

Missoula Rural Fire District  
Board of Trustees  
Missoula, Montana 59804

May 10<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, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 16:00 hours.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**READING OF THE MINUTES:** Trustee Merritt moved to accept the minutes as written. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

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

**CLAIMS:** Secretary Mangan moved to accept the claims as submitted. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Firefighter Oath of Office for new resident Allen Sager and new volunteer Megan Bunnell:** Chairman Murphy swore in Allen Sager and Megan Bunnell. Chief Newman noted that MRFD's Resident/Volunteer Coordinator Kirk Paulsen reported that they did an excellent job completing their first round of Firefighter I scenarios and evolutions.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Raquel Wilkinson conveyed that the communications consisted of 3 thank-you cards, a Notice of Public Hearing for Annexation, a Public Relations Breakdown, an IT Report, a Call for Service Report, and 2 DFM Reports.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:** Trustee Merritt reported that Chief Newman gave him a tour of all MRFD's stations and was impressed with the personnel at each station.

#### **STAFF REPORTS:**

**Local 2457:** Lieutenant (Lt.) Kottwitz introduced himself as the new Local 2457 Union President and reported that a few political candidates for mid-term elections had attended their meetings. The candidates were required to complete questionnaires to gauge where they stood as far as political legislation was concerned. Lt. Kottwitz also reported that Local 2457 had put together a panel of 5 members to participate in the new hire interview process next month.

**Battalion Chief (BC):** Captain DeVos reported that the calls for service had been down from last month. He also noted that MRFD was preparing for wildland readiness and the upcoming season.

**Finance and Human Resources (HR):** Melissa Schnee reported that MRFD is currently balanced with the County through March. Melissa said most of April focused on budget and priority list reviews. MRFD has been preparing for the upcoming wildland, fuel mitigation seasons, and the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT).

**Assistant Chief of Operations:** Chief Finlay reported a crash on mile marker 151 off Highway 12, a 50-mile response for MRFD. This incident was the first opportunity to test communications in an area where there was none in the past. There was outstanding communication throughout the incident. MRFD was able to extricate the patient with the assistance of the Kooskia ambulance and then transported by Life Flight. Last month, Chief Finlay and Resource Manager Brian LaForest traveled to Sioux Falls, SD, for a mid-point water tender inspection. Early next month, another inspection is planned with Chief Finlay and Lt. Kottwitz for the final inspection. The Battalion Chiefs have transitioned to the new vehicle that Chief Christopherson left behind. They have also moved to Station 1, which will help with resource management, communication, and accreditation. Chief Finlay reported that he has been working with Run Cards and station alerting in April. Chief Finlay met with Melissa Schnee regarding the County Assist Team (CAT) team and the local Type 3 Team to discuss the needs of both teams and what our MRFD can do to help. Chief Finlay and Chief Newman conducted an exit interview with Firefighter Charlie Bausman. They learned that things were going well at MRFD from his perspective, but he wanted to pursue other opportunities. Chairman Murphy asked who the closest response was from the other side of Highway 12. Chief Finlay answered that Kooskia, Idaho is the closest, with a volunteer fire department and an ambulance. Chief Newman added that MRFD doesn't respond to every call; they only go for life safety incidents. Trustee Merritt asked if communications have improved in that area. Chief Finlay said that the last couple of years have been better.

**Fire Chief:** Chief Newman is currently in the process of finishing the captain's assessment and will be promoting one captain. Chief Newman had a meeting with the sheriff's department on the potential of a joint training center. Chief Newman also attended meetings with the El Mar Homeowners Association and the Target Range Homeowners Association this past month. Image Trend, MRFD's new records management system that replaced New World, started May 9th, and there haven't been any issues. Chief Newman and BC Orr attended the Grant Creek sand table exercise that went well. It was organized by the Community Preparedness Team and the Grant Creek Wildfire Taskforce. DNRC and the local fire departments also participated. Chief Newman is hopeful that MRFD will have several applicants due to the CPAT that is coming up. Next week will be a three-day strategic planning workshop, the second phase of MRFD's accreditation process.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

2. **Letter to Missoula County requesting Max Mills:** Melissa explained that this request is sent to the County annually. MRFD will request a Max Mills once the Department of Revenue sends out the taxable evaluation. Trustee Merritt motions to go for Max Mills and sign the document. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.
3. **Sign the Auditor Contract:** Trustee Merritt asked why the cost went down in the second year and then back up. Melissa explained that it was due to MRFD's estimation of whether there would be Federal and State audits or only State audits. Chief Newman said that it is based federal grant funding amounts. Trustee Merritt made a motion to accept and sign the three-year contract. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.
4. **FY 22 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget vs. Actual Report:** Secretary Mangan asked if there were any red flags in the budget. Melissa answered that there were none at that point. He also asked if MRFD was caught up on the training that was backed up due to COVID-19. Melissa replied that MRFD is getting back on schedule.

- 5. Mobile Support Team Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA):** Chief Newman explained that the Mobile Support Team (MST) is being run by the Missoula Fire Department (MRD) and has been operating for almost two years. MRFD has been looking at a possible common SOG with this unit because it's a different concept for this area. MST works primarily in the city limits but goes out to MRFD's jurisdiction. Since the two agencies work together, it's essential to get an MAA in place specific to the MST team. Chairman Murphy asked if this is separate from what MRFD has with MFD. Chief Newman confirmed that it would be separate. Chairman Murphy also asked if MRFD has been requested to supply staff. Newman said not at this point. Trustee Merritt asked if the MST team took the lead on mental health calls. Captain DeVos explained that the MST team is being explicitly dispatched for the calls specific to mental health. Chief Newman added that having the MST team dispatched has benefited MRFD. MST stays on the scene to determine a treatment plan for the patient, leaving the MRFD crew to get back in service for the next call. Trustee Merritt asked if there has been an increase in mental health incidents. Chairman Murphy confirmed a rise and it has been more work than MST can handle. Chief Finlay added that there had been many jail and emergency department diversions now that MST had taken over. Trustee Merritt moved to sign the Mutual Aid Agreement. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted and passed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Trustee Merritt made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. Chairman Murphy adjourned the meeting at 16:40 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant  
Missoula Rural Fire District



John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

6/15/22

Date



Dick Mangan, Secretary

6/15/22

Date