

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the Council
Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
April 10th, 2024, at 10:00 AM.**

[1. Call to Order.](#)

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

[2. Public Comment.](#)

None.

[3. Approval of the April 2024 Claims*.](#)

Chairman Gray asked who Marshall Mabley is, as there is a claim for him this month. Jocelin answered that he was a live-in at Greenhorn that recently moved out, and the claim is his security deposit return. Commissioner Michael comments that she talked with Jocelin regarding restarting Cox internet service at the Greenhorn Station.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the April 2024 claims; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None

[4. Approval of the March 20th 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes*.](#)

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the March 20th, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes; seconded by Chairman Gray. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Michael

[5. Report: Monthly Update – North Blaine County Fire District Chief, Rich Bauer.](#)

Chief Bauer would like to publicly thank the Wood River Women's Foundation, as we have received another \$25K grant from them for the landscaping part of the Greenhorn Housing Project. It is wonderful to get such great support from them. He has been in contact with them regarding a tour of the units and property.

Marshall Mabley has moved out of Greenhorn Unit 100A. He lived there a couple of years and has now taken a helitack job in Moab. We thank him for his service at Greenhorn and with the Fire District.

By the end of this week we expect to have 5 of our 8 units occupied by tenants, with two new move-

ins scheduled this week. Current Greenhorn residents Sarah and Dustin Driggs will be moving into one of the new units in the coming months.

Tomorrow the Chiefs will be showing Blaine County Commissioner Muffy Davis around the property and give her a tour, and Chairman Gray will try to join them.

There are a couple of Ambulance District meetings scheduled on April 17th and 24th to discuss the first phase of ESCI consolidation studies.

Chairman Gray asked if we are starting to work on budgeting, including putting together an ask for the District from the Ambulance District regarding Greenhorn Station? Chiefs Bauer and Robrahn will be meeting with Jim and the Mayor soon regarding putting forward an ask for ambulance district funds. Jim Keating, City Administrator, gives an update regarding both EMS consolidation meetings and EMS budget proposals. Meetings on the 17th and 24th are regarding two main items; an ask from Wood River Fire & Rescue to the Blaine County Commissioners to approve funding a \$250K emergency chassi Wood River ordered a couple of years ago, and Lindsay Mollineaux asking for the Commissioner to fully understand the phase one report recommendations Chief Bauer previously referred to. Jim says that some financial recommendations from a phase two report coming from the consultants will be coming right around the same time the Ambulance District will be requesting budget proposals.

Jim will be out on vacation for two weeks. When he gets back will be touring cities around the region with other local city officials. This will include a meeting with the leadership of Kootenai County regarding their EMS system.

[6. Report: Monthly Update – Sun Valley Fire Chief, Taan Robrahn.](#)

Chief Robrahn says that we are in a training phase right now, as we are in a slower shoulder season. We try and get a lot of training done this time of year. We have four cadets in the fire academy right now, and they will be participating in a live fire scenario this weekend. Chairman Gray asks if they still burn donated structures, and Chief Robrahn answers that they do not usually burn acquired structures, but they will train in many other very valuable ways on said structures. Being in the realtor market, Chairman Gray says that he can make a note in the MLS (Multiple Listings System) that if realtors know of houses that will be demolished, they first contact the Fire Department to see if we want to use it for training. Chief Robrahn says that would be very valuable for Department training. We would work with the contractors to schedule training around the demolition date.

Chairman Gray asked about a Blaine County dispatcher who had been interested in the Greenhorn Housing. Chief Robrahn heard she might have signed a different lease already, so he will confirm if that's the case.

Sarah Driggs is about halfway through her paramedic program and is going to start bootcamp next weekend in Massachusetts, which will take about 2 weeks. Commissioner Michael asks how much this program costs, and Chief Robrahn answers that the initial cost for the course is about \$10K. With all other associated costs, like the travel, per diem, and supplies it is about \$20K total. Commissioner Michael asks if there is a work contract associated the Department paying for this

program, and Chief Robrahn answers that staff going through the program sign a 3-year commitment to stay with the Department.

Commissioner Michael asks about if the residents in the new units have commented on noise from the highway, and Chief Robrahn says that residents have not commented on that. The units are well soundproofed.

Commissioner Michael asks about how the tracking of volunteer response and hours is going, and the Chiefs answered really well. There was a potential structure fire the other day, and we had a really good response and were able to staff several apparatus.

Chief Bauer adds that Captain Ricky Williams and Hunter Storey will be doing orientations with some of the new live-ins on April 27th, getting them familiar with our stations and apparatus and processes. Chief Robrahn thanks both of them for creating this orientation and onboarding process.

