



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

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

DATE: May 13, 2025

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:		<u>(Present)</u>	<u>(Absent)</u>
Trustees:	Darren Wilkins, Chairman	X	
	Ron Murray, Vice Chairman	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Rob Holt	X	
	Ramie Blakeman	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: Ty Elliot, Nick Stinson, Miranda Roy, Samantha Honatke, Brinn Fiorentino, Anthony Stratman, Danielle Freeburg, Wendy Wittwer

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

Chairman Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: As presented.

PRESENTATIONS: **Chief Wittwer** recognized **Battalion Chief Anthony Stratman's** 15 years of service with the Central Valley Fire District. Chief Wittwer also presented **Ty Elliot** with a plaque recognizing his 12 years of dedicated service as a trustee on the Board of the Central Valley Fire District.

OATH OF OFFICE: Office Manager Bloem administered the Oath of Office to newly elected **Trustee, Ramie Blakeman.**

ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustee Wilkins opened the Annual Organizational Meeting with the election of officers.

Trustee Murray nominated **Trustee Darren Wilkins for the position of Chairman.** Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The nomination was unanimously approved.

Trustee MacLeod nominated **Trustee Ron Murray for the position of Vice Chairman.** Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The nomination was unanimously approved.

Trustee Murray nominated **Trustee Mark MacLeod for the position of Secretary/Treasurer.** Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The nomination was unanimously approved.

The Organizational Meeting was closed.

MINUTES: Trustee Murray moved to approve the **April 8, 2025 minutes** as submitted. Trustee MacLeod 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: A letter was received from the **Montana DNRC**, Forestry Division in gratitude for the support of the Montana Agencies, including CVFD, who responded to the California Wildfires.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT: As submitted.
Chief Jay Wittwer expressed his gratitude for the actions of the CVFD members who aided one of their own, quickly and effectively during a serious medical incident at Station 1. The outcomes appear to be all good at this point and the department is actively supporting him and his family.

OPERATIONS REPORT: As submitted.
Deputy Chief Hurley briefly reviewed his submitted report.

FIRE PREVENTION REPORT: **Deputy Fire Marshal Yung** reported that hydrant testing is beginning in order to provide the department with a good record of hydrants in service in the District.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT: **Firefighter Nick Stinson**, the newly elected Union President expressed appreciation for Ty Elliot’s years of service. President Stinson also passed along appreciation for the support received from the Union, at the State level as well as Union members, the Administration and the Board in the wake of the medical incident involving one of their own. All signs are hopeful for a positive outcome.

TRUSTEE REPORT: **Trustee Rob Holt** reported that in this legislative session **HB136** was passed and that homeowners are now able to have their home inspected to seek a rating that could provide a discount for their home insurance. The District will look into being able to offer this service. He also shared information about ***the Far Out and Waiting Program*** through Montana Farmers Union which

educates residents in remote areas about what to do in a medical emergency while they wait for an EMS crew to arrive. Montana Farmers Union provides all the support for this program. Trustee Holt added a thank you to everyone who serves and has served for many years with this department.

Trustee Ramie Blakeman added appreciation for the efforts of DC Hurlley to educate the public about the status of Station 2 and handling that in an open, professional manner.

CITY LIAISON REPORT:

Council Member Jim Simon reported that the Belgrade City Council will conduct workshop discussions the second Monday of each month, which are to be open to the public. The first discussion addressed the situation in the area of Dry Creek Road, Cruiser and Jackrabbit. Other topics will be announced. The City has purchased property at Bolinger and Frontage to utilize for water storage and other public works items.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Station 1 Airway Blvd Signage Update

Trustee Holt reported that he, Fire Marshal Zlomie and Chief Wittwer met with the Gallatin Airport Authority Board regarding the alerting signage in front of the emergency exit from Station 1. It was the first time that this had been formally brought before their board. The costs and options were explained. Their board agreed that the airport does not need the signage for its own use, but a single purpose light to stop traffic for emergency vehicles is what is required, and they agreed to a three-way split for the project. Trustee Holt will meet with MDT at the end of the month to approach them to provide the engineering study and installation. Chief Wittwer plans to attend the Gallatin Airport Authority Board Meetings regularly in the future.

