

# **Mosier Fire District Supplemental Budget Hearing and Regular Board Meeting**

**Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm**  
**Held as a Zoom meeting**

## **Minutes**

### **Attendance**

- **Board members: Phil Evans, Kris McNall, Joanne Rubin, Todd Reeves, Steve Fisher**
- **Staff: Chief Mike Renault, Maggie Goter**
- **Others: Jim Appleton**

**Supplemental Budget Hearing called to order at 1801**

**Agenda additions or corrections**

**Comments from the public**

### **Business:**

1. Adopting a Supplemental Budget – Evans

McNall: We have a draft budget on the website for the current year & need to upload the final budget.

Renault: we need a supplemental budget hearing to pay off the Squad and move money to purchase another brush engine.

Renault: our intake is \$175K from sale of Squad and it costs \$154,975.55 to pay off loan.

McNall & Reeves in favor of delaying 1-2 months to make a written apparatus plan. Wants an idea of purpose & expected lifespan of rigs we have, and holes long-term. Need to be looking out 10 years if not 20.

Would like to see Renault & possibly others sit down & come up with an apparatus plan and description of functionality of current apparatus. More detailed than Inez Kemper's inventory of a year ago. More like the 2014 Capital Advisory report.

Reeves: also would like to wait to see what happens with JUF funding. City wants us to raise taxes.

Renault: the danger of delaying is that all our money goes to JUF.

**Motion:** Evans moves to sell the Squad for \$175K and pay off the loan of \$154,975.55 putting the remaining \$20,024 into the General Fund. Rubin seconds. All in favor.

**Supplemental Budget Hearing adjourned at 1824**

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**Regular Board Meeting called to order at 1825**

**Agenda additions or corrections**

- Evans: add item about Capital Committee formation

**Comments from the public**

See written comment from Jim Appleton at the end of the minutes.

**Consent agenda**

- First page of P&L missing; Renault will send to board packet list.

- \$3,500 to Locality Media inc. is for training and public education incl. giveaways for Fire Safety Week.
- Occupational Health costs are for new member physicals (covered under SAFER).
- Reeves moves to approve. Rubin seconds. All in favor. Motion carries.

## **Business:**

### 1. Capital Committee formation

Goal: create new document in the style of 2014 Capital Advisory Subcommittee report with inventory list and scenarios for acquisitions in the future. Chief Renault has mostly fulfilled goals of that document. We would also like a description of why we have current apparatus, i.e. what value it adds. Also expected lifespan/replacement year. Right now we just have current inventory.

Renault doesn't think we'll need to replace any current apparatus within 10 years.

**Motion:** Evans moves to form Capital Committee consisting of Reeves, Fisher, Renault, McNall, and Dan Watson (current MFD volunteer and City of Portland firefighter). Rubin seconds. All in favor. Motion carries.

### 2. JUF Funding Update – Evans

We didn't get the federal funding we were hoping for & we've been working with Sen. Merkley's office for. Would have been \$1.5 million. Est cost of project is \$6.3-6.5. Committee has about \$4 mil. More grants expected to bring to \$4.5-4.75 mil. We're about \$1.75 million short.

Have contacted architects to see where we can cut costs. JUF committee didn't want to reduce footprint but parts of orientation may change to decrease required fill.

JUF Committee/City are requesting the Fire District raise taxes or take out a loan. They want us to decide this winter.

New Market Tax Credit also did not come through. We could apply again in March.

Reeves: they're doing a square footage split and costing bays equivalent to office space which puts a big burden on the fire side and shows fire as the only contributing entity with a shortfall.

The mission of the fire district is to support & protect our community. Not all of that building is doing that but current plans have us paying for it.

McNall: There is a bill in a Congressional committee to give money to FEMA to pay for fire stations. Stuck in the House. We need to keep an eye on this.

Agrees with Reeves: doesn't know where numbers in fundraising budgets came from. Right now we've committed to putting in about \$750K. If we throw in another \$1 mil, that's about what a fire station would cost us anyway. Disingenuous to say a fire station alone costs \$3.4 mil.

Chart they put together about fire getting a loan misrepresents our finances. Financial Committee is meeting soon and will try to review these numbers. They're assuming the fire district only spends \$215K of tax revenue from the budget. We've been getting about \$20k more than that and we've been spending it. Discounting UP money, we're already spending about what we're taking in and don't have as much room in the tax base as that document says. Need to make sure we've still got money for operational needs.

