

Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the Council Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID January 12, 2022, at 10:00 AM.

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Public Comment.

None.

3. Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2021 Audit – Brady Workman, Workman & Company*.

Brady Workman introduced himself and is here to report on the audit that Workman & Company performed for the North Blaine County Fire District for fiscal year 2021. They have provided an unmodified audit report, which is the highest report that they can give regarding financial statements. This audit report has been changed from an accrual audit report, which is a traditional financial statement, to a cash basis report, which means that we are tracking the cash that comes in and the cash that goes out. For this type of report, the format of the forms is a little different, which is important to note for reading the report. At the end of the fiscal year, the North Blaine County Fire District had an overall increase of its fund balance of \$116,000. We spent a little less than was budgeted, mostly in our capital outlay. We also received more than we budgeted from various fees and revenues. Part of the audit included listening to all past minutes from commissioner meetings, specifically listening to conversations pertaining to finances. As auditors, they like to hear those discussions and know that there is proper board oversight of financials. The board has been good in having these public record conversations of the financials.

Chairman Gray would like to have a digital copy of the audit sent to the commissioners at least a week in advance of its presentation next year, as it was only sent out one day in advance this year with this meeting's materials. We will make that happen, and Brady is happy to come to another meeting if the commissioners have further questions after reading through the report more closely.

Commissioner Michael requested that Chairman Gray read through page 12 of the report, specifically Finding 2021-1. Brady explained that this is a finding about the lack of segregation of duties, because Jocelin is doing all the work with the District's finances, such as bank reconciliations, deposits, and writing checks. This is a common finding with small districts that have low staff levels and has been on our audit reports in the past, and will likely continue to be on the reports. This lack of segregation of duty is what makes it so important for the Commissioners to review financial documents each month, which is something they are doing. Chairman Gray noted that he has seen this finding on our past audits, and the commissioners and both fire chiefs look at the claims and monthly expenditures report, and this method of oversight seems to be working and is the method we are likely going to continue to use. Brady's recommendation is that this process can continue with the level of oversight that it has.

Commissioner Michael asked Brady to confirm that the District is not required do a management letter. Per Brady, government accounting and standards *can* require two additional pieces of reporting in a traditional government audit. One is a management discussion and analysis, and the other is the budgetary information. It is always recommended to put budget information in the audit, although it is technically not required. Management discussion and analysis is something that management writes as a summary of the year and an outlook for the future. If both or one of these pieces of supplemental information are not included, a note simply gets added to the report saying so. Because we have changed our audit to reporting on a cash basis and have moved away from traditional reporting, the management letter has not been included in our report, which is acceptable to auditing standards. This can be changed in the future if that is something the District decides that it wants to include in the report.

Chairman Gray appreciates that Workman & Company is always willing to help us improve our processes and is available to us as a resource for answering questions. Brady noted that they are happy to assist us year-round, but as an auditor there are some things he cannot help with, and he will always be straightforward about that.

Commissioner Engelmann suggested that the commissioner could begin reviewing the District's monthly bank statements. Commissioner Michael and Chairman Gray agree that this is a good suggestion we can begin implementing.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moved to accept the Fiscal Year 2021 Audit completed by Brady Workman at Workman and Company; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None

[4. Approval of the January 2022 Claims*](#)

Commissioner Michael noted that when Jocelin sent out her monthly email with attachments for today's meeting, she included descriptions of some our largest monthly costs this month. January is an expensive month for the District, due to our contracted bi-annual payment to the City of Sun Valley.

Chief Bauer had a recent conversation with Todd Mandeville, the District's contracted IT person, regarding our wi-fi at the Greenhorn and Griffin Butte Fire Stations. The wi-fi rarely gets used and the equipment needs costly upgrades to the firewall systems. Since it is so rarely used, he suggests that we cancel the Wi-Fi at both locations. A mobile phone hotspot could be used for when the internet is required at either station. The Commissioners agreed and approved the cancellation of the Wi-Fi at those locations, which does not require its own motion.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the January 12, 2022, claims; seconded by Commissioner Engelman. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann
NAYS: None

5. Approval of the December 15, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the December 15, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes; seconded by Commissioner Michael. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann.
NAYS: None.

6. Discussion: Greenhorn Housing Update*.

Commissioner Michael requested that the Greenhorn housing project becomes a regular item on our monthly agenda. Chairman Gray agrees, since this is an ongoing project that continues to be worked on.

