

**Evergreen Fire District
Board of Trustees
Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Regular Board Meeting of November 1st, 2021 – 6:00 pm**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman Fallon calls the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Fallon, Brockman, Gipe, Fontaine

ABSENT:

Connolly

PERSONNEL IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Williams, Fire Marshall Covington

RECOGNIZE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

(none)

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:

Discuss and Approve August and September 2021 Financials (Action)

(Financials were not available)

PAST ITEMS/UPDATES:

1. Approve meeting minutes of September 2021 (Action)

(October meeting was canceled)

Fontaine, motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 13, 2021 as presented; second by Gipe; passes 4 to 1 (absent).

2. Covid Incentive Discussion

Chief Williams states he believes the intent of the Board was to incentivize vaccines for all different personnel. Since then, mandates have been occurring nationwide and if the District may be forced to mandate the vaccine as well. Chief Williams states he doesn't believe it is the Board intent to continue to pay the incentive to those who would be mandated to do so. He suggests a motion be made to add a clause to the already approved incentive stating if it becomes mandate; the \$500 will not be valid. Gipe asks how many vaccinations were received due to the incentive. Chief Williams states the \$500 incentivized one employee out of 49. Brockman states the mandate wouldn't affect wildland fire personnel unless they were going out of state. Chief Williams states he is more concerned with mandates affecting condition of employment due to contract with Logan Health as well as directly receiving Medicare/Medicaid revenue through Pintler Billing Services.

Gipe; motion to clarify the August 2nd, 2021 motion awarding \$500 applies to personnel who have voluntarily taken with documentation the Covid vaccine prior to any county, state or federal mandates; second by Fontaine; passes 4 to 1 absent.

3. Accounting Firm Discussion Follow-Up

(to be continued from last board meeting)

Chief Williams states the transition has not been as smooth as it should have been.

Fontaine asks if the new accounting firm will be able to learn what they need to in order to move forward. Chief Williams states he believes that is true and he has spoken with the new bookkeeper as well and is confident in the new firm's ability to handle the complexities of the District's account.

3. Exit Interview Discussion Follow-Up

Fallon states he has spoken with Cindy Carpenter from Polson. She is a business instructor at FVCC and offers HR aspects. Her fee is \$50 per hour and estimates spending 30 minutes to 1 hour on the phone with each employee who has resigned from the department in the past 6 to 9 months. She estimates taking a couple of hours to summarize her conversations. There may or may not be travel time added. Fallon states the estimated cost would be between \$500 and \$1000. Cindy is going to put together a proposal that includes some questions that could be asked and standardized amongst the employees and done under the auspices of constructive summary of what comes out of the exit interviews to go forward. He has asked that she prepare the proposal over the next couple of weeks so it could be reviewed prior to the next Board meeting.

NEW ITEMS:

1. Sick Pay Accrual Revision (Action)

Chief Williams states under 'sick' in the new handbook; a sick leave of 3 working days vs. 12 days in the old handbook. He states it doesn't seem like a big deal until it's realized how the 3 working days are accrued and the fact they may be accumulated in the new policy which would mean that he and Ben's sick pay would be 500 days (not hours) of sick pay based on their years worked. He states a motion needs to be made to revert back to the original language from the old handbook under the 'sick accrual policy' with on piece of language added that states there is a cap to it like there is on vacation accrual. Fallon states the old handbook follows State Law so the new handbook should reflect the same. Although MT State Law does not state a cap can be administered to sick leave; it doesn't state a cap can't be implemented. Trustees decide to not place a cap on sick leave in case any employee should suffer a long-term illness. Trustees discuss the possibility of personnel being able to donate sick and vacation time to someone in need due to extended leave circumstances. Covington states he is more supportive of donating sick or vacation time as a one-on-one rather than establishing a fund. Fontaine states the District would have to develop policy or guidelines and decide whether to base it on money or hours. Gipe states the District should base it on hours. Fallon states the policy could state it could be either, and, or. Fallon states it should be run by an 'employee group' to manage the sick leave bank and that the District or the group would have to come up with guidelines which would have to be approved. Fontaine and Covington agree that this would have to be a discussion with the bookkeeper as well. Chief Williams states he will start a conversation with the bookkeeper and have the discussion with personnel at the business meeting and then bring it back for follow up discussion at the next meeting in December.

Motion; Fontaine that the new handbook sick leave policy is replaced by the intent of following MCA 2-18-618 as described in the previous handbook; second by Brockman; passes 4 to 1 absent.

(conversations are had that are not agenda items)

CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Williams states the District has received the resignation of another full time paramedic. He states the department is still struggling to fill the part time positions with the housing costs still the prominent issue which once again brings up discussion of personnel housing on District property.

1. August and September 2021 Call Volume

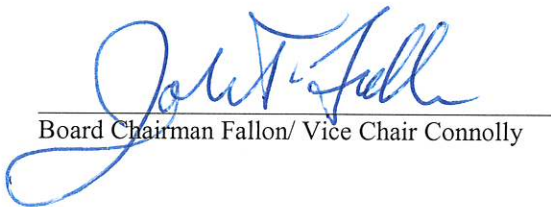
A) Comparison Incident Count by Weekday/Hour (all zones) for August and September 2021

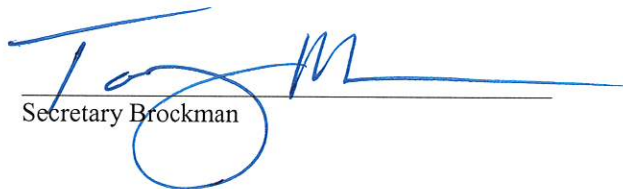
Chief Williams states the District is still up on calls and significantly up on fire calls. For the year there have been 481 fire calls vs. 313 this time last year. He acknowledges a slight decline in IFT's in August with those numbers now up again but with a slight decline in long distance transports due to not having the staffing. However, IFT volume has increased. He states it's hard to get personnel to take long distance IFT's to Billings because they have other jobs and etc. Covington states that FT IFT people are being kept in the District to satisfy the current contract the District has with KRMC. Fallon asks if it is a certain of fire calls and Chief Williams states has been grass fire and MVA's.

B) Comparison Incident Statistics for August and September 2021

Adjourn@ 8:10 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.


Board Chairman Fallon/ Vice Chair Connolly


Secretary Brockman