



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

215 Wings Way
Belgrade, MT 59714
406-388-4480
(Fax): 406-388-6270

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

DATE: Monday, July 28, 2025

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

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

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

GUESTS/VISITORS:

Mo Holt, Justin Sharp – Blanton, Samantha Honatke, Nick Stinson, Jim Martin, Ashley Coulthard, Dylan White, Catherine Hogan Kalmanson, Mike Kalmanson, Carol, Wendy Wittwer

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

Chairman Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA:

As presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Martin questioned the lack of notification for this special meeting. He also is looking for the bylaws and for minutes from before 2022. Mr. Martin continues to have questions about the emergency responses to his area with the closure of Station 2. Chairman Wilkins replied that all the required notices were made before this meeting. He added that the reason that Station 2 has been closed at this time is due to consideration of best use of staffing and the lack of calls in the Station 2 area. Deputy Chief Hurley added detail regarding the pain staking process of making the decision to close Station 2 and the District's desire to meet the needs of the entire District. He also reviewed the efforts to bring in additional revenue and explained the process of call response. CVFD does receive and provides both automatic aid and mutual aid. Deputy Chief Hurley asked Mr. Martin to direct his questions and concerns to the CVFD Officers and not to the Board.

Maureen Holt stated that she and her husband attended the meetings for years and now he sits on the Board as a Trustee. She said that she and her husband have been concerned about any increase in their taxes but are also aware of the large area that the fire department has to cover. She would like to see more funding from other sources including the airport, I-90 and the County.

Mike Kalmanson is concerned about all the developments being approved without the proper infrastructure.

Trustee Blakeman stated that the State of Montana prohibits revenue from being collected for two years on newly developed property. **Council Member Simon** added that approval must be given to any developments who request it and meet the criteria.

<<Female attendee>> asked about the grant awarded to Bozeman Fire. Chairman Wilkins explained that CVFD did apply for the SAFER Grant but was not awarded it. She also asked if the increase in growth affects call volume. Chief Wittwer explained the simultaneous multiple calls and mutual aid. She asked if Station 2 could be partially staffed at least for medical responses and if responses could be more specifically given to meet the needs of the call type without extra personnel. Chairman Wilkins pointed out some of the multiple considerations for responses and staffing and use of resources to meet the needs of the entire District.

Maureen Holt expressed her concern that the County be involved and accountable in these concerns and discussion. There is some confusion about the increase in the property taxes and lack of funds available to the District.

After revenue was brought up again, **Financial Manager Samantha Honatke** explained the limitations on the mill levy revenue increases.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Presentation of Current CVFD Budget & Current Funding Status

Financial Manager Samantha Honatke reviewed the FY25 budget breakdown for operations and capital funds, included in the board packet. Additional copies were handed out to the attendees. \$692,403 was used from undesignated funds to provide the additional revenue needed to cover the FY25 operational budget. She pointed out that capital funds can not be used for the operational expenses.

Financial Manager Honatke then reviewed the FY26 budget projections. These do not include recently implemented revenue enhancements which will hopefully yield additional funds. This review included balance projections for the new few years, ending with a negative balance on 6/30/2029. There are operational increases over those years which cannot be predicted at this point.

The question was asked regarding how long it would take to open a station. If a Levy is approved it does take some time for the revenue to be collected by the County, usually the November after the levy and then it also takes time to train and onboard nine new firefighters to fully staff a station; probably around one year to complete the process.

Discussion of Future Budgets and Service Levels for Response Areas

Deputy Chief Hurley went over the Operations report for this year a copy of which was also handed out to the attendees. This report went over tactical operations and incident management and training. He explained some of the revenue generating programs that are currently in affect and how all of the efforts align with the goals of the CVFD Strategic Plan. He also highlighted the cooperation and support of the District's Firefighters of Local 4939.

Discussion of General Communications Plan

Chief Wittwer presented a data driven communications plan which was put together by consultant Liz Loomis. This will be further reviewed at a future meeting. The recommendation, with only a couple weeks to prepare, is to not go out for a Levy election at this time. Chief Wittwer also highlighted the commitment of each of the board members to the District. Some county commission members will be at the next meeting.

Discussion of Possible Levy Request

Data was provided from the past annexation and levy measures that have been placed before the voters.

ACTION ITEMS:

Consideration and Approval of General Communications Plan.

For future discussion and action.

Possible Consideration and Approval of Resolution for Levy Request.

Trustee Blakeman moved that the **discussion and action on the Levy Request be tabled**. Trustee Murray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Adoption of Resolution 252601 to Establish a Permissive Medical Levy for FY26.

Postponed to August 12th Budget Meeting.

Consideration and Approval to Issue an RFP for Loan for Station 6/Fleet Services Facility.

Deputy Fire Marshal Brandon Yung is leading this process. The money is available in Capital Funds to build the Fleet Services Facility which will be used to provide services to the area at a fee and will be a source of additional funds without necessitating going out to the voters to ask for more funding. He also urged everyone to encourage the residents of this District to come to meetings and be part of these discussions if they have questions or concerns.


Trustee Holt moved to proceed with the **RFP for a loan for the Fleet Services Facility**. 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 **August 12, 2025**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Darren Wilkins, Chairman



Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST: 

Debbie Bloem, Clerk