

Missoula Rural Fire District
Board of Trustees
Missoula, Montana 59804

May 9th, 2023

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 9th, 2023.**

CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chairman Hanson called the meeting to order at 16:00 hours.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

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

CLAIMS: Melissa Schnee remarked that there were a few adjustments to the April Claims; the updated total was \$425,971.38. Secretary Mangan moved to accept the claims as submitted. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.

COMMUNICATIONS: Raquel Wilkinson conveyed that the communications consisted of an email to thank MRFD for saving a resident's property from a fire that jumped from her neighbor's burn pile, a letter from the Board of Commissioners regarding the 2023 MRFD election canceled due to Larry Hanson being elected by acclamation for another three-year term. Also included was a letter from Lieutenant Kottwitz and the Local 2457, an IT Report, two DFM Reports, a Public Relations Outreach Breakdown, and a Calls for Service Report.

TRUSTEE REPORTS: There were no trustee reports.

STAFF REPORTS:

Local 2457: Lieutenant Kottwitz included a Letter of Intent in the BOT packet to start negotiations. There was also a letter to the BOT detailing an event where Local 2457 took part in helping a member's family with sandbags during flooding in their neighborhood.

Battalion Chief (BC): Acting BC, Captain Huleatt, reported an increase in call volume of almost 25% from last year. Approximately 25% of those calls have been EMS related. One significant call started as a vehicle fire and extended to a structure. With the quick actions of the crew, they were able to stop the fire from spreading into the eaves and attic as well as the home's interior.

Finance and Human Resources: Melissa Schnee reported that with Chief Newman's approval, MRFD joined the Government Finance Officer's Association (GFOA) and she attended several live webinars with local governments and states nationwide. Last month, much work was done finalizing individual budget numbers and preparing for next year's budget. As the Fuel Mitigation and Wildland seasons are fast approaching, a lot of preparation went into getting those programs ready. Also reported was onboarding new residents and preparing for the upcoming Candidate Physical Ability Test. Missoula County Risk and Benefits is a self-funded and self-managed insurance group for Missoula County. Melissa attended their Benefits Advisory Meeting with the other departments and districts within Missoula County. This year

Missoula County Risk and Benefits announced a 10% increase in medical insurance premium cost for FY23. The dental and vision premium costs will remain the same. MRFD will continue to request the permissive levy for group benefits.

Assistant Chief of Operations: Chief Finlay added to Captain Huleatt's report that MRFD had seen an increase and complexity in calls. He said that the crew members had done a great job handling multiple incidents simultaneously. In conjunction with Missoula Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Office, MRFD aided in the rescue of a young lady out on a log in the middle of the river during high water. Chief Finlay had an opportunity to attend MRFD's 2023 Annual Dinner, where BC Orr did a great job hosting. Last month, Resource Manager LaForest and Chief Finlay traveled to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to conduct a final review of the two apparatuses in what was supposed to be the end phase of the build. The inspection did not go well, and Rosenbauer is in the process of correcting the oversights. Because the inspection did not pass, Chief Finlay decided not to allow Rosenbauer to send the apparatus to Indianapolis for the Fire Department Instructors Conference. Another final inspection is scheduled for next week, and they hope to drive the two new apparatuses back. As the ad hoc Chairman of the local Active Attack Integrated Response Committee, Chief Finlay participated in an incident review of the threat at Hellgate Highschool, which was a social media threat against the students. Also reported, MRFD took place in tabletop exercises for flood planning that went well. MRFD has been collectively working on Assigned Duties, a significant portion of what the firefighters do outside their responses. Last Friday, MRFD and several other agencies within Missoula County participated in an airport disaster simulation that amounted to a plane crash after a bird strike with 100 patients. At the end of May, Chief Finlay will attend the Candidate Physical Ability Test with Melissa Schnee and Chief Newman. Lastly, Chief Finlay reported that he worked on apparatus movement, run cards, and made some changes to some of the apparatuses. Trustee Merritt asked if it was customary to have two final inspections. Chief Finlay answered that Rosenbauer had underperformed. Trustee Merritt asked if there was an expense to MRFD. Chief Finlay said that Rosenbauer pays all the expenses. Secretary Mangan noted that there had been a lot of media coverage on gun violence and asked where MRFD stands regarding body armor. Chief Finlay answered that MRFD has body armor that includes vests and helmets on all front-line apparatus. They also carry tourniquets and other medical supplies to stop bleeding. The crew members are trained multiple times a year on the Active Attack focus and train with the Sheriff and Police Departments. Next month, they will participate in hands-on training at Frenchtown Highschool. MRFD has several members that teach other fire districts how to prepare for an active shooter event. Chief Newman commended Chief Finlay on his work with the active shooter committee.

