

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the Council
Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
December 13th, 2024, at 10:00 AM.**

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

2. Public Comment.

None.

3. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2023 Audit – Brady Workman, Workman & Company*.

Brady Workman of Workman & Company gave highlights of the audit. First highlight is the audit report; the District received an unmodified audit opinion, which is the highest opinion they can give. The second highlight is that the District did spend some money in this fiscal year. It was real close to what was budgeted for expenditures, within about a couple of thousand dollars. Good job staying real close to what was budgeted. When you review the reports and see that the District now has an approximately \$300K decrease in reserves this year, which was budgeted for, and went mostly toward the housing project. Without that major cost, the District's revenue would have slightly exceeded expenditures. Overall things look great. Brady also reviews all of the minutes of the year, looking for approvals and discussion of bills. He encourages questioning and discussion of the claims.

Chairman Gray asked Brady if he drove past the new units and garages yet, to see where that extra \$300K went last year. Brady says he has driven by many times and it looks great. Commissioner Michael commented that she noticed Brady made a footnote about an annual payment for our newest fire engine, but not our debt service for the first responder loan. We are paying the City of Sun Valley twice a year for our portion of the lease payment. Should there be a note for this? Brady explains that a footnote would not be required, but a comment can be added if the Commissioners would like it. The Commissioners agree that they would like that addition. He can make that addition, as it does not change the numbers in the report. The Commissioners request that this change be added. Brady will work with Jocelin on the wording for this comment and it can be added to the report.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to accept the Fiscal Year 2023 audit completed by Brady Workman of Workman & Company, with the addition of the two footnotes discussed; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

4. Approval of the December 2023 Claims*.

Commissioner Engelmann commented that he has been doing his own snow staking each year, and has found that he has saved money by doing it that way. He makes this comment after seeing the cost we are paying to have All Seasons Landscaping do our snow staking. Chief Bauer noted that he met with All

Seasons, and this year is different because our snow storage location has to move due to the new units and garages being in place where we normally have snow storage. It might be a good idea to look at what works this year and then place the stakes ourselves next year.

MOTION:

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

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

[5. Approval of the November 8th 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes*.](#)

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the November 8th, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Michael

Commissioner Michael abstained because she was absent for the November 8th Meeting.

[6. Discussion and possible approval of Resolution 2023-02 – 2024 Meeting Schedule*.](#)

Chairman Gray noted that, looking at the proposed schedule and his own current schedule, he will be present at all of the meetings in 2024. Commissioner Engelmann may have to call in for a few.

MOTION:

Commissioner Sarah Michael moved to approve Resolution 2023-02 – Adopting a meeting schedule for 2024; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

[7. Discussion and possible approval of Resolution 2023-03 – 2024 Recurring Expenses*.](#)

Chairman Gray notes that we have done this Resolution before, so our recurring expenses can be dealt with.

MOTION:

Commissioner Sarah Michael moved to approve Resolution 2023-03 – allowing the District to make certain recurring payments. These payments generally happen every month and are in set amounts, and typically do not vary significantly in cost. This resolution authorizes the staff to make those payments. Seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

[8. Report: Monthly Update – North Blaine County Fire District Chief, Rich Bauer.](#)

A little update on calls, there have recently been quite a few car accidents by the Greenhorn Station. There was an accident there on Saturday night that required an extended extrication, and the extrication equipment from Engine 3 was utilized. Captain Hunter Storey, who now lives just south of Greenhorn, was also able to respond and take command on that call. There was another call at East Fork just last night. Greenhorn crews were first on scene in both incidents. These responses really showcase how strategic that station's location is. Chairman Gray asks Chief Bauer to pass on the Commissioners' thanks and congratulations for the work that the crews have done.

