



Hyalite Rural Fire District

Board Meeting Synopsis Approval Form

The written synopsis of the April 13, 2021 Hyalite Rural Fire District (HRFD)
Board of Trustees Regular Board Meeting was approved by motion of the HRFD Board of
Trustees on May 18, 2021.

Eugene M. Geddes, III
Chair Signature

Eugene M. Geddes, III
Printed Name

Kenneth Beidenon
Secretary Signature

Kenneth Beidenon
Printed Name

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

DATE: APRIL 13, 2021

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
Walt Zidack
Jason Jarrett

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Brian Nickolay, Interim Fire Chief
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

Ken Beideman
Michael Buffington, Volunteer Firefighter
Reid Templeton, Volunteer Firefighter
Will Charlton, Volunteer Firefighter

0:00:00	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. Volunteer Firefighter Buffington provided the board with a letter signed by several volunteer firefighters in support of hiring Brian Nickolay as the fire chief. Trustee Shrauger asks if he was recommending the board not seek competition for the position. Buffington responds that although he understands there were other applicants his feeling was that the board had a fantastic person on staff and knows his experience. He feels there isn't any reason to search further. <i>[See Attachment A for Letter from Firefighters]</i>
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0:03:14	<p>HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA</p> <p>Chair Geddes points out the board will be approving two consent agendas. The February agenda was held over to this meeting. He asks if there are any requests to pull anything from either of the Consent Agendas. No requests are moved.</p> <p>Motion: Chair Geddes asks for a motion to approve the consent agendas. Trustee Zidack moves to approve the consent agendas as presented.</p> <p>Trustee Miller seconded the motion.</p> <p>Vote: Jarrett-Yes; Zidack-Yes; Shrauger-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p> <p><i>[See February 16, 2021 and March 16, 2021 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items Approved]</i></p>
	<p>REGULAR AGENDA</p>
0:04:49	<p>Discussion and Decision – Interim Chief’s Compensation</p> <p>Trustee Zidack gives background on salaries. No increase in salaries since July 1, 2017. Trustee Zidack states the current salary for the Fire Chief is \$98,160 and the salary for the Assistant Fire Chief is \$82,230. He suggests that given no change in salaries has occurred since 2017 and precedent exists when Brian acted as Interim Chief as far as pay for Brian. He proposes for discussion that the board consider providing Brian with the same salary as the Chief was receiving. He further suggests when a new Chief is in place the board address a compensation package for all employees.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for board discussion. Trustee Jarrett concurs. Trustee Shrauger asks if the numbers include benefits. Trustee Zidack answers that those are the base salary amounts and provides further numbers as to the compensation.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for any more board discussion. None given. Chair Geddes asks for any public comment. None given.</p> <p>Motion: Trustee Zidack moves to compensate Brian Nickolay as the Interim Chief at the current Chief’s base salary of \$98,160.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for any public comment on the motion. None given.</p> <p>Interim Chief Nickolay asks a question regarding timing.</p> <p>Trustee Zidack amends his motion to compensate Brian Nickolay as the Interim Chief at the current Chief’s base salary of \$98,160 retroactive to when he assumed Chief duties (March 16, 2021).</p> <p>Second: Trustee Miller seconded the motion.</p> <p>Vote: Jarrett-Yes; Zidack-Yes; Shrauger-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes-Unanimous approval.</p>

0:09:25	<p>Update on Fire Chief's Search</p> <p>Chair Geddes gives information on the search being conducted for the fire chief. Advertising for the position is currently being done in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle through the month of April. The advertisement is on the website. A survey has gone out to the volunteer firefighters.</p> <p>To date two applications have been received.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for board discussion. Trustee Zidack agrees with Trustee Shrauger that it is the responsibility of the trustees to consider other applicants.</p> <p>Chair Geddes also brought to the boards attention that a compensation review needs to be done more regularly. 2017 was too long not to have had the review. A standing agenda item will be placed on the January agenda for a compensation review.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for public comment. Will Charlton, Captain with HRFD since 2014, gives a vote of confidence in the hiring of Brian Nickolay as the fire chief. He makes the point that one qualification that is hard to access for is the preserving culture of the fire department. He believes this culture has been fostered by the leadership of Brian Nickolay. He asks that the board consider not only the institutional knowledge but also the ability to work with the volunteer base that exists and the standing wonderful culture that keeps people around.</p> <p>Chair Geddes and Trustee Zidack agree that the culture is a most important factor.</p>
0:15:17	<p>Fire Chief's Report</p> <p>Interim Chief Nickolay goes over items on the Chief's Report. An operational change will be made regarding sleeper shifts at Cottonwood. The department has evolved along with the resident program. In an effort to utilize the non-resident volunteers time the staffing model will be changed. Non-resident volunteers will now take one six hour shift per week. This will give non-residents a chance to receive more experience. The shifts would be six hour shifts either 7:00am-1:00pm or 1:00pm-7:00pm. This would also guarantee an ambulance crew during the day.</p>
0:21:13	<p>Interim Chief Nickolay proposes the Cottonwood Station becomes part of the resident program by putting four residents into the Cottonwood Station. Same rules and regulations would apply at both Sourdough and Cottonwood. Interim Chief Nickolay describes the shifts and coverage. He states without paying a single firefighter there will be staffing 24/hour 7/week for the district. Discussion was held regarding items and improvements needed for the station, i.e. beds, stove, desks, armoires for the rooms without closets. A storage unit will need to be purchases for the residents use. This would be brought to the board as an agenda item.</p> <p>Interim Chief discusses other items on the Chief's report.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for board discussion. Trustee Jarrett asks about sustainability of residents at Cottonwood. Interim Chief Nickolay provides comments and feels there will be no issue in keeping residents at Cottonwood.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for more board discussion. Trustee Zidack asks if there is a number for costs for items requested. Interim Chief Nickolay doesn't feel it will be too much but</p>

