

## KETCHUM RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 416/100 Arrowleaf Road  
Sun Valley, Idaho 83353

Phone: (208) 622-8234  
Fax: (208) 622-7600

---

**James E. Gray**

*Chairman*

**Earl Engelmann**

*Secretary*

**Sarah Michael**

*Treasurer*

**Rich Bauer**

*Fire Chief*

### Virtual Regular Meeting of the Ketchum Rural Fire Protection District May 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Present: Chairman – James E. Gray  
Treasurer – Sarah Michael  
Secretary - Earl Engelmann  
Director of Public Safety – Walt Femling  
Sun Valley Fire Chief – Taan Robrahn  
Ketchum Rural Fire District Chief – Rich Bauer  
Administrative Assistant – Trish Smith  
Public

#### CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None.

#### MOTION

**Commissioner Michael moved to approve the April 15, 2020 meeting minutes; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.**

AYES: Commissioner Engelmann  
Commissioner Michael  
Chairman Gray

NAYS: None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

**MOTION**

**Commissioner Michael moved to approve the Claims; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.**

AYES:           Commissioner Engelmann  
                  Commissioner Michael  
                  Chairman Gray

NAYS:           None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

**UPDATE: CISTERN PROJECT – CHIEF BAUER**

Chief Bauer gave an update on Ketchum Rural's water supply. He thanked Nate Galpin who has tested all the cisterns and dry hydrants in the East Fork area. Nate also created a user-friendly Google Sheets document that includes all the data and homeowner information. There were 5 cisterns on the master list provided by Ketchum Fire that either do not exist or could not be located. Seven of the cisterns had missing or inoperable padlocks on the lids of the tanks, and seven cisterns failed the testing due to inaccessibility or a location listed that was not found. Ketchum Rural needs to acquire new padlocks for the cisterns and have them universally keyed. Chief Bauer has received a quote for approximately \$12.45 per padlock. He suggested we keep a cache of padlocks on hand for future use. The current water supply master lists we received from Ketchum Fire are not up to date. The duty crews have been testing cisterns north of Ketchum and have found quite a few that are not on the list. We are teaming up Sam Young of Blaine County GIS Services to update the locations and master list of all our rural water supplies. Commissioner Michael asked for more information on the fire district's responsibilities and liabilities versus the homeowner responsibilities and liabilities pertaining to the water supplies. Chief Bauer explained that the homeowner's primary responsibility is to maintain a clear access route to the cistern, ensure the water supply is available year-round, and the cistern is in working condition. The fire district will not make repairs to cisterns. We will test and inspect the cisterns, ensure there is clear access, and make sure they are labeled with consistent positive identifiers. These are all items that are identified by the Idaho Survey and Rating Bureau. It is their minimum criteria for non-pressurized water systems. Another key point regarding our water supplies, Ketchum Rural will obtain water use agreements from each of the homeowners over the course of time. This would give us permission to use the water in case of an emergency, because the

systems do belong to the homeowners. Chairman Gray added that while the water supply systems are the property of the homeowners, all water in the State of Idaho, belongs to the State of Idaho. He further stated that all water in the State of Idaho can be used in emergency situations. Chairman Gray also noted a safety reason for the padlocks, so a child does not fall into the water system. Another reason the fire district uses padlocks which are keyed alike is because we need to have access to check the cisterns and assess the water level.

Commissioner Michael asked what would happen if the homeowner wanted to access water from their cistern, and it had a fire district padlock on it. Chief Bauer explained the water from the cistern cannot be removed without use of equipment located on a fire apparatus. This is a topic that will be covered in our water use agreement with the homeowners. If a homeowner feels they need access to the water in the cistern, they can call on us, and we will come out and unlock the lid for them. Typically, a homeowner cannot pull water from a cistern. Chief Bauer explained that a primer on a fire engine is used to create a draft and pull the water up into the apparatus. Chairman Gray applauded Nate and the fire fighters who are working north of town creating an inventory of our water supplies.

Commissioner Engelmann also thanked all involved in the water supply efforts. He stated it appears the system has been neglected in the past and some of the supplies have not been checked in years. It is great that we will get these up to date. Chief Bauer stated that Ketchum Rural is modeling the water supply system after the Wood River Fire system, to have consistency in Blaine County.

Commissioner Michael stated this is such an amazing service that Ketchum Rural Fire District is providing. It would be great to get those letters sent out to the homeowners regarding the water supply agreements.

