



## Hyalite Rural Fire District

### Board Meeting Synopsis Approval Form

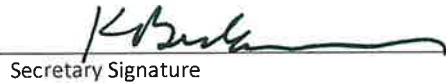
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The written synopsis of the September 23, 2025 Hyalite Rural Fire District (HRFD) Board of Trustees Annual Board Meeting was approved by motion of the HRFD Board of Trustees on October 28, 2025.

  
Chair Signature

Justin Miller, Chairman

Printed Name

  
Secretary Signature

Ken Beideman, Secretary

Printed Name



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

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Sourdough Fire Station, 4541 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Rd., Bozeman, Montana

*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/](http://www.hyalitefire.org/board-meeting-minutes/) or at the Hyalite Rural Fire District Administrative Offices, 4541 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Rd., Bozeman, MT, during its standard business hours.*

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**TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:**

Justin Miller  
Pete Geddes  
Walt Zidack  
Jason Jarrett  
Ken Beideman

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brian Nickolay, Fire Chief  
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant  
Chris Dahlhauser, Assistant Chief

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

Allie Kuntz-President, Volunteer Firefighter Association  
Kade O'Brian-Representative, Volunteer Firefighter Association

<b>0:00:00</b>	<b>CALL TO ORDER OF HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT</b>  Chairman Miller called the meeting to order and asked for any public comment on non-agenda items. None given.  <b>HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA</b>  Chairman Miller asks if there are any requests to pull anything from the Consent Agenda for review. None given.  <b>Motion: Trustee Jarrett moves to approve consent agenda as presented</b>  Trustee Geddes seconded the motion.
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	<p><b>Vote:</b> Jarrett-Yes; Zidack-Yes; Beideman-Yes; Miller-Yes Geddes-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p> <p><i>[See August 19, 2025 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items Approved]</i></p>
	<p><b>REGULAR AGENDA</b></p>
0:00:34	<p>Trustee Jarrett requests we move Agenda Item 4, Fort Ellis Interlocal Agreement ahead of Agenda Item 3, Hiring a Shift Captain. Chair agrees to the change.</p> <p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Discussion – Capital Replacement Plan</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay feels it important to review the Capital Replacement Plan frequently to see where we are progressing. The rate that prices are going up is over running the rate that we have saved. Our goal is to save \$584,023 year. Costs of equipment is exceeding the amount needed to be save.</p> <p>Our current lifespan for engines is 20 years, but we are showing that after 15 years the costs of maintenance are going up dramatically. As we are getting busier our equipment is being used more.</p> <p>Discussion and comments are made by the board.</p> <p>Discussion is held regarding when to go to the voters for a new bond. The current bond is set to expire in 2028. We would need to present to the voters an operations mill levy along with a bond for the new station. We have not asked for any money from the taxpayers since 2011.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett would like to advertise what the volunteers are saving the community as a volunteer station. Tying it to our ISO 4 and how this saves the taxpayers. He feels this has been lost on the general public. Chief Nickolay is working on promoting the resident program.</p> <p>Chair Miller asks for any public comment. None given.</p> <p><i>[See Capital Replacement Costs Interval-Attachment A; Capital Improvement Plan-Attachment B]</i></p>
0:27:40	<p><b>Agenda Item 2 – Discussion and Decision – Purchase of New Staff Vehicle</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay discusses the proposal. Discussion is held regarding the SAR vehicle previously approved for purchase up to \$15,000. The SAR vehicle was taken in to check out and there were a number of issues that would need to be addressed would cost upwards of \$20,000 - \$25,000. Even after the initial costs the maintenance costs on the older vehicle were of concern as well. The staff thought it would be better to purchase a new vehicle.</p> <p>Looking for a new staff truck the total cost would be approximately \$65,670 for a ½ ton with the outfitting. To save costs we will not be putting in new radios.</p>

	<p><b>Motion: Trustee Geddes makes a motion to approve the Chief's request as presented.</b></p> <p>Chair Miller asks for any public comment on the motion. None given. Trustees make comments. Trustee Jarrett asks to table this until after the next two agenda items. Chief Nickolay goes over the capital plan. We currently have six command vehicles.</p> <p>Chair asks for more discussion. He states buying an older vehicle is sometimes not worth the savings rather than just buying a new one.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett withdraws his request to table the request. Trustee Jarrett seconded the motion.</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Jarrett-Yes; Zidack-Yes; Beideman-Yes; Geddes-Yes; Miller-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p> <p><i>[See Proposal for Purchase of New Staff Vehicle – Attachment C]</i></p>
0:39:38	<p><b>Agenda Item 4 – Discussion and Decision – Fort Ellis Interlocal Agreement</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay has talked with everyone individually on what we want to explore going forward. Trustees had suggested with the same financial contribution we would still share the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief position and Hyalite would hire a position to fulfill training and support to Fort Ellis.</p> <p>Chair Miller feels Fort Ellis has a need and we are trying to fulfill the need. He feels that eventually they will want us to assume them. They have a rural improvement district so our taxpayers wouldn't have to assume their debt. They need leadership which they don't have right now. He understands wanting to be a good neighbor but how does that help Hyalite. Chief Nickolay feels before we consider any kind of consolidation, we will need to know we can operate as one. At this point we don't have that answer.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett makes comments. Trustee Geddes would like to see the Fort Ellis volunteers training with our department. He would like to see the Chief to use his time on the building of the new station. He feels we should have communication between board chair to board chair. If Fort Ellis wants to pay for training help that makes sense but not for the chief to be spending his time at Fort Ellis.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett requests getting the meetings between our board and Fort Ellis established. Basically, they are asking for a contract for services rather than an interlocal agreement. If a training position is created it would help both Fort Ellis and Hyalite. Trustee Geddes does not want to see the Fire Chief included. The relationship needs to start at the lowest level. Operations are where we should start. Discussion is held regarding the transfer of culture and it starts at the training level.</p>

