

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

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Public Comment.

None.

3. Swearing in and Oath of Office of Jed Gray.

The mayor of Sun Valley, Peter Hendricks has agreed to swear in Chairman Gray for his next term. It is his honor to swear Chairman Gray into this office, and his personal honor to continue working with Chairman Gray. Mayor Hendricks says that Chairman Gray is dedicated, talented, skilled, and he is grateful for his involvement in the District and City of Sun Valley.

Chairman Gray made the oath.

“I Jed Gray do solemnly swear to support the constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Idaho, and I will faithfully discharge the duties of Commissioner of the North Blaine County Fire District according to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

Chairman Gray comments that he has been in this position for 12 years now, and these past few years with the City of Sun Valley have been the most rewarding. We have found a wonderful partner in the City and are accomplishing great things. He thanks the City and looks forward to a long future of working together.

4. Approval of the January 2024 Claims*.

Chairman Gray asks that on our semi-annual payments to the City of Sun Valley, the total cost be tallied up on the claims approval form.

He also asked for clarification on lines 10-425-633 and 10-425-634, confirming that that line is for our loan with 5B First Responders and we call the loan a lease. Jocelin confirms that he is correct.

Commissioner Michael comments that she has looked at our bank statements, and the Zions Bank has a money market fund at about 4.6%, compared to the less than 1% on our current Zions Bank checking account that has \$116K in it. She asks Chief Bauer to look into opening an account that we could move most of that money into and make a greater return on it. Chief Bauer is happy to look into it.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the January 2024 claims; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

5. Approval of the December 13th 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the December 13th, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Engelmann

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

We did not have any major incidents over the holidays, but our overall numbers in 2023 were up from 2022. Chief Robrahn will update the final call numbers from 2023 in his report. Chief Bauer says that we had been expecting a slow down in building in the fire District last year. Upon looking at the numbers though, building stayed consistent from 2022. In 2023 he completed 49 plan reviews for new construction projects, and 34 final inspections on completed projects. He explains that as the fire marshal he reviews all building plans for construction projects within the Fire District, and then sends them to Blaine County with his approval. Then when the project is completed he does a final inspection. Commissioner Michael asked if Chief Bauer has the statistics on the square footage of these new homes? Chairman Gray asks that due to some of the size of these homes, if there was a fire, would we call our on-call staff to come in? Chief Bauer answered that all the on-call staff have pagers, so when there is really a fire there is a strong showing of on-call staff, as well as the duty crews of other departments. He explained that with the size of these homes, we have residential homes that are commercial in size. As fire marshal reading the fire code, he and the City's fire marshal often discuss how to keep the buildings safest for our firefighters should they need to fight a fire there. He estimates the average square footage in the district is 6,000 square feet, and adds that most of the homes are in the urban/wildland interface. Chief Robrahn of the Sun Valley Fire Department echoes Chief Bauer's comments, and adds that fires in these buildings requires a lot of man power. Chairman Gray asked about the insurance ratings for the District, does the square footage work against the insurance rating? Chief Robrahn answers that insurance ratings have more to do with the water supply and distance to stations from the home.

Chief Robrahn adds for the next year he and Chief Bauer will be working together closely in preparation for both the District and the City's upcoming ISRB (Idaho Surveying & Rating Bureau) review, which determines the ISO ratings for both. Commissioner Michael comments that as a County Commissioner she worked closely with a previous fire marshal to incorporate defensible space in subdivision development code. She thinks it is important that the County update their standards with the latest information. Chief Bauer says that whenever there is an update to the International Fire Code, it usually triggers an update in the County code.

Chairman Gray asked if Nate Galpin has completed the survey of District water supply. Chief Bauer says that Nate did a great job starting the water supply survey, and now full time duty staff Sarah Driggs and Tim Hanna have taken it over. There is a google sheet that anyone on our the staff can see, and it is also all in a phone app. Mapping out the water supply, being thorough in plan review, and continuing to grow our response staffing at Greenhorn all go towards reducing the risks to firefighters when there is an incident.

Chief Bauer and Chief Robrahn have been meeting with the City of Hailey Fire Chiefs, and are discussing creating an Automatic Aid Agreement with them, so that each entity automatically responds to each other if there is a confirmed structure fire in their limits. The agreement will be brought to Sun Valley City Council next month, and then likely to the next Fire District meeting for Commissioner input and approval.

Chief Bauer says that the next chief and consultant technical committee meeting regarding county-wide fire consolidation is next Thursday January 18th. Jim Keating says that an executive meeting is tentatively scheduled for the second or third week of March. There will also be a meeting of the City Administrators with the consultants regarding county-wide fire consolidation.

Additionally, there will be a meeting at Ketchum City Hall tomorrow at 4 pm, regarding the Ketchum Fire Department and Wood River Fire & Rescue creating a Joint Powers Agreement with each other.

Chief Bauer's final comment is to thank Chairman Gray for his previous years of service and leadership on the board, and congratulations on another four years.

[7. Report: Monthly Update – Sun Valley Fire Chief, Taan Robrahn.](#)

Chief Robrahn wants to recognize the duty staff for all their help in getting the new Greenhorn units ready for occupancy, such as installing steps and blinds. Captain Hunter Storey now lives mid-valley, and has really taken on a leadership role at Greenhorn. It's looking great down there; the station and engines are looking good and clean. Chief Robrahn said that keeping the engines clean is very important for more than just maintenance and cleaning off road salts. These engines are very expensive and purchased with tax dollars, and we want to show the taxpayers that we are taking care and pride in the equipment that they help purchase.

