CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

215 Wings Way
Belgrade, MT 59714
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MEETING PLACE:	**Central Valley Fire District, Station 1** **215 Wings Way, Belgrade, MT**		
DATE:	**August 11, 2026**		
TIME:	**5:30 pm**		
ATTENDANCE:		***(Present)***	***(Absent)***
Trustees:	Ron Murray, Chairman		X
	Rob Holt, Vice Chairman	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Ramie Blakeman (Maulding)	X	
	Joel Fassbinder	X	
Fire Chief:	Jay Wittwer	X	
Operations Chief:	Jeff Hurley	X	
Fire Marshal:	Jake Zlomie		X
Acting Clerk:	Debbie Bloem	X	

NOTICE: **ALL MEETINGS OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE RECORDED**

GUESTS/VISITORS: Nick Stinson, Mo Holt, Leslie Mobraaten, Bob Mobraaten, Wendy Wittwer, John Paul, Dan Purcell, Samantha Honatke, Norman A. Bishop, Susan Martin, Mike Kalmanson, Trisha McFarland, Jim

Martin, Mary Maifeld, Mike and Virginia SanSouci, Jerry Pogue, Jennifer Simpson, Lorrie Hasse, Mike Hansen, Lawrence M. Carucci, Gordon Davidson, Chuck Romeo, Martin Kepner, Stephen McAdams, Brad Appleton, Terry Quatrero and Jason Anderson.

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.
Vice Chairman Holt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve the **July 14, 2026 minutes** as submitted. Trustee Blakeman (Maulding) seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Trustee Ramie Blakeman (Maulding) inquired about the higher IT expenses in the Budget to Actual report and Chief Wittwer stated that the increase should be temporary.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve **the financial reports**. Trustee Fassbinder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS: The department received a thank you note from a 5-year-old and his grandmother for the way that the firefighters keep the community safe and help people who are hurt.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Trisha McFarland** expressed concern that the sign in front of Station 2 was removed and would like it to be returned so that people in the neighborhood are aware of the status of Station 2.
Jim Martin appreciates the work of the firefighting team and urged the Board of Trustees to work on the status of Station 2. He inquired about the study that was being done nine months ago and what the plan is for servicing the Station 2 area.
Robert Bishop of Wheatland Hills noted that the distance from Station 2 to his home is two miles and to Station 1 is eight miles. He suffered a medical emergency a few years ago and had transportation to the hospital in a matter of minutes and hopes that, that type of service can be restored.

Chuck Romeo suggested that volunteer firefighters might be able to help with staffing Station 2 at least on a temporary basis. Another option that he suggested was to have a special tax in the area around Station 2 for the purpose of funding Station 2.
Mike Kalmanson expressed concern that a station was built that can not be staffed.
Maureen Holt stated that four years ago they became active with Central Valley Fire by attending meetings and learning about how Montana does fire service. She maintained that the Board of Trustees have improved the fire service in the area and people should get a better understanding of how things work in order to support emergency services.
John Paul asked for more information.
Leslie Mobraaten asked about the probability of the District receiving the SAFER grant.
Bob Mobraaten brought up the mission statement of CVFD to serve the community with excellence with the delivery of services to preserve life and property and wondered how that applies to the closure of Station 2.
Terry Quatraro is concerned about timely response for fire services since she is living near the Bridger Mountains which had a wildland fire a few years ago. She added her appreciation for the Fire Chief and firefighters in the department. She is concerned about the lack of support from the State and the County and the City to make sure that the fire service is funded.
Brad Appleton has been in the fire service and has been to several meetings and he commends the ways that the department has attempted to increase the revenue streams. He praised the service that the department provides and believes that it may be time to attempt to pass the levy again.
Jennifer Simpson insisted that putting the sign back up is a priority until something else can be done.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

As submitted. Chief Jay C. Wittwer reviewed incident numbers. He elaborated on automatic aid which is given either to other fire service areas or to our service area. The department gave or received mutual aid on fifteen calls. Recruitment has been opened

up in order to create a hiring list to be utilized the moment that the District is able to hire.

Regarding deployments, Chief Wittwer explained that as members deploy to other areas to provide wildland firefighting support, this provides training for members as well as revenue for the District.

The EMS Division has an extra Medic staffed by part-time employees to assist with responses and transports during the busiest times of the day.

Chief Wittwer referred to the training and fire prevention sections which can be reviewed in his submitted report. One of the vendors in the area has donated a replacement flag for the large flag that is displayed at community events and ceremonies.

Everyone is invited to the **Grand Opening** of Station 6 which is the Fleet Services Facility on September 8th.

Battalion Chief White and staff continue data gathering and assessments as they work through the **Accreditation Process**. The outcome is not just a plaque to place on the wall, but continuing quality improvement and ensuring that service is aligned with community needs.

In relation to revenue enhancement, Chief Wittwer explained that when a **wildland team** is deployed with apparatus, wages are paid by the requesting agency. Backfill wages for any firefighters that have to fill the vacancy that the team members leave, are also paid along with rates for the apparatus that is sent with the team. The department also hires a seasonal team which deploy to these fires.

