

Missoula Rural Fire District
Board of Trustees
Missoula, Montana 59804

September 12th, 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, September 12th, 2023**.

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, and Trustee Jeff Merritt. Absent: Vice Chairman Larry Hanson and Trustee Dan Corti.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: The public members in attendance didn't have anything to comment on.

CLAIMS: 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 communications consisted of two thank you cards, a letter from the County Commissioners to approve a request of annexation, a notice of public hearing for annexation, an annexation resolution, an Incident Personnel Performance Rating for Resident/Volunteer Coordinator (RVC) Kirk Paulsen, Contractor Performance Reports for Engineer Barnett, Engineer Lorensen and Resident Firefighter Lubke, two DFM Reports, an IT Report, a Public Relations Outreach Breakdown and a Calls for Service Report. Chairman Murphy inquired if one of the annexations had started the process a few years back. Raquel that it was initiated in 2021. Chief Newman further explained that boundary line issues caused delays in the finalization of the process. Chief Newman stated that RVC Paulsen was assigned as a trainee for Task Force Leader during a Severity assignment. He was then called out to manage the Paradise Fire, where he successfully ran the assignment for over 24 hours without any breaks for the crew. RVC Paulsen's performance was exceptional. Chief Newman encouraged the BOT to read the performance report for more detailed information. The performance report for Engineer Barnett, Engineer Lorensen, and Resident Firefighter Lubke from their assignment in California was also impressive. They received praise for their excellent performance during incidents and their dedication to training during their downtime. Their positive example inspired many other firefighters to follow their lead. The report's author noted that they would choose an MRFD unit without hesitation, as their team's success is a shining example of their capabilities within and outside the District.

TRUSTEE REPORTS: During the negotiations with Local 2457, Chairman Murphy reported that they were able to agree on most issues. However, they have reached a stalemate regarding the definitions in Appendix B. As a result, both parties have decided to proceed to the next step. After consulting with MRFD's legal counsel, who referred to MCA-3934101, it was determined that the next step would be mediation, as outlined in MCA-3931307. The Local had incorrectly stated that the next step would be mediation fact finding. Further clarification and determination with the Local was necessary before Board action could be taken.

STAFF REPORTS:

Local 2457: Lieutenant Kottwitz reported that the union had sworn in the four new hires during their recent meeting, and they are still in the process of negotiating contracts. He also mentioned that he will be

attending a mini-education series sponsored by the International Association of Fire Fighters at Station 4. Additionally, the annual Fill the Boot fundraiser is coming up, which raised \$13,605 last year. The current record stands at around \$16,000. The union will send three members to Butte for a conference that will cater to new members, covering the labor movement history of Montana and providing a basic introduction to union business for firefighters. Chairman Murphy asked how many Montana fire departments allow new hires to join their union before completing the academy. Lieutenant Kottwitz and BC Orr both confirmed there are several.

Battalion Chief (BC): BC Orr reported that there were only two more calls this August compared to last year, and there were no significant calls to report.

Finance and Human Resources (HR): Melissa Schnee provided an update that MRFD and Missoula County were balanced through July. Additionally, she reminded the BOT that the October meeting was rescheduled from October 10th to October 3rd. Melissa also mentioned that she has been working diligently on finalizing the budget, employee contracts, and wage comparisons.

Assistant Chief of Operations: Four qualified candidates have been selected for the entry-level firefighter positions following a final round of interviews conducted by Chief Finlay and Chief Newman. Additionally, an Assistant Resource Manager has been chosen after the interview process. The BOT approved the creation of a Deputy Chief position, and plans are underway to prepare for the transition regarding vehicle needs throughout the District. Budgeting work has been completed and is in the finalization stage. Lastly, Chief Finlay attended the Bonner Town Council Meeting.