#### MONTHLY UPDATE – CHIEF BAUER

Chief Bauer thanked all the departments who worked on the Hyndman View Fire, Hailey, Wood River, Bellevue, Ketchum, Sun Valley the Forest Service and BLM (Bureau of Land Management). All the crews worked well together to stop the fire and it is greatly appreciated. Last week Ketchum Rural was paged out to free a 31-year-old Stallion, who had fallen through a rotten bridge trapping his hind legs. It was a great team effort which included Ketchum Rural Fire District, Sun Valley Fire and Ketchum Fire Department. A veterinarian was contacted who sedated the horse, while the crews placed fire hoses underneath the horse, and were able to lift the horse up and out of danger. The horse is doing great! Greenhorn Fire

Station is looking better than ever. Chief Bauer visits frequently to check in. Last week the residents had a clean up day, cleaning the interior and exterior of the station, taking 3 trips to the transfer station. Chief Bauer is very impressed with the work being completed, he stated he has been attending trainings at this location for over 20 years and has never seen it look better. Update on the FY 2018 Assistance to Firefighters Grant; Ketchum Rural under the guidance of Chief Ancona was awarded a grant from FEMA to purchase vehicle extrication equipment. The initial funding request was submitted to FEMA and was denied because of a minor hiccup. We spoke with FEMA and re-submitted with their guidance. The funds have been approved and will be issued soon. We have placed a preliminary order and are hoping those tools will be delivered in 6-8 weeks. We chose to order from a company called Holmatro. They have been the gold standard for vehicle extrication for many years. Once we receive the tools, they will be housed on Engine 2 and Engine 3, ensuring Ketchum Rural has extrication tools on either side of the district. Chairman Gray asked Chief Bauer to extend our gratitude to Tom Ancona.

Lieutenant Slater Storey is the vehicle maintenance leader for the Sun Valley Fire Department. He will be handling vehicle maintenance for the Ketchum Rural Apparatuses. His ability to recognize, report and act when necessary has been a tremendous help. Recently the front tires on Engine 20 were replaced because they were deemed unsafe...they were 19 years old. NFPA requires replacement of tires at 7 years. Sometimes this timeframe can be stretched a bit, but 19 years is too far. The batteries were also replaced on Engine 20, they were 15 years old. Moving forward, Lieutenant Storey will develop a maintenance schedule for the Ketchum Rural apparatuses. The Ketchum Rural shift assist program may begin as early as mid-June; however, will most likely begin around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. Chief Robrahn and Chief Bauer have been working with Stacy McLaughlin who is heading up the Blaine County Wildfire Protection Plan Mitigation Project in Star Weather. A discussion regarding fire wise education was had. There could be a potential to partner with Landscaping Companies or Realtors® who could distribute fire wise brochures while they are conversing with their clients. Chairman Gray stated the Board of Realtors® might approve the purchase of fire wise brochures to assist in fire wise education. Chief Robrahn stated there is a grant in place, funding is available for public outreach and education. What the Sun Valley Fire Department has been working on is: how we live with wildfire. It is a recurring event, and it is not going away. It does matter how we prepare for it, to be successful in our mitigation efforts.

Chairman Gray prefers brochures that could be handed to the Realtors® clients, rather than having a Realtor® trying to educate a potential homeowner about fire wise yards.

Chief Robrahn thinks it would be best to have brochures with contact information listed so the homeowner could contact the fire department which is more than happy to go out and perform the education process. We only ask the Realtors® to supply the brochure which lists our contact information. Once they contact us, we plan on getting out into the community and educating them.

Commissioner Engelmann suggested a collaboration with the local newspaper to run a series of community service articles, or information type distribution. It would be a great way to help educate the public, especially with the early fires that we are having.

Chief Robrahn agreed and stated we may be able to work closely with the paper on this topic. They really are essential in getting information out to the public.

#### MONTHLY UPDATE – CHIEF ROBRAHN

Chief Robrahn wanted to thank the entire team at Sun Valley Fire Department and Ketchum Rural Fire District. The amount of effort that everyone has been putting in over the past few months from all the departments has been great. They have really stepped up in a time of need, mentally and physically.

Update on the de-annexation and annexation. This has been delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it remains a work in progress. Chief Robrahn recently spoke with Chief Bateman of Wood River Fire & Rescue. They have been speaking with their legal experts regarding the de-annexing of the Greenhorn Fire Station, and the process for Ketchum Rural Fire District to annex it. Chief Bateman anticipates this item to be on the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.

Servpro has been donating their services to sanitize all the vehicles. They have been coming in every two weeks to disinfect all the fire vehicles to reduce risk and the spread of the virus. This is a service that Servpro has been donating to Sun Valley and Ketchum Rural, to help our community and our first responders. They have offered to disinfect all vehicles after a big incident.

