



**CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

215 Wings Way
Belgrade, MT 59714
406-388-4480
(Fax): 406-388-6270

MEETING PLACE: Central Valley Fire District, Station 1
215 Wings Way, Belgrade, MT

DATE: April 9, 2024

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:		<u>(Present)</u>	<u>(Absent)</u>
<i>Trustees:</i>	Ty Elliot, Chair	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Justin Varley		X
	Ron Murray	X	
	Darren Wilkins	X	
<i>Acting Fire Chief:</i>	Jake Zlomie	X	
<i>Acting Fire Marshal:</i>	Brandon Yung	X	
<i>Operations Chief:</i>	Vacant		X
<i>Acting Clerk:</i>	Debbie Bloem	X	
<i>City Representative:</i>	Jim Simon	X	

NOTICE: **ALL MEETINGS OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD
OF TRUSTEES ARE RECORDED**

GUESTS/VISITORS: Samantha Honatke, Rob and Mo Holt, Sean Rodino II, Stephen McAdams, Justin Monroe, Miranda Roy, Cody Lipperd, Jeff Ball, Brinn Fiorentino, Collin Brozka, Thomas MacIntyre, Ryan Olson

Meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m., immediately following the IFC Board of Appeals Quarterly Meeting.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee Wilkins moved to approve the **March 19, 2024 minutes** as submitted. Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve **the financial reports**. Trustee Wilkins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS: The department received a heartfelt thank you note from Jeanette Auteri along with a generous annual donation in honor of her son, Allen who passed away in 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

TRUSTEE REPORT: **Chairman Elliot** provided an update on the **Fire Chief hiring process**. ESCI, the organization that the District engaged to conduct the Fire Chief hiring, received 26 applications which their hiring committee of five retired fire chiefs reviewed and reduced to eight. Additional questions were submitted to the top eleven applicants and the answers were reviewed again using the information ESCI had received detailing what the department is looking for. The final four candidates will arrive on Sunday, April 14th. They will participate in a meet and greet, District and station tours and three separate panel interviews on Monday and Tuesday. On Tuesday, the three panels will be comprised of stakeholders, community members and CVFD staff. After the panel interviews, an additional round of interviews may take place on Tuesday afternoon. If an offer is made, it will be for a five-year contract. Chairman Elliot urged members to contact a board member if they have any questions or concerns.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

As submitted.

Acting Fire Chief Zlomie reported that the **Awards Banquet** went well. Members with 5, 10 and 15 Years of service were recognized as well as the following:

- 2023 Volunteer of the Year – Volunteer Firefighter Gabriel McManus
- 2023 Workhorse of the Year – EMS Volunteer William Roberts
- 2023 Firefighter of the Year – Firefighter Edward Ivey
- 2023 Officer of the Year – Battalion Chief Dylan White

Firefighters LoGiudice, Scherrer and Oakes just completed their first year **probationary period** and the department has **hired two volunteer firefighters**, Gabe McManus and Will Kutyllo as career firefighters.

Acting Chief Zlomie has been admitted into the **Executive Fire Officer** Program at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland and appreciates the support of the board in pursuing this.

Next week District staff will be attending a meeting with representatives from across the state regarding the process of supporting legislation to make **Ground Emergency Medical Transport Supplemental Reimbursement funding (GEMT)** available to organizations within the State of Montana. If successful, this funding would recover shortfalls in payments for medical services for patients covered by Medicaid.

There is a need in the area for **Fire Prevention Services** for neighboring departments and Fire Prevention staff is beginning to look into providing investigative and preventative services outside the District.

The County wide **airport drill** will take place May 4th.

The preliminary budget presentation has been shared with all three shifts.

OPERATIONS REPORT:

As submitted.

Acting Chief Zlomie reported that the **Montana State Firefighter Consortium Testing** will take place April 21st through the 23rd with three members participating from CVFD to work a booth for recruitment and to assist with the CPAT testing. Chief Zlomie reviewed the March incident count, staffing and apparatus updates.

