

FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 18, 5:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Dan Foley, Chair, *BSB Commissioner #9*
Patrick Doherty, *BSB Fire Dept.*
Bud Eveland, *Rocker Volunteer Fire Dept.*
Chris Mjelde, *BSB Fire Dept.*
Guy Quam, *Boulevard Volunteer Fire Dept.*
Chad Silk, *BSB Fire Dept.*

Guests Present:

Jeff Miller, *BSB Fire Chief*
Ed Fisher, *BSB Fire Council*
Dave Kneebone, *Little Basin Creek VFC*

Members Not Present:

John P. Morgan, *BSB Commissioner #3*
John Sorich, *BSB Commissioner #4*
George Stone, *Terra Verde Volunteer Fire Dept.*

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 14, 2015, MEETING

A motion was made by Bud Eveland and seconded by Guy Quam to approve the January 14, 2015, minutes. The Minutes were so approved.

V. UPDATES

First, Chairman Foley informed everyone why the monthly meeting had to be changed. The meeting had been noticed; but, there were some issues with the agenda being posted according to the open meeting law, and it was not posted in time (an agenda must be posted at least 48 hours prior to the meeting).

A. FIRE EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FUND REQUESTS

Chairman Foley reported that he sent Chief Miller a letter with the committee's recommendations for the Fire Equipment and Training Fund Requests and that the orders would go through Chief Miller's office.

Chief Miller reported that almost everything has been ordered. He informed the committee that the reason that the ordering was changed this year was due to mathematical errors or omissions in the past; it wasn't about power and control. It was just about ordering and checking the confirmations and pricing received from the vendor. The orders will be shipped to the volunteer fire departments. There may have been some miscommunication about that and he wanted to bring it to everyone's attention.

Firefighter Chad Silk commented on behalf of the career department and said they crunched some numbers; and, after the August 15, 2015, payment for the rescue vehicle, with the remaining TIFID funds, they would like the committee's alliance/recommendation to help fund some of the SCBAs that they requested by using the remaining funds to purchase some of the SCBAs needed (18). He wanted to bring it to the floor.

Chairman Foley asked for clarification that the career department would like the committee to consider their request to use the remaining funds to help pay for SCBAs. Chad confirmed that they would like to put the career department's request on hold until after the August 15th payment for the rescue vehicle and look for another source of revenue to help fund the remainder of the requested tanks.

Chairman Foley suggested that they let him know closer to that date so that he can put it on the agenda at that time. Chairman Foley mentioned that he and the committee believed that it was an all or nothing request from the career department. Chad said that after the meeting about the budget authority and the money available, they realized that there is more funding available.

Guy Quam stated that they looked at the tanks that the career firefighters are looking at getting; he thought we were all trying to standardize the SCBAs. His question was: "Are we looking to replace all of them?" Discussion followed regarding the long-term planning, the continual replacement of SCBAs, the NFPA rules, looking at interchangeable gear, the evolution of a universal buddy system (standardizing equipment) as an industry, new technology, purchasing them out of the general budget, limited resources, replacing the SCBAs incrementally, safety issues, etc.

Chief Miller reiterated that not having enough funding is always a problem. He would like to buy everyone new SCBAs at one time, but we have to purchase them incrementally. He said that the career department was looking to replace the SCBAs on the front-line trucks and they would compromise. This compromise meant that the reserve apparatus and rescue units would not be equipped with new SCBAs.

Chief Miller handed out the Capital Improvement Budget that was submitted last year that showed that the SCBAs for the career department were included in that budget. The budget was never officially looked at due to circumstances beyond our control. He will submit the request for SCBAs again. He shared his thoughts on the budget

and process of having to replace all of the SCBAs incrementally. Chief Miller prefers and respects the democratic process, and asks for the committee's consideration to use the funds to purchase some of the tanks. He will look for other sources of funding as well. Also, Chief Miller intends to write a grant and ask for SCBAs. He stated that our budget has increased because of these funds and we have to report it that additional source of funding. Having the TIFID money takes away some of the integrity when writing a grant. When he goes before Council to request more money, the Council and the Chief Executive will ask about the remaining money in the TIFID fund.

Chief Miller shared that the career department's SCBAs in particular are showing usage. He asks that the committee take a serious look at it. More discussion included the cost of the replacement of the SCBAs and the budget for this fund. Ed Fisher questioned the committee regarding the next payment date and remaining funds, and the number of tanks requested.

Chairman Foley suggested the subject be deferred for discussion at a later time.

