

# Mosier Fire District Supplemental Budget Hearing and Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm  
Held as a Zoom meeting

## Minutes

### Attendance

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

### Call Supplemental Budget Hearing to order at 1803

### Agenda additions or corrections

SAFER extension/amendment moved to future date due to notice requirements

### Comments from the public

### Business:

1. Adopting a Supplemental Budget – Evans

a. Reallocate \$35,000 for brush engine purchase

See “Budget hearing document from Chief Renault” at the end of the minutes.

We have a \$10,000 RFA/VFA grant and we’ve spent \$2,000. That’s where the \$8,000 in grant funding comes from.

We were initially looking at \$40,000-45,000 for this rig but this will get us down the road. There will be extra expenses for this engine in the next budget cycle, e.g. new tires.

Chief Renault is working on another VFA grant as well.

This engine is known to have a valve/lifter issue - fixing that costs about \$4K, but when fixing that they could discover more issues. Total cost of repairs could be \$16K. Instead we’re going to buy a whole new “bulletproofed” engine that comes with a 2 year warranty. New bulletproofed engine is \$20K.

McNall: our equipment plan calls for keeping this for 12 years so it’s important we get something that will last.

Renault estimates tires will be the biggest additional expense in next budget cycle. Maybe \$3K for six tires. Plus some small incidentals.

Renault gave a higher estimate last month (~\$50K), which would have bought tires, side profile lighting, additional items, etc. It’s been pared down but the total cost eventually will be in the neighborhood of \$40K.

We still also owe \$12.5K on the new command rig pickup.

Renault thinks this is a good value for the number of miles on the engine, vs using our existing fire pack in the Dodge and buying a different truck and building a brush engine from scratch.

**Motion:** Evans moves to transfer \$27K from the First Interstate general fund and \$8K from VFA grant to purchase and equip the 2008 Ford F550 brush engine discussed. Rubin seconds. Evans, Rubin, Fisher, McNall in favor; Reeves opposed. Motion carries.

There will be an additional budget hearing to address SAFER needs which will be held 3/25/22 at 5:30pm.

## **Adjournment of Supplemental Budget Hearing at 1841**

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## **Call Regular Board Meeting to order at 1841**

### **Agenda additions or corrections**

**Comments from the public:** None

### **Consent agenda**

- Special Districts bill for \$12,500 is for insurance. Includes vehicles, buildings.
- \$8,000 to ODF is the check from the VFA/RFA grant "pre-designated" for the new brush engine. It had to be set up in advance because it was close to deadline. Reeves would like to see better systems to make sure we don't get close to losing grant money. Board members request grants get sent to board packet when approved so there are multiple people taking a look at this stuff.
- Board also requests pictures of bills - would save time on clarifying questions.
- UP Equipment Fund (6313) has an accounting error: it shows \$21K, but per our financial review we spent that money two years ago and the fund is actually empty. It's an accounting error. McNall will work with Renault to clean that up.
- **Motion:** Evans moves to approve, Rubin seconds. All in favor.

### **Business:**

1. Update on Business Oregon loan application - Evans

JUF ownership/lease draft has been sent to Business Oregon for review. We're still in the preliminary stage but may complete that next week and then will be into the initial application.

2. JUF ownership/lease draft review - Evans

See attached draft MOU at the end of these minutes.

Evans has first draft back, has been reviewed by Carrie.

Plan is for the City to own the entire building as well as the land. Carrie (our lawyer) advises that a very long-term lease is easier than an IGA because an IGA has extra requirements like having to meet every month.

McNall: Draft MOU has us on the hook for 50% of costs of communal spaces. Is it the Fire District's job/purpose to manage or pay costs for a community center? Probably not.

Reeves, Rubin, McNall: it seems like this draft is "odd" and leaves us "out to dry" in several ways. Lease seems skewed towards the city.

Reeves: should we have a lawyer who specializes in commercial or governmental leases look at this?

Evans asks board members to review the document and bring specific concerns/likes/dislikes to next month's meeting. Rubin: What about if repairs are needed? Right now costs are 50/50 but

draft says "final decisions rest with the city." City must consent to changes, maintenance on fire side as well.

