

MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE BUHL CITY COUNCIL AND THE BUHL RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
JANUARY 17, 2022

PRESENT:

Pam McClain	Mayor	Autumn Jones	Treasurer
Michael Higbee	Council President	Neal Gier	Fire District Chairman
Kelly Peterson	Council Member	Glenn Van Patten	Fire District Commissioner
Amanda Hawkins	Council Member	Bob Linderman	Fire District Commissioner
Marla Sisson	Council Member	Andrew Stevens	Fire Chief
Karen Drown	Clerk	Concerned Citizens	

The meeting was opened at 6:30 p.m. Karen Drown confirmed a quorum for the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Minutes of October 18, 2021:** Michael moved to approve the minutes from October 18, 2021. Neal seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Review and Consideration of Budget Amendment to look at population split:** Neal moved to amend the agenda and move the Review and Consideration of Budget Amendment to look at population split to be discussed along with new business item Review and Discussion of Levy Rate Comparison. Michael seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote with Kelly, Glenn, Neal, Bob, Michael, Marla and Amanda voting yes. The motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review of Draft Financial Statements:** Autumn explained at the last meeting it had been asked to see financial statements at the quarterly meetings. A draft for December 2021 was presented and she explained the 2020-2021 Fiscal year had not closed yet but the audit would be presented to Council at their January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and financial statements would be caught up. There was a discussion about the Fire Donation Fund and a portion of that fund was invested in a CD with Idaho Central Credit Union.

**Review and Consideration of Joint Management Agreement:** Pam pointed out the term of the current Joint Management Agreement ended April 30, 2020, but there is a clause that states it renews automatically if nothing is done. Karen noted the group had decided to meet at 6:30 PM a number meeting back and the agreement still says 7:00 PM. Michael noted he spoke to the county clerk and assessor and they both had a hard time finding any other agreements in county that uses population in their equations. Michael moved to change paragraph 3.2 to say 6:30 PM. Marla seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Kelly, Glenn, Neal, Michael, Marla, Amanda voted yes; Bob voted no. The motion passed.

**Review and Discussion of levy rate comparison:** Michael reviewed the levy information that had been updated by Autumn showing the comparison of levy amounts if city residents were taxed the same as the district residents. He noted it is hard to go back to his constituents with this information that shows they are paying more for service than a district resident. And that the percentage was worse if the figure included what the city was setting aside in the administration budget for fire capital savings. It was questioned why the district and city levy differently. Dave McClain, one of the original fire district board members, explained the history of why the district only levies on structures and it had to do with the amount they thought they were going to need to run the district. Michael commented the district has a savings because the city has supplemented the joint budget. Autumn explained how she looks at the fire and library budgets first in the budgeting process as those two funds work with an additional board to approve. Michael commented the numbers needed to be looked at and come and discuss at the next meeting. Michael moved to request information from other districts and cities on numbers and situations. Kelly seconded the motion. There was a vote on the motion with Kelly, Neal, Michael, Marla, and Amanda voting yes and Glenn voting no. The motion passed.

Tabled Motion from October 28, 2021 meeting to amend the 2021-2022 budget using the population for the city of 4516 and the district of 5423.

Michael moved to strike the motion to amend the budget. Marla seconded the motion. Michael noted it is only 2.3% off. Glenn noted it was insignificant and petty and review in the next budget year. Neal commented looking at the call volume the city is getting a bang for their buck, he added the city has 57% of the call and EMT getting the bulk. Michael stated the fire calls in the district are more expensive. There was no further discussion and all voted yes to strike the tabled motion to amend the budget.