Chief Robrahn started his part of the update by saying that we have had a site visit with the architect, and have received preliminary site plans, which we have already modified. We need to continue to meet with the County, and discuss the possibility of expanding the variance that we already have in place at Greenhorn Fire Station.

Commissioner Michael and Walt Femling, City Administrator, met with all three Blaine County commissioners, and then the Blaine County P&Z staff about the Greenhorn site plan, which is based on a conditional use permit. P&Z staff suggested moving the units further away from the highway, because their currently planned location interferes with the scenic easement and setback. Our next steps should be to work on a redesign and continue dialog with the South Central Health District. We also need to expand our conditional use permit with Blaine County P&Z so that we can move the units further from the highway, which should be easier than getting the initial use permit. In their meeting, Commissioner Fosbury said the county has 4.5 million dollars from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds that they intend to use to build 400 units of affordable workforce housing, spending approximately \$10,000 per unit. Commissioner Fosbury indicated that they might be willing to contribute some of these funds towards the Greenhorn housing project.

Commissioner Gray asked if we have enough real estate space to move the units further back from the highway. Chief Robrahn said they have created an alternate site plan that can be sent out to the commissioners shortly. They are working with Afterhours Design to look into different ways to place the units to have them outside of the easement, which places the unit closer together. Chairman Gray is happy to see that on the plans presented at this meeting the units have garages, providing storage space and a way to keep cars out of the snow. He thinks it is great that Commissioner Michael and Walt have met with the Blaine County Commissioners *and* the P&Z, getting important feedback and keeping them aware of our current plans. He also asked who controls the easement, and Walt answered that it is a P&Z ordinance with the county. Chief Robrahn wanted to thank Commissioner Michael for all of the work she has been doing to help with this planning and keeping things moving forward, and Commissioner Michael noted that since Blaine County has said they want get permits for and build 400

units of affordable housing, we should continue moving along as quickly as possible to get our building permits before there is a backlog.

Chief Robrahn said that the company that we are consulting with on the tiny homes has 8 units in progress of being made of the models we are looking at, and we will visit to inspect when they get closer to being finished. The preliminary site plans that have been created include where potential septic areas would be.

Chairman Gray asked Walt Femling if there a possibility of financing for the units. Walt said we need to start taking next steps such as submitting site plans with South Central Health, filling out paperwork with Blaine County's P&Z and filling out correct information for our conditional use permits. The more we are in compliance with the scenic easement ordinance, the more likely we are to get our plans approved with Blaine County P&Z. Getting the approvals from P&Z will make fundraising much easier. Walt would like to see the Fire District, the County, and the City of Sun Valley each commit to providing certain levels of funds to the project. Walt is working on having the City commit to a specific level of funding. Once we have a presentation package and find out what money the county and the fire district are putting forward, we can go out and ask for the remainder of the money we need. Chairman Gray noted that during his last meeting as the President of the Sun Valley Board of Realtors, they discussed this Greenhorn housing, and might be willing to donate \$10,000 to the project. This indicates that there is a willingness in the community to support the needs of our first responders by providing affordable housing.

Commissioner Engelmann has commented on the possibility of working with Jim Anderson of Colorado for financing, as he has a lot of experience financing rural projects. We should continue to focus on partnerships such as ARCH. Keeping in mind that our goal is to place eight units on the property, we may decide to do them in multiple stages. We need to continue to keep things rolling, including working on interviewing a project manager.

Commissioner Michael would like to go and visit the site of the small manufactured homes when that trip happens, and asked where the company is based out of. Walt commented that the company is based out of Cedar City, Utah, but has a manufacturing plant in Pocatello that we are planning to visit. The City's building inspector has worked with the company, ZipKit, before, and commented that they are a good and reputable company to work with.

Commissioner Engelmann noted that this project is highly financeable because we will have revenue from rent. But the less we finance, the cheaper we can rent the units for, and we want them to be as affordable as possible for the tenants. He is looking forward to seeing the units. Chairman Gray commented that is good to know that financing is an option, so that we do not have to be dependent on donations to fund the entirety of the project.

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

This housing project is a great learning experience for both fire chiefs, and we continue to be excited to work on it.

