

Mosier Fire District Board Meeting
Mosier Fire Hall on Washington St.

DATE: December 10, 2015
7:00 p.m.

BOARD: Mac Jervey, Joanne Rubin, Joe Sacamano, Phil Evans

Absent: Darin Molesworth Excused:

STAFF: Fire Chief Jim Appleton, Recorder Tracie Hornung (via conference call)

PUBLIC: MFD Volunteer Maggie Goter, City of Mosier Councilor Jackie Sterner, and City Manager Kathy Fitzpatrick

CALL TO ORDER – Meeting was called to order by Board Member Phil Evans at 7:10 p.m.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS – None

BUSINESS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Review/Approve Bills

Regarding the draft minutes, Chief Appleton said the word “another” in Item #2 under Business should be changed to “next.”

Board Member Joanne Rubin made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Board Member Jervey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS

1. Volunteer Reports

Maggie Goter said the MFD Volunteers’ new leadership crew is Kris McNall, Charles Young, Lisa White and herself. There is a pending new member who is a full medic, and she is awaiting his application. She and White should finish with training at the Hood River Fire Academy in February. She said the Volunteers were happy that the Board had worked with McNall on the draft MFD drug policy.

2. Committee Reports

Appleton referred to the station siting report that Terry Moore of the Station Development Committee had recently completed and said he had done a good job. He noted that Moore had been working with Mosier City Manager Kathy Fitzpatrick on a transportation grant that could result in a siting feasibility study for the MFD and the City. Appleton said it would be 6-8 months before they hear anything about the grant. Appleton said he would email the Board a feasibility study done last year for the City by PARC Resources. Kathy Fitzpatrick spoke, noting that Jackie Sterner is the city council liaison to the MFD Board for this siting project. Fitzpatrick said she and Moore had met with the state Dept. of Land Conservation and Development and noted that they are interested in this study. She said if the process is successful the state would provide technical assistance to the City and MFD for the siting project. An impromptu discussion on ways to finance the new building and apparatus followed.

3. Fire Chief Salary Adjustment

Referring to a chart she had prepared, Board member Rubin noted that she had done a lot of research of small volunteer fire districts in Oregon with paid full-time chiefs. She noted that the Mosier Fire District Chief makes approximately \$39,000 per year; the next lowest salary in Oregon was \$48,500. She informally proposed increasing the Chief's salary by 20 percent. She said after five years with the Fire District, the Chief had not had a merit increase. Jervy asked how the District's unallocated funds accumulated; Appleton explained that any unused unallocated funds were transferred over from year to year. Sacamano proposed establishing a policy with a beginning and a top salary that could be adjusted. Rubin said she strongly agreed with that but that she was ready to act now on offering the Chief a raise.

Appleton noted that the District has a Budget Advisory Committee, and suggested that it could be involved in the issues Sacamano brought up, and there is time for the BAC to address the issue by the February Board meeting.

Evans asked Rubin to clarify her proposal. She said she proposed the Board go ahead with the pay increase for this fiscal year and "then we have until July 1" to create a policy such as Sacamano proposed.

Evans said he thought Rubin's suggestion of a 20 percent increase was too much, adding he appreciated Rubin's effort on this issue.

As the Board discussed how comparisons between fire districts were made regarding Rubin's chart, Rubin said it is impossible to compare equally the various fire districts and what they pay. A discussion followed regarding comparisons made on type and volume of calls, budgets, population bases, and taxing rates. Sacamano noted that, based on the chart, Mosier has the highest tax rate except for two districts but those districts pay their chiefs more than Mosier.

Goter suggested making the entire pay increase retroactive, following review by the BAC. She said that would probably be more acceptable to the community. Appleton said 20 percent seemed high and that he agreed with Goter. He suggested the Board "spread it out a little bit and make it a lower number" and then have the BAC work on a pay range policy.

Rubin then proposed a 15 percent pay raise. She said that would be an increase of approximately \$5,700 gross per year and \$475 per month. Jervy said based on the budget it looked like 10 percent would be "sustainable" over the long run. He added that in the future that percentage could possibly go up. Rubin said if the Chief were making \$75,000 year, a 15 percent increase would be substantial but when making \$39,000 a year it was not. Evans noted that some towns of Mosier's size don't pay their fire chiefs. Sacamano suggested having goals for the Chief and when he met them "then we have back-up for consecutive pay raises." Rubin said this is the first year the Chief has had an evaluation with goals set, therefore he couldn't meet any goals to warrant an increase in the past. Jervy suggested again taking the issue to the BAC; Goter emphasized the need to involve the community. Rubin noted that the agenda item regarding a raise for the Chief had been "on the agenda for months" and no one had contacted anyone on the Board about it.