	<p>doesn't have exact numbers. Chair Geddes feels it would be a benefit to make sure the amenities are enough to attract people. He would like to see Cottonwood on a regular facilities upgrade schedule. He suggests having a board meeting at the Cottonwood Station.</p> <p>Trustees Zidack and Shrauger asks questions and makes comments. Discussion is held to have a board member along with Brian to go through the station to get a sense of what is needed. Trustee Zidack asks if there will be any issues with residents along with having Cottonwood as the main training station. Interim Chief Nickolay doesn't feel like there will be any issues and minimal impact.</p> <p>Chair Geddes asks for any public comment on the Chief's Report. None given. Chair Geddes asks for any more board discussion. None given.</p> <p><i>[See Attachment B for Fire Chief's Report]</i></p>
0:44:44	<p>Trustees' Activities</p> <p>Chair Geddes thanks Trustee Shrauger for his service to our community.</p>
0:45:00	<p>Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Panel Project has begun. • RFP for Audit Services has been sent out to authorized auditors. • Annual Meeting will be held May 18, 2021. • Chair Geddes would like the June regular meeting to be held at the Cottonwood Fire Station. <p>Chair Geddes asks for any public comment on the announcements. None given.</p> <p>Trustee Shrauger asks about the ambulance. Chief Nickolay states the ambulance was ordered in January and is set to be delivered in May.</p>
0:47:47	<p>ADJOURNMENT</p>

4541 S 3rd Road

Bozeman, MT 59715

April 13th, 2021

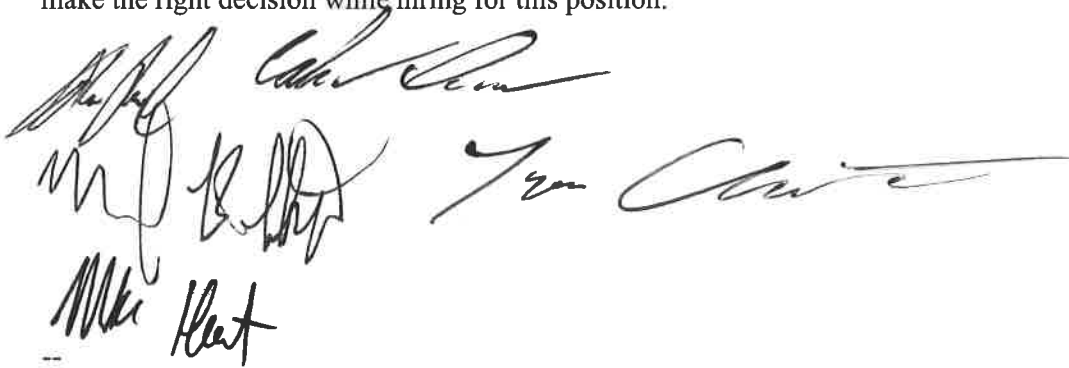
Hyalite Rural Fire District Board of Trustees,

It is in the board's best interest to hire Brian Nickolay as Chief of our fire department. You should all be familiar of his professional background and his long history within this organization, so I want to speak about my personal experience working with him over the past three years.

Every day I work with Nickolay, whether on a call, during training, or spending time at the station, he shows me how I can be a better firefighter. He leads by example by approaching all of his work with a level of passion and personal ownership that drives him to make thoughtful and effective decisions. He fosters a work environment where he encourages all volunteers to develop and grow professionally.

Anytime I have questions about the work we do, Nickolay answers with honesty, humility, and with an unbelievable depth of knowledge on not only fire, rescue, and EMS operations – but more importantly, with the insight of what our district and its residents truly need.

There is no one I would trust more to be our fire chief than Brian Nickolay and I hope that this board will make the right decision while hiring for this position.