ACTION ITEMS:

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF 2025 – 2030 CVFD STRATEGIC PLAN AND MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Chief Wittwer began by explaining that community members were involved in the initial direction of this plan and after that initial input, department members created the plan and implementation with structural guidance from CPSE. Trustee Ron Murray expressed some concern that as the members of the District begin to implement the tasks in this plan that the organization continues to remember its number one role of being first responders. Chief Wittwer assured him that this organization has a strong commitment to serving the community to the point that even in the midst of a medical emergency within the crew, emergency response to the District's residents continued without delay.

Trustee Ramie Blakeman voiced the need to find ways to include the Board of Trustees in the implementation action items in the plan in an active and fully supportive way.

Chairman Wilkins asked if there was a plan to report back to the stakeholders. Chief Wittwer said that best practices will be to hold an annual meeting or to include an annual report in a Board Meeting to not only review the progress to date, but to make any updates necessary.

Trustee Murray moved **to approve the 2025 – 2030 CVFD Strategic Plan and Management Implementation Guide.** Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4/1 with Trustee Holt abstaining for lack of review.

Chief Wittwer added his appreciation for Fire Marshal Zlomie's action and foresight to initiate this process as the Acting Chief prior to Chief Wittwer's arrival.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF FY26 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Financial Manager Samantha Honatke shared the FY26 Preliminary Budget Presentation. During this presentation she explained that the District does have the ability to fund the deficit at this point using undesignated reserves. Wildland deployments or other non-tax revenue which is unknown is not included in this budget. There is already a small amount of additional revenue from increased EMS transport fees which will be more defined for the August review of the final budget. Anticipated expenses from

current CBA negotiations are not included in this preliminary budget. Whenever possible, Capital funds are used for expenditures that qualify rather than using Operational funds. Trustee Blakeman asked if the current status of our apparatus is affecting our readiness to fulfill the mission identified in the Strategic Plan. Chief Wittwer responded that many of the items in the Strategic Plan are already being addressed. The acquisition of a heavy rescue vehicle is something that will benefit the whole area with the addition of a new Brush Truck in order to better protect the District. Trustee Holt expressed concern over the lack of grants being applied for. Chief Wittwer responded that while the District has and will continue to apply for the SAFER grant, many of the available grants are specifically for volunteer fire departments and that staff is always on the lookout for grants to apply for.

Trustee MacLeod moved to approve the **FY26 Preliminary Budget** as presented. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 242509 TO SUPPORT ANNEXATION OF PARCELS

Deputy Fire Marshal Brandon Yung reported that a business owner in the 4 Corners area, currently in Gallatin Gateway Fire District, expressed interest in improving their response rating. Documents have been put together to enable residents to annex into Central Valley Fire District if they are adjacent to the District and these residents have requested this annexation. With a fully staffed fire station in this area and the large call volume to support this station, this is a practical decision for the customers and the District. It was clarified that this is the Board supporting this annexation, but the County Commission must approve it.

Trustee Murray moved to adopt **Resolution 242509 to support annexation of the parcels listed**. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 242510 TO UPDATE PROCUREMENT POLICY

Deputy Fire Marshal Brandon Yung explained that the plan is to use this procurement policy update, along with Alternative Project Delivery to build the new shop in the most cost effective and efficient way. Where possible it will save the most money to hire local subcontractors and this method is provided for in the

Montana state statutes. Trustee Blakeman confirmed with the Deputy Fire Marshal that there will be documentation of this process as this project is completed.

Trustee MacLeod moved to adopt Resolution **242510 to update the procurement policy**. Trustee Murray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION 242511 TO UTILIZE ALTERNATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY

Deputy Fire Marshal Yung added that this additional resolution gives the District the opportunity to break up the build in order to get the best price.

Trustee Holt moved to adopt **Resolution 242511 to utilize alternative project delivery**. Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **June 10, 2025**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.



Darren Wilkins, Chairman



Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST:



Debbie Bloem, Clerk