

Minutes

Board meeting of Park County Rural Fire District #1

March 11th, 2024

The Board of Trustees of Park County Rural Fire District #1 met on March 11th, 2024, for their regular meeting at 304 East Park Street, Livingston MT.

Trustees Present: Chairperson Lawellin, Secretary Lowy, Trustee Nelson, Trustee Fee

Also Present: Chief Babcox, Asst. Chief Anderson, Vickie Jo Shipley, Jordan Caoile

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:01 pm

Public Comment: Asst. Chief Anderson informed the board that his last day with the department will be March 21st, 2024 as he is resigning and moving with his family to Missoula.

Minutes: The minutes were read by Chairperson Lawellin. A motion was made to approve the February 12th board meeting minutes. First by Trustee Nelson. Second by Trustee Fee. Motion passed unanimously. A motion was made to approve the February 26th special meeting minutes as amended by Secretary Lowy. Second by Trustee Fee. Motion passed unanimously.

Sign Claims and Warrants, Financial Report: See Attached. Financials were read by Vickie Jo Shipley. Signed approved February 1st-13th, 2024 warrants and claims #14992-14999=\$13,128.73. Signed approved March 1st-13th, 2024 warrants and claims #15000-15024=\$67,622.68. Total amount of claims without February tax income is \$187,462.86. Capital Improvement Report was also read.

Chiefs Report: See Attached.

New Business: Discussion of Chief Babcox's contract. Chief Babcox's contract is up for renewal next month. The board discussed different calculations on the cost difference if the Chief's salary was to increase. The board discussed the compensation for the Chief, and voiced that it is not a simple matter. The board discussed the Chief's position along with the knowledge and experience Chief Babcox brings to the department. The board suggested an increase in salary to

\$90,000 annually. That would increase his salary for the three remaining months of the fiscal year, which would total to an increase of just under \$3,600. Then it can be budgeted into the next fiscal year. The new wage would start on 1st. Chairperson Lawellin made a motion to increase the Chief's wage to \$90,000. Second by Secretary Lowy. Discussion: Trustee Nelson asked where in the budget would the department make up for the salary increase. Mrs. Shipley said that when the budget is set for the next fiscal year, there will be places within the budget that will have to be cut, Chairperson Lawellin also mentioned that we "kick" a vehicle down on the list for replacement as well. Chief Dubeox also asked for an increase in the amount he is able to spend without board approval in maintenance and cost of repairs, as well as purchasing amount. Specifically Section 15, subsection 13, C and D as well as Section 14, 4th point A. Chairperson Lawellin made a motion to amend to the original motion to increase the amount to \$10,000 and include "and/or Section 15, subsection 13, points C and D and increase the amount to \$5,000 in section 14, 4th point A" and by Secretary Lowy. Motion Passed unanimously. The original motion to increase in salary to \$90,000 passed unanimously.

General Purchasing Authority

Can of the Chief's contract

Per emergency Repair

** Remove Vicecha and add*

Public Comment: Secretary Lowy voiced that the incident that happened on February 26th, 2024 was followed up with a complete investigation given to the board members and that incident that happened was not acceptable. Mrs. Shipley reported that she was hearing complaints from members of the community as well as employees. Secretary Lowy asked for an item to be put on the agenda for the next meeting regarding the conduct and manners. Trustee Nelson also voiced that all members of the board should review the By-Laws prior to the next board meeting. Chairperson Lawellin stated that there will be some changes that we wanted to be made to the By-Laws that were mentioned by Trustee Nelson. Asst. Chief Anderson spoke up and voiced that without naming names, that this creates a hostile work environment every time they come into the fire department, that it is a hostile work environment and opening the department up for a lawsuit.

Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Secretary Lowy. Second by Trustee Nelson. Motion passed.

Courtney Lawellin
Chairperson

Debra J. Lowy
Secretary