

Missoula Rural Fire District
Board of Trustees
Missoula, Montana 59804

September 14th, 2021

The Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) Board of Trustees (BOT) met in regular session at the Station 1 Headquarters meeting room and via a "Zoom" video conference on **Tuesday, September 14th, 2021.**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 19:00 hours

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present: Chairman Ben Murphy, Trustee Jeff Merritt, and Secretary Dick Mangan. Absent: Vice-Chairman Larry Hanson and Trustee Dan Corti.

READING OF THE MINUTES: Trustee Mangan moved to accept the minutes as written. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There are no public comments at this time.

CLAIMS: Trustee Mangan moved to accept the claims as submitted. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Motion voted and passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: Melissa Schnee reported that the communications included two annexations passed through county commissioners, two thank-you letters, an IT report, Public Relations Outreach Breakdown, a retirement announcement from Chief Christopherson, a letter from the county commissioners appointing Jeff Merritt as a member of the BOT and a certificate of training.

TRUSTEE REPORTS: There are no Trustee reports at this time. Chief Newman read the Oath of Office for Trustee Jeff Merritt.

STAFF REPORTS:

Volunteers Association: No one was available to represent the Volunteer's Association.

Local 2457: Captain Burgess reported that the Fill the Boot event will take place on October 16th. The annual Coats for Kids event has started. MRFD will be delivering the coats before the winter weather begins. Captain Burgess has also reported that Lieutenant Berry and Lieutenant Riley, who have been absent for several months due to family emergencies, will be coming back to work over the next month. Captain Burgess reported that the contract negotiations with the BOT are complete. Captain Burgess wanted to recognize the BOT and MRFD administration for their transparency and good faith bargaining. Chief Newman added that he would like to echo the statement back to Local 2457.

Battalion Chief: BC Bowman reported that there were 301 calls for the month of August, which makes 2243 calls for the year. When compared to the same time last year, MRFD is up 380 calls. BC Bowman pointed out a few incidents to highlight over the last month. The first incident was a structure fire in Lolo, where Station 5 performed excellent work. With the calculated tactical decisions made by Captain Brown, they rescued five animals out of the home and contained the fire to the room of origin. The second incident reported was dispatched to the Bonner Mill site's largest building. Lieutenant Kottwitz and crew found that the entire building was charged with smoke and quickly found the source; a semi-truck parked underneath a sprinkler system. The sprinkler-controlled fire gave them more time to create their tactics appropriately to extinguish the fire safely. Chief Newman explained that MRFD's Community Risk Reduction division

has been working closely with Bonner Mill since 2012 to get the sprinkler system working properly. This incident proves that the hard work has paid off. The third incident was dispatched for a vehicle over an embankment. It was rough terrain and had difficult access, and several units were called out to the scene. Safe extrication was possible thanks to excellent communication and an action plan led by Captain Huleatt and Captain Ballard. BC Bowman ends his report saying there were some grass fires at the end of the season but nothing too extensive.

Finance and Human Resources: Melissa Schnee reported that August was busy with the budget, the Capital Improvement Plan, and preparing for contract negotiations. Due to COVID, the auditor filed for an extension for the 2020 audit and is hoping to complete it by the next BOT meeting. MRFD is balanced with the County through the month of July.

Assistant Chief of Operations: Assistant Chief Finlay was at the National Fire Academy and not present to give the report.

Fire Chief: Chief Newman reported that Local 2457 and the administrative contracts were negotiated last month, and all went well. Chief Newman said that he met with a consulting firm working with the County looking into County Impact Fees for future growth in the County. Chief Newman also reported that there were a couple of After Action Reviews (AAR) this month. The AAR's were done by Captain Dufner and Captain Brown and will be passed on to other shifts as an educational tool. Chief Newman reported that he's been working on Fire Officer 1 through the State regarding the deadline issues. Updates will be brought to future BOT meetings as they are available. Chief Newman reported an update to Secretary Mangan's request last month to speak with the media about the increase in call load this year. Captain Huleatt has done two TV News interviews (CBS and NBC) and another interview with Peter Christian of KGBL radio.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Options for the current Station 4:** There are no new updates on Station 4.

CLOSED THE OPEN MEETING

CALL TO ORDER THE PUBLIC MEETING: Chairman Murphy called the public meeting to order at 19:20:40 hours.

1. **MRFD Budget for FY 22:** Secretary Mangan inquired about the debt service principal payment showing an increase from last year to this year. Chief Newman responded that it was due to the loan for the two new Type I engines budgeted for an early payoff. Secretary Mangan inquired about the Fire Marshall's vacation, and sick accrual increased. Chief Newman responded that it was due to Chief Christopherson's upcoming retirement. Secretary Mangan inquired about suppression overtime. Chief Newman responded that the overtime budget has not changed. In the past, the administration kept track of multiple overtime categories but decided it wasn't necessary. Most suppression overtime is now grouped together. Secretary Mangan asked why the Fuel Mitigation budget increased. Chief Newman responded that Missoula County received a three-year FEMA Grant for Fuel Mitigation, and MRFD will be reimbursed through that grant. MRFD will increase its Fuel Mitigation season by three months, increasing service and cost. Chief Newman credited Chief Christopherson for heading the Fuel Mitigation program with Kirk Paulsen. Secretary Mangan commented that the budget report is an excellent display of what MRFD has spent in the past and what it plans on spending in the future. Chief Newman pointed out that the Cash Balance County Fund as of June 30th increased. Chief Newman explained that it was due to loan proceeds for the new Station 4, CARES Act funding, and outside training being limited due to COVID-19 restrictions

resulting in the training budget being carried over to FY22. Chief Newman commented that the administration is constantly monitoring where the trends are going and if the cost is affected.