	<p>Discussion is held among the trustees regarding training. Chief's plan was proposing to have fire training at Cottonwood and EMS training at Fort Ellis.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett summarizes we would support a position that Fort Ellis would pay for. In turn, we would receive help in command coverage, help with training and in turn we train them to do the day-to-day captain/battalion chief work. Then moving forward after the two-on-two meetings we figure out the other services each department would provide. A fire chief is still obligated under MCA for Fort Ellis.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett goes over what Hyalite is looking for to help out Fort Ellis.</p> <p>Chief Nickolay has concerns on how to manage a position at Fort Ellis without being the fire chief. Discussion is held with Trustee Geddes. He feels if Fort Ellis is only interested in the Fire Chief position that would be a deal breaker. He does not see the benefit to our residents. If annexation is the Fort Ellis end-game they will need to start that process right now. A great deal of information will need to be gathered.</p> <p>More discussion is held among the trustees.</p> <p>This item will be tabled for the next agenda after follow-up two on two meetings.</p>
<b>1:36:05</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 4 – Hiring of a Shift Captain</b></p> <p>The Chief was asked to bring a proposed fix to the command issues. Hiring a shift captain is the proposal. Trustee Zidack is concerned that hiring a shift captain and not going through with the Fort Ellis agreement would have Hyalite on the hook for this position costs and increases our operational costs. Trustee Jarrett states with six full-time paid staff, volunteers, and a model now that is not consistent with the state of the industry. Chief Nickolay feels it is mission critical to have command coverage and supervision on calls. The volunteers do not have the experience to run calls by themselves. Trustee Jarrett does not feel it is necessary at this time to have full command response versus command oversight.</p> <p>Discussion is held by the board members and Chief. Trustee Zidack looks at the increase in operational costs and the probability of having to go to the constituents for an operational levy. We haven't asked for a levy since 2011.</p> <p>This item will be tabled for further discussion.</p> <p><i>[See Proposal for the Establishment of a Paid Shift Captain Position – Attachment D; Shift Captain Job Description - Attachment E; FLSA 7(k) Eligible Employees Information Sheet-Attachment F]</i></p>
<b>2:01:51</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 5 – Replacement of Rae Fire Station - Standing Agenda Item</b></p> <p>Poster boards were created and were posted at the Pancake Breakfast. We received positive feedback.</p> <p>The Chief has been meeting with HOAs and has not received any negative feedback. Trustee Geddes suggests having an article put in the Chronicle. It would be nice to</p>

	have some residents attend board meetings. Handouts will also be prepared to get more exposure. Trustees have discussions and make comments.
<b>2:08:20</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 6–Volunteer Firefighters Assoc Report–<i>Standing Agenda Item</i></b></p> <p>Allie Kuntz, President of the Volunteer Association reports to the board regarding the Pancake Breakfast. They served more than 800 plates of food. Their goal was to make \$7,000 in donations. They received more than \$11,000 in donations. They made over \$8,000 in profit which was more than they expected.</p> <p>They have a great group of volunteers. Their next focus will be on the wellness committee.</p>
<b>2:11:00</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 7 – Fire Chief's Report</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay brings two items to the boards' attention. The first being the new Training Captain has been hired. Her name is Metta Trautmann and she was previously a volunteer and resident of the Sourdough Station for several years.</p> <p>We also utilized FireCat Hose Testing who tested all our hose. We had 11,995 feet of hose tested and 2,780 feet of hose failed. Some of the hose was over 20 years old. We will be replacing all the hose that failed at the approximate cost of \$16,000.</p> <p><i>[See Fire Chief's Report-Attachment G]</i></p>
<b>2:13:56</b>	<p><b>Trustees' Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None at this time.</li> </ul>
<b>2:13:56</b>	<p><b>Announcements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, October 21, 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>2:15:14</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>

