 million dollar budget and we are not providing retirement or benefit packages currently and not even going to get comparable benefits in comparison to Kalispell if the levy passes. Dave Edwards states, “Hey, we’re going to contribute \$700.00 a month to an insurance plan that you’ll never be able to use.” Craig states, “Correct.” Dave Edwards asks, “So what’s the incentive to keep our people?” Craig responds, “Currently, we have nothing...so...you know what I mean? I know for some people this will be a difference and for some it isn’t. I mean, honestly Dave, for some...they’ve already passed on it. So, I mean...it’s...” Dave Edwards asks, “Well, I mean...by doing this, by going forward...are we solving a problem or just asking Evergreen for more money to potentially save a few people?” Craig answers, “It’s not about saving the people. They, ultimately at the end of the day are going to have to make a decision on what we can offer them. But, I think that for the majority of the folks down here that have been doing for this for a lot less with no benefits; I don’t see a significant change. It’s those folks, whatever individually, chose to move on because they were presented with something better; a better opportunity. We will lose those folks but also understand that we have got a ton of new talent and we are the only department in the Valley that has a full roster and have maintained a full roster for years. We have a waiting list to be on this department. There’s no one else in this Valley that has had a waiting list, no one else. We have a number of talented people who are willing to continue with this and would stay here with whatever that can get.” “I can tell you that James, really, last week...it really donned on me when I look and realize that I would say that in this audience here, the majority of the folks in this room are working 80-90 hours a week because everyone else in this room has another full-time job on top of Evergreen, everybody...and, that burnout...that long term...trying to get that commitment is a ‘thank you’ but I know that it’s short-term. When Boyce is working 112 hours a week...a lot of these people in here are employed with other fire departments and they are...there’s not many people in here that have even a day off. I have many fire fighters that haven’t had a day off...a single day off the entire summer and they’re still here and they’re still willing to do it. But, we’ve got to be able to present *something* equal to be able to have some stability.” Dave Edwards tells Craig, “I’m not arguing against you. I’m just saying, you know, if Bozeman’s able to achieve a certain level at a \$220 per household average and we put those numbers in there across the board and say on average, these municipalities...then I think we have a better argument. Then we can look back and (ask) ‘Who do they go through?’ Craig states, “They are represented by collective bargaining.” Jack states another line item that should be included is the ‘cost per \$100,000.00’ or ‘cost per \$200,000.00 home’

regarding the other departments in comparison. Jack states that there are 2 comparisons; what the average is and the other is every \$100,000.00 and those are the numbers that are needed with the vast majority of departments being compared. Craig states that the graph was inherited through the Chiefs Association and that he would try to find the comparable communities based on call volume and tax. Board members state they would like the average taxable values on \$100,000.00. Jack states that Craig will also need to find out what is the average residence will be paying and the corresponding rate and that most municipalities should have that in their manager's summary budget that is approved at the beginning of every fiscal year. Dave Edwards goes back to what insurance benefits an Evergreen Water employee has and Jack states that the employee's premium is covered 100% and 75% for family and that it could be a group thing but somewhat individualized and Retirement is at 6.9% on a 457Plan with penalty of having to claim as taxable income if accessed but has no penalty for early withdrawal for age 59 ½ . Jack states that the premium ranges from \$512.00 to \$1248.00 and that the District pays approximately \$5,100.00 a month for health insurance and the employees pay approximately \$800.00 a month for health insurance (5 employees). Jack states that the District's share is \$540 a month per employees on the average. The employees are paying about \$200.00 out of pocket each month. District is paying \$1,500.00 on average/per employee/per month with picking up 75% of the family. Dave Edwards asks, "Is it more important that we have benefits or pay raises?" Jon asks Craig how many full time people? Craig states, "Sixteen with the plan; 4 on...you have 12 on shift and 4 covering PRN/Kelly." Craig states that the \$700.00 he mentioned is a place holder based on County information. He is still waiting for City information on benefits. Dave Adams adds that the number is actually higher than 12 because not included have been Craig, Ben and administrative assistant. The total number is 16-20 people for benefits/retirement package including the PRN/Kelly people. PRN is negotiable and would be a new policy if PRN people given full coverage. Jack states that at \$1,000.00 per month for 20 employees the amount will be \$1,273,285.00. Current budget of 7204 is \$700,000.00 including cash reserves at the end of the year. Jon states the increase will be \$573,285.00 which would increase the 9,000 residents of Evergreen's taxes by \$691.00 a year which is a \$57.00 increase per month. Craig states that the 9,000 was a guess and without the numbers for that unaccounted area mentioned previously. Jon asks Jack if he agrees with his math on the numbers. Jack replies that the easiest way to calculate it is to take the budget of 7204 at \$700,000.00 and the ambulance budget of \$500,000.00 adding up to 1.2 million dollars and that with the levy, EFD would be asking for at least another 1.2 million which is basically doubling the budget. He tells Jon that \$200,000.00 of the 1.2 million is CIP and the other million of the request is payroll, health benefits, and retirement benefits. What we are adding to that is \$200,000.00 for CIP and one million dollars for increased wages, health/retirement benefits. Jack states that in the Spring of 2013, he put together a spreadsheet that indicated EFD 'would need to be putting \$280,000 a year, away. Not the \$200,000 or \$250,000 that might have existed before and that takes into account inflationary pressures of 3% and a scheduled purchase of each vehicle without financing. There may be a need to finance some in the first couple of years but after that cycle there would be plenty of cash developed to do all of that. So, this needing to go out and look for a lease and things like that ...and that's all based on 7 and 10 year replacement cycles for the vehicles.' Craig states, "Correct." Jack continues, " So, to me...and I'm not for this...if you're going to request CIP it should be at least at \$280,000.00 and that it should be dedicated. It's not something that can be violated or re-allocated during the term...whatever term it is that you're contemplating." Craig states, "That's a valid point. That's the bare minimum on there. I mean, I would support \$300,000.00 quite frankly. We are in a bit of a hole. I do know