Fire Chief: Chief Newman and Chief Finlay recently met with the President of Rosenbauer America, the company that MRFD has purchased several apparatus from. Despite some previous problems, the meeting was highly productive. Chief Newman is confident that MRFD can continue to do business with Rosenbauer. Additionally, Chief Newman reported that the administrative negotiations have been completed, and the focus has shifted toward accreditation. MRFD is working with IT Manager, Joe Ford, and Accreditation Manager, Cory Horsens, on testing a new mobile app for MRFD's MDTs. Chairman Murphy inquired if the app would replace the current system. Chief Newman clarified that it is a different platform from the same company. It will work on iPads or Android tablets instead of the current devices. This transition would result in significant cost savings for each unit replacement. Furthermore, there are reports that the iPad version has better functionality, and they plan to test it out to determine if it would be a more favorable option.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Evaluation Committee recommendation and Board or Trustee's contract award for the Station 6 roof replacement:** Through the evaluations by Chief Newman, Chief Finlay, and the architect, Sirius Construction was recommended for the Station 6 roof replacement. Trustee Merritt inquired about the start date. Chief Newman replied that it would be at the end of September with an estimated 7-8 weeks for completion. Secretary Mangan expressed concern about the station's operation being affected during construction. Chief Newman assured him that any interruption would be minimal if any at all. Secretary Mangan made a motion to move forward with hiring Sirius Construction for the Station 6 roof replacement. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
- 2. Fiscal Year 2023 4th Quarter Budget vs. Actual Budget:** Melissa Schnee stated that there were no unexpected expenses, and FY 23 was within budget. Secretary Mangan noted a high number of carryovers. However, Melissa clarified that the report indicated minimal carryover for FY23.
- 3. Resolution 2023-11 Sale Surplus Equipment:** Chief Finlay explained that they were trying to determine the cost of upgrading the tactical water tender by adding a new tank. The aim was to

save money for MRFD. However, they were unable to obtain a precise estimate for the modifications. As a solution, Chief Finlay suggested initiating the surplus process with a minimum bid as outlined in the MCA. They will proceed with the secondary process if the initial offer fails to meet the minimum amount. Trustee Merritt moved to adopt the resolution. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.


4. **General Release of Liability for Donation of Hose to Florence Rural Fire District:** Chief Finlay shared that MRFD is replacing old hoses and that the Florence Rural Fire District (FRFD) could benefit from them. Secretary Mangan expressed concern about defective hoses and their impact on MRFD incidents. However, Chief Finlay assured him that the hoses were in better condition than what FRFD currently uses. He then asked if it meets the National Fire Protection Association requirements. Chief Finlay replied that it does not, but FRFD is aware. Secretary Mangan motioned to accept the release of liability. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
5. **Approval of Administrative Employee Employment Contracts:** Chairman Murphy explained that the contracts reflect what is comparable to similar positions locally and around Montana. Secretary Mangan said he's been pleased with how things have gone in the last couple of years and supports the new contracts. He made a motion to approve the administrative contracts. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
6. **Public Hearing and Decision Resolution 2023-12 FY24 Capital Improvement Plan:** Chief Newman explained that the document included descriptions and justifications for each item. Secretary Mangan inquired if MRFD should contemplate relocating Station 6. In response, Chief Newman mentioned that he regularly monitors growth patterns and trends and feels they are currently situated well in that area. While there has been some growth, it has not been significant enough to cause alarm. Although the Missoula Fire Department might establish a fire station in that area, it is still premature to take action until they have more information about the situation. Secretary Mangan moved to accept the Capital Improvement Plan as submitted. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.
7. **Public Hearing and Decision Resolution 2023-13 Final FY24 Budget and Max Mills:** Melissa Schnee presented the FY24 Budget, max mills, and all its components. Trustee Merritt moved to accept the budget and approve max mills. Secretary Mangan seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed.

ADJOURNMENT: Secretary Mangan made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Merritt seconded the motion. Chairman Murphy adjourned the meeting at 16:46 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Jenn Culp, Administrative Assistant
Missoula Rural Fire District



John (Ben) Murphy, Chairman

10/3/23
Date



Dick Mangan, Secretary

10/4/23

Date