2. **Budget Amendment for FY21:** MRFD spent more than the budgeted amount by \$141,108 on account of purchasing two Type I engines. Melissa Schnee explains that while the expenditures are going over and require a budget amendment, the cost was covered due to additional funding from the wildland revenue.

CLOSED THE PUBLIC MEETING

CHAIRMAN MURPHY RECALLS TO ORDER THE OPEN MEETING

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Bid review and selection for a Type III Engine:** Chief Newman explained that the budget for the new Type III Engine was \$450,000, but the bid came in at \$480,265. They were able to get it down to \$462,388 by doing away with some of the options added by Rosenbauer that were not necessary. Secretary Mangan asked for the delivery date. Chief Newman answered that it would be 425 days and explained that's why they wanted to get this process started. He also explained that if we wait and order after October 7th, there will be a 3% increase. Secretary Mangan agreed that it's best to start before that date. Chief Newman added that the manufacturer is a single source manufacturer, which means that the apparatus will stay on-site through the entire assembly. This will be convenient for MRFD if issues arise and also for the two inspections that MRFD will do before completion. Secretary Mangan motioned to accept. Trustee Merritt seconded. Motion was voted and passed.
2. **Resolution 2021-5 FY21 Budget Amendment:** Secretary Mangan motioned to accept. Trustee Merritt seconded. Motion voted and passed.
3. **Resolution 2021-6 FY22 Capital Improvement Plan:** Secretary Mangan asked if MRFD should consider purchasing a new water tender. Chief Newman responded that we have the maximum number of water tenders that MRFD staff can operate now. A new water tender won't be necessary unless there is an increase in staff. Secretary Mangan motioned to accept. Trustee Merritt seconded. Motion voted and passed.
4. **Resolution 2021-7 FY22 Final Budget:** The Resolution packet includes the General Fund Budget, the Capital Improvement Budget, and the Total Fund Budget, which is a combination of the two. New this year is the prior year's actual amount column has been added to give additional information. In addition to the budget information the Resolution packet also includes the letter to Missoula County with a breakdown of the Mills that MRFD is requesting for FY22, the certified tax evaluation information from the State of Montana, and the calculation sheets. Melissa Schnee offered to sit down with anyone who would like a better understanding of the budget. Secretary Mangan moved to accept as submitted. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Motion was voted and passed.
5. **Local 2457 Contract:** Chairman Murphy explained that this contract includes retro pay back to the beginning of FY22. Before this, retro pay was not an option due to the workload. Now, with more help in the administration office, calculating that retro pay amount is feasible. The same goes for the Administration Contracts. Chief Newman stated that the reason MRFD switched to a calendar year contract was so that actual tax revenue information could be used during negotiations but later realized that negotiating and working off of a calendar year contracts in a fiscal year budget did not work well. Chief Newman added that there was also a COVID-19 bonus added per employee for

the extra burden and hazard during the pandemic to show appreciation. Captain Burgess added that this goes a long way to boost morale and thanked the BOT for doing this. Trustee Merritt motioned to accept the 2457 contract, and the two Memorandum's of Understanding. Secretary Mangan seconded this motion. Motion was voted and passed.

- 6. **Administration Contracts:** Chairman Murphy explained that the comments to the above contract apply to the Administration contracts. Melissa Schnee pointed out to the BOT to ensure that the addendums made to the contracts are noted. Chairman Murphy comments to say that it is noted. Trustee Merritt moved to accept the motion. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. Motion was voted and passed.
- 7. **Update to MRFD Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.** MRFD was made aware that the collection site used was no longer testing and that MRFD needed to find a new agency. The testing procedures have been updated (page 6, number 10) with whom MRFD will be using, along with a new table with what is being tested. Trustee Merritt made the motion to accept. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. Motion was voted and passed.

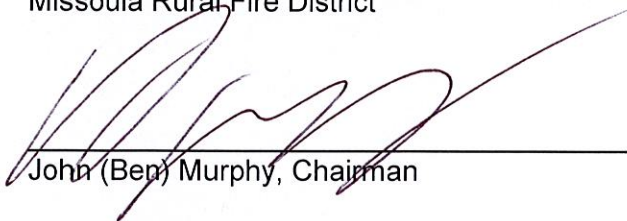
EXECUTIVE SESSION: Canceled.

ADJOURNMENT: Trustee Merritt made a motion to adjourn. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. Chairman Murphy adjourned the meeting at 20:06 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant
Missoula Rural Fire District



John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

10/12/21

Date



Dick Mangan, Secretary

10/13/21

Date