

## Community Announcement on behalf of the City of Buhl and Buhl Rural Fire Protection District

### **The History –**

The City of Buhl had a fire department for many years and in 1993 the Twin Falls County Mutual Fire Insurance Company, which was a private company, ceased to provide service for the rural area that surrounded the City of Buhl. At that time the citizens in the rural area voted to form the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District. In 1995 the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District and the City of Buhl worked to establish the Joint Use, Ownership and Operation Agreement for Fire Protection. In the years since then a number of updates to the agreement have taken place and the last few have been through a Joint Management Agreements. Within the agreement the Buhl Fire Department has functioned through a joint budget for the annual operating and maintenance. Additional expenses have been paid by each entity for additional expenses for their individual service areas. In the years between 1995 and present the City of Buhl has administered the joint budget with the contributions from both entities. This has included payroll, human resources, accounts payable, accounts receivable, budget, grant administration, audit of the joint budget and research for agreements and joint meeting functions.

### **Recent Discussions –**

In the recent years a number of discussions have taken place between the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District and the City of Buhl on different options for funding and administering the joint budget. Those discussions have been affected by legislative changes in Boise in the last few years with major updates to property tax laws. The outcome of those discussions and many special meetings have resulted in a new Cooperation and Reciprocating Fire Service Agreement. With this new agreement the administering and overall management will shift to the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District. Within this agreement the City of Buhl will contribute funds based on a new formula that resembles the funding of an annexation but without a true annexation because of the overall affect the property tax law updates had on the annexation process. This also means the current employees will remain with the Buhl Fire Department but employment will change from the City of Buhl to the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District. These staff members have recently voted to create Local Union 5410. The process of collective bargaining with the union has begun with the City of Buhl but will shift to the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District for the budget year that will begin October 1, 2023.

### **Outcome of Changes –**

Both the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District Commissioners and the City of Buhl Mayors and Council Members through the years have been passionate in the fire/EMS service provided to both the district and city residents. The outcome of recent discussions and the new agreement will not affect the fire/EMS services to either district or city residents. Also, the main office will remain at city hall at 208-543-5664 for any questions or concerns with services.