



Hyalite Rural Fire District

Board Meeting Synopsis Approval Form

The written synopsis of the September 15, 2020 Hyalite Rural Fire District (HRFD) Board of Trustees meeting was approved by motion of the HRFD Board of Trustees on October 20, 2020.

Chair Signature

Eugene M. Geddes, III

Printed Name

Secretary Signature

Nick Shrauger

Printed Name

**HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
SYNOPSIS**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Sourdough Fire Station, 4541 S. 3rd Rd., Bozeman, MT

In compliance with [MCA 2017 2-3-212](#) and the Hyalite Rural Fire District Bylaws, the minutes of HRFD Board of Trustees open public meetings are comprised of an audio recording and a written synopsis. The audio recording is designated as the official record of a meeting. The written synopsis serves to assist the public in accessing portions of the audio recording and is a good faith attempt to provide the public with another method to be informed about the actions of the Board. The minutes are available to the public at www.hyalitefire.org/board-meeting-minutes/ or at the Hyalite Rural Fire District Administrative Offices, 4541 S. 3rd Rd., Bozeman, MT, during its standard business hours.

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:

Pete Geddes
Justin Miller
Nick Shrauger
Jason Jarrett

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Jason Revisky, Fire Chief
Brian Nickolay, Assistant Fire Chief
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

Pat Wilson
Bob Ogren
Steve White
Larry Thomas
Michael Buffington, Volunteer Firefighter

0:00:03	CALL TO ORDER OF HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT Chair Geddes called the meeting to order and reminded the public that the meeting was being recorded. Chair Geddes asked for any public comment on non-agenda items. None given. Chair Geddes reads a letter of Commendation to Assistant Chief Brian Nickolay for his work as Incident Commander of the Bridger Foothills Fire. <i>[See Attachment A]</i>
0:02:16	HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA Chair Geddes asked if there were any requests to remove items from the Consent Agenda. Chair Geddes asks for any public comment on the Consent Agenda – None given. Motion: Trustee Miller made the motion to approve consent agenda as presented. Trustee Shrauger seconded the motion.

	<p>Vote: Jarrett-Aye; Shrauger-Aye; Miller-Aye; Geddes-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p> <p><i>[See September 15, 2020 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items approved.]</i></p>
	<p>REGULAR AGENDA</p>
0:03:02	<p>Discussion and Decision – Reappropriation of SCBAs</p> <p>Chief Revisky provides background and requests the board give approval to solicit small fire departments in the State and give the old SCBAs to a fire department in need.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for board discussion.</p> <p>Trustee Shrauger asks what the estimated value of the gift might be. Chief Revisky advises this is unknown as they are no longer meet current standards. Trustee Jarrett points out that HRFD has been the recipient of equipment in the past. Trustee Shrauger agrees and mentions the receipt of turnouts in the past. Chair Geddes states he feels this is a good thing to do for emergency services community.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment. None given.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for more board discussion – None given.</p> <p>Motion: Trustee Miller made a motion to find a small department in need to donate the gear.</p> <p>Second: Trustee Jarrett seconded the motion.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment on the motion. None given.</p> <p>Vote: Jarrett-Yes; Shrauger-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes-Unanimous approval.</p>
0:06:35	<p>Discussion and Decision – Ambulance Transport</p> <p>Chair Geddes makes comments and suggests having two information sessions in October to present information and give the public a chance to ask questions. He states we have received e-mails from a few members of the community with questions. These e-mails will be attached to the minutes.</p> <p>Chief Revisky summarizes the committee report. Citizen and Committee member Steve White presents a spreadsheet of projected costs and revenues for different amounts of calls through a year. He makes comments on his thoughts on the proposal.</p>
0:20:09	<p>Chair Geddes makes comments and asks for board discussion. Chair Geddes asks about number of calls during a particular year. Chief Revisky advises accurate numbers are not available. Chief Revisky points out that the number of calls and numbers on the spreadsheet are conservative and pessimistic numbers. Citizen Steve White states one of the main points is that the ambulance transport service would stand on its own without using funds from Hyalite Fire.</p>