Right now it seems like a landlord-tenant arrangement - a 190 comes with a cost, but puts us on more equal footing.

McNall: our two big concerns are control and cost.

### 3. SAFER update - Goter

We're proceeding with training and Cpt Oswald and Chief Renault are continuing to source equipment. Website is in progress - we did not write a contract for this into the grant, it's being done by volunteers.

We also have money for advanced firefighter trainings.

### 4. Stipend policy - Goter

Due to grant amendment, we can pay stipends for calls and trainings attended since the beginning of grant in late 2017. \$116K budgeted for stipends, calls and trainings through the end of February will spend \$68K.

We have to have all products in hand and stipends paid by the end of May, but we have three additional months to finish reimbursements and reports.

The board affirms we need to be performing on the grant and spending as much money as we can on recruitment and retention until as close to the deadline as possible. Need to maximize performance on this grant and optimize recruitment and retention.

Stipends are the biggest way we are spending this money. Total grant is \$274K and we had over \$200K left last fall when we filed the amendment. Turnouts are another big grant-funded expenditure at about \$30K.

### 5. Chief's report – Chief Renault

See written report. In addition to that, Chief Renault answered some concerns received in a letter Jim Appleton emailed to the board.

Appleton hears fewer people on the radio than are responding because a majority of people don't chime in on the radio anymore as we're using a digital dispatching app. Renault corrected some times from the email. Clarified that we always try to send an engine to freeway calls for safety reasons.

We get dispatched and canceled to calls in Hood River because we're part of the initial first alarm schedule. Being canceled has nothing to do with having people check in via radio - it happens if we're not needed after initial resources are on scene.

We're hitting a low response rate in terms of numbers of responders - we've had people out of town on vacation. Sometimes that's just the way things are in a volunteer agency. But a 2 person response today is better equipped and better trained and better prepared than we used to be. Now we have 16 qualified wildland firefighters and 8 (soon to be 12) certified structural firefighters. Plus fire officers, engine bosses, etc.

Sometimes it appears there is low staffing because we try to hold resources if we don't need them. Burn complaints don't always need to be fully staffed. People on standby may not be on the radio.

Chief only self-dispatched once and that was because of radio issues.

No volunteer agency today has the resources to staff a complex incident on their own. That's why these aid agreements exist. The past few years we've given more aid than we've received because we're trained and ready to provide assistance.

The board members thanked the Chief for the detailed report, additional information, and the hard work he does with the volunteers and for the district.

6. Volunteer report: no volunteer report this month.

7. Committee reports

JUF: the JUF Committee met. There were no JUF staff meetings. Renault: They're looking at ways to cut costs - that's been sent to the architect.

Jamie is trying to separate out JUF funds that have been intertwined with city funds. Next JUF meeting will have the next iteration from Minarik which will be scaled down. City is looking at surplus property. Reeves: I've asked the JUF and the City to try to cut costs. In the interest of fairness we will also continue thinking about ways to contribute more money or cut costs. Evans & Reeves wouldn't want us to contribute any more as we're already looking at depleting savings & raising taxes.

Jill Burnette has mostly been working on larger general grants, e.g. Ford Foundation. Are there fire district specific grants that we're missing? Renault says there aren't a ton of fire grants readily available for stations.

8. Correspondence: The board received a letter from Jim Appleton about staffing and response times.

### **Comments from the public**

Goter: Re the JUF ownership structure discussed in Item 2, a setup where the City owns everything and the Fire District just leases will limit us in the future. It's what we have in place currently and that limits us as we're looking to replace our current station.

Reeves: It would also limit us in terms of future expansion. We need future expansion needs reserved or written into an IGA for sleeping quarters, space for staff, etc. That potential to expand has been assumed in meetings so far, but what if it conflicts with their desires for the space?

### **Adjourned at 2013.**

*There will be a budget hearing on the 25th of this month. Next month's board meeting will be on April 14<sup>th</sup>.*