



**CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

215 Wings Way
Belgrade, MT 59714
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MEETING PLACE: Central Valley Fire District, Station 1
215 Wings Way, Belgrade, MT

DATE: February 11, 2025

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:		<u>(Present)</u>	<u>(Absent)</u>
Trustees:	Ty Elliot, Chair	X	
	Darren Wilkins, Vice Chair	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Ron Murray	X	
	Rob Holt	X	
Fire Chief:	Jay Wittwer	X	
Operations Chief:	Jeff Hurley		X
Fire Marshal:	Jake Zlomie	X	
Acting Clerk:	Debbie Bloem	X	
City Representative:	Jim Simon	X	

NOTICE: **ALL MEETINGS OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE RECORDED**

GUESTS/VISITORS: Ramie Blakeman, Ashley Coulthard, Dustin Pitman, Dylan White, Nick Tucker, Billy Kutyllo

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Elliot led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee Wilkins moved to approve the **January 14, 2025 minutes** as submitted. Trustee Murray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve **the financial reports**. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS: Central Valley Fire District received a thank you note from **Montana Secretary of State Christi Jacobsen** thanking the District for its deployment of firefighters to the Southern California wildfires. **Sandy Jewett**, a resident of California, thanked the department, for their work on the Southern California wildfires and willingness to help other communities. **Governor Gianforte** sent each of the deployed firefighters, letters of thanks for their service. An **anonymous resident** wrote a letter of concern regarding the cost of the deployment to California, who paid for it and the role that the firefighters played in the deployment.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT: As submitted.
Chief Wittwer reported that he and two firefighters participated in the Montana Firefighter Testing Consortium CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Testing) in Billings. They were able to distribute information about the District and possible future employment opportunities to the candidates there.
The Gallatin Valley Fire Academy will begin May 5th.
The **Fleet Team** has been getting up to speed on apparatus needs. There are currently two **paramedic programs** that members are participating in, the Boston program and the Flathead College, Kalispell program. A program is being created through Gallatin College which may be available this fall.

There was a good turnout for the **Strategic Planning process**, beginning with community participation on the first day and progressing through the following three-day sessions with department members. Chief Wittwer will continue to provide updates on the progress as the final plan is developed. The **FY26 Budget** process has begun.

OPERATIONS REPORT:

As submitted.

In DC Hurley's absence, Chief Wittwer briefly reviewed the Operations Report.

FIRE PREVENTION REPORT: As submitted.

Fire Marshal Jake Zlomie provided some updates from Deputy Fire Marshal Yung on facilities projects, including the water storage at Station 4. A tank has been installed and is almost ready for water.

Fire Marshal Zlomie explained that the District has been involved in new construction permitting. In the past this authority was approved by the Department of Labor and Industry. Department of Labor and Industry changed some of the language to allow state officials to delegate approval of new construction and the District requested to be officially delegated to approve fire suppression projects. No response was received and the Dept of L & I then delegated anything fire protection related to building officials. Of the 36 building inspectors across the state only 3 have any fire certifications. There has been both lack of credentials and lack of transparency. The building officials at the City of Belgrade sent a letter to the District stating that the permitting that has previously been issued by the Fire District will now be done by the City of Belgrade, beginning March 1st. Fire Marshal Zlomie and Fire Chief Wittwer had been discussing this move with the City of Belgrade but were not aware of a conclusion to the discussions until the letter was received. A member of the District may accompany the City Inspector on the inspections but there has been no formal plan to make those inspections available to members of the fire prevention team. CVFD staff plan to meet with the City of Belgrade to further discuss how this will be implemented. Fire Marshal Zlomie will pursue having District Fire

Prevention staff designated as inspectors for Gallatin County residents outside the City. Chief Wittwer is working to have a good relationship with the City of Belgrade. Trustee Murray brought up concerns regarding the safety aspect of being excluded from the inspection process in the City of Belgrade. A daytime meeting, as soon as possible, with the City of Belgrade, including Montana State Officials to clarify the State's position, will be arranged. The last week of February will be the target time for this meeting.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT:

Union President Dustin Pitman stated that firefighters will be concerned over safety issues that this new plan from the City of Belgrade brings up and appreciates the concerns of the trustees. Collective Bargaining negotiations have begun and although the most recent meeting was postponed due to sickness the hope is to complete this process in the next couple of months. There was good representation from the Union in the Strategic Planning meetings and members appreciated the process.

TRUSTEE REPORT:

Trustee Mark MacLeod reported that during the Strategic Planning community meeting one of the participants mentioned that most of the community does not realize all the things that the department does unless it is in the news. He suggested that more of that information be shared. **Chairman Elliot** added that he will be providing interviews to the media to address the concerns of the resident regarding the California deployment and pointing out that other departments help Central Valley Fire District when large events happen here. On another note, Chairman Elliot stated that after 12 years of service, he will not be running for re-election this year. Union President Pitman thanked Chairman Elliot for his service and agreed that the department is in a much better place that it was a couple of years ago.

CITY LIAISON REPORT:

None.

Trustee MacLeod moved to accept **the reports** as submitted. Trustee Wilkins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Interlocal Agreements for Services with the City of Belgrade Update

Chief Wittwer reported that the Belgrade Police Department is requesting help with Fire Investigation and training and that the District would like to have an official agreement outlining that service.

Traffic Control for Emergency Response from Station 1; Chief Wittwer and Trustee Holt

The Airport Engineer is still working on a plan and once that proposal is in place, it will be reviewed by the board, approved by MDT and then funding will be addressed. Trustee Holt would like to request a meter from MDT to officially document the number of cars driving by the station. He was asked to work with Chief Wittwer on proceeding with that request.

Department Participation in Community Special Events

There was some discussion regarding the different community events that the department supports, including Farm Fair. There are costs involved and as well as some benefits to providing this as a service. The Board requested a proposal from staff regarding what the criteria should be and if there should be a cap on hours donated for events before a fee will be assessed.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **March 11, 2025**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.


Ty Elliot, Chairman


Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST:


Debbie Bloem, Clerk