	<p>Trustees Shrauger asks about costs to the staff to track the calls. Chief Revisky advises there would be minimal to no costs. The hospital would provide the information for the billing company through a face sheet.</p> <p>Chair Geddes ask for more board discussion. Trustee Shrauger states he feels the cost numbers are not realistic and not including items such as heat, lights, insurance, maintenance, for purposes of the transport. Committee Member White and Chief Revisky goes over numbers and the costs that are already being paid and are not new costs.</p>
0:30:36	<p>Trustee Jarrett states the board and community decided a long time ago that one of the services the district would provide would be emergency medical response. The proposal is adding one more piece to that service – driving you to the hospital.</p> <p>More comments are made by Committee member White and Chair Geddes states there needs to be a clear distinction between new costs and costs that are already being incurred through HRFD’s operations. Chief Revisky gives background on what costs are already in place with the response to medical calls.</p> <p>Trustee Shrauger makes more comments in regards to costs. He also inquires as to who makes the transport calls. Chief Revisky responds it ultimately lies with the patient on whether or not they transport. Committee member White makes more comments on costs.</p>
0:42:53	<p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment. Community member Bob Ogren makes comments and asks questions. Chief Revisky provides background on obtaining numbers and logistics from the hospital.</p> <p>Chair Geddes states it’s very important to make the difference between new costs and existing costs. The ambulance is not a new piece of equipment additional to what we have. The ambulance has been scheduled for replacement through the capital replacement schedule. Chair Geddes also states he believes it is our fundamental duty to the residents of the district are well served. He is finding through the e-mails there is a misunderstanding that this is going to create an increase to the property taxes to the residents of the district, which it won’t and also a misperception that the board can raise taxes which the board can’t do.</p> <p>Committee member White makes more comments regarding the spreadsheet and a future guideline for budgeting. Trustee Geddes asks Chief Revisky the question if we chose to go ahead with the proposal and then decide not to go forward with the transport what would change from today. Chief Revisky answers.</p>
0:51:04	<p>Chair Geddes wants to make sure the public understands we essentially are already providing these services. EMTs are trained, we have the equipment and supplies. These are not new expenditures, and are not an expansion of services. The difference is actually taking the patient to the hospital.</p> <p>Chief Revisky gives more details on what additional tasks the EMTs will need to make in transporting a patient to the hospital. He explains he still wants to remain in a partnership with AMR as in the past but that we would be transporting the lower acuity patients to the hospital. Chief Revisky wants to re-emphasize the model is based on charging the taxpayers roughly a quarter of what they would be charged for a transport by the private ambulance company. There would be a cost savings to the residents in the district for ambulance transport.</p>

	<p>Trustees Jarrett and Shrauger makes comments and asks questions. Chief Revisky answers.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for more board discussion – None given.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment – None given.</p> <p>Discussion is held for timelines.</p> <p>Chair Geddes requests having one more subcommittee meeting (to be held September 30) and then having an open house for the community on October 6th to provide information and answer any questions. Public comment will be welcome and encouraged.</p> <p>Chair Geddes proposes having a vote on the ambulance transport proposal at the next scheduled board meeting (October 20).</p> <p><i>[See Attachment B for Ambulance Transport Committee Progress Report, Including Spreadsheet; See Attachment C for e-mails received from community members]]</i></p>
1:13:29	<p>Discussion - Fire Chief's Report</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for any board comments on the Chief's report – none given.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment on the Chief's report – none given.</p> <p>Regarding the Pancake Breakfast - Chief Revisky advises he has met with the Health Department numerous times to make sure we are following proper protocols in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the format will be different the Health Department approved our plan. No fire truck rides or bounce house will be available.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for board discussion on going forward with the Pancake Breakfast. The board advises they are fine with going forward with the Pancake Breakfast.</p> <p><i>[See Attachment D for Fire Chief's Report]</i></p>
1:16:44	<p>Trustees' Activities</p> <p>None</p>
1:16:48	<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Meeting regarding the Ambulance Transport set for October 6, 2020 • Next board meeting will be held October 20, 2020. • Pancake Breakfast October 3, 2020.
1:17:15	<p>ADJOURNMENT</p>