Items	# of units	Cost (Today's Price)	Lifespan (In Years)	Salvage Value per Unit	Per Year Cost per Unit	Per year cost per all units
Commands	6	\$ 65,000	10	\$ 500	\$ 6,500	\$ 39,000
Engines	4	\$ 800,000	20	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 160,000
Water Tenders	3	\$ 500,000	25	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 60,000
Support	1	\$ 350,000	25	\$ 1,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
Ambulance	3	\$ 350,000	10	\$ 1,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 105,000
Brush Truck (chassis)	1	\$ 80,000	12	\$ 1,000	\$ 6,667	\$ 6,667
Utility Vehicle (including plow)	2	\$ 75,000	15	\$ 500	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000
SCBAs	44	\$ 8,000	10	\$ -	\$ 800	\$ 35,200
SCBA Air Cascade System	1	\$ 85,000	10	\$ -	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,500
Thermal Imaging Cameras	4	\$ 8,000	5	\$ -	\$ 1,600	\$ 6,400
Air Quality Monitors	5	\$ 2,500	5	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 2,500
Portable Radios	45	\$ 8,000	10	\$ 50	\$ 800	\$ 36,000
Mobile Radios	44	\$ 14,750	10	\$ 50	\$ 1,475	\$ 64,900
Base Station Radios	3	\$ 14,750	10	\$ 50	\$ 1,475	\$ 4,425
AEDs	14	\$ 2,500	10	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ 3,500
Little Giant Ladders	4	\$ 300	10	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ 120
14' Roof Ladders	4	\$ 330	10	\$ -	\$ 33	\$ 132
24' Ext. Ladders	4	\$ 700	10	\$ -	\$ 70	\$ 280
Portable Generators	5	\$ 1,200	10	\$ 50	\$ 120	\$ 600
Extrication Equip	4	\$ 35,000	10	\$ 50	\$ 3,500	\$ 14,000
Rescue Chainsaws	5	\$ 2,000	10	\$ 50	\$ 200	\$ 1,000
Rotary Saws	4	\$ 2,000	10	\$ 50	\$ 200	\$ 800
Ventilation Fans	4	\$ 2,000	10	\$ -	\$ 200	\$ 800
Lifepak Monitors	3	\$34,000.00	10	\$0.00	\$ 3,400	\$ 10,200

