



## Hyalite Rural Fire District

### Board Meeting Synopsis Approval Form

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The written synopsis of the October 28, 2025 Hyalite Rural Fire District (HRFD) Board of Trustees Annual Board Meeting was approved by motion of the HRFD Board of Trustees on November 18, 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: OCTOBER 28, 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  
Walt Zidack  
Jason Jarrett  
Ken Beideman

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brian Nickolay, Fire Chief  
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chris Hindoi-en-Rocky Mountain Insurance Services  
Luke Hindoi-en-Rocky Mountain Insurance Services  
Allie Kuntz-President, Volunteer Firefighter Association  
Kade O'Brian-Representative, Volunteer Firefighter Association

<b>0:00:00</b>	<p><b>CALL TO ORDER OF HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT</b></p> <p>Chairman Miller called the meeting to order and asked for any public comment on non-agenda items. None given.</p> <p><b>HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA</b></p> <p>Chairman Miller asks if there are any requests to pull anything from the Consent Agenda for review. None given.</p> <p><b>Motion: Trustee Jarrett moves to approve consent agenda as presented</b></p> <p>Trustee Zidack seconded the motion.</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Jarrett-Yes; Zidack-Yes; Beideman-Yes; Miller-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p>
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	<i>[See September 23, 2025 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items Approved]</i>
	<b>REGULAR AGENDA</b>
<b>0:00:27</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Hyalite Volunteer Firefighters Association Report</b></p> <p>Allie Kuntz, President of the volunteer association. The Association has been busy planning on making improvements on the gym. A survey was sent out to all active members and 100% response was received. Over 75% of the volunteers utilize the gym so this is an important area they are working to improve.</p> <p>They are also working on Night with Santa which is scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Beideman state the fire station by their house will be holding a pancake breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Clause in December.</p>
<b>0:02:59</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 2 – Swearing in of 2024 Fall Academy Firefighters</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay apologizes to this group as they completed their firefighter academy in the Fall of 2024 but out of oversight they were not inducted in the Fall. The following firefighters introduced themselves and were sworn in: Ruby Weinberg, Zachary Fredach, Jake TeSelle, and Cole Fahey. Chief Nickolay administers the oath to the firefighters. The firefighters were then pinned with their badges.</p>
<b>0:08:28</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 3 – Discussion and Decision – FY2025 Audit Report – Morgan Scarr, Amatics CPA Group</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay explains the audit is close to being completed. We are waiting on information from the County and Pinion. This item will be tabled until the November meeting.</p>
<b>0:08:55</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 4 – Discussion – VFIS Renewal</b></p> <p>Our VFIS policy is coming up for renewal. We are changing up our policy slightly by adding family member assistance program which is a tele health program for mental health services. This would be an additional cost of \$11.76/per firefighter/year. This will be started immediately but be included in the new policy as well.</p> <p>Chris Hindoiien who is the VFIS representative for Montana provides more information regarding the program. Any member of the household of the firefighter along with the trustees can participate in this program. There are approximately 70 fire departments who participate in this program. Beneficiary cards will need to be completed and current. They would like to take over our policy from Marsh McLennan to provide more localized service.</p> <p>This will be put on the agenda for next month. Trustee Zidack would like to hear from our current policy holder.</p>

0:16:14	<p><b>Agenda Item 5 – Discussion – Accounting Fees</b></p> <p>Discussions for past meetings have been held regarding our current accountant and looking at other options. We were recently notified that starting January 1 Pinion will no longer do our payroll. Even if we do not move on from our current accounting firm, we would still need to find another firm to handle our payroll. We as staff feel we shouldn't stay with one company that will not handle our payroll.</p> <p>Staff has researched other options in the State. We talked with one firm in Columbus who handles other fire departments in the State. They can handle our accounting and payroll for approximately \$14,000-\$15,000/year. We will need to make a decision prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>. This will be added as an agenda item for decision on the next agenda.</p> <p>Trustee Zidack makes comments and suggests we start looking at other alternatives. Trustee Jarrett requests staff provide bids for next month to make a decision. Trustee Zidack makes comments.</p>
0:27:45	<p><b>Agenda Item 6 – Discussion – Hiring of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party to Research Annexation</b></p> <p>Pete has requested this item and unfortunately not at the meeting. Discussions held with Pete and the changing demographic with Bozeman and our area. Utilizing a third party would be to develop a strategic plan for the fire district. This could be incorporated as part of our strategic plan. The cost for something like this would cost between \$25,000 - \$30,000.</p> <p>Trustee Zidack wonders if we explore this further how does this contribute to our mission and overall plan given the cost. Chief states any consultant would evaluate us based on standards and if we are compliant with NFPA1720 and if we are missing areas give recommendations on how to get compliant.</p> <p>Trustee Jarrett makes comments. He thought the desire was to look at circumstances at Fort Ellis and circumstances at Hyalite and to see what would need to be done to accomplish a merger between the two.</p> <p>This item will be tabled until the next meeting.</p>
0:34:38	<p><b>Agenda Item 7 – Discussion – Fort Ellis Interlocal Agreement</b></p> <p>Trustee Beideman and Chief Nickolay met with a member of the Fort Ellis board. Trustee Beideman makes comments. Chief Nickolay states they are starting with the need for a fire chief and then will look at other options for the fire department.</p> <p>The Chief feels this item can be taken off the agenda. We will table until the next meeting to discuss with Trustee Geddes and get his input on moving forward.</p> <p>This item will be tabled until the next meeting.</p>