Blaine County Fire Academy starts tonight, and SVFD has four recruits in the academy. We ended 2023 with an approximately 9.5% increase in call volume from 2022, and about a 20% increase from 2021 volume. Our calls are about 50/50 EMS/Fire calls. Since we are not ALS response yet, we do not respond to EMS calls in the District, just within the City of Sun Valley.

Chairman Gray states his concerns that there have been a high number of calls on the ski mountain, and he does not want that to take away from the idea that we need to have an ambulance at Greenhorn to be able to service that area. Chief Robrahn agrees, and also points out that most calls from the mountain are not as time sensitive as other calls for an ambulance, due to the time it takes ski patrol to get down the mountain and to the ambulance with a patient.

Commissioner Michael would like to see the exact call numbers from 2023 and 2022. Do the consultants have this information? Chief Robrahn will get Sarah the information, and yes the consultants have this information. We have submitted all requested data, including locations of calls, and he thinks that when the consultants compile all data countywide, it will be very informative. Chief Robrahn explains that with fires double in size every minute, so response time is incredibly crucial, and having firefighters close to and at our stations for that fast response is critical. He does explain that the construction of a lot of the homes here does give us an advantage in fighting the fire.

Chief Bauer says when he went to the National Fire Academy and attended their Managing Fire Officer program, he did a study on what the largest target hazard (highest risk) is in Blaine County, and determined that it is the highway here that is the most dangerous. We also know that the highway area right around Greenhorn has a lot of accidents, making Greenhorn a very strategic location for both fire and EMS response, especially considering that car accidents usually require both EMS and Fire responses.

Chief Robrahn mentions that next month 6 members of SVPD are going through an EMR course led by SVFD duty staff Matt Hanson. EMR is emergency medical response; it is a step below EMT but gives a lot of great basic knowledge than can really improve patient care when police are first on scene.

Commissioner Michael asks on the total number of recruits in Blaine County Fire Academy, and Chief Robrahn answered he thinks there are about 20 total, and we can usually expect 2-3 to drop out. National stats are showing lower amounts of volunteering in the fire service. Current stats predict that trained volunteers only stay with a department for approx. 1-2 years. A lot of this probably has to do with a volunteer's amount of free time; to be an on-call firefighter takes a lot of initial training and continuing education. Having new affordable Greenhorn units for firefighters will hopefully help us to increase retention with our on-call members.

[8. Updates, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*](#)

Chairman Gray says that the sign looks great at Greenhorn, and he thanks Commissioners Michael and Engelmann for working on getting it. Chief Robrahn also thanked Commissioners Michael and Engelmann for getting that sign, and the Duty Staff for getting it picked up.

Chief Robrahn stopped by the in progress units last week when he was in the area, and delivery is currently set up for February 1st. We are also planning for the first four units being ready for move-in right after delivery of the second four.

Jim Keating, City Administrator for the City of Sun Valley, starts to discuss where we go from here with this project. The first part is putting in the asphalt in front of the units with Lunceford, the second part is getting curb and gutter work done with Merrick, and the third part is a landscape plan from Ashley Board. We have received a preliminary landscape plan and estimate from Ashley Board, and have submitted an application for an encroachment permit with ITD, so we can create a berm along the highway. We are also looking at how to water the new landscaping, because the first couple of years will require higher levels of water for the vegetation as it gets established. Chairman Gray says that we can apply for a temporary permit allowing us to use the extra water for a certain amount of time.

Jim says that the project is generally right on budget right now. We still have about \$1 million in the LGIP account created for the project and expect to use most of it with the previously mentioned upcoming work. The new landscaping plan is currently more significant than originally planned. Right now, the landscaping plan is about \$200K, but Jim also expects approximately \$50K in additional costs for soil excavation and creating the berm along the highway. Commissioner Michael comments that the noise from the highway can be considerable, and wonders about putting a sound barrier in. Chairman Gray

comments that when he was inside one of the units, he noted it was very quiet inside. Jim says that a large part of the landscaping plan is to help with noise abatement, as well as creating personal spaces between the units. Noise abatement has been a primary thought in creating the landscaping plan. Jim would also like to comment that there is a full team, including the Chiefs, Jocelin, and the Mayor, as well as this Commission, working on this project every single day, and there is a lot of passion going into this project. Chairman Gray responds that all of the effort and passion the staff are putting into this project is what is going to help make it such a great village for our staff.

Commissioner Michael says that at the last meeting the Commissioners discussed sending out thank you letters from the District for new donations received after our October mailer, in addition to those sent from the Spur Foundation. Sally of the Spur Foundation has really imparted the importance of saying what our fundraising goal for the project and how much we have raised so far. Commissioner Michael has drafted a new fundraising letter, and wants to discuss further fundraising. Chairman Gray says that he would be uncomfortable going back to the same donors again that we just reached out to in October. Commissioner Michael wants to keep the momentum of contacting donors, and is following up with what we discussed at the last meeting. Chairman Gray is happy to be giving updates to donors, but is still uncomfortable reaching out for donations again so soon. Commissioner Michael would like to make sure we have another press release when the next units come in.

Jim adds that his opinion is that there are diminishing returns on this style of fundraising. The original goal of raising \$1.3 million was a very high goal. He thinks we could reach out to the donors we have not already gone back to several times. Though it would probably not yield significant results, it would be important to do, if only to share our progress with our community that has aided in helping with the project. He advocates for waiting until late spring/early summer before sending out another ask.

Commissioner Michael adds that the North Blaine County Fire District still does not have a lot of name recognition, and more outreach letters gets our name out there more.

The Commissioners agree to wait before sending our more fundraising requests.

9. Discussion: Old Business.

None.

10. Public Comment.

None.

11. Adjournment*.

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 11:15 a.m.



Jed Gray, Chairman



Sarah Michael, Treasurer