Fire Chief: Chief Newman worked consistently with Melissa Schnee on the budget last month. He participated in the West Riverside Leadership Group, which has become a Targeted Economic Development District. The area in West Riverside, which borders the West Log Yard, is looking at the potential of increasing the infrastructure that will go into the West Log Yard in the West Riverside area. The leadership group has met with local community members living there. MRFD will be giving Missoula County a recommendation of what the community wants to see in that area. Chief Newman has been working with Jenn Culp on updating and improving the website. MRFD is now using Gecko Design, a website development and hosting company. Jenn has experience with website design and has done the training needed to keep MRFD's website up to date. Chief Newman reported that he had a Safety Committee Meeting and attended a Forest Service Pre-Season Wildland Meeting with all the regional players. There was also a meeting with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association to update their bylaws and strategies to increase membership. Chief Newman attended the Target Range Homeowner's Association meeting. He's also been working on the Station 4 warranty items that had been pushed out until spring because they couldn't finish them before winter hit last year. MRFD is in negotiations with a consulting firm on a station location study. He stated that the initial price was outside what he felt it should be, so he hopes to get it down to a more reasonable level in the negotiations. Chief Newman reported that MRFD would soon have 15 residents after the academy is complete, putting the resident program at full capacity. Station Alerting is nearly finished, but there were a couple of hiccups at the 911 center. One issue was that it took dispatch anywhere from 5-15 seconds longer, a problem created years ago through a

workaround they did instead of fixing the original issue. Lastly, Chief Newman reported that they have been working on a proposal request for the Station 6 roof.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **MRFD BOT Oath of Office:** Chief Newman swore in Larry Hansen as Vice-Chairman of the BOT.
2. **MRFD BOT Elections:** Trustee Merritt moved to keep the BOT positions the same. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
3. **Discussion and Decision on Resolution Adopting Reimbursement Rates Payable for Travel-Related Expenses:** Melissa Schnee said MRFD wanted to update their per diem rates to match the United States General Services Administration (GSA) rates. MRFD's current per diem rate for in-state is \$30, and out-of-state is \$50. The GSA rates are a flat \$54 for in-state and out-of-state. A policy will be created once these rates are voted on. Trustee Merritt moved to accept the new rates. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
4. **Discussion and Decision on Soliciting Requests for Proposals for Roof Replacement on Station 6:** Chief Newman noted that the request for proposals was worked on and vetted by Melissa Schnee, the architect, MRFD's attorney, and himself. Trustee Merritt moved to accept the bid for roof replacement on Station 6. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed. Chief Newman asked the BOT if they would allow Vice-Chairman to sign the document in Chairman Murphy's absence due to time constraints. Trustee Merritt moved to have Vice-Chairman Hanson sign the request for proposals. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
5. **Union Letter of Intent to open the Local 2457 CBA for negotiations:** Chief Newman asked if the BOT wanted to discuss who would be on the negotiation team. Trustee Merritt responded that he would like the entire BOT present for that decision.
6. **Administration Letter of Intent to open negotiations for the Administration staff:** Vice-Chairman Hanson said he would also like to wait until the entire BOT was present for this discussion.
7. **Letter to Missoula County requesting Max Mills:** Melissa Schnee explained that this is a annual letter that MRFD sends out to Missoula County to inform them that MRFD would like to levy the max mills available. Trustee Merritt asked if there was a time when MRFD had not taken the max mills. Melissa answered, not to her knowledge. Chief Newman added that as much as they would love to be able to provide tax relief to the taxpayers, it would be detrimental to their service to ask for less at this time. Trustee Merritt moved to request max mills from Missoula County. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
8. **FY23 3rd Quarter Budget vs. Actual Report:** Chief Newman noted that this report is through March 31st, and they had no concerns. The only thing that was higher than anticipated was suppression overtime. They hope the overtime for regular training will offset the overage for suppression overtime. Secretary Mangan shared his concern that if the public looked at the current budget, it would likely confuse them. The budget would show 75% through the fiscal year and only 50% of expenditures. Secretary Managed asked if they could explain to the public if it comes up because residents seem increasingly aware and more sensitive to the amount of money the government is spending. Melissa Schnee noted that MRFD is 57% of its revenue received and 58% of its expenses. Once the more significant expenses are purchased in May and MRFD receives

revenue from the loan proceeds for the new apparatuses the budget will reflect increase in expenses and revenue. Through the GFOA, Melissa Schnee has been active in webinars that teach how to present the budget more effectively to the BOT and the public. Secretary Mangan stated that as long as MRFD can explain the financials and is giving the public what they want at the end of the year, he has no issue with that.

ADJOURNMENT: Trustee Merritt made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Corti seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Hanson adjourned the meeting at 16:51 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant
Missoula Rural Fire District



John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

6/13/23

Date



Dick Mangan, Secretary

6/14/23

Date