

# Hebgen Basin Fire District

## Meeting Minutes

October 09, 2018

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Meeting was called to order at 1802 hrs.

**Board Members Present:** Ken Davis, Gay McBirnie, Kyle Goltz, Nancy Heideman, Mike Gavagan

**Also in Attendance:** Chief Grube, AC Jessop, Lindsey Charlton, Erin McDowell, Cassandra Mitchel, William Polansky, Landon Zimmerman, James McBirnie, Jeremy Gallagher, Carrie Egging, Tyrel Stoker

**Recorder of Minutes:** Lindsey Charlton

**Public Comment for Items Not on Agenda:** No public comment.

**Approval of Minutes for September 11, 2018 Regular Board Meeting:**

Mike Gavagan made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ken Davis seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Approve Claims/Deposits:** Chief discussed lost check to market place that was reissued. Auto glass repair, company came down to repair multiple agency windshields. Line 4483, Carrie Egging fuel refund due to high call volume causing WEX fuel card to be maxed. Carrie used her personal card to purchase fuel, Chief explains this is a very rare occurrence. Nancy Heideman asked about increasing limit on WEX cards, Chief states we have fuel accounts at gas stations, providing they are open. Ken Davis asks about the cost of health insurance premium. Chief confirms total and shares the renewal is coming up next month.

Ken Davis made motion to approve the claims as presented. Gay Seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Chief's Report:** See attached.

Reported call statistics and district is three calls ahead of last year. No accidents to report in September. Hose testing is close to being completed, only 500 feet left. September has had major traffic accidents creating a busy month. Staff spent a lot of time on firefighter 1 training. All paid staff, 3 volunteers along with other agencies out of Evergreen and Bozeman are taking vehicle training class put on by HBRFD insurance company. Looking into ATV and UTV training classes for staff in the future.

Training building is close to completion; footings are poured, structural supports in place, three containers delivered, just need to build stairs.

EMT class is in progress, Ethan is instructing, currently running with 10 participants through January. Charging \$500.00 for class, refunding 150.00 after completion and pass state or national licensing. After volunteering for 1 full year, students will receive full refund.

AED application will provide 4 more units if awarded. One will be dedicated for summer rec program and three remaining will be for school sports teams. Will report results.

County SBA grant is almost complete and ready for submission. Our cost was \$400.00, will have a few more conference calls before submitting to review all information.

Radio tower on Sawtell can be purchased by county. Kyle Goltz asks if the county is open to purchasing. Chief explains that they are hesitant to take another site since it is not in their budget. The benefit for south end of county would be very large and hoping the county will consider purchasing.

First net is an option for cell service to replace current phone plan with AT&T. Cost is less than current plan and first responders get priority over cell towers. This is believed to be beneficial for staff and families. Chief is still collecting info and will report findings. Nancy Heideman states she has never heard of first net and asks is that is a new company. Chief explains that it's an AT&T program for first responders so in the event of emergency first responders will have band width priority. If district keeps sim cards from current phones the new plan will roll with current plan.

Financial statement update, see email from Sydni Tangaro for corrections. Ken Davis comments that his impression of her email is that once she has completed her assessment and corrections are made then we will not have to fix things moving forward. Based on what she is doing then all balancing issues should be corrected. Chief explains that Sydni will help us balance end of year books, and we need to keep using just one accountant going forward. Nancy Heideman asks if district will need to go back and resubmit the 2017 reports since accountant is making corrections. Chief states that the accountant's adjustments will not change anything so there is no need to resubmit reports from 2017. We use Sydni for financial statements and Morgan to conduct audit to ensure we follow the District policy of having the audit performed by separate source. Mike Gavagan agrees and adds that if we keep the same people then we should not have communication issues going forward and remaining consistent.

#### **New Business:**

Swearing In and Confirmation of Ethan McDowell as Confirmed Firefighter.