B. MEETING TO REVIEW FIRE EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FUND BALANCE HELD ON JANUARY 29, 2015

Chairman Foley handed out information that was received from Finance & Budget Director Danette Gleason showing the balance of the TIFID fund (attached). A meeting was held on January 29th with Finance & Budget Director Danette Gleason, Chairman Foley, Chief Jeff Miller, Chad Silk, George Stone, and Shelly Jones in attendance. The balance for the TIFID account was reviewed along with information that was provided by Chief Miller. The balance shown from Danette's handout is \$178,784.68. Chairman Foley said that if anyone had any questions, to feel free to meet with Danette Gleason and go over the budget. The budget is confusing and technical.

C. ORDINANCE CHANGE REQUEST SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS BY JEFF MILLER AT FEBRUARY 4, 2015, MEETING

On February 4, 2015, Chief Miller submitted a request to the Council's Judiciary Committee, and they approved the two requests that needed to be changed/removed from the ordinance. The changes were the age limitation and the devotion of time. These changes will go before the Council for approval. Then, they will be taken out of the ordinance. Commissioner Dave Palmer commented on the history of why the entire devotion of time came about. When the (city/county) consolidation took place, there was a concern that a fireman that worked the 24-hour shift could go out and take on other union jobs.

VI. REVIEW/DISCUSSION

A. CURRENT ISSUES IN FIRE DEPARTMENT THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BEFORE LONG-TERM PLAN/VISION CAN BE MADE – NOVEMBER 12, 2014, MEETING

Chairman Foley referred to the November 12, 2014, minutes where Firefighter Chris Mjelde brought up ideas regarding what the fire department's long-term vision and plans should be. Chairman Foley read a portion of the minutes from this meeting referring to this subject. Chairman Foley agreed that this is a good idea for the fire department and that some issues must be addressed that are not always easy. Chairman Foley mentioned that Commissioner John Sorich also agreed that this committee could play a vital role.

Commissioner Foley handed out the "Butte-Silver Bow Fire Advisory Committee Bylaws" to the committee. He referred to Article II: "...the purpose of the Committee is to study and recommend to the Director of Fire Services ways and means of improving fire prevention, fire protection, suppression, training and related activities," which is wording taken out of our Charter.

Discussion included the idea that was brought up previously of doing a study, which was tabled. Chairman Foley referred to the study that Helena did. Chairman Foley put together and handed out a sheet titled: "BSB Fire Department Issues to Review" (also attached). Chairman Foley said that he wanted to use this handout as a starting point for discussion. He asked the committee where they would like to begin and stated that the topics are all interrelated in one way or another.

Firefighter Chad Silk suggested the discussion begin regarding fire apparatus replacement because it was a hot topic last year. Chad spoke with Mike Lingenfelter from the Butte-Silver Bow shop and he has agreed to do an inventory of all the trucks in the county and come up with an analysis to include: call volume, mileage, pump hours, maintenance, and everything he has to do to maintain the trucks. Mike could come up with suggestions for a truck rotation, which is needed. Chad believes that Mike would be best person to do this because he works on the trucks all the time and he could do an unbiased analysis. It was agreed that Mike would be the least biased and most knowledgeable.

Discussion included requesting authorization from the public works director for Mike to do this task, setting up a schedule to bring every truck in for analysis, include each department's truck and pump operators in the evaluation process so they can share what works, doesn't work, and what it takes to make the equipment function at an incident. The idea is to ask Mike do the background check and then bring it to the Committee for further analysis and review. The project needs to start as soon as possible.

Chairman Foley handed out another document (information taken from Helena's study) that is titled "BSB Fire Apparatus Replacement Program" to get the conversation started regarding preparing an inventory of the entire fleet and using this handout as an example to come with some criteria to move forward. Chairman Foley spent some time reviewing the handout in detail. Is this something we want to use?

It was determined that the BSB shop has information on all the fire department vehicles. Bud Eveland asked if any replacement apparatus was included in the last Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Chairman Foley mentioned that there may not be any money in the budget next year either. Chief Miller said we need a long-term plan because down the road, a great number of apparatus will need to be replaced at the same time. We need this plan to go out as far as possible into the future.