\$ 584,023.67

Fiscal Year	Capital Contribution 5%	Total Cost with salvage - unadjusted	Inflation Indexed 3%	Replacement Cost	Starting Balance \$1,064,301.00	Description
2026	\$ 378,000.00	\$ 1,805,950.00	1.00	\$ 1,805,950.00	\$ (741,649.00)	WT-6-2, S-6, AMB 6, AMB 6-2, U-6, U-6-1, SCBA Air Cascade System, E-6-4 Extrication Equipment
2027	\$ 396,900.00	\$ -	1.03		\$ (344,749.00)	
2028	\$ 416,745.00	\$ 111,500.00	1.06	\$ 118,290.35	\$ (46,294.35)	C-6-3, TICs, AQMs
2029	\$ 437,582.25	\$ 35,000.00	1.09	\$ 38,245.45	\$ 353,042.46	AEDs,
2030	\$ 459,461.36	\$ 34,950.00	1.13	\$ 39,336.53	\$ 773,167.28	E-6-1 Extrication Equipment,
2031	\$ 482,434.43	\$ 1,510,800.00	1.16	\$ 1,751,431.27	\$ (495,829.56)	SCBAs, Portable Radios, Mobile Radios, Base Station Radios, Ventilation Fans, Lifepak Monitors
2032	\$ 506,556.15	\$ 500,870.00	1.19	\$ 598,064.97	\$ (587,338.38)	C-6-1, C-6-2, AMB 6-1, Little Giant Ladders, 24' Ext Ladders, 12' Roof Ladders, Rescue Chainsaws, Rotary Saws,
2033	\$ 531,883.96	\$ 258,650.00	1.23	\$ 318,106.88	\$ (373,561.29)	C-6-5, C-6-6, TICs, AQs, E-6-2 Extrication Equip, E-6-3 Extrication Equip, Portable Generators
2034	\$ 558,478.16	\$ 780,000.00	1.27	\$ 988,080.66	\$ (803,163.80)	E-6-4
2035	\$ 586,402.07	\$ 144,000.00	1.30	\$ 187,887.34	\$ (404,649.07)	C-6-4, B-6-1 (chassis)
2036	\$ 615,722.17	\$ 966,950.00	1.34	\$ 1,299,499.94	\$ (1,088,426.85)	AMB 6, AMB 6-2, U-6, U-6-1, E-6 Extrication Equipment, SCBA Air Cascade System
2037	\$ 646,508.28		1.38	\$ -	\$ (441,918.57)	
2038	\$ 678,833.69	\$ 609,500.00	1.43	\$ 869,001.26	\$ (632,086.14)	C-6-3, WT-6, TICs, Air Quality Monitors
2039	\$ 712,775.38	\$ 815,000.00	1.47	\$ 1,196,854.98	\$ (1,116,165.74)	E-6-1, AEDs,
2040	\$ 748,414.14	\$ 34,950.00	1.51	\$ 52,865.01	\$ (420,616.60)	E-6-1 Extrication Equipment
2041	\$ 785,834.85	\$ 2,000,800.00	1.56	\$ 3,117,181.21	\$ (2,751,962.96)	WT-6-1, SCBAs, Portable Radios, Mobile Radios, Base Station Radios, Ventilation Fans, Lifepak Monitors
2042	\$ 825,126.59	\$ 500,870.00	1.60	\$ 803,749.31	\$ (2,730,585.68)	C-6-1, C-6-2, AMB 6-1, Little Giant Ladders, 14' Roof Ladders, 24' Ext. Ladders, Rescue Chainsaws, Rotary Saws
2043	\$ 866,382.92	\$ 258,650.00	1.65	\$ 427,509.04	\$ (2,291,711.80)	C-6-5, C-6-6, TICs, Air Quality Monitors, E-6-2 Extrication Equip, E-6-3 Extrication Equip, Portable Generators
2044	\$ 909,702.07	\$ -	1.70	\$ -	\$ (1,382,009.73)	
2045	\$ 955,187.17	\$ 1,624,500.00	1.75	\$ 2,848,570.58	\$ (3,275,393.13)	C-6-4, E-6-2, E-6-3
2046	\$ 1,002,946.53	\$ 966,950.00	1.81	\$ 1,746,419.26	\$ (4,018,865.86)	AMB 6, AMB 6-2, U-6, U-6-1, E-6 Extrication Equipment, SCBA Compressor, SCBA Fill Station
2047	\$ 1,053,093.86	\$ 79,000.00	1.86	\$ 146,963.27	\$ (3,112,735.27)	B-6-1 (chassis)
2048	\$ 1,105,748.55	\$ 119,500.00	1.92	\$ 228,974.36	\$ (2,235,961.08)	C-6-3, TICs, Air Quality Monitors,
2049	\$ 1,161,035.98	\$ 35,000.00	1.97	\$ 69,075.53	\$ (1,144,000.63)	AEDs
2050	\$ 1,219,087.78	\$ 34,950.00	2.03	\$ 71,046.15	\$ 4,041.00	E-6-1 Extrication Equipment,
2051	\$ 1,280,042.17	\$ 2,349,800.00	2.09	\$ 4,919,959.38	\$ (3,635,876.21)	WT-6-2, S-6, SCBAs, Portable Radios, Mobile Radios, Base Station Radios, Ventilation Fans, Lifepak Monitors
2052	\$ 1,344,044.28	\$ 500,870.00	2.16	\$ 1,080,171.87	\$ (3,372,003.81)	C-6-1, C-6-2, AMB 6-1, Little Giant Ladders, 14' Roof Ladders, 24' Ext. Ladders, Rescue Chainsaws, Rotary Saws,
2053	\$ 1,411,246.49	\$ 258,650.00	2.22	\$ 574,536.40	\$ (2,535,293.72)	C-6-5, C-6-6, TICs, Air Quality Monitors, E-6-2 Extrication Equipment, E-6-3 Extrication Equipment, Portable Generators
2054	\$ 1,481,808.81	\$780,000.00	2.29	\$ 1,784,583.59	\$ (2,838,068.49)	E-6-4
2055	\$ 1,600,353.52	\$64,500.00	2.36	\$ 151,998.48	\$ (1,389,713.44)	C-6-4
2056	\$ 1,728,381.80	\$966,950.00	2.43	\$ 2,347,041.45	\$ (2,008,373.09)	AMB 6, AMB 6-2, U-6, 2 1/2" Hose, 5" 100' Hose



## **Hyalite Fire District**

4541 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Road

Bozeman, MT 59715

(406) 586 – 3770

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### **Proposal for purchase of new staff vehicle**

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of a new staff vehicle would be to fulfill the fire district's need for additional paid staff transportation. As the fire district continues to develop and increase in population, the need for paid staff has increased to support our growing volunteer workforce. Our paid staff are required to travel throughout the fire district and neighboring districts during work hours. This travel includes training at all three Hyalite Fire District stations, general district errands, and attending mutual aid coordination meetings. This vehicle would serve as a staff vehicle for our new Training Captain.

#### **Proposal:**

The Hyalite Fire District explored the possibility of purchasing a used Gallatin County SAR truck. The board approved a purchase of the truck up to \$15,000.00. Division Chief Prato had the used truck inspected and found some mechanical repairs that would be needed. Some of the needed repairs are:

- New ball joints
- Repair an exhaust leaking which is leaking exhaust into the cab.
- New tires
- Repair an unknown electrical issue draining the batteries
- Replace air bags in the rear suspension
- Repair the body mounts of the rear utility box

The estimates to repair the truck would most likely bring the total purchase of the used truck to \$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00. There would be additional costs then of setting up the vehicle for Hyalite. Staff also have concerns of additional repair cost once the truck is in service.