that we can't wait to pay cash for our next one. I mean, I really strongly feel that we're going to have to do something sooner than later. We're going to be paying upwards of twenty and twenty-five thousand approaching the thirty thousand mark on maintenance which could be going very well toward a vehicle that we're not experiencing this sort of maintenance costs on. I mean, it's a black hole with our maintenance right now. So, I agree. I will catch up and we will...if we can get into a decent schedule that would support that where we could pay cash then absolutely. I mean, that's the smart thing to do. I don't have a solution for our short term issue, right now, when most of these folks aren't interested in lending anything to us knowing that our tax revenue goes away every 5 years." Jack states, "So, what this is going to do when you add the \$70,000.00 that you can't get added in there for a \$175,000.00 residence in our area, it's going to change their 2016 taxes just for Evergreen for the permissive and voted levy from \$50.82 to \$231.63...per year, at least on the 2016 property taxes. Property taxes always change every year but that's what it would be for the 2016 property tax." James Boyce asks, "We currently pay how much per year?" Dave Adams states, "For a \$175,000.00 house, the tax was \$50.82." James asks, "We're looking to increase it to \$230.00?" Dave Adams answers, "\$231.00." James Boyce states, "Minus the \$50." Craig states, "Understand that's the taxable value. That's not the retail cost of what your house is worth on the market." James Boyce states, "I'm just trying to get it out there so everybody...because I have a hard time putting all of this stuff together sometimes. Let's just break it down to like, per year...how much more it's going to cost us per year. I mean, even per month for those of us who own our homes or whatever because in all reality, if we decide to go with this, that's how we're going to have to try to sell it when people are asking us in the public. 'Okay, we're looking at \$12 more dollars a month or we're looking at \$30 more dollars a month...know what I mean? ...to get more people on board. It's easier for 'joe schmoe' like me to understand. So, I just want to make sure... and since we've got everybody here and we're all kind of understanding where we're headed and that's looking at our Plan A; the one we want." Craig states, "It's not even that it's the one we want. It's the one we need. Yes, we can scale that down but I don't know how much scalability there is. I agree that we should not touch CIP, in my opinion. I think we need to increase it; I do agree with Jack. I think we're in too big of a hole in CIP that we need to continue with that. So the million dollar question is what can we cut? What gives? That's the work that we've got to do in fairly short order so we've got a workable number. I don't know what that number is. We've got a lot of work to do and we just need to make some tough decisions and say 'Okay, in lieu of insurance and recognize that this is so astronomical and maybe it is higher wages and we'll talk about it...I don't know what that is. We've been through this and we've had these discussions. I just need the Board to recognize that we're busy and we're losing a lot of folks. I know that's going to curb some of that loss of experience and training. We're not competitive any longer. We used to be and we've got a number of Districts that are somehow screaming for 4 folks on shift and they've got less than half the call volume that we have." James Boyce asks, "If I'm doing the math right in my head...is that an astronomical increase?" Craig answers, "I don't know. You'd have to talk to the consensus of the voters out there." Jack Fallon states, "You have to remember that Evergreen Fire District, which is Evergreen and Helena Flats, is the lowest income census data point in the Flathead County as far as income per family. It's less than \$35,000.00 per year and there's many other places that are \$10,000 to \$20,000 dollars higher than that and we're still below that state average in here. So, how can you expect somebody...and we have a lot of fixed income people...we have a lot of no income people...everybody's familiar with them. There are some high end, higher income people but they're also going to be hit with increased property taxes because of all the

