



**CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

215 Wings Way
Belgrade, MT 59714
406-388-4480
(Fax): 406-388-6270

MEETING PLACE: Central Valley Fire District, Station 1
215 Wings Way, Belgrade, MT

DATE: July 14, 2026

TIME: Immediately following the IFC Board of Appeals Quarterly
Meeting which began at 5:30 pm

ATTENDANCE:		<u>(Present)</u>	<u>(Absent)</u>
Trustees:	Ron Murray, Chairman	X	
	Rob Holt, Vice Chairman	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Ramie Blakeman	X	
	Joel Fassbinder	X	
Fire Chief:	Jay Wittwer	X	
Operations Chief:	Jeff Hurley		X
EMS Chief:	Pat Songer		X
Fire Marshal:	Jake Zlomie		X
Deputy Fire Marshal:	Brandon Yung	X	
Acting Clerk:	Debbie Bloem	X	

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

GUESTS/VISITORS: Suzanne Magin, Jerry Magin, Anthony Stratman, Samantha Honatke, John Pantano, Mike Hilbert, Pat Malley, Trisha McFarland, Joe Doidge, Kate Dinwiddie

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee Holt moved to approve the **June 9, 2026 minutes** as submitted. Trustee Fassbinder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

COMMUNICATIONS: Central Valley Fire District received a thank you note from **Manhattan Fire Department** for assistance with the BNSF fire in March which began along the railroad tracks. They also included a donation from BNSF. The District also received a thank you addressed to Fire Marshal Zlomie for the CVFD Teams participation in the **Annual Kiwanis Scholarship Golf Scramble**. Trey, an eight-year-old friend of CVFD, sent the Department a carefully constructed **Help Wanted poster** for firefighters and a thank you note for the **horse rescue** of Dream with a \$20 donation was sent from Billings.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Trisha McFarland** from Summer Ridge Subdivision asked that the sign be returned to the front of Station 2 indicating that it is not currently being staffed to keep people informed of its status. She would also like to know about any steps being taken to re-open the station.

Jerry Magin also expressed his concern and asked for some information about the issues that are keeping Station 2 from being opened.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT: As submitted. **Chief Jay C Wittwer** reported that EMS Chief Songer is at an EMS Conference in San Diego and Fire Marshal Zlomie is participating in a new Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

class at the National Fire Academy, in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Deputy Chief Hurley is out with an injury.

Chief Wittwer reviewed the **4th of July weekend report**. There was one structure fire, caused by the mishandling of spent fireworks and some grass fires and a vehicle fire. The annual **Bucket Brigade**, distributing buckets for residents to use to extinguish spent fireworks, has been very successful and very well received. Reports on wildland, training, rescue and fire prevention are included in the Chief's written report.

Trustee Blakeman highlighted the wildland report, citing the excellent work of Engine Boss Zorechak and his crew in California. Chief Wittwer added that the Department has been asked to stay in California throughout the summer, so crews will be rotating into those positions and will benefit from the experience and learning, as well as the funds that will come into the District.

Backfill is also funded by the deployment reimbursement. The **EMS Reserve**, Medic 5-2 transport program continues to provide a great service and added funds.

Community outreach continues through **CPR and First Aid Classes**. As part of the community outreach team, Paramedic Joe Doidge is now on the Board at the Belgrade Library.

BC Dylan White is progressing with the **accreditation process**, currently working on Module 4.

Chief Wittwer added that the **revenue enhancing measures** in place are being used to address rising costs. Those efforts, along with applying for the SAFER Grant, will hopefully help to re-open Station 2.

Chief Wittwer attended the **City of Belgrade** work meeting where there was a lot of discussion about parking and parking citations. This issue is important for the fire service to help ensure that fire apparatus has immediate access to areas in an emergency.

Trustee Blakeman asked if there was a place in the CRA to analyze the standard of cover staffing on an engine for 3 firefighters as opposed to meeting the national NFPA standard of 4. That will be part of the report. A benefit of the accreditation process is the opportunity to find out where the organization's weaknesses are,

what the opportunities are and what enhancements can be made to improve community risk.

Chief Wittwer concluded by introducing the District's attorney, **Kate Dinwiddie**, who happens to be a resident of the District.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT:

Union President Nick Stinson and Vice President Stephen McAdams are currently deployed to the wildland fire in California.

**VOLUNTEER
ASSOCIATION REPORT:**

None.

TRUSTEE REPORT:

Trustee Ramie Blakeman was able to attend a live fire training and appreciated the focus on safety. She added that she had productive discussions with Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officer Association (MSPOA) who are experiencing a lot of the funding challenges that the District faces. The MSPOA have needed to sell beds in the jail to other organizations, in order to be able to fund staffing for their jails, which limits the capacity for their own use. She went on to point out that the District's funding restrictions have not affected the level of service from the department to the community.

Trustee Mark MacLeod reported that Central Valley Fire District responded to his neighbor's fully engulfed garage fire and did a great job.

**FINANCIAL
MANAGER REPORT:**

Financial Manager Samantha Honatke reported on a debit from the District's bank account through a fraudulent ACH from a legitimate vendor whose communications had been compromised. Once the receiving bank alerted the District, some funds were recovered immediately and the Gallatin County Sheriff's office was contacted and a detective was able to warrant the remainder of the funds. Once a judge processed the case, the funds were all returned to Central Valley Fire District. Processes are now in place to help ensure that this does not happen again.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Effective Outreach through Board Meeting Locations

Board meetings have been held at Stations 2 and 3 and the September meeting will take place at the new Station 6, Fleet Facility. The different stations will continue to be utilized for future meetings. Trustee Blakeman asked that any items pertinent to that station be highlighted at each meeting.

Before the meeting was closed, Chairman Murray asked that any public bring their questions to a trustee since discussions are not able to be part of the regular board meeting. The trustees would appreciate the opportunity to address any questions. Chief Wittwer added that business cards are available in the entryway and encouraged residents to contact staff with questions and concerns.

ACTION ITEMS:

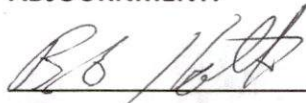
The meeting was closed for an executive session in order to conduct an employee evaluation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

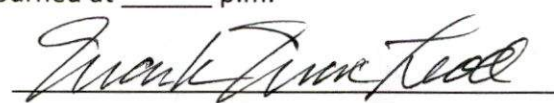
The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **August 11, 2026**.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at ____ p.m.

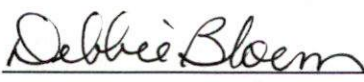


Ron Murray, Chairman



Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

Rob Holt Vice Chairman

ATTEST: 

Debbie Bloem, Clerk