

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

DATE: June 13, 2013  
7:00 p.m.

BOARD: Ken Hudson, Lee Roy Herman, Vic Hamilton, Glenn Bartholomew

STAFF: Fire Chief Jim Appleton, Recorder Tracie Hornung

Absent: Darin Molesworth

Excused:

Public: District Volunteers Marc

Berry and Pete Wright

CALL TO ORDER – Meeting was called to order by Board Secretary Glenn Bartholomew at 7:10 p.m.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS – Added to the Board packet were two lists of bills paid

BUSINESS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes – May 9, 2013

2. Review/Approve Bills

**A motion was made by Board Member Hamilton to approve the consent agenda as presented. Board Member Herman seconded. Discussion: Board Member Hudson asked to review the previous bill from the District’s attorney. Following his review, the motion passed unanimously.**

BUSINESS

1. Budget Hearing of 2013-2014 Budget

PUBLIC HEARING: The Board meeting was suspended at 7:17 p.m. and the Budget Hearing was opened. To provide knowledge of the hearing, the budget was published in The Dalles Chronicle, and the budget and hearing notice were posted on the Fire District’s web site. There were no members of the public in attendance. Budget Officer Hornung explained that there were no changes to the proposed budget because it had been approved as presented by the Budget Committee at the May 9 meeting.

The Budget Hearing was closed at 7:20 p.m. and the District Board meeting was reconvened.

2. Resolution 2013-06-01 Budget Adoption

**A motion was made by Board Member Hudson to adopt Resolution 2013-06-01 adopting the budget, making appropriations, and levying taxes and categorizing levy at the rate of \$1.65 per \$1000 of assessed value. Board Member Herman seconded. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Non-apparatus vehicle for Fire District

Chief Appleton suggested that the District buy a used all-weather vehicle for travel outside the District for legitimate District business such as transporting volunteers to training exercises, buying supplies, etc. He suggested it could be a station wagon, SUV or pickup with a crew cab. When asked by Board Member Bartholomew if it would function in other capacities, Appleton said he would prefer that it be used in an emergency, with lights and a radio, but not be

a fire truck. Pete Wright asked to speak. The Board agreed. Wright said he supports a crew cab as it could carry extra fire-fighting supplies on an emergency call. He said most departments have some sort of utility rig that can be used for different purposes. He added that it puts a burden on volunteers to use their own vehicles. Board Member Hudson said it was cheaper in the long run for volunteers to get reimbursed for mileage and not have the District paying insurance, etc., on a District-owned vehicle.

Appleton said he thought it was important that the District pay for legitimate District business, explaining that if a volunteer using his own vehicle for District business is in an accident, the volunteer must use his own insurance. Board Member Hudson said the District has had volunteers drive their own vehicles “for a lot of years. Now it appears we have some money and everybody wants it to stick to them. If you’re a volunteer, you volunteer.” Board Member Herman asked if there is room to park another truck in the current stations. Appleton said yes. Herman suggested they might have to sell one rig to make room for the vehicle under discussion. Appleton asked what rig Herman suggested selling. Herman said, “I could care less, sell them all. I’m just here to try to keep the taxes from going any higher than they are right now because every time I turn around somebody asks me ‘are the taxes going up again?’” A discussion followed on reimbursing volunteers for the expense of using their own vehicles for District business. Appleton said he is not a volunteer and, “I feel pretty strongly as an employee that I should not be required to use my personal vehicle for department business.” Board Member Bartholomew asked Herman if taxes were not raised and the expenditure was within the budget, would Herman agree to it? Herman said yes, but added he doubted a pickup for less than \$15,000-\$20,000 could be found. Appleton said he’d recently taken a quick look on Craig’s List and found 8- to 10-year-old Dodge Durangos with low miles for about \$6,000 that would be reliable and usable in a variety of weather. Board Member Hudson said he thought they should try paying volunteers mileage costs first, and added that part of his objection to buying another vehicle was that in the past Appleton had used a District truck to spray weeds outside the District and for other things that “didn’t show good judgment on your part. That’s one of the reasons why I don’t want you driving a vehicle every place.” Appleton said he had stopped doing the things that the Board objected to. Hudson said he didn’t know that. Appleton asked if Hudson could trust him, and Hudson said he didn’t. Appleton said that they needed to talk about that and Hudson agreed.

