

Missoula Rural Fire District
Board of Trustees
Missoula, Montana 59804

December 11, 2019

The Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) Board of Trustees met in regular session at the Station 1 Headquarters meeting room on **Tuesday, 12/10/2019**.

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Ben Murphy called the meeting to order at 19:00 hours.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Present: Ben Murphy, Vice Chair; Chuck Beagle, Secretary; and Dick Mangan, Trustee. Absent: Larry Hanson, Chair; and Dan Corti, Trustee.

Per Vice Chair Ben Murphy, the Oath of Office for the new Volunteer (VFF) firefighter was moved to the top of the Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. *Oath of Office for New Volunteer Firefighter: Austin Heaton:* Chief Newman introduced Austin Heaton as our newest Volunteer firefighter, and potentially an upcoming Resident with us in the future. On behalf of Vice Chair Murphy, Chief Newman then administered to him the MRFD Volunteer Firefighter Oath of Allegiance. The Board members then congratulated him and welcomed him to the ranks.

READING OF THE MINUTES: Trustee Dick Mangan moved to approve the November minutes as submitted. Secretary Chuck Beagle seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.

CLAIMS: Office Manager Melissa Schnee highlighted for the Board that a few additional claims came in after the Board packet was sent out. After a brief discussion, Secretary Chuck Beagle moved to pay the claims as presented. Trustee Dick Mangan seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: Administrative Assistant (AA) Heidi Sather reported: In addition to the packet, we also receive the monthly I.T. (Information Technology) report from I.T. Manager Joe Ford. He is continuing to do updates for the workstations for MRFD. He also highlighted the transition of the move to the office trailer here at Station 1.

In the packet, there was a copy of a letter of thanks from Chief Newman, which was addressed to the Missoula Chapter of the Salvation Army. Their Women's Ministries had brought some homemade baked goods to Station 1 as a show of thanks to the emergency responders.

The packet also contained a copy of a letter from Assistant Chief Finlay to thank Ms. Mary Ann Stohr for her kind donation of \$60.00 to MRFD. She was thankful for MRFD's response to a call for their family.

We also have from Lieutenant Eric Huleatt the monthly public relations outreach breakdown for November 2019. There were 12 total documented events consisting of ten social media posts, one monthly car seat event at Station 1, and one impromptu media appearance. A graphic chart was also included for the Board's additional reference.

TRUSTEE REPORTS: None.

LOCAL 2457: President Toby Ballard reported: We have completed successful negotiations with MRFD Board delegates Trustee Dick Mangan and Vice Chair Ben Murphy.

We have started Operation Warm this year, which is our Coats for Kids program. We raise money for this project each year, and we get coats in bulk for young children between the age of three to five years old. We then give these out for free at schools with kids in need. We have a couple of big donors that are very generous to help us with this program. Our first event was on 12/9/2019 at Head Start in Missoula, on the north side. This is generally our biggest event of the year, and we gave out 265 coats there. There are plans to have additional events at schools in Lolo, Bonner, Woodman, DeSmet, and possibly Alberton. We will keep the Board updated as the program continues over the next few months.

President Ballard was pleased to announce that he was accepted into a Union Class: The Executive Leadership Series for the Seventh District, which includes Alaska, Idaho, Washington, and Montana. There were approximately 16 people who were accepted into this class, which lasts for one year starting in April 2020. He will not be around as much over the next year; however, he does plan to periodically check-in. He wanted the Board to be aware, and he is excited for the opportunity to be involved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Office Manager Melissa Schnee reported: Most of what we have been doing in the last month is part of the New Business with the contracts. We received additional statements from the County, and we are now

balanced with the County through September. The County said that we can expect October by the end of this week. She is hopeful that we will be back on track and getting them on a regular basis again soon.

Fire Chief Chris Newman reported: Assistant Chief Paul Finlay was away for a family vacation, so we are hoping that this will be a nice break for him. Chief Newman has been meeting a fair amount with the architects from MMW. The Station 4 project is continuing to move forward. They are in the process of performing the feasibility study for the septic out there. We've identified the rough parcel size and location. Now that they know that, they can move forward with their perc test. We will be able to do more once we know if we can move forward on the septic.

Chief Newman also had a meeting with the Principal from C.S. Porter. Even though this school is technically in the city, we would be the first to respond. He had some questions as far as evacuations, emergency response, and situations like active shooter response or a hazmat release. He wanted to have an idea of what we would expect of them if they had to evacuate 600 kids. He wanted to discuss a possibility of them coming to Station 1 first, at least to corral on this parcel. He is still in the infancy of this process, so we may be meeting with them some more in the coming months.