Hyalite Rural Fire District

4541 S. 3rd Rd.

Bozeman, MT 59715

Phone: (406)-586-3770

Web: www.HyaliteFire.org

Attachment A

Letter of Commendation

September 15, 2020

Brian Nickolay, Assistant Chief
Hyalite Fire District
4541 S. 3rd Ave
Bozeman, MT 59715

RE: Bridger Foothills Fire

Dear Chief Nickolay,

The Hyalite Fire District Board of Trustees would like to recognize you for the outstanding performance and service that you provided to the community during the Bridger Foothills Fire. As the Incident Commander for the first 3 days of this large and devastating fire, you provided exceptional leadership in both Operations, Planning, and Logistics. The Bridger Foothills Fire was a rapidly expanding and explosive event that surprised many seasoned fire suppression agencies with its aggressive behavior.

As the Incident Commander, you remained calm and thoughtful in your management of the fire suppression resources, law enforcement officers performing evacuations of residents, and the state and federal agencies who responded to assist with the fire. After your 3 days as Incident Commander, you successfully transitioned management of the fire to a National Type 1 Incident Management Team. The Board is very proud of you and your actions, and we appreciate and thank you for your dedication to the safety of Gallatin County residents.

Sincerely,

Pete Geddes, Board Chair
Hyalite Fire District

**Ambulance Transport Committee
Progress Report September 15, 2020**

The Ambulance Transport Committee is a group comprised of members of the public, Hyalite Fire District staff, and a Hyalite Fire District Board member. The last meeting was September 2, 2020 and was attended by Jason Revisky (Hyalite Fire Chief), Pat Wilson (community member), Steve White (community member), and Jason Jarrett (Hyalite Board Member). Our primary focus was on the creation of a spreadsheet to demonstrate projected costs and revenues for ambulance transports. You will find that spreadsheet attached to this document.

We also discussed many questions that have been brought up over the last few months as we have discussed the concept of the fire district providing ambulance transport services to the district residents. We organized the question into a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format that we hope will be helpful for the public as we move into a series of information sessions. The following are just a few of those questions and the corresponding answers:

Background

The Hyalite Fire District Board of Trustees is currently discussing the possibility of providing ambulance transport services for its residents based on the recommendation of Fire Chief Jason Revisky. Historically, the Hyalite Fire District has provided both fire and EMS emergency services to its residence, but the ambulance transport of those patients has been performed by a private ambulance service in Gallatin County (AMR). As the county population has grown radically over the last decade, AMR has struggled to provide consistent ambulance staffing for all 911 EMS calls for service in the county. As a result, the Hyalite Fire District has been dispatched with much greater regularity to provide ambulance transport services when AMR does not have an ambulance available to respond to a 911 EMS call. This has also affected the Bozeman Fire Department who respond with an ambulance to 911 EMS calls in the city of Bozeman when AMR does not have an ambulance available. While AMR has been a very good partner in providing EMS services to our residents, they have no legal or contractual obligation to provide EMS and/or ambulance service to the Hyalite Fire District. When they are unavailable, they simply just don't respond. It is imperative that we develop a robust and reliable EMS and ambulance transport system that ensures a high quality and consistent level of service to the residents of, and visitors to, the Hyalite Fire District.

FAQs

- **What authority does the fire district have to perform ambulance transport in its jurisdiction?**

MCA 7-33-2105 specifically provides authorization for a fire district to provide EMS services to the residents of the district. No other entity has the authority to perform EMS services in the Hyalite Fire District.

- **Will the district's taxes increase as a result of the fire department providing ambulance transport services?**

No. Providing these services will not result in any increase in property taxes. In fact, district residents who use this service will likely be charged a substantially lower rate for transport than the current private ambulance company charges. Please remember, the Board of Trustees can only increase taxes after placing an issue before district residents for a vote. The Board cannot by itself raise taxes.

