

Missoula Rural Fire District  
Board of Trustees  
Missoula, Montana 59804

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 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, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 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:** Secretary Mangan asked how the expenditures are looking on the new Station 4 with the budget versus the actual cost. Melissa responded that she would have more on that at the next BOT meeting as invoices were still coming in. Chief Newman added that the cost is below what was anticipated from the beginning of the project. Secretary Mangan moved to accept the claims as submitted. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Raquel Wilkinson reported that the communications consisted of three thank-you letters, one resolution of annexation from the County, a Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 audit acceptance letter from the State of Montana, two DFM Reports, IT Report, Public Relations Outreach Breakdown, and a Call for Service Report.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:** There were no trustee reports.

#### **STAFF REPORTS:**

**Local 2457:** Captain Burgess reported that three members were sent to the Ricky J. Walsh Spring Seminar, an annual union education conference. The Local started a benevolence fund named in honor of Dan Merritt. The first fundraising event will be an MRFD hockey game on March 13<sup>th</sup> at Glarier Hockey Rink.

**Battalion Chief (BC):** BC Bowman reported that there were 315 calls for service in January, 98 more calls than there were at that time last year.

**Finance and Human Resources (HR):** Melissa Schnee reported that the 2022 Awards Banquet invitations were sent out on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Assistant Chief Finlay will be the MC for the event. Melissa also noted that she began work on the budget for FY23. MRFD is balanced through the County through December. Next week, MRFD will be signing the title paperwork for the old Station 4.

**Assistant Chief of Operations:** Chief Finlay reported that he's concentrating efforts on moving the BC's to a more centralized location at Station 1. The move will benefit the flow of communication and the Community Risk Assessment-Standards of Cover (CRA-SOC). Chief Finlay took part in station alerting meetings as MRFD works through the accreditation process and recognizes the positive aspect from

single station alerting to the response time and crew health. Chief Finlay also took part in a State Hazard Mitigation Advisory Group meeting in Helena as well as drill planning with the University of Montana for a hostile event. The Active Attack Integrated Response Training continues with additional February training dates. Chief Finlay and Melissa have been attending leadership training that is nearly complete. They will attend an FLSA training next week. Chief Finlay also reported that he's been working with the Mitigation crew and the Resident/Volunteer Coordinator to determine the direction of the program for this coming summer. MRFD continues to work on the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and will meet with an ISO representative soon.

**Fire Chief:** Chief Newman reported that the CRASOC is complete. The document has in-depth data that breaks down everything MRFD does and looks at the community and risks. The document provides insights into how MRFD can best serve the community. MRFD continues towards changing the record management system to Image Trend for report writing. Chief Newman also discussed the fuel mitigation crew with Taylor Blakely, Kirk Paulsen, Scott Noble, and Jeff Noble. Now that MRFD has access to the FEMA grant fund through Missoula County, Chief Newman expects this program to do better than the years past. Secretary Mangan said he plans on dropping off a document for Chief Newman to read about a study he did on fuel treatment crew in North Lake Tahoe and is interested in seeing what the implications might be for the potential for MRFD. Chairman Murphy asked if he received an email from Ashley Duran from the DNRC, who is heavily involved with the disbursement of grants for fuel mitigation. Chief Newman said he doesn't recall seeing an email but would check again but could have gone to Taylor Blakely, handling the grants for fuel mitigation. Chief Newman reported that MRFD continues working with Missoula City Fire Department, Frenchtown Fire Department, and Partnership Health's mental health unit to work out the response guidelines or protocols for that unit. The Montana Firefighter Consortium has decided to do one spring Candidate Physical Ability Test this year on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. MRFD anticipates hiring three new career firefighters.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **FY22 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR Budget vs. Actual:** Chief Newman reports that there wasn't anything alarming, and it's trending in a better than anticipated direction.
2. **Resolution #2022-1 Advertise for bids on a tow vehicle:** Chief Newman presented to the Board the need for a new tow vehicle as well as a new staff vehicle (Resolution #2022-3 below). Secretary Mangan asked what the intent is to have a tow vehicle. Chief Finlay responded that while planning the upcoming fuel mitigation season, the vehicles that MRFD has are inadequate for that use. The vehicle used for fuel mitigation is now pulling the Mule vehicle and carrying rescue gear. Chief Newman said that it has been difficult to get vehicles of any kind due to pandemic and nationwide shortages and is requesting an exemption from the normal bidding process per Montana Code Annotated 7-5-2304 for a staff vehicle and a tow vehicle. Secretary Mangan commented that if MRFD gets the money expected from the grant, it's imperative that MRFD have the equipment needed for the upcoming fuel mitigation season. Trustee Corti referred to the document for the exemption and asked about the exclusion under this law and if it would fall under wear and tear. Chief Newman said he spoke to MRFD's legal counsel, who confirmed that it would. Trustee Corti made a motion to approve the resolution. Vice-Chairman Hanson seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.
3. **Resolution #2022-2 Equipment Surplus Sale:** Chief Finlay asked the Board to approve the surplus sale of the old Type 6 engine that was built in 1998. It was used in fuel mitigation in years past and is now being stored outside for many years. Secretary Mangan mentioned the previous discussion on the shortage of new vehicles and asked if MRFD should wait until a new vehicle for

fuel mitigation is purchased using the old Type 6 in the meantime. Chief Finlay responded that Brian LaForest, the resource manager, recommended not using it due to the age and degradation of the vehicle and claimed that it wasn't safe for the use of fuel mitigation. Trustee Merritt motioned to approve the surplus sale. Vice-Chairman Hanson seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

4. **Resolution #2022-3 Advertise for bids on a staff vehicle:** Trustee Corti motioned to approve the resolution. Vice-Chairman Hanson seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.
5. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Local 2457 – Accreditation Manager:** Chief Newman requested that the Board make the temporary Accreditation Manager position permanent. Secretary Mangan asked if the person would do this job on or outside their regular shift period. Chief Newman explains that the Accreditation Manager would not be on shift unless there's a significant incident call. Chairman Murphy asked Captain Burgess if Local 2457 approved the MOU. Captain Burgess replied that it was voted on and approved. Trustee Merritt moved to approve the MOU. Vice-Chairman Hanson seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Board of Trustees 2021 Award nominees were discussed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Vice-Chairman Hanson made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Chairman Murphy adjourned the meeting at 19:50 hours.


Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant  
Missoula Rural Fire District

  
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John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

3/9/22  
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Date

  
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Dick Mangan, Secretary

3/9/22  
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Date