Commissioner Michael comments that when she stopped by the station yesterday the crew was training with the ladder truck, and that was fun and interesting to see. Chief Robrahn says that because we are an all hazards department there is always something for the crews to be training on, from rope rescue to swift water.

[7. Discussion and possible approval of contract between the City of Sun Valley and the North Blaine County Fire District regarding management and ownership of the eight new Greenhorn Housing Project units*](#)

Jim and Chairman Gray had a meeting regarding this contract a couple of weeks ago, and Jed sent it back to the lawyer for some modifications. This is a contract the District had requested so that the City and District are in agreement regarding ownership and management of these new units. All Commissioners have reviewed the contract.

Jim Keating says that we are the proud new owners of 8 housing units and a set of garages for the units. We have certificates of occupancy on all 8 units. This contract the Commissioners have received codifies the ownerships between the two entities. Jim says that the way the contract is currently laid out, the ownership is split 50/50 for both the units and garage buildings. He will be bringing the contract forward to the City of Sun Valley City Council at their next meeting in May.

As for rent collection and operating costs, this contract continues to have the District covering all rent collection and upkeep costs, as they do with the previously existing units. If rent collection exceeds operating costs in any given year, then those additional receipts would go towards future capital improvement costs on the new units.

For insurance coverage, the District and the City would also split insurance costs 50/50. At this time all are on the City's ICRMP policy, so that will need to be adjusted.

To terminate the contract, one entity would give the other 90 days notice before change of fiscal year that they are requesting a change in the coming year.

Commissioner Engelmann does not have questions about the contract. He feels that the relationship between the District and the City is going very well, and he is in favor of the 50/50 split of ownership of the units.

Commissioner Michael comments that she can see that the documents originally identified certain units as owned by the City and others as the District, and this has now been crossed out. Can someone speak to that? Chairman Gray replies that he spoke with Jim about that provision, and at this time he did not see it as necessary to define an owner of each unit, as the relationship between the City and District is good, and separating out the ownership could make tracking of rent/maintenance/repairs more complicated. He thinks remaining co-owners of the units provides the most equity between the agencies. Jim adds that him and Chairman Gray worked with the City's lawyer Matt Johnson regarding different models and contract options, and that was just one of them. Commissioner Michael responds that she is a little surprised at the suggestion of a 50/50 split of ownership, considering all of the funds that the District has provided and been instrumental in collecting, including money from the County, Wood River Women's Foundation, and fundraising through the Spur Foundation. She would like to discuss other options. She adds that the City has provided a lot of man hours to the project, and they both still have an outstanding balance on the Appropriation Lease they signed onto together. Jim responds that as to the Appropriations Lease, the plan is to continue to pay it back together 50/50. Chairman Gray responds that there was a lot of collaboration between entities to get these built, including a lot of administrative and legal support from the City, while the District did a lot of the fundraising work. He feels that we cannot tally up the hours each entity has put into the project, we have to focus on the collaborative effort between both entities and consider the efforts of each to be balanced. To keep a solid relationship and partnership, he believes splitting ownership of the units 50/50 is the right thing to do.

Commissioner Michael comments that we currently have \$1.2M in our LGIP accounts, yet we have the debt balance that will continue to put us in a fiscal deficit in our annual budgets. Because the District has brought so much of the funds in, she would be interested to know if the City could help lower the amount the District has to pay so that we are not in such a deficit with our budget. Chairman Gray adds that we are still doing fundraising that can help pay down the debt, and he has found another grant sponsored by Congressman Mike Simpson that we could potentially apply for for Fiscal Year 2026. He brought an application packet for the grant, noting that Representative Simpson gave one fire department over a million in funds for a new fire station. Commissioner Michael's concern remains that she is concerned about the debt service cutting into our annual budget. Chairman Gray says that we continue to have new homes built in the District, which should add to our annual income. We also just received another \$20K from the Spur Foundation, so money is still coming in. He does believe that while the District and City work together as a combined agency, they should run the new units in a similarly combined and collaborative way. Commissioner Michael raises the point that the City has a dedicated housing fund with their Local Option Tax, while the District does not. The District has very limited forms of funding. Chairman Gray says that we could go to the City and request money from their Joint Housing Fund.

Jim says that the next agenda item is regarding future fundraising recommendations for the project. We need another \$300K in funds from both agencies in order to finish the landscaping and final touches of the project. He is going to request that both agencies fund half of that amount, \$150K each. The City Council will make their decision, with recommendations from Jim and the Mayor that that money mostly comes from the previously mentioned housing fund. It is the City's intent to actively contribute to funding the final pieces of this project. We jointly own the debt service over time, and if we have leftover housing funds at the end of the project, he would suggest we apply it to the debt service. Chairman Gray adds to this the City applied for an additional \$50K ARPA funds from the County for the project on behalf of the District. This will continue to be discussed on the next agenda item.