- **Will ambulance transport burden the fire department's volunteers?**

Our volunteers currently respond to all medical calls in our district and all our fire fighters are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Providing this level of training for our volunteers means that for many years our residents experiencing medical problems have been served by very qualified personnel.

Our volunteers are very excited about the prospect of the additional experience and training opportunities that will be available to them by offering this service. We believe this will serve as an attractive recruitment opportunity for those interested in a career in emergency services.

- **Will additional training cost more or be a burden to staff?**

Our department has had a well-established and rigorous "hands on" training program in place for many years. The marginal costs, both in staff time and supplies, for additional training is quite low.

- **Won't it cost a lot of money to purchase an ambulance?**

The Hyalite Fire District currently owns an ambulance that was purchased as a retired unit from the Big Sky Fire Department. In line with the Department's Capital Replacement Plan, it is due for replacement in FY21. Hence, there will be no additional costs outside of our budgeted capital replacement for an ambulance.

- **Since you own an ambulance, do you transport any patients at the moment?**

Yes. We transport patients when the private ambulance service is not available. This condition has become more acute in the last year as the private ambulance company is stretched beyond its current staffing capabilities. We feel that it is critically important we ensure reliable and consistent ambulance transport services to our residents without being reliant on a third-party, private ambulance service.

- **Will district residents be surprised or disturbed to receive a bill for ambulance transport services from the Hyalite Fire District when they have never received a bill from the district in the past?**

This is certainly possible, but could easily be mitigated with a letter of explanation describing our billing system. We believe once residents are educated with regard to the billing for ambulance services, especially that they are paying far less than they would have with the private ambulance company, their concerns will be effectively addressed and satisfied.

- **Will the fire district have a back-up for ambulance transport in the event where there are multiple and simultaneous medical calls requiring ambulance transport?**

Yes. The private ambulance service is still providing ambulance transport services in Gallatin County, subject to their staffing constraints. Central Valley Fire District provides ambulance transport services and will continue to be a mutual aid resource to the Hyalite Fire District for ambulance transport services.

- **Would Hyalite Fire transport patients from all EMS calls within the district boundaries?**

Not at this time. The current plan would be for the Hyalite Fire Department to be the primary transport agency for EMS calls that are designated by the 911 Center to be of low to moderate severity for the patient. This rating system is created by a computer-

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Hyalite Admin <bookkeeper@hyalitefire.org>

Ambulance...

1 message

Tony Wastcoat <tony.wastcoat@gmail.com>
To: Admin@hyalitefire.org

Sun, Sep 13, 2020 at 8:56 PM

For the record, I am opposed to the proposed expansion of service. Our volunteers have enough responsibility at present. Tax payers are stretched.

Thanks for accepting comments.

Tony Wastcoat
Past Sourdough volunteer fireman and current taxpayer



Hyalite Admin <bookkeeper@hyalitefire.org>

Sep 15 HRFD Board Mtng - Ambulance Trans Svc

1 message

Murdock <donmarmurdock@montana.net>

Mon, Sep 14, 2020 at 3:01 PM

To: Hyalite Rural Fire Dist <admin@hyalitefire.org>

Cc: Nick Shrauger <mtnick@gmail.com>, DMurdock <donmarmurdock@montana.net>

HRFD Board. Here are some of my cmts. 1. What is the purpose of this project: over all financially is it an "income producer", an "expense producer", a break-even situation or just a "good will to community"? 2. What is the projected income from this proposal? 3. What are the one-time costs (new vehicle(s), increased number of personnel needing additional lodging, addl inside parking space(s), etc)? 4. What are the recurring costs (increased staffing & training, equipment, maintenance, etc)? Who/how are the administrative costs (billing, collection, reporting, etc) going to be handled for this possibly "new/expanded" mission? IF this were a real money maker for Gallatin Valley RFDs, why are they not already doing this mission? Also we are a Rural "FIRE" dept...and not a Rural "AMBULANCE TRANS SVC" Dept.