Chief Newman, Chief Finlay, and Resource Manager Brian LaForest went down to Dallas to take a look at a potential used ladder truck that we have been considering. This will be covered in more detail in New Business. Also, Union negotiations and administrative contract negotiations were taken care of since the last meeting; these will be part of New Business, as well.

The new hire academy finished up on the 24th of November. Chief Newman wanted to send special kudos out to Captain Jake Fuller and Lieutenant Andy Brown for running that academy. By all accounts, it was run very well, and all of the feedback from the new recruits that went through was very positive. Captain Fuller and Lieutenant Brown did a fantastic job in running thirteen people through an academy; we had some pretty significant logistical issues, and those were all addressed. There was really good planning, communication, and coordination between the stations, and with several other people involved, to make it a quality academy. We are confident that these thirteen will be joining the engine crews more prepared than ever before. So, that is our ultimate goal.

Along with that, we had the graduation ceremony for our large academy. Due to logistics, we had to do this off-site at the Holiday Inn, as we had over 150 people in attendance. It was very professional-looking; they even put a stage up for us and had two screens up for the video slide show. Vice Chair Ben Murphy was there to represent the Board of Trustees, and Battalion Chief Ron Lubke emceed it and did a great job. Our goal was to be able to replicate the new hire graduation so that it can be a great experience, even on a smaller scale in the future. Typically, the graduation ceremonies will take place at Station 1.

Chief Finlay and I also attended the quarterly meeting for the Northwest Accreditation and Credentialing Consortium. These are the meetings that we have been attending quarterly in working towards the accreditation model. We have gone through this training and learning for about a year now, and we firmly believe that it is worth the undertaking. It is a minimal financial cost and is more of an investment of time and effort for our personnel. We see it as a third-party verification of what we're doing right, what we could be doing better, and how we can improve as a department. So, we are going to continue to push forward with this process for the foreseeable future.

In November, Chief Newman went to a final meeting with the Board for Parks, Trails, and Open Lands. The last meeting was initially supposed to be in October, but they asked for some more documentation before they were going to vote on it. So, after giving them the information that they requested, the vote was a split decision. We were encouraged by that because this indicates that we are not the only ones who think that this is a good location and a good idea. We are now working with the Planning Board, and Chief Newman has an upcoming meeting with Commissioner Slotnick to determine the next step. Vice Chair Ben Murphy asked what the issue of concern from the Parks Board. Chief Newman replied that it was mainly just the open space of the parkland. They felt like if the fire station is built on the parkland, that this would be setting a precedent. Our view is that we are not talking about putting in a convenience store or an apartment complex; this is public safety, and this should not be setting a precedent to affect the future of that park. We are working on trying to have all of the facts together before we come before the Commissioners.

OLD BUSINESS: EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) / Wildland Assignments: Chief Newman wanted to follow-up regarding Trustee Dick Mangan's concerns about engines and crews responding to wildland assignments, and specifically his request that we look into the possibility of arranging for transports for the fire engines. Chief Newman explained that he looked into the process and learned that the cost varied, but that the most significant issue was time. Of the three different places that he talked to, they said that next-day service would be almost impossible. Even with having a driver on a standby contract, it can take from 48-hours to a week for them to arrive. For our recent response to California, Chief Newman made the decision to let the crew drive and to take turns in rotating drivers. Chief Newman's main concern is that we need to use good judgment and gave the example that there would be no reason to start the travel in the middle of the afternoon, especially if there was a storm forecasted along their route. He agreed with Trustee Dick Mangan that we need to use caution and not be in a rush to get there. Vice Chair Ben Murphy added that we need to ensure that the travel is reasonable, and to mitigate

