

MINUTES

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE BUHL CITY COUNCIL AND THE BUHL RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
JULY 18, 2022

PRESENT:

Pam McClain	Mayor	Autumn Jones	Treasurer
Kelly Peterson	Council Member	Neal Gier	Fire District Chairman
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 May 16, 2022:** Neal moved to approve the minutes from May 16, 2022. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussion and Consideration of Joint Management Agreement Formula, Joint Management Capital Purchases Fund and 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Operating Budget:** Kelly moved to approve budget option B. Marla seconded the motion. Kelly stated is option is more evenly distributes the contribution and makes it a more even playing field. He cannot do option C or D in giving one department in the city raises as presented, it is not doable. He stated it is no reflection on the job being done by the employees. His concern is the increase is based on grant money and next year the joint budget would have to fund it. Neal questioned comparing the fire wages to other city employees. He also stated the 65/35 split needed population and calls included in the formula. Amanda questioned why fire rolls out on a medical call. Andrew stated they roll out to assist for backup to Magic Valley Paramedics. She asked if the district has a percentage in mind. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted no, Neal voted no, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes and Bob voted no. The motion failed.

Amanda stated she thinks we have a pay issue and questioned if we did a trial year and see how it works. Kelly moved to go with option B and the excess goes to the district at the end and places in a capital purchase fund with a one-year trial. Bob seconded the motion. It was questioned who has ownership of capital fund money. Kelly commented the money would be the districts. It was then questioned if it could be used on a fire station. It was stated the joint board would discuss and decide and approve purchases. Pam stated hopefully in a year this has worked out beautifully. Kelly added it is the upmost of this board to serve the community. Amanda asked if wages could be discussed. It was noted that the motion is for option B which has the wages listed and the motion didn't change those presented. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted yes, Neal voted no, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes and Bob voted no. The motion failed.

A recess was taken from 7:15 PM to 7:17 PM.

Andrew commented he hadn't been able to present his budgets. He began by presenting information regarding the excess returned to the city. He stated the city has always spent \$250,000 year after year based on the excess returned. He also noted the URA deduction from the city's market value is the less increment amount. Karen clarified that when money is budgeted for the fire budget the excess does go back to the general fund balance but if the contribution was less on the front end that excess is ongoing revenues that could be budgeted in other general fund departments. Pam stated the URA sunsets in 2024 and that money has been used for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements and that money does not hit the city funds. Andrew stated the new formula wouldn't include the URA increment amounts. Andrew stated budgets A & B are plain jane with no changes and a 3 % increase on wages. Budgets C & D are contingent on receiving a grant with having a admin assistant/firefighter/EMT. The only on-going expenses would be the 7% increase and the extra person. He added that inflation is not the only reason for pay increases, but comparing to other departments and the competitive market. Neal moved to adopt budget C with the 7% wage increase with the grant included. Bob seconded the motion. Neal stated the district and the city are growing and we need to keep help and add help. It added it is free money but need to be aware next year. Amanda questioned if applications were received for this position would they be informed it is only funded for one year and might not be funded the next year. Andrew stated, yes they would be told. Neal stated the excess would go back to the city and the district. Amanda then questioned that budget C has the city paying more than the district. Pam stated she has a problem that all departments were told 3% and

all others complied. Kelly stated concerns about the first year the grant funds this and then gets pushed through the next year and the comparison with increase between all other employees. He questioned if fire employees are double other employees. He concluded with the percentage paid by the city is lopsided. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted no, Neal voted no, Kelly voted no, Marla voted no and Bob voted no. The motion failed.

Bob moved to approve budget C with employees with an annual wage below \$40,000 get 5% and those above \$40,000 get 3% and the formula would be the same as the current JMA. Marla seconded the motion. Bob state it is hard to foresee the future in this bubble we are in. Kelly noted that a flat across the board percentage benefits the higher end. Autumn stated a change in salaries would change the contingency amount. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted no, Neal voted no, Kelly voted no, Marla voted no and Bob voted yes. The motion failed.

A recess was taken from 8:00 PM to 8:03 PM.

Bob stated the fire department has been good with their budget numbers. The budget has a buffer for the unforeseen and Budget C is doable for the year. He feels the taxation cap will be changed in the future. Pam questioned what is wrong with budget D? Bob state budget D uses structure amount and doesn't include call volume. Pam stated there is always unforeseen.

Amanda moved to approve budget D as presented for one year but have the salaries changed to employees with an annual wage below \$40,000 get 5% and those above \$40,000 get 3%. Marla seconded the motion. Andrew stated it is important for his employees to get increases even if his is lower. It was noted again the grant revenue would not continue next year and the extra would have to be funded in the future years. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted yes, Neal voted no, Kelly voted no, Marla voted yes and Bob voted no. The motion failed.

Kelly moved to approve option A with the current JMA formula as printed with a 3% across the board, with no grant, for 1 year. Bob seconded the motion. Amanda stated if we are not in there with wages with other fire departments concerned with this option. Kelly stated a 5% increase average would be \$67 per month and isn't going to be enough to retain employees. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted no, Neal voted yes, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes and Bob voted yes. The motion passed. It was noted there was no change to the current JMA.

**Review and Consideration of 2020-2023 Fiscal Year Fire Donation Fund Budget:** Neal moved to approve the Donation Fund budget as presented. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Amanda voted yes, Neal voted yes, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes and Bob voted yes. The motion passed.

**CITIZENS CONCERNS** – There was none.

Kelly apologized for the cross attitude. Pam stated no apologies were needed he is just doing his job.

## **MEETING ADJOURNED**

Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting; Neal seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.