**Impact Fee Discussion:** Anne Wescott with Glenna Consulting explained setting up impact fees with the Joint Management Agreement is harder to do, and noted if setting up an agreement today may look at different options. She detailed out the impact fee process and concept on how they work. She added if the city was interested, they could also do a study. She noted the district has agreed to do the study. She stated if the district and city both wanted to do impact fees, she would look at a capital improvement plan for 10 years and develop a 10-year budget with funding sources. It was asked what a general impact fee would run; Anne stated in an urban area they would be approximately \$1200.00 per new build, she added she had not seen a fire fee under \$1000.00. There was a discussion about her fee to complete the original study was \$8000.00 but normally it is \$10,000.00. She added an update to the plan has to be completed every five years and that cost was \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00. There was a comment made that the district had opted not to do plan review and inspection fees. It was also added the current JMA does not have a capital section. Anne noted she had never worked with a situation with a JMA but she had where either the district or city contracts with the other entity. Glenn stated he was very clear on this when presented at the district meeting, now it is not so clear. Andrew noted he worries about Buhl falling behind other districts. It was stated the JMA is more complicated. Autumn provided the history on the joint capital fund and the dissolving of it to the joint board. Anne stated the study takes about 4 months and it does involve public hearings.

**Discussion of Fire Station Options:** Andrew Wright presented information regarding the three options that had been presented by the fire commissioners in regards to funding the new station. Option #1: Split cost 50/50 at \$1.5 to \$2 Million each and Option #2: Rural District Purchase Building outright and lease back to Joint Department for 20 annual lease payments of around \$284,000 are administrative binding and both are fine to do. Option #3: Rural District Purchase Building entirely on own with City committing to spend a like amount on upcoming future equipment needs outside the Joint Budget with not matching funds from the Rural District would be binding to future Councils and would not be legal. It was noted Council is pretty opposed to option #2. Kelly voiced his concerns about the first feasibility study and the plan in the 2020-2021 joint budget to do a study and then being surprised to see the district come in with a building proposal. He is concerned there hasn't been a study done to look at future growth and the feasibility of running through town from the proposed site. He recommended to back up to Phase #1 as he is opposed to all the options. He added he would like to see a business plan to operate the station and furnish and equip it with all the needs. Bob stated the district looked at feasibility study to see if the district could afford it on their own. Michael stated more needed to be looked at than if we can afford it, there are more details. Glenn pointed out that Andrew has done a hot spot of call outs, the district already owns the land and questioned if the JMA dissolves how could the district still provide services. At this point \$150,000 non-refundable payment is required to get further information. He noted the department has done a lot of work and the general design is expandable in the future. Andrew noted they could look at area of new growth and maybe consider a smaller station in the future on the other side of town.

Pam stated this discussion is going nowhere, and she has yet to see this work in all the years she has been on Council. She pressed that it needed to be figured out what is best for the people of 83316. Other departments are making it work and this group needed to make it better and she wants this to work but maybe there is a better solution. No one should have to worry about excellent fire service. Michael added he doesn't want to go over the population and other figures of the JMA calculations because it does not work, it is broke.

Michael moved to hold a special meeting on Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss options going forward whether that be contract, annexation or something else. Marla seconded the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed. Andrew Wright said he would look at annexation and contracts and noted administration is a big piece. Bob noted the changes in the annexation process funding would need to be addressed.

**Update of FEMA Grant for Compressor:** Andrew stated the new compressor would be delivered around the end of January. They are working on getting ready for the installation and lining up the electrician. Karen noted that once an invoice was received it would be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement. The remainder of the cost would be paid out of the Fire Donation Fund and there was enough in the account at Farmers Bank that the ICCU CD would not have to be touched.

**Review and Consideration of Surplus of old compressor:** Andrew stated he has a smaller department that would like the compressor. He would provide a letter that it was being donated for parts and make it clear the unit could not be

certified. Karen noted that since the exact purchase details of the equipment were not available, she and Andrew thought it best that the joint group consider this surplus action as it probably was paid out of either the joint budget, fire donation or by grant. Michael moved to surplus the old SCBA compressor. Glenn seconded the motion. There was a vote and the motion passed.

**Review and Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding for FEMA Grant with the City of Twin Falls:** Andrew explained the City of Twin Falls is buying a mobile air compressor trailer. They are applying for a grant and the City of Buhl's match in the plan would be \$1500.00. Andrew noted he could use a portion of his current operating budget to cover the expense. Michael moved to join the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Twin Falls. Marla seconded the motion. It was agreed this would be a beneficial piece of equipment. There was no further discussion and the motion passed.

**CITIZENS CONCERNS** – There were none.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

A motion and second were made to adjourn the meeting. There was no discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.