

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District
In the Council Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
May 12, 2021 at 10:00 AM**

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

Present: Chairman Gray; Commissioner Engelmann; Commissioner Michael.

2. Public Comment.

None

3. Approval of the Claims

Commissioner Michael noted the \$625.00 invoice from AK Pest Management who baited for vermin and sprayed for bugs and spiders at both the Greenhorn and Griffin Butte Stations. She would like to complete research to ascertain if there is another way to control vermin at the stations rather than using poison.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the May 2021 claims, seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, and Commissioner Michael.

NAYS: None.

4. Discussion and possible approval of the April 14, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the April 14, 2021 regular meeting minutes of the North Blaine County Fire District, seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, and Commissioner Michael.

NAYS: None.

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

Chief Bauer gave an update on the new pumper/tender. He and Lieutenant Slater Storey will travel to Wisconsin May 24-27, 2021 to visit the factory and go over each detail of the apparatus before signing off on the pre-approval. Lieutenant Storey has been an invaluable asset during this process. He helped design the Sun Valley Fire pumper tender that they purchased last year, and that experience is very beneficial.

Chief Bauer met with the members of the Heatherlands homeowner's association recently. They discussed water supplies, wildfire mitigation, and defensible space. He would like to as time permits, meet with all the homeowner associations in the district to discuss these topics.

The district recently promoted Nate Galpin and Don Nurge to the rank of Squad Leader. This is the senior most leadership position in the paid-on call ranks. They will serve as squad leaders for the North Blaine County Fire District. Nate will serve as squad leader for the Greenhorn Fire Station, and Don will serve as the squad leader for the Griffin Butte Fire Station.

Trish created a more comprehensive housing agreement that we intend to implement soon. With the help of Nate Galpin and Theo Rich, we will be developing a live-in firefighter handbook to better detail the duties and responsibilities that come with being a resident firefighter.

We have had some septic issues at the Griffin Butte Fire Station. Today, Roberts Electric in concert with Sawtooth Plumbing are trouble shooting the system. It is Chief Bauer's understanding that this has been a long running problem with this system, and we would like to fix it properly instead of putting a bandage on the situation.

There was a vacancy in one of the Greenhorn Station units when Kjirsten Brevik moved out recently. She and her fiancé moved into their new home in Hailey. Marshall Mabley is our new firefighter taking her place. He is a great addition to the team! He has a military background and is on Sawtooth Heli Tack as a wildland fire-fighter. We will have another residential opening at the end of the month. Tim Hanna will be moving out of the station to a home in Hailey.

Chief Bauer reported on the first Blaine County Ambulance District Committee meeting that was held recently. The committee would like to hire a consultant to analyze the future needs of ambulance and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) here in the Wood River Valley. In 2019, under the current ambulance contract, 1 medic was required on duty in the City of Ketchum, and 1 medic required on duty in the City of Hailey. Thanks to Chief Bateman, in 2020 the minimum is now 1 medic on duty in Bellevue, 1 medic on duty in Hailey, and 1 medic on duty in Ketchum. Our proposal of 2 additional medics, will have 1 medic on duty in the City of Sun Valley and 1 medic on duty at the Greenhorn Fire Station, giving us a total of 5 medics (minimum) on duty in Blaine County. Chairman Gray stated, given the breadth of Blaine County, north to south and east to west, 5 medics on duty is essential to provide prompt response times. Commissioner Michael added that the Blaine County Commissioners have doubled the Sheriff Department's budget based upon his requests over the last 4 years and have approved an additional patrol person to cover the outlying areas. She would like the topic brought up at the next meeting to ascertain the County Commissioners priorities. Is it law enforcement, or public health and safety? Chairman Gray asked how much money the previously known Ketchum Rural Fire District, now the North Blaine County Fire District has received over the past 3 years. Chief Bauer's response indicated the total amount of monetary support received from the Blaine County Ambulance District over the past 3 years has been \$0.00. Commissioner Engelmann stated the population in Blaine County is growing exponentially, and he believes new residents will continue to arrive. If we do not plan for this now, we may find ourselves behind the curve. Commissioner Engelmann agrees that we should obtain a third-party study from someone who is not politically connected with anyone involved to give a good overview of what needs to occur. Chairman Gray stated that at the meeting the subject of an RFP (request for proposal) was brought up and questioned who would write it. He suspects that if the RFP is written by Dr. O'Connor and Commissioner Greenberg, it will be slanted, because they have not, and are not currently paying attention to our fire district and the people we serve. Commissioner Engelmann stated he believes Ketchum has the best ambulance service in the valley, perhaps at the expense of everyone else in the valley.

Chief Robrahn stated that Chief Bateman of Wood River Fire & Rescue, who has a bachelor's degree in economics, has performed some financial modeling of what the future may look like. This modeling has it laid out for seven years before it gets close to where the reserves begin to decline. This model is based upon very minimal property growth and is very conservative. Chief Robrahn went on to say unfortunately having the County Commissioners represent the Ambulance Board as well, we feel they bring a bit of a different perspective in terms of being conservative regarding financial matters. The ambulance district should be looking at how they can support the community which they are representing and using those funds to better the level of service instead of trying to figure out how not to do something. He believes there is a lot of potential there. ITD (Idaho Transportation Department) will be replacing the entry bridge into Ketchum which may take about a year to complete. During this time, all traffic will be diverted through the back streets of Ketchum. This will have a delayed response of the ambulance approaching from Ketchum Fire. These are the type of situations that we need to prepare for. Our goal is to improve response times and service throughout the county.