The new pumper tender by Pierce Manufacturing for the City of Sun Valley is expected to be delivered in June 2020. That apparatus should be in service for the summer, which will be a great asset to the City of Sun Valley and Ketchum Rural Fire District. All the apparatuses of Sun Valley Fire Department and Ketchum Rural Fire District are from Pierce Manufacturing. This makes it easier from a maintenance standpoint. Lieutenant Slater Storey is being trained as a

maintenance technician; he has been attending Pierce training courses for maintenance on all our vehicles.

Commissioner Michael requested a letter be sent to Servpro acknowledging their public service. The service they have been providing during this crisis is amazing. Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann and Chief Robrahn all agree that a letter to Servpro is a great idea. Commissioner Michael will draft a letter for all to sign.

#### MONTHLY UPDATE – DIRECTOR FEMLING

Director Femling explained the fiscal year 2020 Budget was put together in July 2019, even though the City of Sun Valley was not to take over the Ketchum Rural Fire District until October 1, 2019. Director Femling was able to obtain 3 years' worth of records from the City of Ketchum. As he studied those records, a few items stood out such and "supplies & gasoline". Combining those 2 items together brings a lack of accountability of expenditures. He expanded a few line items to separate items such as "office supplies, janitorial, operating supplies and motor fuels". The difficulty faced by the City of Sun Valley while not involved in the Ketchum Rural Fire District yet, was ascertaining the dollar amounts for the budget. Director Femling looked at past expenditures from 2016-2019 and tried to fill in blanks with actual budget numbers. The Capital Expense of \$15,000.00 listed in the fiscal year 2020 budget was not for a specific item, but for unexpected repairs, services, or purchases. Based on the proposed fiscal year 2020 budget in comparison to the fiscal year 2019 budget, a surplus of \$31,000.00 was used to create the Capital Replacement fund. The replace fund was created for use on items or circumstances that are unknown at the time of the budget approval but are detected during the fiscal year. One example of this is the repairs needed at the Greenhorn and Griffin Butte Fire Stations, and residences. The \$30,000.00 approved for the fire station and residences can be pulled from the Capital Replacement Fund. We will make a proposal each year to place funds in the Capital Replacement Fund, in the event of a major break down of one of the apparatuses, or some other unknown needed expense. Ketchum Rural Fire District has money in the Idaho State Treasurer's Office accounts which should be slated for the building of new residential units. Another option would be to investigate grants or donations for the funds to build additional housing. Commissioner Michael asked about the Communication/Dispatch/Lease line item of \$15,000.00 was budgeted, and we have spent \$11,000.00, does that mean over the next 6 months, we need to pay more. Director Femling stated the dispatch

lease and communications are a one-time payment for the year. Last fiscal year Ketchum Rural paid \$29,000.00, which was an overpayment, therefore the fiscal year 2020 budget was adjusted to the \$15,000.00 shown. It is believed that the fiscal year 2021 communication costs are coming in lower. Chief Robrahn has been to some recent meetings regarding communication costs for the future. He can speak more on that. The Dues/Subscriptions/Memberships line item was high last fiscal year because Ketchum Rural was paying for Air St. Luke's subscriptions for all the City of Ketchum employees. The budgeted amount was reduced for the fiscal year 2020 budget. That amount will need to be raised for the fiscal year 2021 budget due to the IFSCA membership, and other memberships that we were not aware of. Chief Robrahn stated the communications budget line expenditures, as Director Femling previously stated, are paid once a year. He also stated we are in great shape overall. Chiefs Robrahn, Bauer and Director Femling have been working on the fiscal year 2021 budget and will be providing the documentation to the Commissioners along with justifications and explanations of where we are currently and what is planned. The Commissioners will be provided with explanations of why some items may be under this year, and if we expect them to resume next year, or why we needed to make increases in line items. In running the numbers right now, Ketchum Rural Fire District looks to be in great shape. It is difficult to say exactly where we are currently, however we may have a \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 savings over fiscal year 2020. In our presentation that will be coming up, we have some ideas about the future Capital Funding mechanisms, and how we put those together. One of our goals is to prepare our organizations for the future. Chief Robrahn stated this document should be ready to share with the Commissioners for their review in approximately 2 weeks and should answer a lot of the budget questions.

#### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL TO PURCHASE 5 NEW RADIOS

Chief Bauer stated there were some communication issues during the East Fork Fire. A lot of the radios that are on the Ketchum Rural Apparatuses are old HT100 radios, which are past their serviceable life. When Ketchum Rural Fire District transitioned away from the City of Ketchum, they paid Ketchum Rural for 5 portable radios. Chief Bauer proposed that we purchase 5 of the new BK radios, which is what most of the fire fighters in the area are carrying. They are a great communication device which we can program ourselves. Chief Bauer would like to purchase 5 radios this year, with the money received for radios from the City of Ketchum and then budget to buy a couple of radios each year, for the next few

years, so we can keep up with good technology and good communication. We would like to have the best possible tools for safety reasons. Commissioner Michael voiced her support for this transaction. She believes we need to have the best technology and communication. Commissioner Engelmann agrees that communications are a critical safety measure.

### **MOTION**

**Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the purchase of 5 new radios as proposed by the White Clouds Communications/Auto Phones quote dated 05/07/2020 in the amount of \$8,855.65; seconded by Commissioner Michael. A roll call vote was taken.**

AYES:           Commissioner Engelmann  
                  Commissioner Michael  
                  Chairman Gray

NAYS:           None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION: UBS ACCOUNT**

Commissioner Michael received online access to the UBS account however, she has been unable to connect with our account manager, who is currently on vacation. There is a possibility of further distributions in 2020 to this account. This will probably be the last year of distributions. Commissioner Michael will be speaking with our account manager next week and requested authorization to request that UBS waive the \$170.00 management fee for 2020 as we are in the process of concluding our relationship, and also allow her to close the account if there are no further distributions or income. It was discussed that when the Commissioner names were added to the UBS account, Chairman Gray was listed as the control person, therefore being the person permitted to close the account, or grant online access to others listed on the account. Commissioner Michael as being listed on the account has the authority to view, research, and ascertain information from UBS regarding the account, but when the time comes that the Commission wishes to close the account, Chairman Gray's signature is required.



**MOTION**

**Commissioner Engelmann moved to authorize Commissioner Michael to follow through with the UBS account research, and potentially prepare it for closure; seconded by Commissioner Michael. A roll call vote was taken.**

AYES: Commissioner Engelmann  
 Commissioner Michael  
 Chairman Gray

NAYS: None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION: OPEN BURNING AND BURN PERMITS**

Chief Bauer stated Ketchum Rural Fire District had a previous burn ban in place in accordance with the Idaho Department of Lands. This was for non-essential burning. Once the Covid-19 restrictions loosened, a gentleman applied for a burn permit. He has burned in this district for many years. Ketchum Rural granted him a permit, and unfortunately the burning went beyond his control. This cause the fire near East Fork Road. Chief Bauer in his 20+ years' experience has never seen such dry conditions and this type of fire behavior this early in the year. Chief Bauer noted that a lot of the burning in the south valley is more essential burning for agricultural reasons. In the north valley however, it seems the burning is not essential. Chief Bauer would like to hear the commissioner's opinions on northern burning. Chairman Gray asked if the majority of our northern burn permits are for use of property clean up and burning the debris rather than taking it to the transfer station. Chief Bauer replied yes, that is what we have seen from the burn permits we have issued. Approximately 5 burn permits were issued from Ketchum Rural Fire District in 2019. Chief Robrahn stated with the situation going on, and the fatigue on all the responders a risk/benefit analysis is performed. We ascertain the risks versus the benefits. With only having a hand full of burn permits, and the situation with Covid-19 and everything compounded on top of each other, it's Chief Robrahns feeling, (he and Chief Bauer have discussed this) that it's in the best interest to suspend burning in the district right now. Chairman Gray is in favor of suspending any non-essential burning in our district and believes Chiefs Bauer and Robrahn can determine the difference between essential and non-essential burning. Chairman Gray feels, any item that can be hauled away rather than burned should be, not just now because of the pandemic, but for the future as well because we live in a high-risk area for

