

Meridian Rural Fire Protection District

33 E. Broadway, Suite 210 - Meridian, Idaho 83642

Meeting Minutes – June 8, 2020

Call to Order:

The Meridian Rural Fire Protection District meeting for June 8, 2020, was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commissioner Ward. Roll call was taken.

Attendees: Commissioner Marvin Ward, Commissioner Derrick Shannon, Commissioner Randy Howell, Councilman Brad Hoaglund, Fire Chief Mark Niemeyer, and Deputy Chief Charlie Butterfield

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion approved.

Approval of the minutes:

Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2020, MRFPD meeting. Motion approved.

Noted for the record: April and May 2020 MRFPD meetings were cancelled with no minutes taken.

Treasurer's Report:

- Approve and pay bills as follows:

- ✓ Check #5330, City of Meridian, \$101,250.71
- ✓ Check #5331, Fire Code Consultants NW, \$481.86
- ✓ Check #5332, Stitch-It Screen Printing, \$545.70

A motion was made and seconded to approve and pay checks numbered 5330 through 5332 for April 2020 as presented. Motion approved.

- ✓ Check #5333, Ada County Billing Services, \$58.71 for Lake Hazel Property trash
- ✓ Check #5334, City of Meridian, \$92,810.31
- ✓ Check #5335, Fire Code Consultants NW, \$2,285.30

A motion was made and seconded to approve and pay checks numbered 5333 through 5335 for May 2020 as presented. Motion approved.

- ✓ Check #5336, City of Meridian, \$81,003.15 for April for 2020.

A motion was made and seconded to approve and pay check number 5336 as presented. Motion approved.

- Current net cash position is currently \$3,745,375.43.
- US Bank and LGIP statements were presented for review and approval.
- Assessments for 2020 received from Ada County for the property on Water Tower, Overland and Lake Hazel roads.

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- Estimate received from ICRMP for member contribution.
- Renewal documents from Idaho Workers Compensation State Insurance Fund received.
- Understanding of Services from Zwycart, John & Assoc. for our annual audit was received.

Old Business:

1. Chief Niemeyer gave a current update on COVID-19 as it pertains to the District. Chief believes that through the summer (barring no changes) we should move in to stage 4 next week. We are concerned that things may pick back up in the fall. Chief recommends the District consider web based meetings to stay current with information. Commissioner Howell would like to plan for web based meetings now in order to be prepared in the fall. Discussion followed on what programs may be available to use for the meetings and any funds through the CARES act that may be available to Fire Districts.
2. Update on Lake Hazel Property, Chief Niemeyer. There is still a hayshed, tractor and van on the property. Chief Niemeyer received a call from the previous property owner's attorney and they are working on identifying ownership of the items and getting them removed. Property is currently being used for fire training. Chief Butterfield asked Commissioner Howell to discontinue the regular monthly household trash collection for that property.

New Business:

1. Chief Niemeyer briefed the Commissioners on the Meridian Rural Fire contract service fee calculation for fiscal year 2021. The City of Meridian's Budget Analyst has updated the population and assessment values for the Rural Fire District and it was determined that the Rural's contribution should be set at 8% for fiscal year 2021 based on that assessment. Motion made and seconded to accept and approve the calculations provided by the City and accept the recommendation of an 8% MRFPD contract service fee as proposed by the City of Meridian. Motion approved. Chief Niemeyer reminded the District that a Resolution may be in order and we will put that on next month's agenda to discuss with counsel.
2. Foregone taxes discussion. Chief Niemeyer received a phone call from Alan Dornfest with the Ada Tax Commission regarding foregone taxes available to the District. Over the past few years, the District has not opted to take the "up to 3%" tax increase each year. This has allowed those amounts that they could have taken to accumulate into "Foregone" taxes which is currently at \$785,000.00 for the District. Those foregone taxes could cover a big project or cover a shortfall in tax revenue if needed. Mr. Dornfest had contacted Chief Niemeyer to ask if the Rural is planning to take the foregone taxes this coming year. Discussion followed with no decisions made.
3. Fire Stations 7 & 8 are in our Capital Improvement Plan for the City and they were intended to be built in 2023 and 2025. The Mayor's current direction is to move sooner on the build of these two stations using impact fees. Designing and building of two stations simultaneously would see a cost savings of 5 to 10%. The more difficult part to fund would be the staff which would run approximately \$1.4 million in wages and benefits alone to staff just one station. The hiring process has numerous moving parts including promotions, entry level testing, and lateral hires. The proposed station in the NW area of Meridian is predominately a City response station with very little rural area in that district. (*Chief*

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Niemeyer wrote on the whiteboard a rough map of where the property is located.) The proposed station in the SW area on Lake Hazel shows that the entire SW corner is still mostly rural. Discussion followed on a possible cost share of staff for the SW Station.

Another possible source to fund staffing is a FEMA grant for staffing (SAFER) and another grant, the AFG, Assistance to Firefighter's Grant could be used for equipment. The SAFER grant, if awarded, is a 3 year grant. It would pay 75% of the cost of wages and benefits for the first year, 75% in the second year and 35% in the 3rd year. The Mayor has requested we apply for the SAFER grant and plan accordingly. If we receive the grant, we would still be left with those percentages not covered by the grant. If the District is willing to entertain covering the difference, then this is where the foregone taxes could come in to play. If we build both stations simultaneously, and receive a SAFER grant, we would anticipate a projected opening of both stations in the summer of 2023. Another note on the foregone taxes is that they may fall under different rules for the newer tax years. The District may need to state what the foregone taxes would be specifically used for with the new rules, but this needs to be verified by counsel.

Commissioner Ward inquired about apparatus specific to the rural area such as brush trucks and water tenders. Chief would like to bring a plan to the District at next month's meeting outlining the specifics.

Commissioner Ward asked about the plan for the Water Tower property. Chief recommended the District keep possession of this property for a future relocation of Station 1. This project has been pushed a few years out from the original plan.

DC Butterfield gave an update on the proposed timeline for building Stations 7 & 8. The plan would be to design the stations this coming October of 2020, then break ground in the summer of 2022, with a move-in date in the summer of 2023. May of 2022 is the grant deadline. We would look to hire a consultant to write the grant through January-May of 2022 asking for the 24 firefighters to staff both stations. Grant awards are announced in September. If the grant is not approved and we have already broken ground, then we have to have a contingency plan in place to cover the cost of wages and salaries for the 24 firefighters. DC Butterfield discussed options on timing of hiring, academies, building, opening, and different plans on funding.

Chief Niemeyer stated that there is actually two discussions on foregone taxes; what the District has now in the "bank" of foregone taxes and also moving forward if the district needs a percent of the foregone taxes for the future. Chief will bring a plan to the next meeting.

4. Commissioner Howell informed the Commission that he has received a request to complete the US Census Bureau Survey; he has researched it and will complete the census for the District.
5. Commissioner Shannon inquired about response times near Chinden, Locust Grove and Eagle Road which are all under construction. He asked for clarification on exactly how emergency response vehicles deal with dead-end streets and emergency medical transportation. Chief Butterfield stated that ACHD does have regular meetings with first responder agencies such as Fire, EMS, and law enforcement where they present plans for construction and ask for input from the agencies. Chief

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Butterfield stated that there is ongoing and open communication between ACHD and first responders. Meridian Fire is aware of the construction and DC Butterfield keeps in constant communication with our fire captains regarding those issues.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the June 8, 2020, meeting of the Meridian Rural Fire Protection District. Motion approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.