FIRE PREVENTION REPORT: None.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT: As submitted.

BC Monroe thanked the board members who were able to attend the Awards Banquet. He congratulated Gabe McManus and Will Kutyllo on being hired with the department.

CITY LIAISON REPORT: **Council Member Jim Simon** reported that this year is set to be the largest growth year to date for the City of Belgrade. The City of Belgrade is working with a lobbyist to look into legislative action to provide ways to generate revenue based on tourism to help pay for the additional services required due to visitors to the area. The League of Cities is also supporting this effort. The new library opening has been delayed to January or February 2025 due to supply chain issues.

Trustee MacLeod moved to accept **the reports** as submitted. Trustee Wilkins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Presentation and Discussion of Preliminary FY25 Budget

Acting Chief Zlomie presented the Preliminary FY25 Budget and process. He brought this presentation to each of the crews over the past month and the feedback from the crews indicated that this presentation was very helpful. The main topics of concern that were expressed in the feedback were regarding wages, cost of living and retention, the mill levy, efficiency of the volunteer program, capital vs operational funds, SAFER Grant and the need to look into additional sources of funding.

Chief Zlomie reviewed the flow of funding, the different funds and their purposes and restrictions, and tax vs non-tax revenue. The presentation went over personnel expenses and how that is covered by tax vs non-tax revenue. There has been a decrease in EMS Transport revenue, one form of non-tax revenue, and the EMS transport fees and procedures will be reviewed. There is potential to use auto insurance recovery fees to pay for transports due to motor vehicle accidents.

Over the last five years, personnel has increased by 35% with FY25 staffing projected to be at 45 employees. Chief Zlomie continued by looking at the slight shortfall in personnel expenses covered by tax revenue that must be covered by non-tax revenue and personnel expenses compared to total operations revenue.

The market value of property protected by the Central Valley Fire District has increased by 539% over the past ten years.

Finally Acting Chief Zlomie went over FY25 expenditures and both operational and capital projects. He explained how some of the expenses are being designated as capital to utilize those restricted funds appropriately and broke down some of the capital projects for apparatus, facilities and equipment and addressed a few items that are not in this fiscal year's budget.

There was a lengthy discussion of whether CVFD should apply for the SAFER grant to fund some new hires. The primary concern of staff is that if additional firefighters are hired, there would be additional personnel expenses added both now and once the grant runs out in three years and there is a pressing need for increased wages due to the cost of living in the area. Trustee Murray expressed concern about the amount of overtime that is currently being paid and the need for increased staffing to reduce that. Chairman Elliot suggested that if the timing is not right, the District could turn down the grant if it is awarded.

The decision was made to proceed with the SAFER Grant application for three firefighters with the option to turn it down.

At the May meeting the FY25 Preliminary Budget will be presented for approval to be submitted to the County by May 24th. Please contact Acting Chief Zlomie if you have any additional questions or concerns.

In August the County will provide the certified value from the Montana Department of Revenue and then the budget will be adjusted to enable the approval of the Final Budget at the August Board Meeting. In the future staff will look into more efficient financial software and work on the development a budget document to present the breakdown and detail in a clearer way.

In addressing a question regarding the growth in the area, the City of Belgrade does collect impact fees. It is necessary to come up with a way for the District to access and utilize those funds. One way may be

to use them to help fund the future Station 6 which will be within the city limits.

ACTION ITEMS:

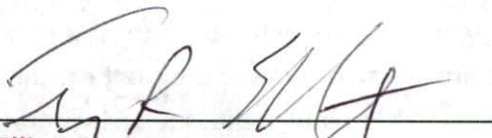
None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

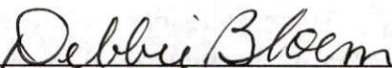
The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **May 14, 2024**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.


Ty Elliot, Chairman


Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST: 
Debbie Bloem, Clerk