other taxing jurisdictions that exist. So we're not the only ones asking for more money. Everybody else is asking for more money and 2/3 of your property tax notes goes to schools and you can be sure that they're going to be asking for more money. The only one that doesn't seem to be asking for money very frequently is the County. That's just the interesting dynamic. So, we're asking the lower end of the income spectrum to pay 200% more on their property taxes just to operate our District. How many of those people have the health benefit or retirement benefits that are being requested? So that's the dilemma I have." James Boyce asks, "How did you get 200% more?" Dave Adams answers, "Because the taxes are going up by 4.5 times as much." James Boyce states, "Just on the Fire side, yeah." Jack Fallon states, "But, that's to accommodate both the Fire and the Ambulance. It's our total budget." James Boyce states, "Right, overall taxes are going up..." Dave Adams adds, "Fifteen dollars a month." James Boyce states, "On average, we're looking at our taxes going up ten bucks a month...fifteen bucks a month." Dave Edwards states, "But, if you add schools and all that and everybody gets a slice...even if it's successful, but it's not enough to cover what you're hoping to do because looking at the figures, Belgrade has a budget which is a million dollars even more than here that you're requesting...they have 16 employees...I don't know how they pull this all off with the budget they have but they're 35,000 people; damn near 4 times as many people." Craig goes over a bar graph that shows a snapshot of who the taxing authorities are and what the impact is to the citizens. Dave Edwards states, "But you're going to take that same demographic and combine Evergreen Fire and sun setter and add those 2 up; you're about where the County is and you double that then you're almost double where the Evergreen Elementary is. I mean, I'm not against it but how do you sell it to people?" Dave Adams states, "My thinking on this is that we're running an ambulance service that has never been tax funded. I mean, we could go back to being a fire department and as a Board say 'No, we're not going to do an ambulance anymore because we can't keep people around' and keep the levies that we have and go back to running just fire calls but it's going to be an all volunteer fire department and we already know that we're going to get paged as a fire department to every EMS call, already. That was why this whole ambulance service got started; because we're going and we might as well be getting the money for it. So, the tax payers...the 9,000 people in Evergreen, which in my opinion is a low number, they are receiving a free benefit that's there only when you need it. But, when they need it..." Jon interrupts, "I think if you remember right, that they came and asked if we would be First Responders because Kalispell took so long to respond." Dave Adams answers, "They didn't ask us to. We got paged automatically to them." Craig states, "We didn't have a choice." Dave Edwards asks, "What is 3 Rivers paying people?" Craig states, "It's competitive. They're right up there with us. She (Jackie) just got a raise." Dave Edwards asks, "They provide benefits as well?" Craig answers, "Yeah. They are a private ambulance. They keep it pretty 'hush hush'. They're not a public agency so they don't have to disclose. We tried to ask but..." Craig also states, "We tried, when we initially when we tried to run the Hall, we were trying to add all of the personnel and (inaudible) and it would have been 7 million dollars." Dave Edwards states, "Yeah, I remember in 2008, I was given like 3 dollars to come down here." James Boyce states, "When it went to 5 we were all pretty psyched." Craig states, "Hey, I got 10 years of nothing... not a penny." He states to the Board, "We're going to do our best to try and vet it out. We need to get some folks in here from the community and having similar discussions. I mean, that's always been my intent and that's what we're going to do. I don't know if they're going to have a magic answer either but we need to listen, if we are going to ensure any potential success in this." Jon states that there needs to be hard numbers and Dave Edwards states that he thinks a little more should be asked for. Craig proposes the he gets with personnel to discuss and glean

from those conversations what he can and bring back any answers to the Board at the next Special Board Meeting. Craig also tells the Board that he would invite any help on gathering the information from insurances. The Board agrees to meet on Monday, October 2nd for the Regular Board meeting at 5 pm and to meet again on October 16th for a Special Board Meeting at 5 pm.

NEW ITEMS/UPDATES:

1. Auditor Contract Discussion/Approval

Craig tells the Board that there will be an increase in the cost of the auditor if EFD does obtain any health benefits as it would increase by an additional 20 hours (\$1,140.00) and has highlighted that information in the packets to make sure everyone was aware of the fact. Craig reminds that Board that it will be a cost share with 7204 and 9428 splitting the bill 50/50.

Dave Adams makes a motion to sign the auditor's contract; seconded by Kyle Nace; unanimously passes.

RESOLUTIONS:

(none)

PROPOSALS:

(none)

CHIEF'S REPORT:

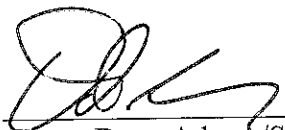
(none)

Adjourn.

Jon adjourns the meeting at 7:59 pm.

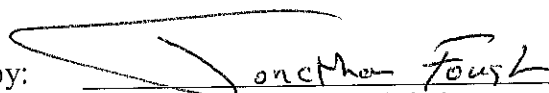
The President of the Board of Trustees, as presiding officer of any meeting of the Board of Trustees, may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy; and, then, if, and only if, the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. The right of individual privacy may be waived by the individual about whom the discussion pertains; and, in that event, the meeting must be open.

Submitted by:



Dave Adams/Secretary

Signed by:



Jonathan Foust/Chairman