AC Jessop starts ceremony off by starting to feel like Bill Murray from Groundhog Day with the monthly confirmations that have been happening. AC Jessop welcomes Ethan's father, Erin McDowell, who has 31 years of experience in firefighting positions. James says words about tradition, service, safety, and coping with all that comes with the job. This group is more than fire department, we are well rounded team. James closes by sharing the interesting history behind fire helmets. Kyle Goltz then swears in Ethan McDowell as confirmed Firefighter for the Hebgan Basin Fire District.

#### **Employee Home Investment and Retention Policy**

#### **Discussion/Action**

Ken Davis motions to move this discussion to below residency policy. All in favor. Motion passed.

#### **Purchase of New Command Vehicle**

#### **Discussion/Action**

Chief explains that AC Jessop is in need of new district truck. Chief asked for bids from Chevy, Dodge and Ford dealer ships. Chief recommends that district goes with lowest bidder for the 2019, 4 door red hemi, which comes with topper and slide. Total cost is \$32,670.00.

Ken Davis agrees with Chief's suggestion and motions to purchase truck. Gay Mcbirnie seconds. All in favor motion passed.

#### **Revise Personal Policy:**

131 Employee Residency to Reflect Arbitrators Ruling

#### **Discussion/Action**

Chief used last best proposal that the district went to arbitration with to make the policy updates. Chief revised the definition of residence and changed it to reflect a 30 minute response time per arbitrators ruling. Gay MCBirnie states that in reading the arbitrators award, she recommends removing the title: **Residency Policy** and change it to state **Residency Response Time**. Gay MCBirnie called the arbitrator to get clarification on the decision wording, and he told her to read response which she understands that as in lieu of residency policy the title needs to be changed to residency response time. Chief disagrees stating if you want to

quantify the district or response time as residency policy it is still a residency policy. The policy has changed and the definition is now a response time rather than specific area.

Gay Mcbirnie responds that the district should be willing to modify the policy and the arbitrator is stating in lieu of. The wording needs to be changed to reflect arbitrator's definition.

Mike Gavagan responds that there is still a residency policy, the policy has changed to reflect a 30 minute response time. There is no need to change wording as it is clear that the district modified the residency policy to reflect a response time.

Gay Mcbirnie would like to see the district change the wording for future staff and states that the wording should be changed to response time removing residency policy. Gay MCBirnie then asks if the crew was aware of policy changes. Cassandra Mitchel comments that they were notified 1 hour before board meeting. Ken Davis states arbitrator ruled, and crew had copy, then recommends the board to table topic until next month. Chief responds that the wording used is directly from the attorney representing the district and all parties received arbitrator's award last week. The district attorney was working another case, copies were distributed to board, and the language in the policy is the same language submitted to the union, nothing has changed. Kyle Goltz states this discussion is not tabled and the board needs to vote on it. The board should not wait as the document is not going to change.

Ken Davis remarks that the policy reflects wording from arbitrator, his award, and the board proposal. Bottom line is the policy written follows the arbitrators order.

Gay Mcbirnie asks Chief if has there been a date set between board and union to sign contract.

James MCBirnie comments that they have asked chief twice to sit down and work on documents and adds if lawyer writes the contract then the union may change due to verbiage. Chief responds that the residency policy is what is on agenda right now. Contract is still under review and once chief reviews then he will submit to union. Right now the residency policy is what is on table.

Ken Davis addresses the crew by stating that he appreciates what they have said and it makes sense. Ken would like to change policy to state employee response policy rather than residency policy in order to make everyone feel that it reflects arbitrator intent. Ken Davis Motions to adopt employee response policy. Gay MCBirnie seconds. Mike Gavagan restates that this is still a residency policy and questions Gay MCBirnie about contacting the arbitrator. The procedure Gay MCBirnie followed to get the clarification was not within position boundaries and there is a conflict of interest. The board is trying to change a residency policy, the board members represent district and everyone involved was aware of policy changes.

Kyle Goltz states the District is willing to modify the residency policy, which is what has been done and district policy needs to stay as written. Kyle Goltz revisits motion on table to adopt Employee Response Policy. 1 in favor, 4 opposed, motion denied.