the hazards to minimize the risk of driving. Chief Newman also voiced his concerns about the return trip after working an assignment, because that is when a crew would potentially be tired. He would prefer that we plan to lodge the crew for an extra night or two where they are so that they can be well-rested before they start their travel back. OM Schnee added that the lodging and per diem would also be covered, so we would not be saving anything by rushing back, and we are not out anything by taking extra time. Vice Chair Ben Murphy stated that it would be great if we had a policy that we could refer back to, so that if it became a question later in the future, we could state, well, here's the policy, and here's why the policy exists, because there is all this other precedent, and this is best practice. Trustee Dick Mangan said that it would be great if we had a departmental policy that said no more than 12-hours per day of driving time, 24-hours of complete rest after the duration of an assignment of 10 or more days. OM Schnee added that when they go out for the EMAC assignments, they don't necessarily need justification, because they want what's safe and prudent. When we go out on EMAC assignments, we go out with a number of departments. There are some agencies that have a longer travel time than us, and some that have less. The ones that took longer are Eastern Montana. They don't require any justification for it at this point. Trustee Dick Mangan suggested that MRFD put together a department directive to state the guidelines for traveling with an engine. For example, the crew would not depart in the middle of the afternoon when there is less daylight, and they need to have at least eight hours of daylight time before they could leave. Then, they would not return home after a 10-14-day assignment until they had a full 24-hour rest period. Vice Chair Ben Murphy added that several policies are already out there, so we could refer to them as a template. He gave an example of when he served on the hotshot crew: it had to do with the number of drivers, and how long each driver could drive, the total shift length, etc. He did like the idea of a time limit, and to have it reference something like eight hours of driving before sunset. Chief Newman confirmed that this item did not require a vote; this was only his request for the Board to provide direction as we move forward with responding to these future wildland assignments.

NEW BUSINESS: (continued)

2. 1st Quarter Budget to Actual Report FY 19/20: After a brief discussion, OM Schnee highlighted that interest earnings are higher than we have budgeted in the past. It is not a large dollar amount, but the percentage looks high. She then summarized that "everything looks on track, and this report is just for informational purposes.
3. 2020 May 5 Special District Election: OM Schnee requested for the Board to please make sure that their information is correct. She has updated Chuck Beagle to show as the Board Secretary. We have one position that is coming up for re-election, which is Larry Hanson. We will have to see if he's going to file to continue; otherwise, we will have one open position. These forms are due back this week, so she will send them in with the corrections and updates. After reviewing the document, Vice Chair Ben Murphy requested to remove his middle name from his listing. No other changes were requested.
4. Local 2457 Union Contract: Trustee Dick Mangan commented that he was very pleased with the professionalism of everyone involved with the negotiation process. Vice Chair Ben Murphy noted that things seemed to be smooth with changing the contract to be at the end of the calendar year, instead of the end of the fiscal year. Chief Newman recommended that he would like to see the negotiations take place in August or September; ideally, once we know what our revenue will be, but before we finalize the budget. After further discussion, Trustee Dick Mangan moved to approve the contract as submitted. Secretary Chuck Beagle seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.
5. Administration Contracts: Chief Newman extended his thanks to the Board for a very smooth process with the administrative negotiations. After a brief discussion, Trustee Dick Mangan moved to approve the administrative contracts as submitted. Secretary Chuck Beagle seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.
6. Ladder Truck Bid Selection: Chief Newman explained that after advertising for this ladder truck for almost three weeks in the Daily Dispatch and the Missoulian, we received one bid back, which came in from Rosenbauer. Over the past few days, Chief Newman, Assistant Chief Finlay, and Resource Manager (RM) Brian LaForest have conducted their technical review, and this bid meets all of our bid specifications. Chief Newman recommended this bid for Board approval, with the caveat that he would like to have the latitude to be able to negotiate for a handful of potential upgrades or changes, as long as they stayed close to the offered bid price of \$673,834.00. He explained that he was able to recently go out to Texas with Chief Finlay and RM LaForest to test and inspect this truck. The apparatus is in good condition; however, we would like to negotiate with them to do as much work as possible before they lowboy it out to Missoula, such as replacing a few valves and things of that nature.

Chief Newman explained that this 2016 ladder truck is a 78-foot Viper Ariel, made by Rosenbauer. Compared to what we currently have, which is 30-years old and is lacking almost all of the safety features that are part of the new NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standard. We are especially interested in the smart controls, which are safety features that will not allow the operator to put the ladder in a position that is at risk for potential tipping or

overloading. This demonstration truck has 25,000 miles on it from driving to different trade shows. In comparison to what is out there, used ladder trucks for sale are typically at least 10-years old and have between 50,000 – 70,000 miles on the engines from fighting multiple fires. The average price for these heavily used trucks is between \$350,000 - \$550,000. So, we believe that by getting a 2016 apparatus in such good condition, we could have about 20-years of service from this truck. After further discussion, Trustee Dick Mangan moved to approve the bid with the Chief's conditions. Secretary Chuck Beagle seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.

ADJOURNMENT: Trustee Dick Mangan made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Chuck Beagle seconded the motion. Vice Chair Ben Murphy adjourned the meeting at 19:55 hours.

Respectfully submitted,


Heidi Sather, Administrative Assistant
Missoula Rural Fire District



Larry Hanson, MRFD Board Chair

1-14-2020
Date



Chuck Beagle, MRFD Board Secretary

02/14/2020
Date