

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

DATE: APRIL 14, 2026

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  
Ken Beideman

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brian Nickolay, Fire Chief  
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

Families and Friends of Volunteer Firefighters

<b>0:00:01</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 Geddes moves to approve consent agenda as presented</b></p> <p>Trustee Zidack seconded the motion.</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Zidack-Aye; Beideman-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p> <p><i>[See March 17, 2026 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items Approved]</i></p>
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	<b>REGULAR AGENDA</b>
<b>0:00:41</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 2 – Volunteer Firefighters Association Report</b></p> <p>Kade O’Brian, President of the Volunteer Firefighters Association give a report on the association. The association has set a couple of dates for events. The Wildland BBQ is set for June 10, 2026 starting at 4:00pm. The Annual Pancake Breakfast is set for Saturday, September 19, 2026.</p> <p>The association is also looking for some help from the district to purchase gym equipment. They are looking at getting a Stairmaster, dumbbells with a rack, a squat rack with integrated weight storage and an adjustable bench. The total for the equipment they would like to purchase is \$13,000.</p>
<b>0:04:07</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 1 – Promotion of Lieutenants</b></p> <p>Chief Nickolay has the firefighters introduce themselves and their history with the station. Each firefighter is then pinned. The following firefighters are promoted: Jones, Fredach, Weinberg, Vincent, and O’Brian.</p> <p>Kate Brownell and Brandon Pelton are also pinned.</p>
<b>0:08:10</b>	<p><b>Agenda Item 3– Discussion and Decision-Response to Strategic Planning Services RFD</b></p> <p>The Chief makes comments regarding the RFP submitted. He feels it may be a bit pricey given the request. The board had requested NTE \$50,000. The proposal encompasses two phases of the project for a potential cost of \$55,000 at the low end and up to \$65,000. Trustee Zidack has concerns about the amount of money for the product especially with the introduction of AI to create a final product.</p> <p>Trustee Geddes has shifted his focus to more of a marketing campaign to improving the Rae Station. He would like to meet with the submitter of the proposal and be able to ask questions. Trustee Geddes has real concerns about the financing and the public environment.</p> <p>Trustee Zidack suggests a possible Zoom meeting. Chief Nickolay also suggests talking with a local marketing company. The board feels this would also be a good option. Discussion is held regarding the financing and potentially have help with explaining to the public what will be needed. Discussion is held regarding having help from DA Davidson with the bond presentation.</p> <p>Discussion is held amongst the trustees. Trustee Miller would like to see someone more local to help. Trustee Beideman attended the Montana Trustee meeting and a marketing company gave a presentation. This is something we could look to for possible help.</p> <p>Trustee Miller</p>

	<p><b>Motion: Trustee Zidack moves to have staff make contact with Mr. Forsman to initiate a Zoom call to explore the possibility for further conversations.</b></p> <p>Trustee Geddes seconded the motion.</p> <p><b>Vote:</b> Zidack-Yes; Beideman-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes. Unanimous approval.</p>
<p><b>0:38:00</b></p>	<p><b>Agenda Item 4 - Discussion – Replacement of Rae Fire Station – <i>Standing Agenda Item</i></b></p> <p>No current updates. The Chief has been meeting with HOAs in the district.</p> <p>We have a couple of community events coming up and hoping for good turnout to keep the information flowing.</p> <p>Trustee Geddes asks the Chief about his feelings. He feels the community understands the need with the Rae Fire Station. He feels we do have a positive feeling in the community. There is definitely tax fatigue in the county. He will continue to work with the HOAs.</p>
<p><b>0:42:12</b></p>	<p><b>Agenda Item 5 – Fire Chief’s Report</b></p> <p>The Chief provides updated numbers for the board. The Spring Academy recruits are onboarding and started their training.</p> <p>Discussion is held regarding staffing. We train a large number of firefighters for them to be here for a short amount of time.</p> <p>We have responded to several wildland fires in the valley. WE have also responded to structure fires, including one in our district. The turnout was outstanding with over 18 volunteers responding to the call.</p> <p>The ambulance steering committee is moving along. We may need to make an agenda item. This topic may make a ballot for the county to have an ambulance service. We need to decide if we want to keep the ambulance service volunteer or move it to a paid staff model.</p> <p>Discussion is held regarding helping the volunteer association with their gym equipment budget. Trustee Zidack suggest having this as an agenda item at the next meeting for discussion. The Chief will look at their proposal.</p> <p>The Chief states there will be a Wildfire Readiness Workshop on April 28, 2026 at 6PM. HOAs have been invited. We are also having a Red Cross Community Preparedness event on May 21, 2026 at 6:00pm.</p> <p><i>[See Fire Chief’s Report-Attachment A]</i></p>
<p><b>0:58:14</b></p>	<p><b>Trustees’ Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>