Given the needed repairs to the used truck and the vehicle age, staff feels the best option would be to build a new staff vehicle that would provide a more dependable and

longer life vehicle. We are asking to purchase and build a similar ½ ton truck to our command fleet. In order to keep costs down on this new vehicle we would not immediately purchase and install mobile radios in the vehicle. Radios would be purchased as budget allows in the future. Portable radios would be used until mobile radios were purchased. The district was able to move \$1,000,000.00 into our capital replacement account. Our current balance for capital replacement is \$1,064,301.

\$46,000.00 Purchase of a new ½ ton pickup truck.

\$ 5,720.00 Purchase of topper and bed slide.

\$ 2,200.00 Cost to decals to the exterior.

\$ 8,600.00 Cost to install emergency lighting and siren package.

\$ 1,300.00 Cost of an emergency vehicle center console.

\$ 1,850.00 Cost of miscellaneous items (seat covers, tablet/cell phone holder, etc)

Total project cost - \$65,670.00



## **Hyalite Fire District**

4541 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Road

Bozeman, MT 59715

(406) 586 – 3770

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### **Proposal for the Establishment of a Paid Shift Captain Position**

**Date: 9/9/2025**

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### **Proposal Overview**

This proposal recommends the creation of a **Paid Shift Captain Position** within the Hyalite Fire District to improve consistent incident command coverage and administrative capabilities. As our department continues to grow, the need for a full-time, rotating shift, compensated command-level officer has become evident. The fire district has continued to struggle to maintain the needed number of Volunteer Incident Commanders. This position will provide incident command coverage, improve continuity of leadership, and support administrative functions.

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### **Purpose**

The primary purpose of creating a Shift Captain position is to:

- Provide improved 24/7 incident command and oversight
  - Support volunteer training and development
  - Support administrative and logistical needs within the fire district.
  - Improve interagency coordination and communication
-

## **Justification**

### **1. Operational Needs**

The Hyalite Fire District's Incident Command position is an integral part of our response and on scene operations. For years the Fire District has relied on college aged volunteer firefighters to fulfill response needs. This model has provided committed, eager and well trained firefighters to respond to our calls. The weak point of the model is the experience level of our firefighters. In order for this model of response to work it requires the presence of an experienced Incident Commander for all calls. Currently, the Hyalite Fire District relies on Volunteer Incident Commanders to manage response and incident command seven nights a week from 7pm - 7am. Paid staff currently covers command seven days a week 7am - 7pm. For several years we have struggled to train and maintain the needed seven volunteers to provide overnight incident command coverage. Staff has worked diligently over the last several years to streamline our promotion process to bring up additional Volunteer Incident Commanders. Even with this effort we still fall short of our needed volunteers. This creates gaps in leadership availability, lack of incident command for overnight calls, and potential burnout of current paid staff. A dedicated, paid Shift Captain will improve our command coverage by working a modified 4 days on, 4 days off rotating shift. Day one and two would be 0700 - 1700. Day three and four would be 1700 - 0700. This will allow this position to fill the needed command role two nights a week. This will drop our needed seven volunteer positions to five. During the daytime when other paid staff are on duty this position will respond to calls as they occur as an Incident Commander, Driver/Operator, Crew Leader or Firefighter/EMT. Along with providing training to our on shift volunteers.

Historical data for volunteer captains

1. 2025 - 3 Volunteer Captains
2. 2024 - 4 Volunteer Captains
3. 2023 - 4 Volunteer Captains
4. 2022 - 5 Volunteer Captains
5. 2021 - 5 Volunteer Captains
6. 2020 - 4 Volunteer Captains
7. 2019 - 7 Volunteer Captains
8. 2018 - 8 Volunteer Captains
9. 2017 - 7 Volunteer Captains
10. 2016 - 8 Volunteer Captains

### **2. Administrative Support**

The department has seen an increased burden of administrative duties including Driver/Operator training, managing volunteer shifts, logistical needs, and PPE management. The Shift Captain will assume much of this workload, allowing the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and Division Chiefs to focus on high-level leadership and policy development.

### 3. Training & Development

Consistent oversight of training and readiness standards is vital. The Shift Captain will serve as an additional coach for training our volunteers, ensuring compliance with state and national standards, and mentoring company officers for future leadership roles.

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#### Position Overview

**Title:** Shift Captain

**Classification:** Full-Time, Non-Exempt, FLSA (7k) exemption

**Reports To:** Assistant Fire Chief

**Salary:** \$106,136

#### Primary Responsibilities:

- Serve as Incident Commander while on duty
  - Supervise on shift personnel and ensure daily operational readiness
  - Coach training with on volunteer personnel
  - Manage volunteer shift scheduling
  - Manage logistical needs of all fire stations
  - Oversee and manage the Fire District PPE.
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#### Financial Impact

The cost of this position will include salary, benefits, and related employment expenses.  
Estimated annual cost:

- **Base Salary:** \$106,136
  - **Benefits (Health, Retirement, etc.):** \$20,262
  - **Total Estimated Cost:** \$126,398
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## Implementation Timeline

Phase	Date Range	Description
Planning & Approval	[09/2025]	Finalize proposal, budget approval
Recruitment	[10/2025]	Job posting, application & interview process
Onboarding	[11/2025]	Hiring, orientation, initial assignment

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## **Hyalite Rural Fire District**

### **Shift Captain**

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#### **GENERAL STATEMENT OF POSITION:**

The Shift Captain position is a responsible operational position that oversees and coordinates on shift members of the Hyalite Fire District. The Shift Captain is responsible for responding to all emergency calls while on duty. He/she will perform the duties of a Fireground Incident Commander, Crew Leader, Firefighter, Driver Operator, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The Shift Captain position requires a great deal of managerial skill, teamwork, self-discipline, and effective decision-making abilities to ensure the fire department's readiness to respond to any type of event. The Shift Captain position is a full time, non-exempt position and works under the general supervision of the Assistant Fire Chief.

#### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

- Perform all the functions of a Hyalite Rural Fire District Captain job description.
- Respond to emergency calls while on duty as a Firefighter/EMT, Driver/Operator, Crew Leader or Incident Commander.
- Responsible for safe and effective operations during structural and wildland fire suppression, rescue services, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, fire prevention efforts, public education, community hazard reduction, and duties necessary to protect the life safety and property of the community.
- Assist with coaching and oversee assigned Fire District training.
- Conduct other training for members of the Fire District as directed.
- Recommend improvements to protocols to increase effectiveness and efficiency.
- Support and develop the members in a respectful and cooperative environment while maintaining good order and discipline.
- Communicate well and work cooperatively with members to monitor performance and provide regular feedback and coaching to create an effective and safe working environment.
- Assist as a public representative of the Department and respond to community questions and comments in a courteous and timely manner, exercising discretion and sound judgment.

- Perform other tasks, duties, and/or assignments as directed by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- Attend weekly fire department training.
- Attend monthly command training.
- Attend specialized training throughout the year when assigned.
- Attend monthly leadership meetings.
- Demonstrate continuous effort to improve operations.
- Attends community related functions.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE & ABILITIES

### Knowledge:

- Supervisory, management, and leadership techniques.
- Firefighting principles, practices and procedures.
- Safe operation of fire and rescue apparatus.
- The geographical layout of Response Areas, including fill sites and hydrant locations.
- Emergency medical services.
- Vehicle rescue methods.
- Fire salvage and overhaul operations.
- Hazardous materials first responder operations.
- Natural gas and propane emergencies.
- Fire Departments' policies, procedures, guidelines, rules and regulations.
- Incident Command Systems.

### Abilities:

- Maintain managerial control under extremely stressful conditions.
- Work cooperatively and courteously with management, subordinates, the public and peers.
- Be a dependable and an effective team member.
- Effectively communicate with customers, volunteers and the public using a telephone or in a one to one or group setting.
- Understand and follow verbal and written instructions.
- Write accurate reports concerning the use and condition of apparatus, related equipment, and supplies.
- Move objects 20-50 pounds short distances (20 feet or more).
- Work for long periods of time, requiring sustained physical activity and intense concentration.
- Rely on sense of sight and hearing to help determine the nature of an emergency and make operational decisions.
- Remain in a standing position or sitting position for extended periods which could be several hours at a time.
- Stand and operate on uneven and unsteady surfaces, including up, down and across severe grades on ice, snow and wet slippery surfaces.

- Work in a variety of weather conditions with exposure to the outdoor elements.
- Work safely without presenting a direct threat to self or others.
- Understand apparatus limitations as related to apparatus response and fire suppression activities.
- Identify critical incident scene safety factors and address them appropriately.
- Train and instruct members in modern fire suppression, EMS, and rescue principles, practices, and procedures.
- Learn emergency service related material through structured lectures and reading and through oral instruction and observation.
- Obey and comply with all of the procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations and policies established by the Hyalite Fire District.
- Understand and operate within the Incident Command Management System.

#### MINIMUM REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Must have a high school diploma or GED.
- Three years of experience in the fire service.
- Successfully pass a background check.
- Possess a valid driver's license and have a good driving record.
- Possess and maintain National Registry and State of Montana Emergency Medical Technician certification.
- Possess and maintain CPR certification.
- Possess a National Wildfire Coordinating Group Basic Wildland Firefighter certification.
- Gain and maintain a State of Montana Firefighter 1 certification.
- Gain and maintain a State of Montana Firefighter 2 certification.
- Gain a National Wildfire Coordinating Group S-215 Wildland-Urban Interface certification.
- Gain a National Wildfire Coordinating Group S-230 Engine Boss certification.
- Complete an annual physical as specified by the fire department.
- Qualify every quarter (3 months) on donning and the use of structural personal protective equipment to meet current standards.
- Qualify every quarter (3 months) on donning and use of a SCBA to meet current standards.
- Attend all training throughout the year which includes weekly training nights, monthly command training and two rescue training weekends.

#### DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- 5 years of experience in the fire service.
- 3 years of leadership experience in an emergency services organization.
- Experience with wildland-urban interface fire operations.
- Experience in instructing fire, rescue and EMS service training.