Board Member Herman brought up the settlement for a tort claim that was paid by the District’s insurance carrier regarding trees that had been cut on private property. Board Member Hudson said Appleton should not have been involved with the issue and noted that Appleton’s latest Chief’s Summary included a walk-through of City of Mosier property to assess hazard trees. Hudson said it should be the City’s issue, not the District’s. Appleton said when the trees fall they will be on public property and be a hazard, and that he believed it was the responsibility of the District to be proactive to prevent such hazards and that it could be done without the District becoming involved. He said again he would like to meet with Hudson to discuss these issues. Hudson said he and Appleton have a difference of opinion as to what the Fire Chief should be doing. Appleton asked if the two could meet and try to reach a consensus. Hudson said he wasn’t sure, adding that before arriving at tonight’s meeting he “came prepared to make a motion to change the job description for the Fire Chief to half time at half the pay and benefits.” Hudson

also questioned Appleton's travel outside the District for training events, which Appleton explained.

Board Member Herman then asked why Appleton had not attained Firefighter One certification. Appleton explained that as long as the department is not accredited, individual members of the District cannot be officially certified. He added that the department must apply to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) for accreditation and, according to DPSST, he needs the District's liaison officer Mid Columbia Fire & Rescue Division Chief Wood to shepherd that application through but over several weeks has not been able to reach him. Appleton said that tomorrow he would ask DPSST to ask Wood to respond. A long discussion followed on the steps required to get the District accredited. When Board Member Hudson asked why this hadn't happened over the last four years, Appleton explained that the District had received incorrect information as to how to proceed. He added that the District is 90% on its way to accreditation.

#### 4. Draft policy for on-duty status

Chief Appleton explained that the draft presented was a new addendum to the Vehicle Use policy and was created at the request of Volunteer Charles Young.

Board Member Hudson asked about a recent attorney opinion and bill, and if reimbursing volunteers for using their own vehicles for District business had been ruled out by the attorney. Appleton said no, but that the attorney recommended a District vehicle be used. Board Member Herman asked Appleton if a cheaper attorney could be found; he said he knew there were cheaper attorneys available. He added, based on the thickness of District copy paper recently purchased, that Appleton should have bought less expensive paper. Appleton showed Herman the receipt from Staples and said it was the cheapest paper available. He directed Appleton to save money whenever possible, adding, "Save the taxpayers some money. It doesn't bother you any because you pay no taxes. The only tax you pay is income tax and state and federal. You have no property so you pay no property taxes."

The discussion returned to the Draft policy for on-duty status. Appleton explained that, in addition to helping volunteers know what is expected of them while on-duty, the draft is also an attempt to allow the chief more than 24 hours off-duty each week. Currently he is on-duty except for 24 hours between Saturday and Sunday. He said there are three to four volunteers right now who could be available. A discussion followed on the issue of having a fast-attack vehicle at a volunteer's home on the nights they are on-duty. Pete Wright said it makes sense since most calls here are medical. Appleton added that another goal of this draft is to improve emergency response time.

Board Member Bartholomew confirmed with Appleton that the goal was to have this draft incorporated into the Vehicle Use policy and have it presented at the next Volunteers meeting and the next Board meeting.

#### 5. Low-Angle Rope Kit Budget

Referring to the proposed Rope Rescue Budgets included in the Board packet, Appleton suggested that the two proposed budgets be approved: one of \$2,009 for a low-angle rescue kit to

be purchased before the end of this fiscal year, and another of \$1,840 for a high-angle kit to be purchased before the end of Fiscal Year 2014. He said that a need for rescues requiring this equipment will occur eventually and that he and some other members of the Fire District are trained to use it. He said this was a stripped-down package of equipment compared to what Mid Columbia Fire & Rescue has. Following a question by Board Member Herman if this equipment would have to be replaced after one use, the Chief said no but there is an OSHA requirement that the weight-bearing items would need to be replaced after 10 years.

