

# Evergreen Fire District Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting Minutes  
Regular Board Meeting of January 8, 2018 - 5pm

## **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

Chairman Foust calls meeting to order at 5:00 pm

## **TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dave Adams  
Jon Foust  
Kyle Nace

Dave Edwards  
Jack Fallon

## **RECOGNIZE EFD STAFF/ PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

Jared Pitcher  
Craig Williams  
Ben Covington

James Boyce  
Jack Knuffke  
Jacob Pitcher

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

*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.*

*(none)*

## **FINANCIALS:**

### **1. Discuss and Approve October & November 2017 Financials**

Dave Adams asks what the \$8,000.00 was spent for at RES and was told repairs for apparatus #821 and #831. Chief Williams states that there will be another substantial payment to RES in December as well for repairs.

*Dave Adams makes motion to accept and approve October and November Financials as approved; seconded by Dave Edwards; motion passes unanimously.*

## **PAST ITEMS/UPDATES:**

### **1. Approve meeting minutes of Regular Board Meeting of December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

*Kyle Nace motions to approve the meeting minutes of the regular Board meeting of December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as presented; seconded by Dave Adams; motion passes unanimously.*

### **2. Levy Committee Update**

Chief Williams states that members of the Advisory Committee met at Station 81 for a tour only. He tells the Board that there are a total of 13 committee members with some being active and some are not and that it took 6 station tours to coordinate all 13 schedules. He finally had to pick a day and time workable for the majority of members with the first committee meeting being held tomorrow (January 9, 2018) at 6pm. The meeting will be informational, only, and includes department history, call volume, disciplines (what we do) and current staffing model. If time permits, Chief Williams may also discuss comparisons. He states that the committee members ask a lot of great

questions and spends a lot of time answering those questions as he moves through the presentations. Chief Williams reminds the Board of the date/time and encourages all Board members to attend. Jack Fallon states he has a School Board Meeting at 6 pm. Dave Adams states he can attend for about an hour. Chairman Foust states that if there are only 2 Board members present there does not have to be minutes taken. Chief Williams states that minutes will be taken, regardless. Jack Fallon asks if there will be materials handed out at the meeting and Craig states that it will be a power point presentation. Jack asks if he is emailing the members and that if so he would like the Board members included in the emails. He states that every other Tuesday does not work with his schedule and Chief Williams answers that Tuesdays are the only days that work for the majority of the committee members. Jack reiterates that he just wants to see that materials that will be circulated.

### 3. **2018 EMS Rate Increase**

Discussion: Chief Williams states that included in meeting packets are the proposed rate increases for 2018 and that he and Captain Boyce consulted with Leslie Pintler of the department billing service (Pintler Billing Services). The increase was prompted by Leslie who bills for 13 other transport providers states wide. Evergreen Fire has always maintained a 'midline' cost which began to slide to the low end. Chief Williams states that Evergreen Fire's costs on a couple of categories of medications had even slipped to one of the very lowest. He states that it's difficult to raise only a couple of costs on a few of the medications because of constant fluctuation in cost so they looked at costs across the board. The spreadsheet shows the department's current price; proposed with increase; note as a basis for why it needs to be increased; out of district fees; in district fees; and mileages. Jack Fallon argues that Chief Williams used the words 'increasing dosages' and that he is not increasing dosages but increasing the price for the drug and not dosage. Captain Boyce clarifies that what is being increased is the price per dosage. Edwards asks where the figures came from. Fallon continues that there is a legal aspect to increasing a dosage vs. increasing the price for a drug or standardized dose and wanted to make sure the language is understood. Captain Boyce explains that Pintler Billing Services bills in milliliters (how many cc's given based on concentration given) but is inaccurate due to the fact that the pharmacy gives the department different concentrations and that the milliliters will change. The department then started milligram based billing. He continues that some of the drugs are 'occurrence based' due to the drug being partially used but still having to replace the entire via. He reiterates that the price per dosage is being increases and not the dosage. Fallon clarifies that if a drug is administered and only half used (as per standard) the full amount price is charged. Boyce confirms that is so to replace the full amount. Adams reminds the members that the justification of each increase is given in the notes on the spreadsheet. Edwards wants to know how the final costs were derived when some of them are not percentage based. He asks what the percentage increase is and how was it derived? Captain Boyce states that the numbers were derived by a 20% increase. Chief Williams adds that it was a 20% increase just to keep the costs midline in comparison to the 13 other transport providers Pintler bills for across the state. Edwards states that he understands that a lot of medical costs have consistently gone up to 20% every year while people's paychecks only go up 3%. He asks what it is linked to in order to justify the increase. Chairman Foust asks about the "Specialty Care Transports" and Boyce states that Pintler hasn't billed one and that the question can't really be answered by Pintler and that it was added in the event that criteria is met. He tells the Board that the highest level of care provided by Evergreen is ALS II. Chairman Foust asks what Kalispell charges for an ALS run and Chief Williams states that it is done for Kalispell 'in house' and not very transparent but