0:58:21	<b>Announcements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, May 19, 2026</li> </ul>
0:59:42	<b>Adjournment of Regular Meeting</b>
0:59:42	<b>EXECUTIVE SESSION – This portion of the meeting may be closed pursuant to <a href="#">§ 2-3-203(3), MCA.</a></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion – 2025 Fire Chief Performance Evaluation</li> </ol>

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## Hyalite Rural Fire District

### Fire Chief's Report

April 2026

Prepared by: Fire Chief, Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire District responded to a total of 75 incidents in March 2026. Our total call volume for 2026 as of April 1st is 179.
  - Total calls March 2025 - 42
  - Total calls March 2024 - 68
  - Total calls March 2023 - 71
  - Total calls March 2022 - 40
  - Total calls March 2021 - 52
  
2. Our current roster is at 47 members (effective 4/1/2026).
  - 1 Career Fire Chief
  - 1 Career Assistant Fire Chief
  - 2 Division Chiefs
  - 3 Career Captains
  - 0 Volunteer Captains
  - 1 Volunteer Reserve Captains
  - 9 Volunteer Lieutenants
  - 8 Volunteer Firefighters
  - 9 Volunteers Apprentice Firefighters
  - 1 Volunteer Reserve Firefighters
  - 9 Volunteer Recruit Firefighters
  - 3 Volunteer Recruit EMTs
  
3. We are continuing to work on our overnight command coverage shortages.
  - We currently have zero (0) of our needed five (5) volunteer captains.
  - We have one (1) of our new captains working on shadowing command shifts currently.
    - i. Alexi Ness is currently being shadowed for command.
  - We have begun the training process with five (5) new captains.
    - i. Jack Vincent, Ruby Wienberg, Jake Krieger, Evan Janes, and Anna French have started the training process.
  - Our Training Captain and Recruitment and Retention Captain continue to work the modified schedule and cover a night of command each per week.
  - We still will be short on our needed amount of captains to cover our overnight command shifts. This will require Myself, Assistant Chief Dahlhauser, Division

Chief Malone and Division Chief Prato to work extra to provide coverage at night where we lack availability.

4. We currently have six (8) resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.
  - Current Sourdough Residents -
    - Kade O'Brian, Evan Jones, Ruby Weinburg, Zach Fredach, Zane Nordwick, Garrett O'Tool, Logan Gillespie, Sarah Shenk.
    - Sourdough resident firefighters continue to fill weekend shifts Friday 7pm – Monday 7am.
5. We currently have two (2) resident firefighters living at the Cottonwood Fire Station.
  - Current Cottonwood Residents –
    - Jack Vincent and Paige Maunu
  - Cottonwood resident firefighters continue to fill weekday night shifts Monday – Thursday 7pm – 7am.
6. We currently have three (4) residents at the Rae house.
  - Current Rae Residents -
    - Kate Brownell, Tyler Palmer, Colton Rue and Brandon Pelton.
7. Non-resident volunteer firefighters continue to cover six hour shifts at the Sourdough Fire Station on Monday - Friday 7am – 7pm. With our current level of staffing we are able to cover 8 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 training through the month of March has focused on fighting basement fires.
9. We assisted the Gallatin Gateway Fire District with a wildland fire on March 18th. We provided 1 brush truck and 2 command vehicles.
10. We assisted the Central Valley Fire District with a residential structure fire on March 27th. We provided 1 structure engine and 1 command vehicle.
11. We assisted the Central Valley Fire District with a structure fire on April 11th. We provided 1 structure engine and 1 command vehicle.
12. We assisted the Fort Ellis Fire Service Area with a wildland fire on April 11th. We provided 1 brush truck and 1 command vehicle.
13. We responded to a large out building structure fire on April 13th on Johnson Road. The fire was located in a large shop area. We had an incredible turnout of our volunteers and paid staff. Hyalite Fire responded with all four of our structure engines, two water tenders, one support truck, one ambulance and three command vehicles. We received mutual aid from the City of Bozeman Fire Department, Central Valley Fire District, Gallatin Gateway Fire District, Fort Ellis Fire Service Area and the Gallatin County

Sheriff's Office. Some of our aid units were cancelled enroute as we were able to keep the fire to the room of origin.

14. The fire district continues to be involved with the EMS Steering Group in Gallatin County. I am still one of the steering committee members. We are at a point where the board will need to discuss and decide if we want our future ambulance crews to remain volunteers or if we want to look at a paid model. I will add this to next month's agenda.
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 have been recently appointed to the Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee through the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services.
18. I am still on the operational committee for the Northern Rockies Coordination Group.
19. 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.
20. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser continues to chair the training and SOP committees with the Gallatin County Fire Council.
21. I am still a Gallatin County Deputy Fire Warden.
22. We had no firefighter injuries in the months of March.
23. Ambulance 6-1 was out of service from March 24th - March 31st for body work repair. This was a result of the passenger side door being damaged during a wind storm in the fall.