

MINUTES 7/19/22
Whitefish Fire Service Area Trustees Meeting
Fire Station #22

Call to Order: 6:06 pm

Attendance

- Trustees: Dennis Oliver, George Losleben, Becky Briber, Molly Miller, (Ed McGrew, absent)
- Guests: John Van Denburgh, Joe Perry, Chief Joe Page

Public Comment: John Van Denburgh donated an updated GIS map of the WFSA to the Board. The Board thanks him.

Approval of [6/21/22 Minutes](#)

- Motion made, seconded, and approved.

Treasurer's Report

- Bills paid:
 - NWE, #2957, \$28.80
 - FEC, #2958, \$66.00
 - That Guys Lawn Service, #2959, \$600.00
 - City (extinguishers), #2960, \$150.00
 - Big Drift, #2961, \$500.00
- Current fund balances:
 - Working Fund, \$380,021.27
 - Includes fee charges of \$124.34 for new checks.
 - All checks cleared for FY ending.
 - Capital Improvement Fund, \$858,222.74
- Bid solicitation & invoice policy
 - Set a threshold/requirement (usually a dollar amount) for when we must solicit bids, and define the number of bids we need to solicit (three is commonplace).
 - Projects more than \$2500 require bids
 - We might want a policy doc. There are probably templates available on the Web. Molly will research.
 - Some vendors respond when called and work without bids
 - The doc can define exceptions such as these
 - The doc will specify that we require an invoice for payment.
 - That has been the policy to date.
- Fiscal 2023 Budget
 - Tentative budget due 7/23; Dennis submitted 7/18/22
 - All checks cleared except payment to WFD for contract, which is in the 2023 budget (July payment)

- If we raise fees, the board has sole capacity to increase fee.
 - Molly will find out from Tamara in the County Finance department the deadline for raising the fee. (thelmstetler@flathead.mt.gov)
 - We will need to do some public outreach explaining the rate change.
 - We will need some spreadsheet modeling to determine the rate impacts.

Project Updates

- Next steps on 3-year plan and priority action items identified from Steering Committee recommendations (see 6/21/22 minutes above)
 - Rate Increase
 - Find out the requirements and dates (Molly)
 - Build a backward calendar of deliverables needed to meet the date (Team)
 - Develop outline for 3-year plan as one of the deliverables (Molly)
 - Financial Transparency
 - Meet with Tamara to get updated on County requirements and processes (Molly and George)
 - Transition to electronic monthly report and away from writing checks at meetings (George)
 - Consider looking for a person with finance background to fill board vacancy or join the Finance committee, so we can generate cost/analysis data, project budgets, and other important financial information
 - Communications Outreach
 - Goal is to hire outside help to educate the public to changes in the WFSA
 - Fire Authority
 - Ed has provided background information
 - Legislature meets in January
 - Develop a backward calendar of steps we need to take to get the bill reissued by the right parties (Ed)
 - Develop outreach strategy (Ed)
 - Resident Volunteer Program/Station 22 Residential Renovation
 - Plan is to develop a Logistics Committee to help with these projects
- CMU study:
 - Proposed policy inputs: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YoKuzJ6Mj3BLHy3m31bUs86PSAH5wxUAXRsWhhBoQp4/edit>
 - CMU Study Clients are expected to send one representative to the kickoff in Pittsburgh on Friday, Aug. 16. Discuss WFSA reimbursing for travel expenses.
 - Tom submitted expenses totaling \$977.49 for airfare and lodging; there will be meals, cabs, and other incidental expenses.
 - The Trustees voted to approve reimbursement of these expenses July 28.

- WFSA Project Statement
 - Joe Perry offered a statement to include concerning threat of wildfire to the Whitefish community
 - All others provided commentary
 - Motion to approve the document with changes was made, seconded, and approved
- Update on bids/contractors for Station 22 roof (Ed absent)
 - \$30K ballpark for first bid; required to keep roof from deteriorating (built in 1997-98); involves repair and some additional siding
 - Can contractor project the life of a new roof vs a repaired roof?
 - Would a brand new roof make sense?
 - Do we wait until reconstruction?
 - Need 5 days to complete project, no rain.
 - George suggests we go ahead with painting as planned.
 - Need formal bid and 2 more bids
 - Joe Perry to solicit WFSA mailing list for painter recommendations

Montarise Village development and annexation process

- What is the WFSA position on fire protection funding or set-asides for large developments going forward?
 - Ed later provided information on requirements from Creston
- Recommend developing WFSA guidelines to provide developers and County Commissioners
 - Need owner to take this on
 - Could get info from other districts/areas at Fire Trustees conference in September

