

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the Council
Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
October 09, 2024, at 10:00 AM.**

[1. Call to Order.](#)

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Chairman Gray announced that the North Blaine County Fire District was gifted a \$1 million anonymous donation to pay off our loan on Engine 3 loan, with the remaining balance going towards our housing project loan.

[2. Public Comment.](#)

None.

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

Commissioner Michael asked what the District pays ICRMP for, and Chief Bauer answers that it covers all of the District's physical assets – stations, apparatus, housing units, etc. Commissioner Michael had been wondering about that, since usually covers employees.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the October 9th 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 September 11th 2024 and September 24th, Regular and Special Meeting Minutes*.](#)

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the September 11th, 2024 and September 24th, 2024 Regular and Special Meeting Minutes; seconded by Commissioner Sarah Michael. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

[5. Discussion and potential approval to pay off remaining Engine 3 Zions Bank Commercial Loan*.](#)

Chairman Gray comments that the donation we received was specifically earmarked to be used to pay off our Commercial Loan with Zions Bank for Engine 3. Zions Bank is sending Jocelin a payoff quote for November 5th. The donation check has been deposited in our bank account but it takes up to 10 business days to clear. At this time Jocelin estimates the loan is at about \$442,000 with interest since our last payment in August. Commissioner Michael comments that since our annual payment for the loan is about \$78,000 per year, we are now saving that annual payment. Chairman Gray adds that it will certainly help us to lower our annual budget deficit.

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moves to pay off the remaining Commercial Loan with Zions Bank for Engine 3; seconded by Commissioner Sarah Michael. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

[6. Discussion and potential approval to manage and distribute remaining anonymous donation funds*](#)

Chairman Gray states that the remainder of this donation has been earmarked to pay down our private loan with Chris Stephens and 5B Housing. The Reniers donated \$100,000 to go towards the housing debt service as well, so this will go in conjunction with that donation. Chairman Gray has spoken with the Mayor and City Administrator of Sun Valley about this debt payment, and they have spoken to Chris Stephens. Chris Stephens is okay with this large early payment. Jocelin says that the 5B Housing loan currently sits at about \$1,349,000 after our latest payment in September. After paying off the engine, we will have approximately \$550,000 to put toward the housing loan.

Commissioner Michael asked if we pay this money towards the loan, does this go towards just the District's portion of the loan, or does it also cover the City's portion? Chairman Gray says that the donor directed the money towards the housing fund, not just for the District's half of the loan. He sees the donation as a joint gift for both the District and the City to benefit from. Commissioner Michael comments that Chairman Gray and the District have worked to raise a large portion of the funds for this project, and that the City has funds and income specifically for housing projects, 0.5% of their funds from their sales tax revenue. Considering these points she would like to consider the option of updating the payment schedule of the remaining loan amount in the future. They may discuss this further in November.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the distribution of the remaining gifted funds to the Greenhorn Housing Project, paying off approximately \$550,000 of the loan associated with the project; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Chairman Gray, Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

*A clarification was made that the balance of donated funds (\$550,000 after paying off the Engine Lease) will be transferred to the District's LGIP account until the City is ready to receive the funds to put toward the 5B Housing loan.

Jim Keating, City Administrator for the City of Sun Valley, says that when we make this loan payment bi-annually on its current schedule, the District pays the City their half of the payment, and then the City pays the total payment to 5B Housing. This is a total of about \$135,000 per year from both entities. Jim requests that this money gets paid to the City of Sun Valley in the same way, and then they pay the amount to the 5B Housing, along with the \$100,000 donation being received from the Reniers. Commissioner Engelmann asked if this payment will change the amortization table; would this shorten the payment duration or lessen the annual payments? He feels that it is worth looking into both options. Jim will talk to Chris Stephens about both options; if we keep the same time table it would lower our annual payments by almost half. This City expects to receive the \$100,000

donation from the Reniers via Spur very soon. If the District then transfers funds to the City right away, the City will write the check to 5B Housing.

Commissioner Michael asked about how much the City has brought into their Housing Fund from the LOT tax, and Jim answered that they brought in about \$500K last year, and they are assuming the same amount to be received this fiscal year. The City did dedicate \$100K from this fund to the Greenhorn Housing project this fiscal year.

Jocelin will work with Kelly to distribute funds to the City once the City is ready for them.

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

Chief Bauer starts by saying thank you to Chairman Gray in acquiring this donation, it really is a huge deal.