Chief Bauer did the first round of bi-annual performance reviews with all of the live-ins last month. They were told if they are currently meeting the standards that they have agreed to with the housing. They also all signed notices about the change in rent that begins next month. Commissioner Michael thanked Chief Bauer for doing these reviews; it's very important and really raises the standards for our live-ins. Commissioner Engelmann asked if all of the residents are meeting the standards, and Chief Bauer answered that some of them are. Chief Bauer is aware of what is going on in their lives, and what might be holding them back, and is flexible with them, but he wants them to be ready to get closer to and eventually meet the standards. If we do not see improvement by the next six-month reviews, that's when we would run into problems.

Engine 20, which the Commissioners agreed to donate to Smiley Creek Fire Protection District, will be officially brought to Smiley Creek today or tomorrow. We hope this engine will serve them well for a long time.

As for consolidation meetings with the County, the Chiefs have a meeting with the consultants in January. Jim Keating, City Administrator for the City of Sun Valley, compiled and sent all requested documents from the District and City to the consultants for the Ambulance District regarding consolidation.

Chairman Gray says that him and Jim met with two of the consultants and Mandy Pomeroy of Blaine County. It was a private meeting and Chairman Gray explained to the consultants and Mandy the reasons that the District moved away from their partnership with the City of Ketchum to the City of Sun Valley. The relationship with the City of Sun Valley far exceeds the quality of relationship the District had with the City of Ketchum, and he feels like the District and City have a quasi-consolidation relationship already. He also commented that the reason that the Ambulance District has started this process is because they are not in a sustainable budget situation. He commented that neither Ketchum Fire nor Wood River Fire & Rescue have sustainable budgets without leaning on the Ambulance District funding, leading to a sense of unfairness from the citizens of Sun Valley and the North Blaine County Fire District, who contribute approximately \$1.5 million in tax dollars to the Ambulance District each year. Chairman Gray feels that his comments were well received, and Jim adds that he thought the meeting had a lot of constructive dialog. He thinks that the next executive meeting will be held in March. Commissioner Engelmann thanked Jim and Chairman Gray for having that conversation with Mandy and the consultants.

Commissioner Michael asked what the current budget is for the Ambulance District. Peter Hendricks, Mayor of Sun Valley comments that about 47% of the Ambulance District's taxes come from NBCFD and

CSV residents. The Budget is approximately \$3.5 million, and WRFR and KFD each get over \$1 million, and the CSV receives about \$150K.

Chairman Gray added that the Ambulance District officially has a new medical director, and he thinks that she is going to be great in this position. Chief Bauer says that he and Chief Robrahn actually have a meeting scheduled with her tomorrow, as she already reached out to Chief Robrahn.

Last comments are that Chief Bauer would like to say are that he was glad to hear such a positive audit report from Brady, thanks so much to everyone that helps with keeping us fiscally responsible here.

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

Chief Robrahn wants to add that everyone should be careful and take their time on the roads. As it gets dark earlier, animals are still on the move, and roads can get icy quickly. Jed says that the Gimlet HOA sent a letter about this recently too.

Chief Bauer, Chief Robrahn, and Captain Reid Black attended the Sun Valley Co's new employee orientation and were able to provide safety tips and general safety information for the area.

The team is doing a great job as we come to the end of another great and busy year. Commissioner Michael asked how the recruitment of new on-call firefighters works, do they use events like this for networking? Chief Robrahn answered that we did meet one possible recruit at that event yesterday. We have 7 applicants for the academy this year, and Capt. Ricky Williams put on our first day of physical testing this Saturday. We have found that word of mouth from our firefighters is the best way to get high quality candidates that stay with the department for a long time.

Chairman Gray asked if Chief feels like we have enough on-call members? Chief says that we would always like to have more on-call staff. Nationally, numbers are trending downward in the fire service for both on-call and full-time members. We are even seeing this in larger cities; there are less applicants per position.

