

**Regular Meeting of the North Blaine County Fire District in the Council
Chambers – 81 Elkhorn Road, Sun Valley, ID
November 13, 2024, at 10:00 AM.**

1. Call to Order.

Commissioner Engelmann called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Michael was present via phone call and Chairman Gray was absent.

2. Public Comment.

None.

3. Approval of the November 2024 Claims*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Michael moved to approve the November 13th 2024 claims; seconded by Commissioner Engelmann. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Commissioner Michael, Commissioner Engelmann

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Chairman Jed Gray

4. Approval of the October 9th, Regular Meeting Minutes*.

MOTION:

Commissioner Engelmann moved to approve the October 9th, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes; seconded by Commissioner Sarah Michael. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Chairman Gray

5. Report: Monthly Update – North Blaine County Fire District Chief, Rich Bauer.

A couple of weeks ago we were paged out to smoke at a residence as far at the end of our district as it could have been. The fire was in the insulation in the crawl space in a property at the end of Cove Creek Road. Great job to the teams that worked on that, especially Julie Youngblood and Sarah Driggs.

Chief Bauer is moving his main office to the south fire bay office at Greenhorn Station, which is part of a Greenhorn Readiness Plan. This plan is a work in progress for creating a path for the District for the next 3-5 years, to ensure we have and create a truly synergistic relationship between the Fire District and SVFD. This is to really keep us moving forward in a positive way to continue to better serve the constituents of the District. Commissioner Michael was going to ask what we purchased all of the office furniture for recently, and this answers that question.

Chief Bauer says that we are having a resident meeting at Greenhorn tonight at 5:30 to announce to the residents that this change is happening. This will bolster our response processes and guarantee

an EMS response from Greenhorn many days of the week. Commissioner Engelmann says he is excited about this; it sounds like we are putting our first full time staff person on site. Chief Bauer agrees, and now that we are having a BLS response out of there it is good for him as a paramedic to be there and ready to respond. We do have the eventual goal of having 24/7 staffing from Greenhorn Station.

Chief Bauer reminds the Commissioners that in 2025 we are getting evaluated by the Idaho Service and Rating Bureau with their public protection evaluation. The evaluation is what determines our insurance ratings for properties in the District. Much of the rating is based on how close properties are to a fire station. It also includes our dispatch information, community risk reduction efforts, fire department equipment, operations training, and water systems available for fire fighting. These ratings have a pretty big effect on house insurance costs.

Chief Bauer says that he would like the Commissioners to consider purchasing a pickup truck, potentially with a plow, with the money we are saving from our debt service payments due to the anonymous donation we received recently. A vehicle like that would also be an ideal vehicle to use for responding to EMS calls.

In the last meeting, Chief Bauer mentioned potentially creating a permanent burn ban in the district and no longer give out burn permits. He has reconsidered this and advises that we continue to issue the permits. There are a few residents that receive permits each year, and the Sun Valley Company does necessary burning in the District each year.

Commissioner Michael asks about having a common training officer for the entire valley. In a consolidation meeting that she recently attended between City of Ketchum and Wood River Fire & Rescue she was surprised to hear that there is not a consistent training method between all of the local agencies, nor do we have radios that can enable everyone to be able to talk properly on incidents. She thought that the agencies' mutual aid agreements between entities included common response, radio, and training protocols. She would like to know what is preventing the coordination of training and purchasing radios that can talk to one another, and adoption of agreed upon protocols? Chief Bauer responds that he does feel both agencies were misrepresenting the situation; they do not have a plan for a training officer or standardized response protocol with their consolidation. The City of Sun Valley Fire Department has recently adopted Blue Card for Incident Command, which is a nationally recognized standardized incident command approach. Sun Valley and North Blaine County are trying to stay in our lane and lead by example; we are the first entity to adopt this standardized response protocol, and the first to have a Deputy Chief of Training.

Commissioner Michael disagrees that we should stay in our lane, we should all be communicating and coordinating with each other for the sake of greater public safety. We need to find a way to have these protocols between agencies.

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

Chief Robrahn starts by addressing Commissioner Michael's concerns. He agrees with these concerns completely, and feels a lot of these problems can actually be fixed quite quickly. Firstly, all of the Fire Chiefs in Blaine County agreed on a radio plan that everyone works by. In this way all

radios in the Valley are set up the same way so that anyone can pick up any radio and they all work the same way with the same training. Ketchum Fire Department changed their radio plan last year without consulting any of the other agencies; they are now the only agency in the County that does not have the same radio setup.

