

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the
Council Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
April 19th, 2023, at 10:00 AM.**

Chairman Gray - Present in Person
Commissioner Michael – Present in person
Commissioner Engelmann – Absent

1. Call to Order.

Commissioner Gray called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

2. Public Comment.

None.

3. Approval of the April 2023 Claims*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the April 2023, claims; seconded by Commissioner Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

We have had a very expensive problem with our Griffin Butte septic system and frozen ground there.

4. Approval of the March 15, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the March 15, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

5. Report: Monthly Update – North Blaine County Fire District Chief, Rich Bauer.

At the last meeting Chief Bauer noted that we were having problems with ice dams on some of our resident roofs, and we did have Griffin Butte Unit 2 shoveled, but not all the snow was able to be removed. There was continued leaking and damage to the inside of the unit. The unit has been repaired now and a claim has been made with ICRMP. A unit at Greenhorn had been damaged and has been repaired as well. We will probably put heat tape on the Griffin Butte roof this summer.

Since the septic system at Griffin Butte was mentioned with the claims, it is something that has been causing us problems for years, and he would like the Commissioners to consider replacing the system

sometime in the next couple of years.

Chairman Gray would like Chief Bauer to do an inventory of the status of our roofs and see how old they are and what condition they are in. Please also get bids on what a new septic system could cost.

Commissioner Michael commented that if we do build a new septic, we may have to speak with BLM and ITD about it first. City of Sun Valley City Administrator Jim Keating added to the roofing conversation that the City of Sun Valley recently approved an amended budget to completely re-roof the Elkhorn Fire Station roof as well as the Streets Department roof. Perhaps when we get bids from them they can look at the District roofs as well.

Chief Robrahn, Chief Bauer, and Jocelin looked at Greenhorn 100A the other week, and looked at some upgrades like painting and a new appliance package in there. There was some damage in the bathroom that is already being repaired. Chairman Gray asked for quotes on what these renovations might cost.

Chief Bauer pointed out that the Commissioners have copies of a draft new fee schedule for the District that we would like to adopt at our next meeting. If they can review that, it will get noticed in the local paper twice before our next meeting and then can be adopted. These fees are in line with the fees that Wood River Fire & Rescue is adopting at their next meeting.

Chief Robrahn and Chief Bauer have had a couple of lunch meetings with Chiefs Bateman and McLaughlin to discuss consolidation efforts. They spoke about training, personnel, and standardizing training throughout the Valley. Chairman Gray says that the key to this is keeping the Commissioners informed of these conversations and updates, as it is the elected officials that would be making the tough decisions. Chairman Gray is greatly concerned about how equity would be determined if consolidation is decided upon. He does not want the members of our district to be paying for the members of other districts. Commissioner Michael asked if the County is doing a financial analysis of how this would work, and Chief Bauer answered yes, but they should really be talking to the Chiefs, as there is a lot of nuance in the fire department budgets. Chairman Gray commented the WRFR has an assessment 4x higher than NBCFD, and he does not feel that they should have to lower their rate, nor should we raise ours.

Chief Robrahn wants to go back to how this originally started, which as with the Ambulance District, and how we need to improve our EMS services and responses. Chief Robrahn has looked at the last 3 years of audits for the Ambulance District, and it looks like they now have \$3.5 million in reserves, and they look to have increased their funds approximately 30% in the last three years. He recommends people look at the models of Kootenai and Ada Counties and how they run their Ambulance Districts. From the information he got from Walt regarding Kootenai County's model, Chairman Gray thinks that it is a no brainer to how this could be done, but there seems to be strong resistance to looking at the report and strong biases within the County. He does not think we are going to make a lot of progress until there are some changes within the current structure and personnel. The Chiefs will keep the Commissioners posted on this topic.

Chairman Gray asked about the several ambulances he has seen out in the East Fork area in the past couple of days, and asked if there was an incident. The Chiefs said yes, and Greenhorn responders were first on scene for two calls in the last two days.

6. Report: Monthly Update – Sun Valley Fire Chief, Taan Robrahn.

Chief Robrahn started by saying that a main focus right now is on flood mitigation. Chiefs and Jim joined a joint community meeting in Ketchum last night that the public attended. In 2017 we had more high elevation level snow than right now, but this year we currently have a lot of lower elevation level snow for this time of year. The further we move into May and June, the more likely we are to have a rapid warming event. Current forecasts expect mid to late May to have higher melt flows. Chairman Gray asked if they are considering sheet flooding, and are we giving people resources for how to deal with this event? Chief Robrahn answered yes, our main concern is a large rain on snow event that would cause sheet flooding, and we are not seeing one of those in the next 6-10 days. Our primary area of concern in the District would be Warm Springs and Gimlet. From flooding in 2017, side streams were created that the water will be following. We are not giving out sandbags or private property protection; that will be up to the homeowners. We are more focused on life saving, and our swift water rescue team that has recently been doing extra training and has new swift water rescue equipment purchased through the volunteer association. We are right on track from a planning and rescue stage.