We have continued to be very busy this past month. We assisted on the Telemark fire on the Big Wood Golf Course a couple of weeks ago. There was good response from both the District and the City. It was a really tough fire and that started around 2 am. Everyone in the household got out safely, and no firefighters were injured. We do not yet know the extent of the damage, but there was significant damage to the roof and interior. We were able to get a lot of personal belonging out of the garage. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but the BLM reached out to Chief Robrahn to say that they placed a heat sensing camera on top of Bald Mtn for wildfire monitoring, and that camera measured an explosion at that home at the time of the fire. They are going to send over the footage. The family is local and has other family to stay with.

There was also the Martin Canyon wildfire in Bellevue that we assisted on, as well as a car fire on the highway, and a really large gas line leak on the highway just two days ago.

With our new increased funds from the Ambulance District this year, we are officially starting a BLS response out of Greenhorn Station on October 15th. This response will be for the southern portion of the Fire District, and will be a BLS response with ALS capabilities. This response will be automatic out of Elkhorn initially, and if a Greenhorn engine is able to respond, then Elkhorn can return to service. E10 will be the responding engine from Greenhorn, and is equipped to do so for the BLS response. This is a very exciting and tremendous step for the Fire District.

We have actively started our hiring process for 2 new full-time staff, including a Captain and a Firefighter. We have received multiple applications for each position and will begin to review those applications in the next couple of weeks. One of the firefighter applicants is from out of the area.

We are preparing for Blaine County Fire Academy that will start in January, and already have a full class of four cadets for the City and the District. This is great and ahead of the curve for us, and we are very excited about these new recruits.

Chairman Gray asked if we have continued to hold one of the newly renovated Greenhorn units as a potential duty staff room. Chief Bauer says yes, unit 100A has been kept vacant for now. It may also be used as a recruitment tool for hiring the two new positions.

Chief Bauer has been working with City Administrator Keating on a new Greenhorn Readiness Plan; a strategic plan for full time staffing, EMS presence, etc. We are excited about this opportunity to enhance Greenhorn readiness with all of the responders we now have living there in the housing. There will be more to come on this and Jim and the Mayor will provide additional future updates on this plan.

We are having very unusual wildland fire conditions for us this time of year. It is significantly drier and warmer than usual for this time of year, and really leaves the potential for a significant wildfire to start. We even had a red flag warning just last Friday. Chairman Gray asked if we are still not allowing any burn permits? Chief Bauer says that he is not allowing any at this time. At a future meeting he would like to discuss banning all open burning in the District in the future. Chief Bauer feels that there is a significant risk versus reward on allowing burning. We have generally only given out 2-3 permits each of the past couple of years. Chairman Gray suggests putting it on next month's agenda to discuss.

Commissioner Michael says that we also need to be communicating with the Forest Service regarding where and how they allow campfires. They are still allowing campfires in the established fire rings through the season. There are a lot of homeowners on the urban wildland interface are losing their home insurance. Chairman Gray says his subdivision by Redfish has been working with the Forest Service for many years and they are working to close pirated camp sites.

[8. Updates, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*](#)

Commissioner Michael says that she toured the renovated units at Greenhorn. They look very good and she thanked Jocelin for all of her work on this. The last piece of the project is to install the new blinds.

Chief Bauer met with Ashley Boand, the landscape architect of the project, to discuss the next phase of planting. All irrigation and planting will be completed by the end of the week. They will hydroseed the berm right as we go into freezing weather. What they have planted so far has already really enhanced how things look there. Commissioner Engelmann asked if we are moving forward with more planting than initially planned, since P&Z gave us approval to plant 60% of the berm rather than just 30%. Chief Bauer answered that for now we are going with the currently planned vegetation, and then we may plant more. There is a certain portion of the berm that ITD does not want planted. The other concern is that if there is too much vegetation, Elk could easily hide in the vegetation and jump onto the highway unseen.

There was some damage to one of our new units due to a septic line being hit by a subcontractor putting in the new underground power lines along the highway. Sawtooth Plumbing diagnosed the problem quickly that Friday, and Jonathon Lunceford got his crews out there on Sunday to repair the break. Chief Bauer wants to do another big thank you to Lunceford for this and all of his work on the project. There was some damage to the unit, and we are working to get reimbursed from the subcontractor for the costs of repairs.

Commissioner Michael comments that the City paid approximately \$1,695,000 from their housing LGIP account for the housing project in Fiscal Year 2024. How much have we spent total and how much remains? Jim Keating says that we have approximately \$350,000 left in the LGIP, and expect to received just about the same amount in remaining bills to be paid on the project. The total estimate on the project at this time is about \$3.8 million. We expect to pay our final bills for the project soon.

Chairman Gray says he still has many people ask him what this project cost, and he thinks we got a good deal for what we did.

9. Discussion: New Business.

None.

10. Discussion: Old Business.

None.

11. Public Comment.

None.

12. 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 adjourned the meeting at 10:56 a.m.



Earl Engelmann, Secretary



Sarah Michael, Treasurer