that EFD is approximately \$400.00 less than the City for BLS transport. Edwards asks what BCBS or Allegiant would cover for an ALS run that is approximately 20 miles round trip costing around \$1,200 to \$1,500. Chief Williams states that the 2018 Medicaid rate is \$3.12 paid to EFD which isn't breaking even on Medicaid transports and of which are approximately 50% of EFD runs. He states that there is 2% decrease in 2018 over 2017 for Medicare. Chief Williams states that the insurance payments would vary so greatly based on each insurance company and plan that he can't answer Edwards' question but that he could most likely get that information from Leslie Pintler. Edwards gives a scenario of a motor accident and that an insurance only covers \$700.00 of the cost and that the cost was just increased by \$208.00 on an 'arbitrary' number in that the cost was increased because 'everybody else is charging this much'. Chief Williams states that the cost increase is not 'arbitrary'. He continues that the costs weren't artificially inflated by 20%. He reiterates that the increase is necessary in continuing to stay 'midline' in costs and has been midline since 2008 and that EFD had slid well below midline and even lowest in some of the medications. Chief Williams states that he could provide all of the data to the Board if they want it. He continues that the increased costs are directly related to the rising costs of payroll, fuel, maintenance and repair and other costs. Chief Williams states that maybe there should be an automatic yearly increase so that it's not so much all at once. Edwards asks what the net increase would be and Chief Williams states that it would depend on several things and would be difficult to calculate. Fallon states "Apparently it's not very hard because it was done for us the last time we had the increase; what our actual dollar increase would be compared to what our rate increase would be. When John did it, he showed us what our gross increases would be but he showed us what our net effect was on our revenue." Chief Williams states that he didn't recall that. Fallon continues that Jon had shown the Board that a 10% to 20% increase only resulted in an approximate 1% increase in revenue. Chief Williams agrees that would be the truth in the fact that the majority of EFD patients receive Medicare or Medicaid. Chairman Foust points out that an ALS non emergent, in district is increasing by \$194.00 while and ALS non-emergent, out of district is going up only \$182.00 and questions why in district would be higher than out of district. Boyce explains that on ALS in district EFD was still well below average in cost. He states that 20% still was not enough to break midline which results in some costs being higher than others. Chairman Foust states that he doesn't like how it looks for in district tax payers having to pay more than those out of district. Fallon suggests the question should have been 'why was ALS emergent, out of district and ALS non emergent out of district the same price to begin with under that current schedule since it is 2 different levels of service?' He asks "Or were they the same price under our current schedule and there's a typo in that line item?" Chairman Foust states that if EFD is \$400.00 less than Kalispell he would rather see out of district people take the financial hit over the tax payers of Evergreen. Bottom line is that in order for EFD to get back to being midline with costs, the increase was 20% across the board except for things that were well below average. Those things below the average were raised to the average which results in an increase higher than 20%. Fallon states "The price in the insurance industry is 'usual and customary' and I guess if all of these in the median or are at the median, then we satisfy 'usual and customary' regardless of how one may feel you're treating in district or out of district users."

*Jack Fallon makes motion to accept and approve the 2018 EMS Rate Increase for ambulance service and drugs as presented with one correction; seconded by Dave Adams; motion passes 3 to 2 with Edwards and Foust opposing the increase.*

#### **4. Meeting Meals**

Discussion; Chief Williams states that this has been a topic for 3 meetings and asks the Board for a decision on which account the meals will be purchased from and how much should be budgeted for it and include the Advisory Committee meals as well. He states that the next action is regarding the Christmas expenditures and that due to those expenditures plus the meeting meals 4212 will require monies to be transferred. Chairman Foust asks if the Board wants to keep the meals. Adams states he is 'good either way' and Nace states that he is too. Foust asks which account the money will come from to continue to provide meals for all the meetings and Chief Williams states 4212 is where it should come from but that 'in a pinch' it could come from 7204. Fallon states that an accounting of the fire revenue still needs to come in and then a decision can be made after the data is compiled and presented to the Board because 7204 is where any monies to 7250 or 4212 will come from. Chief Williams agrees with Fallon and moves forward with the Christmas expenditures.

*Discussion is tabled.*

## **NEW ITEMS/UPDATES:**

### **1. Christmas Expenditures**

Discussion; Chief Williams explains that the person who provided the prime rib has not submitted an invoice yet but expects it to be upwards of \$500.00 and that there is currently approximately only that much money in 4212. Chief Williams tables the Christmas expenditure as well as the meeting meals. However, he does clarify whether or not the Board wants food provided on the 29<sup>th</sup> for the Special Board Meeting. Fallon states that any meetings taking place between 5:30pm and 6:30 pm and expected to last longer than 1 hour should have food provided because they are missing their evening meal at home. Chairman Foust asks for that discussion to be tabled one more time with the exception of the advisory committee meals and the meal for January 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Discussion is tabled.*