Kyle Goltz addresses the revised residency policy on table as currently written and states it needs to stand as written. Ken Davis motions to adopt. Mike Gavagan second, Gay Mcbirnie votes no, 4 votes in favor. Motion passed.

Jeremy Gallagher asks for clarification with Employee Assistance Program and living within Hebgen Basin. Chief responds that the policy is for homes within the basin that support the district.

### **Revise SOG#202 Driving Hbfd Fire Apparatus**

### **Discussion/Action**

Seasonal volunteers have out of state licenses and current policy states volunteers are required to possess a valid Montana driver license. Policy needs to be changed to state valid driver's license, removing Montana from current wording.

Nancy motions to make change. Gay Mcbirnie seconds. All in favor. Motion passed

### **Employee Home Investment and Retention Policy**

### **Discussion/Action**

Chief explains that he brought policy before board in July and stills believes it would be a great policy. Chief recommends we move forward with the program. Kyle Goltz states that he personally has been for program, the issue is the union has claimed that it is an indentured servant servitude. This is like a slap in the face when

the board is trying to implement good programs for people. Mike Gavagan explains, this can help people buy homes we can be a model program for town, school, police department and it can used to keep good people here. He expresses that he strongly support this program and it is a great benefit to the staff of Hebgen Basin District. Ken Davis adds that there are escape clauses to let them out of program, Hebgen Basin Staff are not bound by the program and do not have use the program.

Ken Davis motions to adopt program. Nancy Heideman seconds. All in favor. Motion passed.

### **Hardship Application**

### **Discussion/Action**

Patient has requested that the district write off remaining balance of medical bill due to hardship. Chief reviews that applicant has made consistent monthly payments reducing the amount owed to less than half of total billed. This patient is an example of a person the write off policy is designed for. Nancy motion to write off balance. Gay Mcbirnie seconds. All in favor. Motion passed.

### **Pay Raises for Non-Union Staff (Chief and Assistant Chief)**

### **Discussion/Action**

Chief asks for the same raises for this year and last year for AC and Chief that was awarded to union staff. Chief suggests that in lieu of longevity pay, a performance bonus could be implemented. Kyle Goltz comment that he personally has no problem with the program, we should adopt a performance program rather than longevity scale. Nancy Heideman agrees with Kyle Goltz on having performance bonus rather than longevity policy, but first the wages should be increased. Nancy Heideman motions to increase non-union staff to what the union received. Ken Davis seconds then asked that the pay be equivalent to the union amount and retroactive as we are with union pay raises. Ken Davis also comments about administrative assistant position raise and Chief explains that he will request pay increase once probation period has ended. Ken Davis comments that the board should go ahead and give Chief approval to increase administrative salary once probation period expires. Chief asks if Board is moving forward with back pay, or setting new wages. Nancy Heideman confirms that AC and Chief will receive back pay just like the union awarded. Nancy Requests motion on table to be recited: Motion to increase non-union staff to rate of increase the union staff received. Ken Davis second. All in favor. Motion Passed.

Nancy Heideman recommends that performance reviews should consider time with employer, view pay increase based on work above typical performance, a performance bonus would be more than fair for non-union employees. Board members discuss options for evaluation non-union staff and crew voices concerns of evaluations validity: retaliation, possible reprimand, the need for feeling protected in order to be honest and being anonymous. Chief does not want the evaluations to be anonymous and Kyle Goltz suggests sending results directly to him and he consolidates information then distributes to the rest of the board to review. This way Board members will not know who sent specific information and Kyle can pass on any questions to crew if needed. Landon Zimmerman suggests the evaluations get submitted to the union and they consolidate and send to board for review to protect participants.

Kyle Goltz motions to table the performance bonus on our next meeting. All in Favor. Motion Passed

Kyle Goltz requests the union makes a list of bonus questions the board can answer and asks the crew to share any ideas they may have. Nancy Heideman adds that this needs to be more of a peer review and the staffs ideas need to be heard.

Meeting adjourned: 19:44

Thursday 11/15-6pm