Charts referenced are pages 16 and 17 of 10/18/2021 JUF Agenda Packet from Colleen Coleman.

3. Chief's report – Chief Renault

We had 14 calls last month. 1 brush fire: move up to Underwood, WA.

Time for the first vehicle en route was about 5 minutes for our calls. Little longer for mutual aid.

Fire academy has about 2 months left. Instructor 2 class moved to after the new year. Fire investigator class: we'll have more info next month.

Still waiting for equipment to come in from several grants.

Regarding concerns about response times: responding from stations is better with a crew of people vs solo. When we had apparatus all over the district many were nonfunctional. Re comments about centralizing response: we have people assigned to all 3 stations; people usually respond to their assigned station based on where they live.

Our times from dispatch to en route are comparable to neighboring departments.

Radios have been upgraded with new frequencies.

FirstDue: we have about 30 people on Community Connect.

The apparatus we have benefits homeowners & their insurance. Homeowners insurance benefits when we fully staff apparatus.

A discussion of insurance ratings and what goes into them (incl. fire map overlays) followed. Addresses in the City are higher rated because the City has hydrants. Auto aid agreements also help.

4. SAFER update – Goter

See update provided with board packet. Working with our grant officer on extension/amendment request. Grant officer asked us to change our request from 12 month to 6 month extension. They've reimbursed our first \$45K payment request. Chief Renault confirms that money has been received.

We've already met the recruitment goals in our SAFER grant application, but we would like to be able to show more performance on the grant financially and the extension will help with that.

We have submitted most of our reimbursement requests for salary, physicals, & gear & have received money from FEMA. Outstanding expenses include one physical, Firefighter 1 academy costs, a month of salary and a few months of health insurance.

5. Volunteer report: none.

6. Committee reports

i. JUF Committee: this was covered earlier.

ii. Finance Committee

They are scheduling a meeting for next week. McNall would like someone to attend from JUF who can answer questions about their assumptions about Fire finances.

They also want to investigate & understand maintenance costs for JUF. Estimate: that will be at least \$10K per year.

7. Correspondence: none

**Comments from the public: none**

**Adjourned at 1939**

*Next month's board meeting will be on December 9<sup>th</sup>.*

Comment from Jim Appleton:

"This is a public comment in response to draft minutes of MFD's 10/14/2021 board meeting.

Maggie is doing a fantastic job of recording, virtually a transcript. I respectfully request that this document be appended to the 10/14 adopted minutes, in its entirety unedited, in keeping with current recording practice.

A significant portion of the draft minutes reference or respond to my letter to the editor published that same week.

I make the following replies.

1. "Team response." Mike cites one call, says the outcome would have been different with one responder. That misstates my contention that nearly ten years of safe, rapid initiation of all-hazard response with a single unit is essential in this district and does not exclude effective team response as well.

My consistent point is that in this district, with current and projected staffing, exclusive reliance on centralized response per national recommendations is a gross error.

Nearly ten years of stats, and two restarted hearts prove my point.

2. Mike makes a vague point that 30 minute plus response times reflect some kind of "average," including tenders.

Board, beware.

The reports he refers to are apples to apples, and the response time is always first on scene, not an average. You should confirm my claim. As a taxpaying constituent, I'd be appalled if you didn't.

Mike is telling you that information reported to the State now knowingly misrepresents actual stats.

You need to know why.

He is either doing a poor job of record keeping, or doesn't care about accurate reporting.

Another way of looking at this is, if the reports show averages per call, why is it that over five years on my watch the stats show under five minutes where Mike's show 30. I guarantee that if you look into how this report is generated, you will see that it aggregates initial response times, not an average per call.

Your chief has some explaining to do.

3. Kris McNall makes a point I don't understand about "lag from dispatch" on my watch.

In my time, it was common practice for me to scan our neighbor's channels, including law enforcement.

When I heard an incipient incident in our district, I raised the alarm on our Working repeater, mostly to good effect. We were sometimes on scene before we were paged.

I have no clue what Kris's comment refers to.

I also ask how many calls she has responded to in the last three years."