



**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: August 12, 2025

TIME: 5:30 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>	Greg Tryon	X	

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

GUESTS/VISITORS: Mo Holt, Stephen McAdams, Justine Swanson, Zach Brown, Samantha Honatke, Anthony Stratman, Jordan McGearty, Trent Saunders, Miranda

Johnson, Chase Roe, Brinn Fiorentino, Kyle Davis, Chris Cameron, Jim Martin, Chuck Romeo

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

Chairman Wilkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve the **July 8, 2025 minutes** as submitted. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Trustee Holt moved to approve the **July 28, 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: Chief Wittwer sent a thank you note to **Chalet Market** for continuing to team up with CVFD to host the Eagle Mount Big Sky Kids Welcome Lunch each year.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Chuck Romeo** from the Summer Ridge Subdivision requested information regarding the timeline for the reopening of Station 2 due to concerns over response times to the area.

Jim Martin asked if the Board has developed a plan to re-open Station 2 and expressed his concern over what he perceives as lack of planning on the part of the Board of Trustees.

Maureen Holt expressed concern that other entities are affecting the services available to District residents without providing additional revenue.

ACTION ITEMS: **Consideration and Approval of Standard of Behavior**
(Adjustment to item order)

Chief Wittwer explained that the Board Members attended an excellent Board training provided by MSU's Local Government Center. One item that was addressed was the need for a Standard of Behavior, a draft of which was included in the Board Packet for the Board's review.

Trustee MacLeod moved that the **Standard of Behavior** be approved. Trustee Blakeman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 252601 to Convert Voted Mills

Due to some changes in recent legislation, it is necessary for the District to select **one of two options regarding voted mills**. This selection will affect the 14 voted mills designated for capital improvements and the 10 voted mills for operations. Chief Wittwer introduced two Gallatin County representatives; Justine Swanson, the County CFO, and County Commissioner, Zach Brown.

Chairman Wilkins asked the County Representatives to explain the advantages both immediate and over time. Commissioner Brown explained that the purpose of the legislation is to clarify for the voters what the dollar amounts are for the mill levy funding for transparency and understanding since most people do not have a clear understanding of mills. Justine Swanson explained that it appears that if the mills are not converted this year, they will have to be converted in the future.

Commissioner Brown added that the Commission has the ultimate authority in this matter. He does agree with the goal of this conversion to bring clarification and transparency. Trustee Blakeman expressed her hope that the Commission will help to educate the voters with a statement to the public explaining the necessity for this change. This is significant since this change will at some point decrease the revenue available for the District to provide its services which are already suffering due to lack of funding. Option 1 conversion will translate to \$300,000 more in revenue this year than Option 2 but will most likely limit the revenue available in the future by not adjusting according to the growth in the District.

Trustee Holt moved to adopt **Resolution 252601 to Convert CVFD's Voted Mills using the First Method**. Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

As submitted.

Chief Wittwer reported that the District is part of the **Montana Firefighter Testing Consortium** and staff will be participating in the Career Firefighter testing December 8th through the 11th.

The Montana Farmers Union training, "**Far Out & Waiting**" is planned for some time this winter. Trustee Holt asked that information regarding the

Far Out and Waiting class be distributed to the HOA's and others to get the word out. Revenue enhancement efforts continue.

OPERATIONS REPORT:

As submitted.

Deputy Chief Hurley reported on the call volume for July. A brush truck with crew is in California helping to fight the wildland fires. He added that call responses to the District are not affected by these deployments since members step up to cover the absences and wages are reimbursed by the fire resources and do not use District funds.

FIRE PREVENTION REPORT: As submitted.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT:

Union President Nick Stinson reported that members continue to support the deployments and support the efforts of the Board to provide additional revenue for the department and services to the community.

TRUSTEE REPORT:

None.

CITY LIAISON REPORT:

Assistant Manager Tryon reported that the City is experiencing the same challenges with reduced funding with a \$460,000 drop in funding to the police department. It will now be necessary to go to the voters more frequently for funding. He also thanked the department for the presence of the fire engine at Belgrade Summer Nights.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

None.

ACTION ITEMS:

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 252602 to Adopt the CVFD FY26 Budget.

Financial Manager Honatke reviewed the updates from the preliminary budget proposal for FY26. It was conservatively anticipated that the District would receive a 12 percent increase tax revenue since this was a reassessment year however the increase was only 9% this year. After analyzing enhanced non-tax revenue, including EMS billing, investment interest, deployments and Fleet services the estimation of expected revenue was increased by \$300,000, making up for the loss in tax revenue. Financial Manager Honatke continued to go through expenditures which increased by \$34,800.

\$15,000 was added to outfit the new type 3 engine with a radio and tank. \$180,000 of station signage money was re-allocated to be addressed in the next budget. Radio purchases will be able to be applied to the capital fund account.

Trustee Holt moved to adopt **Resolution 252602 to approve the FY25 Budget**. Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 252603 to Establish a Permissive Medical Levy

Trustee MacLeod moved to adopt **Resolution 252603** to Establish a Permissive Medical Levy. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 252604 to Levy the Maximum Number of Mills

Trustee MacLeod moved to adopt **Resolution 252604 to Levy the Maximum Number of Mills**. Trustee Blakeman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Engagement for a Public Communication Plan

Chief Wittwer explained that a committee will be formed to include two board members along with other department staff who will then use the developed communication plan to focus on community involvement and education. Chairman Wilkins expressed the obvious need for this improved public engagement and Trustee Blakeman added the need for dynamic interactions.

Trustee Holt moved to approve the **public communication plan**. Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval for Securing a Loan for Tech Rescue Vehicle

Deputy Chief Hurley reported on the need for a Technical Rescue Vehicle to benefit the District as well as surrounding communities to make extrication and other rescue equipment available for responses as well as for training. Financial Manager Honatke added that because the District is a non-taxable government entity, the loan rate will be lower. Currently there are no grants available for this type of funding.

Maureen Holt asked that the District explore grants from Town Pump, NorthWestern Energy, AMB West and Stockman.

Trustee Blakeman moved to **Secure a Loan for a Tech Rescue Vehicle**. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Selection of CVFD Representative to the Gallatin County EMS System Policy Group

Chief Wittwer said that after completing their study of the EMS response needs in the area, there is now a request for a board member to sit on the committee for the Gallatin County EMS System Policy Group.


Trustee Holt volunteered to represent the District in this group.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **September 9th, 2025**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.



Darren Wilkins, Chairman



Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST:



Debbie Bloem, Clerk