Sacamano proposed that the BAC meet soon to consider this issue; Appleton said that early January would probably be the soonest because of the holidays. Sacamano suggested another alternative was simply to approve the raise immediately. Rubin agreed. Evans said he did not disagree that the Chief should get a raise but that he would prefer to have a complete “package” outlining the Chief’s salary and benefits first. Rubin agreed that that would be good for the future but because the Chief is so underpaid now if the District were to lose him, she asked rhetorically, who would replace him at the pay he receives now? She agreed with having the BAC review the issue and that evaluations should be worked on but that she wanted to go ahead with the raise now. Referring to a salary memo prepared by Craig Funk, Appleton asked what Funk’s recommendation had been; Board members pointed out that he made no specific recommendation but gave three examples of possibilities. Rubin said that few people would stay in a job with no raise for long. Sacamano then suggested a 10 percent increase. Rubin said she’d like to give the Chief a raise today and then refer the issue to the BAC.

Appleton suggested the BAC could review the raise in light of the District’s budget; Rubin said she already looked at the budget and there is enough money now and that she had checked out if the money could be used for that; she said it could. Appleton said if the Board makes a big increase with the raise it could have political implications if done “without thinking through everything.” Appleton said one reason he never got a merit raise was because an analysis to determine if the District could afford it had never been done, and in his view “we were pretty close to the line.” In response to Rubin mentioning the contingency fund, he said the contingency fund had been tapped into in the past. She said she didn’t think \$5,770 would wipe it out. Appleton noted that when it becomes time to buy apparatus and begin station-building contingency funds might be needed. She said that issue would be factored in with the long-term plan for a salary adjustment.

Sacamano proposed a 15 percent increase and not making it retroactive. Jervey said the same thing could be accomplished by taking it to the BAC. Rubin requested that the issue be taken to the BAC, after giving the Chief a 15 percent pay raise now, with a proposal that it be made retroactive.

Board Member Jervey made a motion to ask the Mosier Fire District Budget Advisory Committee to review the following recommendation: a 10 percent pay increase retroactive to July 1, 2015, with the BAC meeting to review the proposal. Rubin said she would second the motion if Jervey would make it 15 percent; he agreed. Sacamano then amended the motion to say the BAC will meet within the next 45 days. The entire amended motion was finalized as: a 15 percent pay increase retroactive to July 1, 2015, with the Budget Advisory Committee meeting in the next 45 days to review the proposal.

Ayes: Rubin, Sacamano, Jervey. Nay: Evans. The vote passed 3-1.

4. Policy/Procedures Review: Drug Free Workplace Policy

Rubin noted that she wished to send the final draft policy to the Volunteers and have the Board address it at next month’s meeting. In regard to how it might relate to the draft drug policy, she said she had contacted Colorado and Washington regarding what they are doing with the legalization of marijuana.

5. Chief authorization to finalize purchase of new apparatus (Minipumper)

Appleton said the District had a firm bid for a new minipumper, just under \$250,000, for the whole package including delivery. He said it could arrive approximately early to mid summer after the contract is signed. It's estimated it will be with the MFD for 25 years. He said the MFD attorney said the District meets state requirements for spending public money on an open bid. The Capital Advisory Committee has recommended putting 10 percent down and financing it on a lease/purchase agreement for 10 years with an annual payment of approximately \$20,000.

Board Member Evans made a motion to authorize the Fire Chief to go ahead with the acquisition of the minipumper. Board member Sacamano seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. PERS pooling

Recorder Tracie Hornung explained that MFD is not currently enrolled in PERS pooling. She referred to a resolution proposed by the state authorizing MFD to enroll in the program. This issue had been discussed at the November meeting.

Board Member Rubin made a motion to enroll MFD in PERS pooling. Board Member Jervey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Chief's Monthly Summary

Appleton gave a verbal summary of November's activities.

Correspondence: Hornung mentioned a Special Districts Board Training opportunity Feb. 5-7.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2016

Attest:

Board President Darin Molesworth

Tracie Hornung, Recorder