Commissioner Michael commented that swift water rescue training is rigorous and technical; will there be practice sessions in the Big Wood River? Chief Robrahn said the team will be training at Trail Creek and the dam. We are also training our police force, as they are out patrolling frequently. Chairman Gray believes that he has some throw bags and live preservers he can donate.

7. Acceptance of Grant from the Wood River Women’s Foundation for the Greenhorn Housing Project*.

We have received a Grant from the Wood River Women’s Foundation, and Chief Bauer has been named as the manager of this grant. Commissioner Michael has signed an initial acceptance letter for the grant, and today we have a thank you letter to them that the Commissioners will sign. Grants will officially be awarded May 15th.

Jocelin added that the Foundation reached out and asked if we would like the money directly transferred to the City or the District. This should be part of the motion to accept the grant. Commissioner Michael asked if the City or District can accept the money directly, rather than it going through the Spur Foundation. Chairman Gray and Jim explained that non-profits and government agencies have the 501c3 status, so the money can go to any of the organizations and eventually transferred to the City and their LGIP account.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to accept the \$20,000 Grant that the Wood River Women’s Foundation has awarded the North Blaine County Housing Project, with the money to be deposited into the City of Sun Valley’s LGIP Fund # 3770, an account solely to be used to for expenses related to the Greenhorn Housing Project; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

Chairman Gray would like to thank Commissioner Michael for all of her work on applying for this grant, and commented that it was very generous for them to grant us the full amount of money requested.

Commissioner Michael has thanked Foundation for this funding, and we have a thank you letter to sign and send to them. She sent out a press release, and we may send out another press release with photos as well.

Jim thinks that if the Foundation sends the money directly to the City of the Sun Valley, the City should acknowledge that. They can send a thank you letter from the City along with the District's letter, as well as the City's tax id information.

8. Request to transfer Spur Foundation funds raised for the Greenhorn Housing Project to an account allocated for the project*.

It was discussed if the funds should be transferred directly to the City, or to the District and then the City. Commissioner Michael asked if when the District transfers funds to the City's LGIP account, those funds are recognized as being raised and contributed by the District. If there is a 'divorce' between the City and the District, are the funds being marked as to who contributed what? Jim answered that the LGIP account currently holds the funds from the \$1.5M from the appropriations lease, and we would like to aggregate all other funds from the City, District, Spur, ARPA, etc into this account. All transfers into the account will be noted as to where they came from. There will be an ongoing debit balance sheet sent to the District each month to keep track of the funds.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to request that the Spur Foundation transfers the approximately \$904,107.56 in funds they have collected for the North Blaine County Fire District's Greenhorn Housing Project, with the money to be deposited into the City of Sun Valley's LGIP Fund # 3770, an account solely to be used to for expenses related to the Greenhorn Housing Project. These funds should be paid to the City of Sun Valley via check. Seconded by Chairman Gray, a roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

Under the discussion period of the motion Chairman Gray noted that there is an approximately \$100,000 pending donation from a foundation. When this money is donated, it will also be sent to the LGIP Fund.

9. Approval to transfer District allocated funds for Greenhorn Housing Project to City of Sun Valley Greenhorn Housing LGIP account*.

Jocelin explained the different amounts of funds we could be transferred to the LGIP account. \$300,000 was allocated for the project from the District this year, and we have been using this line to pay our bills to the Spur Foundation, Mary Austin Crofts, and 5B First Responder Housing for the appropriation lease repayment. After today's bills we will have \$227,463 left in the line. Do we want to transfer the remaining funds, leave funds for our final Spur payment and second bi-annual lease payment, or pay the entire \$300,000? In the last case, we will significantly go over what was allocated for that line.

Chairman Gray does not want to pay an entire \$300,000 as it was previously discussed in our public

meetings that when we allocated the \$300,000, it was agreed that we would be paying some of our Greenhorn expenses from that line.

Chief Robrahn added that the City also allocated \$300,000 for the Greenhorn project this year. They are paying their lease payments from a separate line in their budget though. When creating the budget for the project, the lease payments are not considered part of that budget.

Jim would like to recommend that the City transfers the entirety of their allocated \$300,000 to the LGIP account, and he would like the District to make their contribution at the same time. Payments regarding the project, such as payments for the housing units and Galena Engineering, and have been being paid out of that LGIP account, so they have not used any of their \$300,000. He also suggests that the District makes their contribution based on what is left in the line after project related expenses, but not the debt service payments.