Board Member Hudson said he did not support this budget. Referring to a rescue that occurred a few months ago, Hudson said Mosier Fire District was not called. Appleton said if the District had had a rope team, it would have been called. Hudson said he doubted it, and Herman agreed. Appleton asked why. Herman said because “they don’t like the Chief here.” When Appleton asked who he was referring to, Herman said people at Mid Columbia Fire & Rescue. He said he recently attended a MCFR awards dinner where he talked to “way more than one” about it. Board Member Bartholomew asked if Herman meant there was not an objection to Mosier Fire District’s capability, training level or equipment but that it was a personal issue with the Chief. Herman said that was his understanding, and that “they feel he’s not trained to do what he’s supposed to.” A discussion followed on the accreditation of Mosier Fire District. Board Member Bartholomew asked Appleton if the board could help with that process; Appleton said he could use help contacting Wood at Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue.

The discussion returned to the Rope Rescue Budget. Appleton said the equipment and the ability to participate in such a rescue could limit the District’s financial liability. Board Member Hudson asked what instigated legal fees on this issue. Appleton said it was to find out what the District’s liability was if it could not assist in a rope rescue within the District. Hudson said he resented spending District money on getting a legal opinion without Appleton approaching the Board first. After a brief discussion about recreationists at Mosier Creek falls, Hudson said an “easy fix” would be for the City of Mosier to post a sign prohibiting the public from using the falls. However, Appleton said the City will not do that because it has “recreational immunity.” He said the Fire District could be financially liable even though the City might not be. A discussion followed on the amount of use the falls are getting by river rafters and others. Board Member Bartholomew then called for a head count on the issue. Board Members Bartholomew, Hamilton and Herman agreed to the Rope Rescue budget; Hudson was opposed.

#### 6. Wet Planet Check

Board Member Hudson explained that he had not signed a recent check made out to Wet Planet for an upcoming swiftwater rescue training for two Fire District volunteers because he wanted the issue discussed by the Board. Appleton explained that the training association has discussed developing a regional capability for swiftwater rescue. He said the training could be used in Mosier but the likelihood was that a team would form from resources throughout the region. He added that a swiftwater rescue can’t be done with just two people so getting two volunteers certified would not give Mosier Fire District “any real operational capability here.” The total cost was \$700 for two people. The check in question was a deposit for half: \$350.

Board Member Hudson said, “When we’re supposed to protect a house and five acres, I don’t know how swiftwater rescue has anything to do with that.” Appleton responded that as

with the rope rescue, he thought it would be of use in this community and a “step up in joining our neighbors and departments in having improved capability within the region.” He said he explained to the volunteers that if they were to get the training, they would need to make a commitment to be part of whatever team forms and periodically attend trainings. He added that he thought it was important to support volunteers who have goals that are compatible with the mission of the Mosier Fire District. He said that other fire departments are now involved in other types of emergencies in addition to fighting fires.

Board Member Bartholomew then called for a head count on the issue. Board Members Hudson, Herman, and Hamilton were opposed; Bartholomew was in favor. Pete Wright suggested the District get a swiftwater-trained person to volunteer to give the Mosier volunteers a basic class so they are aware of the hazards of swiftwater. Appleton said he was not sure he could find someone to volunteer to do that but he said he would check with Craig Funk at Portland Fire.

7. Chief’s monthly summary

The Board reviewed the handout of the Chief’s Summary, which includes the actions of the volunteers and duties of the Fire Chief for the month of May. A discussion followed on equipment and possible upgrades; Bartholomew suggested the Chief and Pete Wright get together over the next few months and come up with a recommendation. Also discussed were the latest developments regarding a new station.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

CORRESPONDENCE – None

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President Darin Molesworth

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Tracie Hornung, Recorder