### **2. Association Discussion**

Chief Williams introduces Firefighter Jared Pitcher who has been recognized as the representative of the new, in-process-of-being-formed Firefighter Association until the Association can vote and elect officers. Pitcher states to the Board that the Association has been formed with 2 primary objectives; 1) to be able to legally fund-raise as a department and 2) to work 48 hours per week without the department having to pay over time (FSLA). He states that once the officials are elected later in the week they will start the process of going through the State of MT to be recognized as an association. Fallon asks who at the State will recognize them as an association and Pitcher states that it is to become tax exempt. Fallon asks if tax exemption is a Federal or State level and Pitcher states it is for both State and Federal exemption by 501 status. Fallon states that 501 is a Federal level and wonders what the State has to do with it. Pitcher states that the association will be going to sit down with EFD's accountant at Stahlberg & Associates to go over all of the legalities. Fallon asks what the purpose of the association is. Pitcher reiterated his initial explanation of wanting to be able to fund raise as a department for 4212 and that currently the department cannot do so and also to work 48 hours per week without the department having to pay overtime. Fallon states that he understands the 48 hours a week and states he assumes that it requires a motion by the Trustees. Pitcher states that the way he interprets what he read is that it has to be an FSLA exemption

which is the Fair Standard Labor Act and that the Association would have to be recognized by the State in order to do so. Fallon asks why the District doesn't qualify for that by itself. Pitcher states he does not have that answer. Fallon continues that would have to be the first question answered. Edwards asks if personnel currently do not get time and a half after 40 hours. Pitcher states that after 40 hours 'yes' and Edwards interjects by asking Pitcher "So, you're trying to form an association to get 8 hours of overtime taken away?" Chief Williams states "These guys are looking towards the future." Knuffke states that no one is scheduled for over 40 hours at the department and that overtime is very rare but that this allows for better coverage for future scheduling. Chief Williams adds that Evergreen is the only fire district in the County that doesn't have an association and tells Fallon that he doesn't know if a district can even be an association and has always been told they couldn't. Fallon clarifies his statement and says that he is not referring to being an association but why can't the District qualify for that exemption by itself. Covington states that State Law requires that the department has to be a part of an association to qualify and it's up to 56 hours. Fallon asks that the language be sent to the Board members for review.

### **3. Election for Special Districts Letter**

Trustee Adams refers to a letter that has Jack Fallon's name on it that had been sent to the department that states the elections for the District Board will be held at the same time as all other elections. Edwards asks if he has to sign anything and Adams states that he does not if he isn't running for election again. Edwards asks if he is up and Adams tells him that he is as stated on the last page of the letter. Adams tells Edwards that is the paperwork that he has to fill out and submit with a filing date of February 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT:**

### **1. December Call Volume**

Chief Williams states that the year to date and December call volumes have been included in the packets. He states there has been a total of 207 calls in December. Chief Williams brings attention the 2,559 calls received in 2017 which was 330 more calls than 2016. He states that one of the most often asked questions by the Advisory Committee is "How do you guys do that with that amount of call volume and 2 people on shift?" He answers them by stating "Pure luck and the hope that we all have a future down here." Chief Williams speaks for the organization when he states "We do this because we hope that there's light at the end of the tunnel." He states that the department is averaging 7 calls per day. He continues that personnel sets out to get a lot of things done for the day and that he, himself, generally ends up 'writing off about 50%' of what he sets out to do in a day because calls get in the way. Fallon states that out of district calls seem to be going up and down but it still shows a 30 % increase of going in to Kalispell and 9% increase for inter-facilities and 20% increase for calls within the District. Chief Williams confirms that the department is extremely busy. He states that he will be keeping the Board briefed on some things that he has going on at the County level with some pretty significant changes coming in the future.

### **2. Wildfire Revenue Update**

Chief Williams states that approximately \$110,000.00 was made in California which will put total revenue over the \$200,000 mark for wildfire revenue for 2017. He states that in the next coming weeks there needs to be good discussions regarding transfers once the data is complete and all revenue has been received.

**3. Luminaries**

\$325.00 luminary purchases  
\$100.00 donation (x2)

**4. Goals for 2018**

Chief Williams states that his only goal for the year is to pass the levy and to keep his personnel safe.

Chairman Foust speaks for the Board in thanking the firefighters both present and not for helping fight the wildland fires in December as many sacrificed family at Christmas time in having to be there for several weeks. Chief Williams adds that the Department Facebook page is being updated often and there are pictures and stories posted including having received a Care Package from California that Chief Williams states "is pretty darned impressive; you don't see that every day." Chairman Foust calls for any additional comments and there are none.

Adjourn.

*Meeting is adjourned at 5:47 pm.*

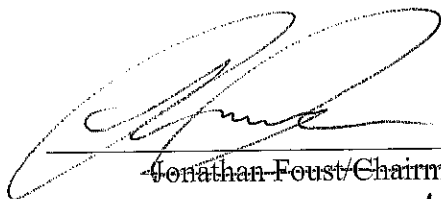
*The President of the Board of Trustees, as presiding officer of any meeting of the Board of Trustees, may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy; and, then, if, and only if, the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly 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~~ ABSENT  
KYLE NACE - Vice CHAIR