Discussion followed on how a plan would be followed with budget constraints. Why haven't some of the volunteer fire departments applied for grants to replace apparatus? Guy Quam suggested that the TIFID money might be a good source of payment as funding for an inter-cap loan. He mentioned that most everybody has received new turnouts. Everybody should be well equipped now and maybe we should look at funding the apparatus replacements. It would save on a lot of disagreement. Chief Miller said that the career department has benefited from the inter-cap loan, but he believes that the primary purpose of this fund was for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). He is not opposed at looking at anything, but it was everyone's concern in the past that it should be used to replace PPE. We need to look at it to replace everybody's SCBAs. We need to keep in mind what this fund was set up for, but all options are on the table.

Chairman Foley asked if everyone was in agreement to move forward with reviewing the apparatus replacement program, and then it was reviewed in detail. Everyone agreed to follow this plan and not reinvent the wheel knowing that emergency replacements may come up, and agreed that we should ask if Mike Lingenfelter can perform the analysis making sure all apparatus were NFPA and DOT compliant.

Chris Mjelde suggested that this same format could be used to replace PPEs, SCBAs, and turnouts), etc., for all departments and the committee members agreed. Chris stated this is a real honest assessment that we can do before we make financial decisions and come up with a rotation system. The career department keeps track of most of the inventory in FIREHOUSE. Shelly Jones or Chairman Foley will email each volunteer fire department an Excel spreadsheet to list their PPE so that it can be returned and entered into FIREHOUSE. All departments need to participate to make this successful.

A request was made to submit all current/active members of each department to the committee. It was noted that not all departments have active members.

Capital Assets & Resources

The committee discussed capital asset and resources. Chief Miller said that he and Safety and Risk Management Coordinator, Cinda Seys, and he met with all the volunteer departments. Chief Miller reported that Cinda did most of the work and that she did a really good job. She developed a comprehensive list of immediate needs. Chief Miller stated that every facility needs work. Requested funding for this was also included in the CIP. Every facility needs considerable work, but it comes down to, once again, funding. They have done a pretty good job of getting quite a few things done. Every station needs interior/exterior paint, heating maintenance, etc. Chief Miller will provide the report to the Committee.

Budget/Funding Sources

Chairman Foley handed out the Final Budget and the Performance Budget handouts. Both of these handouts were reviewed beginning with the Final Budget. Wages and benefits are a big part of the budget. The rescue vehicle will be paid off in 2017.

The Performance Budget is under Public Safety. A mission statement and goals and objectives are included in this budget. When looking at funding, the Fire Department has a huge budget with huge expenditures for staff as it is for all departments. The 10 mil value was discussed, with Melrose and Walkerville having their own mill levy. Walkerville is its own incorporated city, and they are responsible for their own maintenance. There are still questions whether or not Melrose is paying into the 10 mills. Melrose is included with Silver Bow County. It was discussed that all volunteer fire departments are included in Silver Bow County except Walkerville. Discussion continued regarding Melrose having a separate mil levy, and why? How can we be more efficient is the bottom line.

According to Ed Fisher, preparation for the annual budget was discussed at the Fire Council meeting. A question that was brought up was how they can prepare a budget if they don't have any idea what their expenses are. Chief Miller shared that anyone can call him to get any budget information they need. The Finance & Budget Department has been inundated with requests. Now, you have to fill out a request for the information. They do the best they can with the funds that are available. He welcomes any volunteer department that wants to submit a budget to do so, but is it worth their time? There is very little extra money; most of it goes to the boots on the ground. Realistically, will they get what they ask for, and the answer is probably not. All the volunteer department budgets are included in the Fire Department.

After some lengthy discussion, it was thought that it is not practical for the volunteer fire departments to submit a budget. This may be something to look at removing from the ordinance. It was suggested to submit a budget on an as needed basis for special budget requests.

VII. ACTION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

A. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FROM COUCIL OF COMMISSIONER REPRESENTATIVES – TWO-YEAR TERM

In the absence of Commissioner John Sorich and Commissioner John Morgan, the Committee decided to elect a vice-chairman of the Fire Advisory Committee. Bud Eveland made a motion to elect Commissioner John Sorich to continue to be the vice-chairman, and Chris Mjelde seconded the motion. The motion was so moved.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MATTER NOT ON THE AGENDA

Bud Eveland asked if a paid or volunteer member cannot attend a meeting and has a substitute attending the meeting, does the substitute have voting rights. Chairman Foley said that he would put together a draft for review at the next meeting to include it in the by-laws. As long as a quorum of 5 out of 9 members is in attendance, this should work.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE – MARCH 10, 2015 – 5:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNNENT – The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

cc: Chief Executive Matt Vincent
Dan Foley, Chairman, Fire Advisory
Chief Jeff Miller, Director Fire Services