As we've seen all too vividly this past 10 days, there are times, fortunately rarely, when massive amounts of fire fighting capability is necessary. Short of a passenger train derailing (NP no longer runs through BZN), a BIG passenger plane crashes into the "Brick" during a sold out athletic/music event or a different "mass cal" event occurs, I think the existing Gallatin Valley ambulance transportation situation seems to be satisfactory. Just ask the hard questions, deliberate them thoroughly and then make your proposal known to all the residents of the HRFD. After all, we're the ones who will probably financially support the ultimate decision the Board makes. Don H. Murdock (91 Trails End Rd), 587.7401



Hyalite Admin <bookkeeper@hyalitefire.org>

Proposed Ambulance Service

1 message

Wayne Gipp <pigsky2@me.com>

Tue, Sep 15, 2020 at 2:04 PM

To: admin@hyalitefire.org

Cc: Nick Shrauger <mtnick54@gmail.com>

To: HRFD Board of Trustees

Fr: Wayne Gipp, HRFD resident and taxpayer

Re: Proposed Ambulance service

I have been following with interest the Chief's request to add medical transport to the services provided by HRFD. I do this to the extent possible on the HRFD website, but also from information shared by Nick Shrauger. I feel that the Chief and Board need to provide more details and documented facts as well as an opportunity to "vote" on the final proposal via a mail survey, before any final decisions are made.

Based on the information that I have, I have a few questions:

1. Can you provide documentation for the costs and revenues in the spreadsheet prepared by the Ambulance Committee? Costs seem low and income projections high to me.
2. Can you share Central Valley (Belgrade) Fire's costs, revenue, and experiences relative to their Ambulance Service ? If you have data and input from other fire departments/districts or other services it would be appropriate to share that also.
3. How many medical transport calls are currently made within the HRFD: Total? by HRFD? by AMR? by others?
4. How many requests for medical transport within HRFD are not responded to due to the unavailability of response units from any entity?
 - 4a. The spreadsheet implies that 40% of the calls will be out of district. That therefore implies that a large number of requests for medical transport within the valley are not being responded to because of unavailability of response units..do you have data to support this need?
5. Is the \$500 proposed fee for HRFD residents applied to all medical responses or only to responses that result in actual transport?
6. Is it appropriate (legal?) for HRFD to use tax dollars to subsidize a profit making service? The spreadsheet prepared by the Ambulance Committee presents the service as making a profit. A related question: Is it appropriate to charge resident taxpayers \$500/call when the projected actual additional cost per run is \$128 (or \$248 if the replacement cost for the initial tax dollar purchased ambulance is included)?
7. What is the Medicare approved reimbursement rate for Ambulance Transport in our area?
8. Is the proposal to increase the level of service from BLS to ALS? If so, does HRFD have sufficient qualified staff (paramedics) to support that level of service?
9. Does HRFD have the correct type and the correct amount of liability insurance/protection for the likely increased liability exposure connected with medically related service?

At this point I am neutral on HRFD adding medical transport service. However, I cannot support the proposal until more justification, details and information are provided by the Chief and Board.

Thanks for the opportunity for input.

Hyalite Rural Fire District

Fire Chief's Report

September 2020

Prepared by: Fire Chief Jason Revisky

1. The Hyalite Fire Department has responded to 364 calls in 2020 (as of 9/01/2020).
2. Our current roster is at 43 members (effective 9/01/2020).
3. We currently have 8 resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.
4. We had re-instated staffing at the Cottonwood Fire Station but due to COVID-19 concerns staffing has again been suspended at the Cottonwood Fire Station.
5. We still have 3 resident renters at the Rae house.
6. We have experienced no firefighter injuries or significant mechanical breakdowns in the last month.
7. The Fall Recruit Academy began September 9, 2020.
8. Solar Project is set to start in mid-October.
9. Station signage is progressing. The lettering is being prepared and should be ready for installation soon.
10. Pancake Breakfast is currently scheduled for October 3, 2020.