## **FLSA 7(k) Eligible Employees**

All Hyalite Fire District employees eligible for FLSA 7(k) exemption shall be employed in accordance with and subject to each of the terms and conditions listed in this section.

### Employee eligibility for the 7(k) exemption

1. Employed by the Hyalite Fire District as a full-time employee not identified as exempt under FLSA;
2. Trained in fire suppression;
3. Have the legal authority and responsibility to engage in fire suppression;
4. Engaged in the prevention, control, and extinguishment of fires or response to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk.

### FLSA 7(k) work period

FLSA 7(k) eligible employees shall work a twenty eight (28) day work period. Within the identified 28 day work period an eligible employee shall work up to two hundred and twelve (212) hours without receiving overtime or compensatory time. Eligible employees shall qualify for overtime pay after work hours exceed 212 hours in a work period. Overtime shall be earned at a rate of one and one half times the employees base rate.

### Earned Leave

FLSA 7(k) eligible employees are employees who have been hired on a full-time (212 hour work period) basis. These employees accrue vacation and sick leave from their beginning date of employment. FLSA 7(k) eligible employees are entitled to use sick and vacation leave benefits providing they have worked the qualifying periods.

Vacation - As an employee gains time with the District, he or she earns additional leave. The table below shows how much vacation leave employees earn over a variety of years, up to the maximum accrual:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>FLSA 7(k) Eligible Employees Earn:</u>
0-9	120 hours (15 days) per year
10 – 14	144 hours (18 days) per year
15 – 19	168 hours (21 days) per year
20 and on	192 hours (24 days) per year

You can earn at an accelerated rate if you have prior Montana government service, such as prior employment with Montana state or local government service, or Military time which interrupts your Montana Government service

Employees are responsible for providing the documentation of prior government service. Accelerated leave accruals will begin at the beginning of the next pay period after the District receives documentation of prior eligible service.

Vacation is credited at the end of each pay period. You may not use vacation leave until it is credited: no advance vacation is allowed.

Sick Leave – Eligible employees begin earning paid sick leave from the beginning date of employment. A FLSA 7(k) eligible employee earns 12 working days (96 hours) of sick leave per year.

Sick leave is credited at the end of each pay period.

### Compensatory Leave

FLSA 7(k) eligible employees are entitled to overtime pay if the employee works more than two hundred and twelve (212) hours in a work period. The employee and the District may have an individual agreement to utilize compensatory leave in place of overtime pay when it is deemed beneficial for both. This agreement must be in place before the work begins that will yield compensatory leave in place of overtime pay. In no circumstance may the District force an employee to accept compensatory leave in place of overtime pay.

Overtime pay and compensatory leave is earned at the rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times the actual number of hours worked in excess of 212 during the work period.

Maximum Accruals - FLSA 7(k) Eligible Employees - Unless otherwise provided in the Employment Agreement, will not be allowed to accrue a balance of more than 120 hours of compensatory leave. Exceptions to this rule may only be granted by the Board of Trustees.

### Leave Usage

Vacation Leave - Vacation leave FLSA 7(k) eligible employees cannot be taken in increments of less than one (1) hour. Absence from employment because of illness is not chargeable against vacation unless the employee requests it. Time spent on vacation does not count as hours worked for overtime purposes.

Sick Leave - In addition to using sick leave for an illness or injury, as described earlier, up to five (5) days sick leave may be taken when an employee's immediate family member dies. Extensions to this five-day rule may be granted by the Supervisor. Sick leave cannot be taken by FLSA 7(k) eligible employees in increments of less than one (1) hour. Time spent on sick leave does not count as hours worked for overtime purposes.

Compensatory Leave - Compensatory leave cannot be taken in increments of less than one (1) hour. Time spent on compensatory leave status does not count for computing hours worked for overtime purposes.

### Shift Trades

FLSA 7(k) eligible employees shall be permitted to trade shifts provided that the shift trade does not interfere with district operations. All shift trades shall be approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

### Duty Shifts

- FLSA 7(k) eligible employees shall be fit for duty at all times during their duty shift.
- FLSA 7(k) eligible employees shall report to an assigned fire station or be engaged in fire district activities while on duty.
- FLSA 7(k) eligible employees who are required to report for duty from 1900 thru 0700 hours shall be allowed time to rest/sleep from 2200 - 0700 hours outside of call responses.
- FLSA 7(k) eligible employees are encouraged to engage in physical fitness training relevant to their position for up to one (1) hour per duty shift.
- All required documentation including incident reports, patient care reports, or other administrative reports shall be completed by the end of the duty shift.

### Call Backs

FLSA 7(k) eligible employees may respond to certain emergency incidents without supervisor approval while off duty. These incidents include:

- In district structure fire
- In district wildland large fire or in district wildland large fire-structures threatened

Employees may be called back to work in the event of an emergency when needed. Call back time shall be paid at a normal hourly rate, but shall be paid overtime or earn compensatory time when an employee has exceeded 212 hours during the 28 day work period.