He comments that cities like Boise, Nampa, and Caldwell are doing large recruitments hiring 30-50 firefighters at a time. Because there are less applicants going for more positions, it makes getting hired easier, with the potential to draw our firefighters away. Here, we are staying ahead of the game by being progressive, and having the housing to offer is a great draw for people already in the Valley, as well as recruiting new firefighters to the Valley. He notes that the City of Meridian recently received the largest SAFER Grants ever awarded with \$8 million, all to help recruit and hire new staff. We have applied and received that SAFER Grant in the past, but have not applied in the past couple of years.

Commissioner Engelmann asked what number of those new recruits is going through Academy in order to live in the housing. Chief Robrahn does not know the exact number, but at least a couple are motivated because of the housing. The Commissioners all comment that they have all only gotten positive comments regarding this housing project. Chief Robrahn is excited to get the next units placed and finish the landscaping plan. This conversation will be continued in the next agenda item.

10. Updates, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*.

Commissioner Michael asked if the second set of units is going to be delivered on January 15th? Chief Robrahn says that as of the latest email he has received, January 15th is the date. Contractors are doing the final hookups for water, sewer, and power this week, and Lunceford seems to be doing final excavation for the north septic tank. The garages are completed and will be hooked up to power with the second set of units.

Chairman Gray asked if there are still plans to renovate one of the older Greenhorn units to duty staff housing, and Chief Robrahn answered that that is certainly still a possibility, though there is no plan in place at the moment.

Commissioner Michael asked when we plan to have residents move into the first four units? Chief Robrahn answered that we are waiting to have Certificate of Occupancies complete, and plan to have residents move in after the second set of units are delivered in January. Jim says that he has high confidence that the units are coming in January.

Chief Bauer adds that an ABC affiliate news station out of Twin Falls interviewed Chairman Gray and himself regarding the housing project, and the story on the project came out really good.

Commissioner Michael asked how signs for the District are coming along, and Commissioner Engelmann said that he is currently waiting for the latest information on the landscaping plan, regarding the one for the station. Regarding the fundraising sign, he can get that ordered, and Chief Robrahn said the SVFD staff will get the sign installed.

Chairman Gray says that we got a new fundraising report from Sally Gillespie of the Spur Foundation. This reports shows \$142K collected this past quarter, \$100K of which was a previous committed amount. So \$42K came about from the letters that we sent out. At this point we have received all of the money that was committed to us in writing, although there was one other large verbal commitment that has not been received yet. Some of the repeat donations that came in were in larger amounts this year than the donors' previous donations. He said that we need to keep up the work on our fundraising; we still have a deficit of approximately \$1 million that we need to fulfill for our overall goals. Commissioner Michael said that while the Spur Foundation has sent thank you letters, we should send thank you letters directly from the District, and she is happy to draft that letter. We should also think about sending new donation requests to smaller donors. Chairman Gray agrees with both of these points.

Commissioner Michael comments that we will need to discuss the ownership of the units, and our ability to pay off the loan we have received for the units. Jim Keating, City of Sun Valley, says that it would be an important step to have a document created that lays out the final arrangement of ownership of the housing units between the City and the District. The City of Sun Valley is now collecting Housing Funds that could be put toward servicing the debt. Chairman Gray says that in the future, there will be different City and District leaders sitting in this room, and having a legal document written would be good. Jim says that, it could be argued that the City of Sun Valley has the initial ownership of the units, since they are making the direct payments on the units, and getting the insurance coverage. He thinks the intent though, is to share ownership and management of the units. This conversation has come up with the City Council, and they plan to discuss in more detail and talk with the City attorney about creating a legal

document when the final units are delivered. Commissioner Michael would love to have an update on all of this in February/March.

Chief Bauer says he was just emailed from the County officially waiving our security deposit \$163K for our landscaping, which is one more thing we needed for our C of O for the units.

11. Discussion: Old Business.

None.

12. Public Comment.

None.

13. Adjournment*.

MOTION

Commissioner Engelmann moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Michael.
A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

Chairman Gray declared the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.



Jed Gray, Chairman



Sarah Michael, Treasurer