0:39:20	<p><b>Agenda Item 8 – Discussion – Command Staff Shortfalls</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay is still working on covering staff shortfalls. He has had several discussions with the paid staff and volunteers. The feeling of the paid shift is it is a burden to work a 40-hour week plus a 12-hour shift. The feeling is if this is the plan going forward, they would like to see an adjustment of the daytime hours. From a volunteer standpoint they would like to continue seeing the shift work. Not covering a shift with command had many concerns by the volunteers and staff alike. We will continue to lose command volunteers through graduation and job opportunities.</p> <p>Discussion is held by the board members and Chief. The Chief is looking at other options for training and roles. Staff is concerned about how reducing hours in the daytime would impact interactions with the volunteers and for Colin, keeping up with the maintenance. Discussion is held regarding the schedules and who is covering the evening shifts. There are two fully qualified volunteers, one is close and being shadowed and three are close. Each of the paid staff are taking a night shift. The Chief is worried about burn out for the staff. His request is to either hire another full-time position or work with the schedule to bring a better work/life quality to the staff. His preference is to hire another full-time person to help cover staff which wouldn't affect the daytime schedule for staff. Discussion is held by the board and request more information on staffs' feelings of schedule options. Trustee Zidack talks about the costs/benefits of hiring another position as well as how additional monies for shift coverage. Chair Miller feels keeping good people is very important.</p> <p>The board would like the Chief to work on figuring out more schedules for the staff and provide more data. This item will be tabled to next month.</p>
1:19:58	<p><b>Agenda Item 9 - Discussion – Replacement of Rae Fire Station – <i>Standing Agenda Item</i></b></p> <p>The Chief did not make the Hyalite Foothills HOA meeting. He asks the board if they would like to see more promotional items for the new station. Flying Horse is willing to provide assistance in marketing. Discussion is held regarding sending something out digitally.</p> <p>The Volunteer Association will be handing out candy at Halloween.</p> <p>A press release will be reviewed and sent out to the media.</p>
1:23:29	<p><b>Agenda Item 10 – Fire Chief's Report</b></p> <p>The Chief goes over his report. We have lieutenant classes ongoing with eight volunteers attending the training. Staff has been attending several conferences. Malone and Templeton have been working on the Rescue Taskforce model.</p> <p>Volunteer Firefighters O'Brian and Ness worked hard on visiting with schools during Fire Education week.</p>

	<p>The diesel fuel vault has been replaced at the Cottonwood station. Prato worked with Rocky Mountain Supply on the installation. Questions are asked by the board.</p> <p><i>[See Fire Chief's Report-Attachment A]</i></p>
<b>1:28:16</b>	<p><b>Trustees' Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<b>1:28:30</b>	<p><b>Announcements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, November 18, 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>1:29:15</b>	<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>



## Hyalite Rural Fire District

### Fire Chief's Report

October 2025

Prepared by: Fire Chief, Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire District responded to a total of 62 incidents in September 2025. Our year total for incidents to date is 514.

- Total September 2024 - 45
- Total September 2023 - 65
- Total September 2022 - 57
- Total September 2021 - 43
- Total September 2020 - 62

2. Our current roster is at 50 members (effective 10/1/2025).

- 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
- 12 Volunteers Apprentice Firefighters
- 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 September focused on fighting attic fires.
9. We have begun our lieutenant training for 2025. We have 8 of our current firefighters going through the program. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser and Division Chief Malone are providing the training. The training program will run through November and December.
10. I attended the Western Fire Chiefs Association FORCE conference in Sisters, Oregon September 28th - October 1st. This is a leadership summit for chief officers. The training was funded by the Montana State Fire Chief Association.
11. Myself, Assistant Chief Dahlhauser, and Captain Templeton attended the 2025 Montana Fire Convention in Butte. The convention was October 8th - October 12th.
12. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser and Division Chief Malone have been working hard on establishing and providing training for our county rescue task force model. Our volunteers have been participating in this training as well.
13. Several of our volunteers put in time to visit schools for Fire Prevention Week which was October 5th - October 11th. Kade O'Brian and Alexi Ness put in a large amount of time organizing and scheduling visits to our schools.
14. The open burning closure for the fire district was lifted on October 4th. Open burning season will end on November 30th and reopen March 1st.
15. The fire district continues to be involved with the EMS Steering Group in Gallatin County. I am still one of the steering committee members.



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

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

18. 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.

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

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

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

22. We have replaced our diesel fuel vault at the Cottonwood Fire Station. The old vault was donated to the fire district over 15 years ago from the airport. The old vault was deteriorating in conditions and was over 30 years old. Division Chief Prato worked with Rocky Mountain Supply to get us the new vault.

23. All apparatus are in service.