wildfires. The economic devastation to the citizens greatly surpasses the economic difficulty of paying someone to haul it away. Chairman Gray is not in favor of issuing any non-essential burn permits within our district, ever. These conditions will not change. Commissioner Engelmann noticed a substantial article in the newspaper today about our predicted dry summer, risk for fire, and the lack of water. Commissioner Engelmann agrees there is no reason to have open fires in our district. He asked, at what point will the forest service, and BLM ban campfires? Chief Robrahn stated we are having meetings with the forest service and BLM, in terms of early burn bans, which we have been pushing for. We feel that with everything going on, our biggest risk is we are going to see an increase of campers, and they will be more spread out into federal lands. Our goal is to reduce risk and limit those possible exposures. If we can all get on board, and Chief Robrahn thinks we are, the federal entities have a more detailed process to go through to get these procedures implemented. Commissioner Michael wanted to clarify what latitude the staff has for issuing burn permits if they feel it is safe and falls in the category of essential burning. Chairman Gray asked if the Chiefs needed a motion or resolution from the Commission to enact a burn ban on non-essential in 2020, or at least until it can be reviewed in the fall. Chief Bauer believes as Fire Marshall for Ketchum Rural Fire District, that he can make that call. Typically, in the past, when Federal Agencies began putting restrictions on burning, that is when the Rural Districts would suspend open burning until the fall or when there was significant rain or snowfall. Chief Bauer will research this to be certain. Chairman Gray feels the federal agencies are behind the curve because of the process they need to go through, and their timeline is not satisfactory for protecting our district. Commissioner Michael believes our leadership is important here, and that we should have a motion suspending burn permits until the fire conditions are less hazardous.

**MOTION**

**Commissioner Engelmann moved to suspend burn permits indefinitely; seconded by Commissioner Michael. A roll call vote was taken.**

AYES:           Commissioner Engelmann  
                   Commissioner Michael  
                   Chairman Gray

NAYS:           None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

Commissioner Engelmann asked if this motion would also ban campfires. Chief Robrahn stated it would not ban campfires at this moment. The banning of campfires falls under fire code where the Fire Marshall would be able to implement those restrictions. Ketchum Rural Fire District would like to send a unified message in cooperation with the forest service across Blaine County. It becomes difficult with campfires, whether a citizen is within the rural district or the forest service, it would be best if we coordinate and issue our bans together. We have been having weekly meetings with the forest service, and the topic of campfires has been brought up. We have made our position clear that we are in favor of early burn bans. Chairman Gray stated the federal government controls the public lands. While this commission cannot control burning on federal lands, hopefully we can influence them with a strong message from the commission. Commissioner Michael offered to draft a letter for Chairman Gray's signature to the head of the BLM here regionally and the Sawtooth National Forest Ranger indicating our request for them to consider our position and the threat that we feel for the homeowners in our district from wildfires. Chairman Gray accepted Commissioner Michael's offer, and requested she add the fact that we are already stressed due to the Corona Virus.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Gray stated the IFSCA attorney William Punkoney has responded regarding the by-law draft submitted to his office. Their office like many others has slowed workflow due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. He hopes to have a document to deliver to Ketchum Rural Fire District for our review by May 22, 2020. The next regular meeting of the Ketchum Rural Fire District is June 10, 2020. It was agreed to review the by-laws documentation sent by William Punkoney at the next meeting.

Commissioner Michael gave a report on draft legislation that the ISFCA (Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association) regarding annexing the Griffin Butte Station. Commissioner Michael received correspondence from the ISFCA Executive Director saying the legislative committee has not called for a meeting, but she has asked William Punkoney to draft language to propose to the committee. The ISFCA Executive Director Krystal Hinkle says she likes the potential decrease in acreage and putting the language in legislation that allows the taxing entity to annex the property that they own. Commissioner Michael informed Michelle Stennett that she will not be alone, and hopefully this bill will be an Idaho State Fire Commission Association with the Ketchum Rural Fire District as a supporter. Michelle would be one of the sponsors of the bill, the association would try to gather several legislators as co-authors.

Chief Bauer asked if we still planned on paving the fire station lots this spring? Commissioner Engelmann suggested we move forward with paving the lot at the Griffin Butte Fire Station, and delay paving the lot at Greenhorn Fire Station. We may be adding to the facilities at Greenhorn which may involve removal of some of the pavement if so, we should repave after the construction. Chief Bauer stated the contractor did agree to honor the fall bid price. We paid \$1,500.00 in the fall for staging of equipment which was not used due to weather. We were told the \$1,500.00 would be deducted from our bill this spring. Chief Bauer will request a revised bid.

#### ASSIGNED TASKS:

##### Commissioner Michael:

- Draft a letter of thanks to Servpro
- Draft a letter regarding campfires to BLM and SNRA

##### Chief Bauer:

- Research the capacity of the Fire Marshall regarding fire bans
- Obtain revised paving bid from Idaho Materials

##### Chiefs Bauer and Robrahn:

- Research costs of Fire Wise Program brochures

**MOTION**

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

**AYES:** Commissioner Engelmann  
Commissioner Michael  
Chairman Gray


**NAYS:** None.

**Chairman Gray declared the motion carried.**

Adjournment 11:35 AM



James E. Gray, Commissioner/Chairman



Earl Engelmann, Commissioner/Secretary