Commissioner Michael reiterates her concern that we are spending down our reserve balance that we also want to use for capital improvements, and Chairman Gray says he does share that concern.

Commissioner Engelmann says that the relationship between the City and District is very positive right now, and he does not want to do anything that might jeopardize the relationship. He is in favor of the way this contract set up at this time, adding that the contract can be modified in the future if we need to do so. Chairman Gray says he has reviewed the contract and had conversations with Jim and the Mayor about it and is in favor of approving.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the Greenhorn Housing Agreement, the Interagency Governmental Agreement between the City of Sun Valley and the North Blaine County Fire District, regarding the ownership and operating costs and expenses related to the Greenhorn Housing Project; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

[8. Discussion and possible action regarding funding final phase of the Greenhorn Housing Project, including landscaping*.](#)

Chairman Gray refers to the grant application he gave Jim earlier in the meeting regarding a potential grant opportunity from Representative Simpson.

Jim says that this project that was originally budgeted at about \$3.5 million, which we pooled into the City's LGIP account for the project from various sources. We are down to about \$350K left in the account, which we expect to draw down to about \$5-10K with currently planned work from Lunceford and Merrick regarding the concrete and asphalt.

We have been working diligently on a comprehensive landscaping plan, including securing a permit from ITD to use more of their land in the landscaping, and getting water rights from IDWR for a revegetation period, which Jim is confident we will get. The current landscaping plan has an estimated cost of \$250K, and Jim's recommendation is that the City and District each contribute \$150K towards the project incrementally. If there is a positive balance in the LGIP account at the

end of the project, his recommendation is that those dollars be put towards paying down the Appropriations Lease. He first recommends that since the District has \$100K in our capital expense line item this fiscal year, we allocate the funds to the City's LGIP account for the project. And then in next fiscal year's budget Jim suggests the District allocate an additional \$50K for the project.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moves to approve the allocation of \$100,000 for the Greenhorn Housing Project, including landscaping, to the City of Sun Valley Greenhorn Housing LGIP account; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

Commissioner Michael asks if we have gotten approval from the County and ITD for the berm we would like to build. Jim answers that we have worked with Blaine County and ITD throughout this process, and have gotten their approval.

[9. Additional updates, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*](#)

Jim says that the landscaping request for bids was released two days ago, and the City of Sun Valley Council will review them at their next meeting on May 7th.

Chairman Gray says that we got the dirt for the berm for free from the road project currently happening in Ketchum.

Chief Robrahn says that Lunceford has done the prep for the concrete walkways of each unit, and we expect them to pour the concrete in the next few weeks. We expect them to lay the asphalt May 13th-15th. As we move forward with the landscape plan, it will be like putting the final coat of paint. He would like to have a grand opening once all of the work is truly complete. Chairman Gray asks if we are going to try and be done with heavy equipment building the berm before the asphalt is laid, and Chief Robrahn answers yes. Lunceford is responsible both for the berm building and the asphalt, so they are coordinating the timing of the concrete/asphalt work and the berm work so that it all goes forward in a way that makes sense. We are in the big and exciting final stages of the project. Chairman Gray would like to see one unit remain unoccupied for the grand opening, so people can walk through them. Chief Robrahn says that we have a plan to keep one unit open for current tenants in a different Greenhorn unit, so it can be used as a touring unit. Once we get landscape bids in, that will give us the best idea of when we can plan to do a grand opening.

Chief Bauer says that the units really advertise themselves, since they are so visible from the highway right now, and he has had a lot of people approach him about it them with positive feedback. Chairman gray says he has had calls from other organizations asking how we accomplished this project.

Commissioner Michael says thank you to everyone for all the hard work that has been put into the project.

[10. Discussion and possible approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Calendar and Public Hearing Date*](#)

Jocelin notes that the agenda item had a typo, and we are discussing FY 2025, not FY 2024.

Commissioner Michael says that she will not be able to participate in the currently scheduled May 8th meeting. The Commissioners discussed moving the meeting, and decide to move the meeting to May 2nd. All three Commissioners will be available.

The next few meetings should work for everyone, and the rest of the Budget Calendar looks good to everyone.

MOTION

Commissioner Michael moves to adopt the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Calendar and Hearing Date as discussed; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

[11. Discussion: Old Business.](#)

None.

[12. Public Comment.](#)

None.

[13. Adjournment*](#)

MOTION

Commissioner Engelmann moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Michael.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

Chairman Gray declared the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.



Jed Gray, Chairman



Earl Engelmann, Secretary