North Blaine County Fire District will issue a burn ban effective June 1, 2021, and it will remain in effect until November 15, 2021, or until the first significant snow fall.

Chief Bauer reported that a pair of turnouts stored at the Griffin Butte Station had been destroyed by vermin. AK Pest control was hired to take care of this situation. Commissioner Michael would like to research pest control options for the stations and present that at the next meeting.

Chief Bauer and Chief Robrahn will be attending the Idaho Fire Chief's conference that is being held at the Sun Valley Resort May 13, 2021 to May 16, 2021.

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

Chief Robrahn thanked the entire team, they are doing a terrific job! We are seeing amazing growth with all the construction occurring. It is changing around here.

Sun Valley fire-fighter Brian Tierney who has been with the department approximately 10 years, will be moving on. He is leaving the department to pursue further education. He will be working on wildland deployments while pursuing a degree in wildland fire management. Sun Valley Fire recently hired a new member, Richard "Ricky" Williams. Ricky grew up in Sun Valley, he started as a volunteer with Ketchum Fire Department and became a full-time fire-fighter/paramedic in Avondale, Arizona (just outside of Phoenix). He is a wildland engine boss, a very qualified instructor, and will be a great asset to our team.

Chief Robrahn broached the topic of heli-dip tanks. Commissioner Michael and a gentleman named Chuck Christopher from the Wood River Valley had reached out to the Chiefs recently who wanted to propose heli-dip tanks throughout the valley. Heli-dip tanks are structures that would be placed strategically throughout the valley. In the event of a wildfire, they could be used as a dip site. This was discussed at the last Blaine County Fire Chief's meeting. While it could be a benefit, we as Chiefs do not have any aerial resources. Our priority right now is housing.

Commissioner Engelmann stated he has spoken with Blaine County Commissioner Fosbury regarding moving forward with the new housing for both Greenhorn and Griffin Butte Stations. Commissioner Fosbury is very much on board with this and stated there is to be a housing workshop on Monday May 17, 2021. Commissioner Engelmann will be attending this workshop to observe and gather information about affordable housing.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget.

Chief Robrahn stated there will be an increase in the contingency line because it is unknown if we will receive the Safer Grant that we applied for. If the Safer Grant is awarded to us, we will use the contingency fund for PPE (personal protective equipment) such as uniforms. A support vehicle was suggested by Chief Robrahn. This would be similar to a pickup truck, and it will be stationed at the Greenhorn Station. It would be equipped with medical gear that is needed when responding to calls, and possibly a plow so the firefighters could perform snow removal of the station lots themselves.

Chief Bauer stated our revenue has grown over the years. In taxes alone, we are expecting an increase of at least \$13,000.00 for FY 2022. In March 2021 we had a record fee amount for plan check reviews of \$9,000.00. He followed up on Chief Robrahn's comment regarding the pickup truck, and stated they are also considering the purchase of a new Type 3 wildland engine. The pickup truck could serve as a first response vehicle and save on snow removal costs, which have been high even in these drought years. We would consider purchasing these vehicles outright after October 1, 2021. Chief Bauer stated that he and Trish worked on the budget and had a few suggested line items increases and decreases.

1. Increase the equipment non-capital. Increase this line item from \$7,000.00 to \$20,000.00. The new apparatus that is currently being built, does not come with a mobile radio, this will need to be a separate purchase under this line item. The cost is approximately \$8,000.00. We also need to replace some fire hose, at the suggestion of our firefighters. While the hose may pass a test, the performance decreases through time. Given the rural nature of our district, we want to ensure we have the best performing attack line hoses that are undertaking the initial attacks on these fires.
2. Increase the medical safety supplies. If we are successful with our paramedic ALS upgrade, we will need to spend funds on this type of equipment.
3. Increase the legal expenses. It became clear that our \$1,000.00 FY 2021 budget for legal expenses was not enough. We are considering an increase of \$2,000.00, totaling \$3,000.00 for the FY 2022 budget.
4. Decrease the communications dispatch lease. In FY 2021, the North Blaine County Fire District paid the Baldy Repeater Lease in full. In years past, this expense was evenly divided with Ketchum Fire. Since Ketchum Fire is now the new lease holder of this agreement and did not reimburse North Blaine County Fire in FY 2021, we can deduct this amount from the FY 2022 budget.
5. Increase or decrease the snow removal. This is contingent upon the purchase of a pickup truck with a snowplow.
6. Increase motor fuels. The price of fuel has increased this year.
7. Increase advertising and legal publishing. An increase of \$100.00 because this is an election year, and we will be posting more notices.

Commissioner Engelmann requested a line item be created for "housing development" because we will need to pay for engineering of the site, soil tests, surveys, preliminary plans, etc.

Chairman Gray requested a line item and funds to cover the costs of changing the name on all our apparatus.

Commissioner Engelmann requested a line item set aside for the purchase of hats and/or T-shirts for the paid-on call firefighters.

8. Discussion: Old Business.

Verifying the balances of the fire district's accounts.

9. Public Comment.

Colleen Quindlen stated she is a huge fan of Ricky Williams and wanted to let the commissioners know that Ricky was a paid-on call resident. She said we are lucky to have him back.

10. Adjournment.

MOTION

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

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, and Commissioner Michael.

NAYS: None.

Chairman Gray declared the meeting adjourned at 11:44 AM.



James E. Gray, Commissioner/Chairman



Earl Engelmann, Commissioner/Secretary