Any time Sun Valley Fire does a big training they always invite the other agencies in the Valley. Referring to the Blue Card training program, it is a nationally recognized program for incident communications. We have paid a lot of money for this and sent two of our own staff to a train the trainer program on this, so our staff are certified to be instructors for the program. Because we now have these instructors, we can certify staff in and out of our department that go through the program. We have purchased ipads and basic handheld radios to continue this training in our department and have invited all of the other departments to participate in this training.

Commissioner Michael really appreciates Chief Robrahn's and the City's leadership, and she was shocked to hear these comments at the meeting the other week. It does sound like these are steps that could have been taken without consolidation. She hopes that the newly formed fire district will be more collaborative. Chief Robrahn says we continue to look for ways we can collaborate and grow. Commissioner Engelmann comments that regarding these topics, these things can be fixed with cooperation and communication, not consolidation.

Chief Robrahn says it has been a busy past six weeks. We are really looking at the City's overall strategic plan. They are looking at what we do to progress and provide the highest level of service to our citizens, and be prepared for the future. We are looking to create this plan in tandem with the Greenhorn portion of the plan we are working on. We will bring the document to the Commissioners for their approval and feedback.

We are starting to look at plans of full-time staffing at Greenhorn. There is a lot of pressure on the residents in because they feel they always have to be ready to respond. We are looking for ways so they can feel like they are not always at work while at home. One of our initial steps is looking at an organizational restructuring. We are excited to share that we have promoted Captain Ricky Williams to the role of Division Chief of Training and Operations. Training is one of our primary goals in the department, and consistent training is how we ensure the best responses from our firefighters. With this move, a second Captain's position opening was created, since we already had one vacancy. We have promoted Matt Hansen, a paramedic and one of our Blue Card instructors, to Captain. We have also hired Rune Haavick, a former Captain and paramedic from Wood River Fire & Rescue, as our third Captain. We are very excited to have him join our team. Promoting Matt Hansen left a vacancy in the Lieutenant's position, and we are very happy firefighter paramedic Katelyn Berman has stepped into that role. Lastly, we are excited to have hired Nate Scales as a firefighter. He is a long time Blaine County resident who has been an engineer and EMT paid on call firefighter with Wood River Fire & Rescue.

City Administrator Keating and Mayor Hendricks have been working closely and getting feedback from everyone on the department and have evaluated all of the salaries of our department staff. Salaries have been increased so our staff are being paid at the same levels as other staff in the valley, making sure we retain all of our highly trained and qualified firefighters. Commissioner Engelmann says he thinks this is all extremely positive, and appreciates everything Chief Robrahn

has just announced. Commissioner Michael agrees completely and says this is all very exciting. She asked if the salary changes were for the fiscal year or calendar, and what percentage change did staff receive? Chief Robrahn answered that the changes went into effect with the fiscal year, and the salary increase was different depending on the positions staff are in.

8. Updates, discussion, and possible action regarding Greenhorn Housing Project*

City of Sun Valley Administrator Jim Keating announces that we have completed all pieces of the Greenhorn Housing Project. All landscaping is in, and hydroseeding has finished. He says that we really need to take a moment to celebrate this. We expect to wrap up invoices and reconciliations in the next couple of months. When we have final numbers for this Jim will present them to the Commissioners.

Since our last Commissioners meeting, the City received the funds from the District's anonymous donation, as well as the \$100,000 donation through Spur from the Renier's. The city is writing a \$657,939 check today to put both of those funds into one check to 5B housing, to prepay down part of our debt with them. Both the District and the City approved the release of these funds for this purpose. Each organization was paying about \$67,000 to this debt service each year. 5B housing is keeping our time schedule for the amortization table. Now each organization is paying about \$35,000, a savings of over \$30,000 per year per agency. The North Blaine County Fire District has also paid off their lease on Engine 3, creating another \$80,000 in annual savings. This provides over \$100,000 in annual savings to the District.

Commissioner Engelmann comments that it does not seem like it was very long ago that he was standing at the to be construction site, and now it is a fully occupied community. That really speaks to the level of need there was for this housing.

8. Discussion: New Business.

Jocelin would like to discuss next year's meeting schedule for next year. Commissioners Michael and Engelmann agree with keeping the same schedule, with a couple of changes suggested by Jocelin. Jocelin will check with Commissioner Gray as well and prepare the Resolution for next month.

9. Discussion: Old Business.

None.

10. Public Comment.

None.

11. Adjournment*.

MOTION

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

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES: Commissioner Engelmann, Commissioner Michael

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Chairman Gray

Commissioner Engelmann adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Remote

Earl Engelmann, Secretary

Sarah Michael

Sarah Michael, Treasurer