The District got paged out to a chimney fire at Seattle Ridge Lodge on the night of Dec 27th. Snowcat drivers spotted 10-12 ft flames coming out of the chimney, and initial reports said the fire might have already expanded to the building. There were logistical challenges to getting our team members up the mountain and to the Seattle Ridge. Taan was first to arrive, and then Engine 2 out of Greenhorn, and they used snowcats and snowmobiles to get up to Seattle Ridge. Snow makers for Sun Valley Co. were able to extinguish the fire using hoses they connected to the snow making guns, and the fire did not spread to the lodge, it stayed confined to the chimney. Had it spread to the roof, it would have been incredibly difficult to fight. The fireplace had to be inspected before it could be used again, but otherwise lodge use was able to resume. Seattle Ridge Lodge, Lookout Restaurant, and Roundhouse are three structures on the mountain that all lie in our District.

Chairman Gray suggested that perhaps we can set up regular training on fire response to Sun Valley Co. staff, since they will be in these difficult to access places. Chief Bauer said that many of the staff on Ski Patrol are firefighters or volunteer firefighters, and they have keys to access buildings on the mountain. There is some firefighting equipment at the Seattle Ridge patrol shack. We can work to potentially get other sheds stocked with equipment. Chief Robrahn commented that the staff from Sun Valley Co really did do a great job with their response. He was able to stay on the phone with one of the staff members to get updates, coordinate, and give instructions. He is very thankful for all of our crew that were able to get out there and help, and is working with Sun Valley Co to recognize their staff that helped in the response. Chief Bauer commented that this was the first call that new live-ins Ricky and Connor were on from Greenhorn Station.

Our new pumper tender continues to be worked on, and the company is sending weekly updates. We do not know when it will be finished, but when it is, Lt Slater Storey will go with Chief Bauer to go and inspect the pumper tender for a full three days before they deliver it to us. We pay an annual payment on our loan each August.

The last update is about the Blaine County Ambulance District's strategic plan. The Blaine County Commissioners met and formally adopted the plan. Currently there is a proposal to have the County Commissioners and the fire chiefs meet again sometime in mid-February. The problem of response times was not addressed in the plan, although Chief Robrahn commented that there is a map in the document showing what response times are throughout the Ambulance District. The consultants that created this plan reiterated that data in the document was a snapshot in time, and it should be treated as a living document with continuously updated data.

During the meeting there was also a discussion of developing a Standards of Cover. Chief Bauer will send a copy of the adopted Ambulance District strategic plan for our NBCFD Commissioners for them to review, as well as a final draft of the discussed Standards of Cover. Chairman Gray suggested that after reviewing the Strategic Plan document, the Commissioners and Chiefs can discuss sending a joint letter from both SVPD and NBCFD, mentioning that Sun Valley and the District have some of the slowest response times in the area, despite their contribution of \$1.5 million in tax payer funding given to the Ambulance District. Commissioner Michael commented that when she and Walt Femling met with Blaine County Commissioner Fosbury, he indicated that he is aware of the problem with response time. Chief Bauer commented that Greenhorn station can be a pivotal piece in improving our response times,

and this was discussed in the Ambulance District meeting. Also brought up was Wood River Fire and Rescue's request for funds from the Ambulance District for their staffing, which the district may agree to if Wood River can match the funds given. Chief Bauer noted that new Blaine County Commissioner Muffy Davis is going to be a great asset to our community, and had some really great comments in her first Ambulance District meeting yesterday. She appears to have the best of the interests of our citizens in mind.

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

Chief Robrahn does not have much add to the reports already covered so far in this meeting. Thank you to Jocelin for all the hard work she has been putting in, we're happy to have her and she's fitting in well with the team. We are excited about continuing to move forward with Greenhorn Housing, which is really going to be a great asset to our first responders, and therefore our community.

Chairman Gray mentioned that we are very grateful for our partnership with the City of Sun Valley, and appreciate all of the things we are able to accomplish because of the partnership. He extends his thanks to Walt Femling, Chief Robrahn, Mayor Hendricks, and the City. It is exciting to see meaningful projects moving forward so that we can continue to better serve our citizens.

Commissioner Michael agrees and is happy to see us doing all of these things in a financially responsible way. For reference to creating our Greenhorn affordable housing units, she commented Blaine County Housing Authority is charging \$700/month for rooms at the Lift Tower Lodge, which do not have kitchen facilities. Chief Bauer said that they visited the tiny homes in the Meadows RV Park, and those are going for \$1,400 a month. Chairman Gray commented that we plan to do better for our staff; providing better housing at more affordable rates.

9. Discussion: Old Business.

None

10. Public Comment.

None

11. Adjournment*.

MOTION

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

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None.

Chairman Gray declared the meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.



James E. Gray, Commissioner/Chairman



Earl Engelmann, Commissioner/Secretary

Commissioner Engelmann - remote call-in