## Hyalite Rural Fire District

### Fire Chief's Report

September 2025

Prepared by: Fire Chief, Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire District responded to a total of 48 incidents in August 2025. Our year total for incidents to date is 452.

- Total August 2024 - 77
- Total August 2023 - 63
- Total August 2022 - 65
- Total August 2021 - 41
- Total August 2020 - 47

2. Our current roster is at 52 members (effective 9/1/2025).

- 1 Career Fire Chief
- 1 Career Assistant Fire Chief
- 2 Division Chiefs
- 2 Career Captains
- 2 Volunteer Captains
- 1 Volunteer Reserve Captains
- 6 Volunteer Lieutenants
- 12 Volunteer Firefighters
- 13 Volunteers Apprentice Firefighters
- 1 Volunteer Driver/Operators
- 1 Volunteer Reserve Firefighters
- 6 Volunteer Recruit Firefighters
- 4 Volunteer Recruit EMTs

3. We are continuing to work on our overnight command coverage shortages. We are at 2 of our needed 7 volunteer captains. We have 4 of our new captains working on shadowing command shifts currently. Myself, Assistant Chief Dahlhauser, Division Chief Malone and Division Chief Prato are continuing to work extra to provide coverage at night where we lack availability.

4. We currently have 7 resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.

- Current Sourdough Residents -
  - Nick Blommel, Kade O'Brian, Evan Jones, Ruby Weinburg, Zach Fredach, Paige Maunu, and Zane Nordwick.
  - Sourdough resident firefighters continue to fill weekend shifts Friday 7pm –

Monday 7am.

5. We currently have 4 resident firefighters living at the Cottonwood Fire Station.

- Current Cottonwood Residents –
  - Zakkar Tusken, Jack Vincent, Colton Rue-Zindell and Allie Kuntz
- Cottonwood resident firefighters continue to fill weekday night shifts Monday – Thursday 7pm – 7am.

6. We currently have 4 residents at the Rae house.

- Current Rae Residents -
  - Kate Brownell, Tyler Palmer, Ted Yewer and Sophie Smith.

7. Non-resident volunteer firefighters continue to cover 6 hour shifts at the Sourdough Fire Station on Monday - Friday 7am – 7pm. With our current level of staffing we are able to cover 4 of our 10 day shifts with at least 2 volunteers.

8. We continue our regular multi company fire and EMS training every Wednesday night and command training twice a month. Our regular training through the month of August focused on wildland fire training.

9. Our hiring process for the Training Captain position has been completed. We have onboarded Metta Trauttman for the position. Metta comes to us with experience as a Hyalite Volunteer Firefighter. Her first day was on September 7th.

10. The fire district continues to be involved with the EMS Steering Group in Gallatin County. The current work of the EMS steering group is to get an administrative board established to begin creating an interlocal agreement between public agencies providing ambulance transport, city and county governments. This would allow EMS transporting agencies to pool resources on supply ordering, EMS billing and training. I am still one of the steering committee members.

11. On August 14th, I deployed as a Division Supervisor with the Montana DNRC County Assist Team to the Summer Springs Fire outside of Custer, MT. The team was reassigned on August 15th to the Windy Rock Fire outside of Drummond, MT. I spent five days on the deployment.

12. On August 24th, we deployed Brush 6-1 and a crew as part of a Gallatin County Critical Mission Task Force to assist on the Windy Rock Fire. The crew spent 72 hours on the deployment. Our crew received very high regards to their work on the fire from multiple people.

13. On August 26th, the Hyalite Fire District responded to a wildland fire in the area of 9400 Nash Road. Mutual aid was received from our neighboring fire departments. The fire was contained to two acres. Hyalite Fire responded with 1 command, 2 brush trucks, 2 water tenders, and 1 structure engine.

14. On September 5th, we responded to a structure fire at the Hyalite Youth Camp in Hyalite Canyon. The fire was contained to a utility building and no injuries were reported. Hyalite Fire responded with 1 command, 3 engines, and 1 water tender.

15. I am still on the Board of Directors with Montana State Fire Chiefs Association as a combination section director.

16. I am still on the Montana State Fire Chiefs Wildland Fire Committee.

17. I continue to sit on the board of the Gallatin County Fire Council as Vice President. I also continue to chair the Gallatin County Fire Council communications committee.

18. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser continues to chair the training and SOP committee with the Gallatin County Fire Council.

19. I am still a Gallatin County Deputy Fire Warden.

20. We had no firefighter injuries in the month of August.

21. We completed our first annual hose testing with FireCatt. This was the first time Hyalite Fire has done an official hose testing with a vendor to the NFPA standard. The result of the hose testing was 11,995 feet of hose tested. We had 2,780 feet of hose fail testing. Some of our hose was around 20 years old. We ordered new hose to replace the hose that failed in testing. Due to the amount of failed hose the replacement cost is going to be around \$16,000. We have developed a plan to annually replace hose to avoid a high failure rate again.

22. Engine 6-4 was out of service from August 27th - September 2nd for chassis engine repair.

23. All apparatus are in service.