Proud volunteers of HRFD

Hyalite Rural Fire District

Fire Chief's Report

April 2021

Prepared by: Interim Fire Chief Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire Department has responded to 51 calls in 2021 (as of 3/31/2021).
2. Our current roster is at 46 members (effective 4/01/2021).
3. We currently have 8 resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.
4. We will soon begin non-resident firefighter staffing again. We are adopting a new staffing model for non-resident firefighters. Prior to COVID restrictions our firefighters were filling overnight shifts at the Cottonwood Fire Station. This staffing was done 5 nights a week for 12 hours from 7pm to 7am. Our firefighters will now fill a 6 hour shift once a week at the Sourdough Fire Station. We will fill 2 shifts per day, Monday through Friday. One shift running from 7am to 1pm and the other running from 1pm to 7pm. This staffing model will better support our soon to come ambulance transport plan. We are not abandoning our staffing of the Cottonwood Fire Station. Attached to this Fire Chief's report is my plan for staffing of the Cottonwood Fire Station.
5. We have 3 resident renters at the Rae house.
6. Our spring firefighter recruit academy is moving forward. Our 6 new firefighters are doing great and recently completed their exterior and interior fire attack tactics with the MSU Fire Services Training School.
7. We have 6 firefighters who are beginning their firefighter 2 training and testing with the MSU Fire Services Training School.
8. In the last month we have responded to several wildland fires. Two fires were located within the Hyalite Fire District. One was a 8-10 acre grass fire off Jagar Lane on 4/4. Another was a 5 acre grass fire off Gooch Hill Road on 4/7. On both of these incidents we received automatic aid from mutual aid partners. We also assisted the Gallatin Gateway Fire District with a 25 acre grass fire on 4/3.
9. We have experienced no firefighter injuries or significant mechanical breakdowns in the last month.

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
TOTAL HRFD EMS Calls (Including MVAs)	33	44	33
Calls Resulting in Transport	13	25	19
Refusals/No Transport Needed	20	19	14
TYPES OF EMS CALLS DISPATCHED BY 911			
A – Least Severe	4	9	11
B	7	9	3
C	8	8	4
D – Most Severe	6	6	5
E – Rarely Used			1

Proposal for the Hyalite Fire Department - Cottonwood Fire Station Resident Firefighter Program

Since the opening of the Sourdough Fire Station and the purchase of the Rae Fire Station house, our resident firefighter programs have proven to be dramatic features of our operations. Response times from both stations have dramatically decreased from 15 - 20 minutes to under 5 minutes on a majority of our call volume. Our experience and competency of our resident firefighters has shown to be a benefit in creating leadership within our fire department. The interest in our resident program only continues to grow within the fire department as we now hold a waitlist of firefighters wanting to live at the fire stations.

Given the success of the program and the growing interest, I am proposing the establishment of a resident program at the Cottonwood Fire Station. We currently have firefighters willing and interested in moving into the Cottonwood Fire Station. Having firefighters live at Cottonwood will benefit the residents and businesses in the area. Currently we only have 1 volunteer firefighter assigned to the Cottonwood Fire Station. This creates a near zero response currently from Cottonwood. This has negative effects on residents and businesses including the Anderson School. Response is required to come from either Rae or Sourdough stations.

I would like to move 4 firefighters into Cottonwood as that is what the station can currently hold. The Cottonwood resident program would mirror the Sourdough program currently. The same rules and regulations that are currently in place at Sourdough would be in place at Cottonwood. Firefighters will live rent free with utilities including electric, gas, trash, internet and wi-fi paid for by the fire district. In Exchange for living rent free firefighters will be required to fill two week night shifts from 7pm - 7am. I would divide the 4 firefighters into two (2) person crews. One shift will cover Monday and Tuesday nights and the other shift will cover Wednesday and Thursday nights. **This staffing along with our current weekend staffing at Sourdough via residents and week day staffing via non-resident will bring staffing levels to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with at least a two person crew.** I would assume from our current success in the resident program that staffing would be above base requirements. I firefighters living at the stations love going on calls!

The Cottonwood resident program does have the potential to slightly increase utility cost for the fire district. I believe given we have previously staffed Cottonwood at night these utility increases will fit into our current budget line item for utilities. I would like to do some improvements to Cottonwood that are needed and will better fit a resident program. These items are listed below.

1. Replace the current kitchen stove and oven. The current appliance is the original in the fire station which is 17 years old. It is in poor condition with the stove top delaminating.
2. Replace the beds in the bedrooms. The beds are the originals and worn out.
3. Purchase a reasonably costing desk for each bedroom. Given most of our firefighters are college students, having a desk in their room where they can study is an important feature.
4. Purchase 2 armoires for the 2 bedrooms at Cottonwood that do not have closets for clothing storage.

5. Purchase a portable storage shed to place behind the fire station to allow for outdoor recreation storage. Similar to what the old bay at Sourdough is used for, having a place for residents to store bikes, skis and such is important to avoiding clutter in the fire station.

Items 1 - 4 I am comfortable using funds from the facility budget line item. Item 5 may be better coming from our capital improvement fund. I would bring quotes for the board to review and approve using capital improvement funds.

I feel this plan for residents at all three Hyalite Fire Stations will have positive results for our fire department. I see this as only improving firefighters' experience and creating more appeal to potential new volunteers. This plan will put us in a better place in keeping our fire department utilizing volunteers. As our area continues to grow, the more we can secure good volunteers the more we will avoid the need for paid firefighters in the future.