A discussion was held. It was decided to transfer the funds based on the what is left in the line after payments to the Spur Foundation and Mary Austin Crofts, but not the debt service.

MOTION:

Sarah Michael moved to transfer \$261,386.23 in funds from the North Blaine County Fire District's budget for the Greenhorn Housing Project to the City of Sun Valley's LGIP Fund # 3770, an account solely to be used to for expenses related to the Greenhorn Housing Project. Seconded by Chairman Gray, a roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

[10. Consideration and possible approval of bids to complete excavation and infrastructure portions of Greenhorn Housing Project*](#)

Chief Robrahn clarified that we are not approving bids here at this meeting. The bids will go to the Sun Valley City Council since the funds for payment will be coming out of the City's LGIP account. We went through the public process to receive bids and only received one bid, which was high and well above our budget. Since then, Chief Robrahn, Jim, Walt, and Galena Engineering reached out to contractors directly to request bids for pieces of the project. Chief Robrahn is extremely happy to say that we have received multiple bids for the different portions of the excavation and foundations, and they are much closer to our initial budget for the project than the one bid we received for the entirety of the work the other month. Lunceford has given us a great bid that we are very excited about. The Mayor will likely be calling a special meeting of the City Council, possibly next week, to approve contracts.

Jim Keating added that the original bid for the all of the infrastructure work was approximately \$1.85 million, \$1 mil over budget. City Council moved to request open market bids, and now we have received bids from Burks, Joe's Backhoe, and Lunceford. Jim thinks that we are playing out to have great contractors working with us on budget.

Commissioner Michael asked about the public works process of having to receive sealed bids. Jim responded that this was already done, and that is when we received the one large bid. The City Council

rejected the bid and directed City staff via a motion to request and review bids for different pieces of the project. Staff will make a suggestion to the City Council, and the City Council will make the final approval and decision. This process is being done according to Idaho Code.

Chairman Gray said that he has heard that Galena Engineering is being sold to Benchmark associates. Jim confirms that Galena has been sold and is now Benchmark. We are still working with the same staff there, and will continue to work with them as Benchmark Associates now.

11. Additional updated, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*.

At one of the last Spur meetings, it was decided to let our current contract with them expire, as we feel we no longer need the full suite of services they have been providing to us. We will now consider a new possible contract with Spur. We would like to continue to bring funds in through them, as all of our current fundraising paperwork has Spur's information with it.

Spur has provided new suggested terms via a letter, that specify a \$50 fee per donation for processing, and \$75 for any donation of traded securities. For small donations, this could be a higher fee than donation, in which Spur would deduct the rest of the cost from our raised funds. Commissioner Michael commented that the Spur Foundation is well respected in our community, and would like to continue working with them. Chairman Gray and Commissioner Michael both think the terms of the letter are reasonable. Chief Bauer has been involved in the Spur meetings, and is on board with this new proposal. He would like to thank Sally and the staff at Spur for all their hard work on this project and helping us get this far. Chairman Gray added that he would like to approach donors from 2022 and ask if they would match their donations in 2023. This will be easier if they can make their donation to the same entity.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to ask the Spur Foundation to present the District with a new agreement or memorandum of understanding with an effective date of May 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, to collect funds and process donations on the District's behalf; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

Jim Keating presented an update on the \$350K in ARPA funds that the County promised the District for the Greenhorn Housing Project. He has been in contact with the County and there are continuing conversations about the topic, regarding qualifications the County Commissioners are under the impression they stated in their County meeting that approved the funds last year. The County has sent over a contract that includes language that would require units to be available to all Blaine County first responders, regardless of their status as a member of SVFD/NBCFD. City and District staff agree that this is *not* a condition that was stated in that meeting. City and District staff and the City attorney have reviewed and made edits to the contract and Jim will be sending it back to the County this afternoon. He has requested and is waiting to receive the minutes from the referred to County Meeting.

12. Discussion and possible approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Calendar and Public Hearing Date*.

Jocelin presented the simple budget timeline, which includes discussing the budget each month at our next few meetings, with our Budget Hearing Date being August 9, 2023.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved that the North Blaine County Fire District schedules its Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Hearing Date for August 9, 2023, seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

13. Discussion: Old Business.

None.

14. Public Comment.

None.

15. Adjournment*.

Chairman Gray announced that the National Association of Realtors is looking for 'Good Citizens' to recognize, and he has submitted himself for this recognition. If chosen, the District will receive a \$15K donation for the housing project. He has also submitted an application with the Idaho Association of Realtors and would receive \$1K if recognized for that.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Chairman Gray.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann.

Chairman Gray declared the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.



Jed Gray, Chairman



Sarah Michael, Treasurer