Executive Leadership

- Trustee introductions and backgrounds
 - What are the backgrounds, relevant strengths of each trustee?
 - Dennis: served as WFSA Treasurer 4 years; as Trustee, 2 years
 - Dennis resigned from the board for personal reasons, effective August 16
 - Dennis will be available to help transition to new Treasurer
 - Tamara from County will send information to WFSA Trustees gmail
 - Dennis expressed interest in helping define the scholarship program as part of the logistics committee after his retirement
 - The WFSA thanks Dennis for his service; see tribute in the section **WITH THANKS** below
 - George: MT law degree; MBA, focus on healthcare, insurance, life insurance; worked 25 years overseas; worked with financial planning for schools and embassy staff; Texas bar; treasurer of 2 different schoolboards
- Trustee roles and responsibilities (see [2021_Bylaws.pdf](#))

Officer Elections

- Becky nominated the following slate:
 - Molly Miller, Chair
 - Ed McGrew, Vice Chair
 - George Losleben (Treasurer)
 - Becky (Secretary)
 - The motion to approve the slate was seconded and unanimously approved

Proposed Committees

- See **Exhibit A**
- Board Vote Required to establish
 - Unanimous support for the idea, with some tailoring to descriptions/duties

Fire Authority Process (Postpone for Ed)

Administrative Business

- Costco Chromebook sale thru July 24
<https://www.costco.com/hp-14%22-chromebook-bundle---intel-celeron---1080p---bonus-sleeve-%2526-wireless-mouse.product.100853396.html>
 - Ed and George took advantage of this sale.
- Technology Budget per Trustee
 - Property of WFSA
 - Proposed \$300 per 3-year tenure (Approved)
- Montana Fire Trustee's Association Conference, Sept 30th, Copper King Hotel, Butte. Opportunity to gain knowledge from other Fire Service Area Trustees across the state.
 - Hotel Friday Sept. 30-Sunday Oct. 2: approx. \$207.44 at group rate provided.
 - Fuel reimbursement: Federal rate is \$0.625/mile. Estimated \$157
 - Meals allowance: \$78/dayx2 days (this is the US GSA Meals & Incidentals daily rate for Montana, one full day and two half travel days)
 - Estimated total: \$520.44
 - Board approved attendance
 - Agenda not yet posted
 - George and Molly to attend
- Dealing with WFSA website solicitations
 - Joe Perry advises it's probably not needed, as the solicitations are machine generated
- Discuss hiring a property manager to oversee contractors and conduct Station 22 upkeep and maintenance.
 - Dennis and Ed do not recommend.
 - That Guys Lawn Service will no longer be managing the lawncare
 - We may still get a bill from him.
 - Ed has a new contractor to do the lawn.
 - All contractors must be licensed and insured

- Dennis advises we might need someone to treat/weed the lawn, not just mow
- Short-term rental and zone change requests in the WFSA - Chief Page is cc'ed, and they are being mailed to Mark Carlson. Need to get all WFSA official business mailed or delivered to one address. Do we want Chief Page to continue handling these? What else do we need to change delivery/email address for? Sent from County Planning Board; email not possible; any checks we receive goes to the County Treasurer
 - Annual GIS Audits (goes to the WFSA Board)
 - Need to update contact information to Tamara at the County Treasurer's Office (Molly)
 - Update addressee name with County Planning and Zoning (Molly)
- Dennis turned over the PO Box keys and the file cabinet key to George
 - PO Box 1311
 - Bills should be all in by the 12th of the month
 - Check/change name on account (George)

Adjournment: 8:49pm

ADDENDA

On July 28, Becky Briber submitted her resignation from the WFSA Board of Trustees

- The Board voted and approved the resignation unanimously

Molly spoke with the County Elections Office July 25

- Sent official notice of Dennis' and Becky's resignation to the County Commissioners Office, along with Becky's resignation letter
- Vacancy posted by Flathead County July 26; application deadline August 25
 - Vacancy also posted on WFSA website
 - We can make recommendations to the County

WITH THANKS

Dennis Oliver

Dennis began regular attendance of WFSA Board meetings during the Winter of 2018 and began assisting the board with Treasurer's duties by the Summer of the same year. He became a Board Trustee as part of the 2020 county election cycle and continued as the WFSA Board's Treasurer until his departure from the board. His board career, while relatively brief, helped serve as a catalyst for the growth the organization is now poised to experience. He served as a liaison to the Flathead County government in financial matters and as member of the WFSA negotiating committee that reached a five-year contract agreement with the City of Whitefish and Whitefish Fire Department.

The Board extends our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to Dennis.

Rebecca Briber

Becky joined the WFSA Board in May 2022, and she made a big impact in a short time. Her service to the WFSA began in January 2022 as a key contributor to the Steering Committee, whose recommendations served as a blueprint for progress in the WFSA. Becky also engaged as a primary architect of the specifications for a financial and policy analysis tool that may be developed by CMU interns to assist the WFSA in exploring different funding options for future projects. Becky has extensive experience working with nonprofit organizations, and she shared a wealth of good ideas with other WFSA Trustees to help us prepare for challenges to come. The WFSA Board is grateful for Becky's short tenure and wishes her the best in future endeavors.