

Missoula Rural Fire District
Board of Trustees
Missoula, Montana 59804

January 11th, 2022

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, January 11th, 2022.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

READING OF THE MINUTES: Trustee Merritt moved to accept the minutes as written. Vice-Chairman Hanson seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No one from the public was present for comment.

CLAIMS: Chairman Murphy asked about the "341 MESI Damage" claim. Finlay responded that the Missoula Emergency Services Inc (MESI) ambulance got too close to one of the MRFD trucks on an incident. Don with MESI sent them a check to cover the damage. Secretary Mangan moved to accept the claims as submitted. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: Raquel Wilkinson reported that the communications included were two thank-you letters, a notice of public hearing for annexation, an IT Report, two DFM Reports, a Call for Service Report, and a Public Relations Outreach Breakdown.

TRUSTEE REPORTS: Secretary Mangan commented that he read that Missoula Fire Department has a new Fire Chief. Chief Newman stated that Chief Brant retired at the end of December, and Gordy Hughes is the new Chief. He said that in the 11 days he had been Chief, there had already been more communication than in the last year and a half between the two departments.

STAFF REPORTS:

Local 2457: Engineer Muir reported that Captain Forest Brown retired. The Local 2457 has been working on Operation Warm/Coats for Kids, delivering 287 coats. Chairman Murphy asked if there was a drop-off location for coats. Engineer Muir said there wasn't and that all the new coats come directly from Operation Warm with donors that help fund it. MRFD distributes the coats to the kids who need them.

Finance and Human Resources (HR): Melissa Schnee was not present for the report. Raquel Wilkinson reported that MRFD is balanced with the County through November.

Battalion Chief (BC): Acting BC, Captain Swain, had to leave the meeting for a call. Chief Newman reviewed the Call for Service Report stating that December had 294 calls for service. Of those calls, MRFD responded to 281. Chief Newman also noted that 2021 surpassed the total calls from any previous year. Chief Finlay reviewed Captain Swain's report saying that there was a fully involved Class A motor home fire that MRFD responded to with the aid of the Missoula Fire Department (MFD). There were several motor vehicle accidents during the first few days of snow. MRFD sent units east of Clinton for a 15-car pileup. MRFD was called out to a vehicle fire where someone was trapped inside. Before MRFD was on the scene, a 16-year-old male rescued the individual from the vehicle. BC Bowman is currently working

with the Sheriff's Department to acknowledge the rescuer. In addition to those significant incidents, Chief Newman reported another that happened at mile marker 144, where a pickup truck went into the river with two adults and two children inside. Before MRFD arrived, bystanders formed a human chain and rescued the family.

Assistant Chief of Operations: Chief Finlay reported that he was elected Chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, working with other agencies in the area that handle emergency planning. Chief Finlay met with MFD on the Reserve Street bridge area regarding flooding issues, the unhoused population, and the risk to responders. Most of the area of concern is within MRFD's district. MFD will respond to situations requiring one engine, but MRFD would respond in conjunction with MFD if needed. Due to the lack of enforcement by police officials and the health department, an agreement was made to allow for warming and cooking fires in that area. Another concern for the site is bodily fluid issues with hypodermic needles and feces. MRFD has stressed safety to the first responders who are called out to that area and are preparing for the ice melt that may cause some flooding due to warmer temperatures. There will be another meeting with MFD to discuss the access needs for that area. Chief Finlay reported that he has also been working with MFD on a mutual aid agreement with their 181, the mental health unit on staff. Chief Finlay assisted with a day of moving into the new station 4. He has been involved with the Active Shooter Attack meetings. There was also a meeting with the Office of Emergency Management that included Chief Davis and Dr. Kremkau to discuss county planning moving forward. Secretary Mangan said that he read the Montana DNRC is raising their salaries for seasonal firefighters. He asked how it will impact MRFD's Fuel Mitigation crew and where MRFD stands, especially if there's money coming from the new Infrastructure Bill that emphasizes fuel treatment around the County. Chief Finlay responded that MRFD's Fuel Mitigation team comprises primarily Resident Firefighters. Chief Finlay responded that MRFD is on par with the pay. MRFD residents receive other benefits such as additional training and funding for school. Chairman Murphy asked if it was a county resource. Chief Finlay said it was a city-county resource held under MRFD in conjunction with Partnership Health available to the County within 15 road miles. Chairman Murphy asked if the County has any money in it, and Chief Finlay said they do. Chairman Murphy asked if MRFD is providing staffing to the 181 unit. Finlay answered not at this point. Chief Newman noted that there had been some discussions of that, but currently, Partnership Health provides the mental health side of that response. He also stated that MRFD has enough overtime that the staff isn't looking for additional work. It is not something MRFD is pushing for but would consider it if it becomes a need.

Fire Chief: Chief Newman reported that Station 4 is close to completion and could move in within two weeks. The live auction for the existing Station 4 is Saturday at noon. The auctioneer reported that there has been a lot of interest and feels that he has at least three very serious potential bidders. The Community Risk Assessment Standard of Cover Study is complete, and by the next BOT meeting, each board member should receive a copy. MRFD is looking into creating a schedule for new hires to replace Chief Christopherson and Captain Brown's positions. MRFD is working with the State Consortium for the Candidate Physical Ability Test to determine when that will happen and hopes to test in May. Chief Newman also reported that the Captain and Lieutenant's promotional assessments would accompany those positions. A letter of intent for the new Resident Firefighter/Volunteer Firefighter Coordinator position went out with resumes and a letter of intent due Wednesday, January 12th. There has been one received to date. Chief Newman attended a meeting with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association. Chief Newman stated that MRFD's current radios are failing and will need to purchase new radios. The radio budget in Capital Improvement is \$300,000.00, but the cost of the new radios will be 593,000.00. MRFD will finance the remaining \$293,000.00 over the next five years. Chief Newman reported that the County has seen a significant spike in COVID-19 cases with the new Omicron variant and is working with the medical director, consulting with the Health Department, and trying to follow the CDC guidelines. Chairman Murphy asked if MRFD had seen any shortages in Personal Protective Equipment. Chief Newman reported that MRFD had not seen any shortage.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **FY20 Audit Review:** Nicole Noonan reported that the FY20 Audit was complete. She presented the information from the Audit Report that was included in the board packet.

ADJOURNMENT: Vice-Chairman Hanson made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Chairman Murphy adjourned the meeting at 19:55 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant
Missoula Rural Fire District



John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

2/9/22
Date



Dick Mangan, Secretary

2/9/22
Date