

MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE BUHL CITY COUNCIL AND THE BUHL RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
MARCH 13, 2023

PRESENT:

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

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

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Sales Tax Questions & Information with meeting with Twin Falls County Staff: Autumn detailed the information she received from the Idaho State Tax Commission regarding sales tax. She explained the city sales tax is based on the percentage of state collection and the population of the city. The city's portion would only reduce if the city's population reduced. The district contributions are affected by other special taxing district. Based on calculations from the tax commission a true annexation would possibly increase the district amount by \$2000 per year but that is dependent upon other taxing district changes that year.

Autumn also detailed the information that the tax commission had ran regarding the effect of a true annexation. She explained that prior to House Bill 389 the city area tax revenue would have been about \$250,000 but after House Bill 389 that contribution would be about \$15,000. She also explained in a true annexation the city levy amount would be reduced by the amount spent on fire.

There was a discussion about an option Kristina Glascock had questioned; if the district had ever looked at taxing land. She explained the possibility of that would depend on how the district was originally setup. It was then explained that occurred in 1993 and all records for that year are missing in the Twin Falls County system.

Autumn then discussed the formula spreadsheet which showed how tax payers are paying per \$100,000 of structures only value. She explained the difference that had been over the last 6 years. She also explained that historically if the proposed formula had been in place those 6 years every tax payer in the city and the district would have paid equally per \$100,000 of structure only value.

NEW BUSINESS

Potential Contract for Fire Services: Autumn started by reviewing the Potential Budget document. This would be if the district held the contract. She summarized the expenses based on the amount spent in the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year for salaries and operating and maintenance, it also included the expenses for the district that were listed in the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year audit that had been provided, that total was \$ 937,050. The revenues included the contributions based on the proposed formula and other revenues that was also listed in the district 2021-2022 Fiscal Year audit that total was \$ 714,970. She explained that left \$ 222,080 for and administrative clerk, additional salaries and outcome of Union negotiations, additional operating and maintenance expenses and capital expenses.

Karen detailed information she had recently received regarding health insurance coverage and that since the city coverage falls under a small group it is not allowed to have more than one plan available to employees. So, there isn't an option to consider a different plan to Union employees and if the Union has a plan to offer it could jeopardize the current plan the city has for all employees.

Glenn noted this proposal was close to doable for the district but there was a need to look at funding long term. He suggested an increase to the city's contribution by 3% every year but with a 5% cap. This would guarantee a 5% increase each year. Michael stated that is not how taxes are levied and questioned if property values tank. Glenn noted if there is a recession the contribution would remain the same. Michael stated this whole idea would have equality out of whack again. Glenn stated it is not doable for budget to protect the firemen. Michael questioned why don't we pay the same for each taxpayer? Glenn stated the proposal needs to look at growth. Autumn stated growth is worked into the formula when using the levy rate. Michael again questioned what is the point that is not fair with paying the same? Karen questioned if the sum that is being questioned by the district is \$8,600? She then questioned the points of negotiations

that Council members had to consider. Glenn stated they don't need the 3% this year to fund this but maybe next year but they need to look at \$55,000 for a clerk, funds for the second building, the Union negotiations and other capital savings.

Andrew stated this is so close and as the chief he wants to move forward. If \$300,000 is still on the table he feels like this is in a place where we can build and grow. Michael noted there has not been a year the budget has spent all the levy amount on fire service. Glenn offered an option the district could hold the contract for a year and the 3% is negotiations.

Michael made a motion to move ahead with the draft potential budget as presented for district to hold the contract. Amanda seconded the motion. There was discussion about upcoming union negotiations and Michael Mayor McClain explained the representative explained this year would be minimal changes to negotiate an initial agreement. Amanda noted this contract would be in good faith and Marla agreed. Bob agrees in moving forward. Michael stated the points of negotiations would be discussed by Council members at March 27th meeting and will forward the outcome of those discussions to the district. There was no further discussion and the motion passed.

CITIZENS CONCERNS – David McClain, Buhl, Idaho, detailed some history on the formation of the Buhl Rural Fire Protection District. It took 8 months and 16 drafts to get to a final Joint Management Agreement. He explained hiccups will happen in any agreement like this.

Teresa Robbins, Buhl, Idaho, questioned what could the district do for this agreement? Commissioners keep saying what can the city do for the district. She questioned the need for the number of employees. And she stated that over the last 10 years \$8,600 has been wasted to come to this.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.