The **SAFER grant** has been applied for in the hope that the funds can be used to enable staffing of Station 2. The notification will come sometime in September if the department is successful. Each year the percentages vary of what the department is responsible for vs what the grant pays of the new firefighter's wages.

Trustee Ramie Maulding asked about the revenue expectations for **Medic 5-2** after six months and EMS Chief Songer responded that though there was a decrease this month, the trend should continue to improve but that more data is needed before any conclusions can be made.

The **City of Belgrade** is most recently focused on parking enforcement.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT:

As submitted. **President Nick Stinson** reported that members are stepping up not just to staff wildland deployments, but to provide backfill as well. Firefighter McManus recently passed his paramedic exam and Firefighter Barrick will test this month. It will take two to three months to complete their onboarding as paramedics. The Guns vs Hoses games ended with the firefighters winning again and the event successfully raising money for the Shop for a Cop program. President Stinson congratulated Battalion Chief Stratman on his achievement of Chief Fire Officer. Where Angels Play builds playgrounds honoring children who lost their lives and union members were able to help build "Layton's Playground" at Monforton School in honor of Layton Smith who died in a boating accident.

VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION REPORT:

None.

TRUSTEE REPORT:

Trustee Ramie Maulding has been looking into the **National Agriculture Imagery Program** recently released by University of Montana. This free program enables users to get an aerial view of an area vividly enough to see the bark on a tree and can be used to prepare for and to fight wildland fires. Trustee Maulding then brought attention to the fact that it is rare for a department to actively **generate revenue** to help in its own fire service funding. She stated how important it is that the community be **united** and added that the residents outside the City voted no at a higher percentage than the residents of the City of Belgrade in the failed mill levy election. She also expressed concern that it was reported to her that an email was sent out to Station 2 area residents stating that they would not receive emergency services in that area. She emphasized that their area absolutely does have service and **misinformation** like that makes people fearful. The focus of opening Station 2 is simply to improve the speed of the excellent service that has always been there.

Trustee Holt added that Central Valley Fire District received the 2026 EMS Service of the Year award from the State of Montana, confirming the wonderful service that CVFD provides. He then shared his efforts to distribute publicly accessible AED's to different areas in the District as well as rural fire districts outside CVFD.

Trustee Fassbinder mentioned that he resides in Station 2's response area and reiterated the Board's concern to improve service to that area.

Trustee MacLeod moved to accept **the reports** as submitted. Trustee Maulding seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS: **None.**

ACTION ITEMS:

Apparatus Update Consideration and Approval

Fire Chief Jay Wittwer referred to the report submitted in the board packet, requesting approval to replace an old Type 5 Brush Truck with a new Type 5, constructed by the Fleet Division from a 2026 F-550. The old truck will be surplused.

The Board individually indicated their approval of the updated plan to replace this apparatus.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 262701 to Adopt the CVFD FY27 Budget

Fire Chief Wittwer introduced Financial Manager Samantha Honatke, thanking her for the excellent service that she provides to the District. **Financial Manager Honatke** reported that this is the culmination of a 7-month process; receiving budget requests, reviewing those requests, then creating a preliminary budget which was passed in May. In August, the final revenue numbers are received from the County and the department can then proceed with the final budget. Those revenue numbers were received the previous night so she asked the board to take a moment to review these final documents. She added the reminder that there are operational funds and capital funds which are kept and used separately.

Trustee Ramie Maulding asked about the increase in the projected non-tax revenue and Financial Manager Honatke explained that there has been a request to extend the California deployment into the Fall, so there will be additional funds generated from this long deployment. Financial Manger Honatke also explained that the department discontinued the use of Ready Rebound in the Health and Safety line item, after a review by the Health and Safety Officer found that, that program was not useful at this time. There will be no reduction in services providing health and safety to the members.

Wendy asked if funds generated from the wildland deployments are able to be used for opening Station 2 or if funds have to be designated for that purpose. Those funds may be used however the department finds necessary.

Chuck Romeo added that there are many residents who would like to help support the next attempt to pass a mill levy.

Trustee Fassbinder moved to approve **Resolution 262701 to Adopt the CVFD FY27 Budget.** Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 262702 to Establish a Permissive Medical Levy

Financial Manager Honatke explained that this medical levy helps alleviate increased medical costs to the District.

Trustee MacLeod moved to approve **Resolution 262702 to Establish a Permissive Medical Levy.** Trustee Fassbinder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Consideration and Approval of Resolution 262703 to Levy the Maximum Number of Mills

Trustee Fassbinder moved to approve **Resolution 262703 to Levy the Maximum Number of Mills.** Trustee MacLeod seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **September 8, 2026** at the new Station 6 / Fleet Services Facility at 775 Frank Road and will be preceded by a Grand Opening ceremony for the site.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Ron Murray, Chairman

Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST: Debbie Bloem

Debbie Bloem, Clerk