

## **GTLVFD/FSA BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, August 31, 2023

Location: GTLVFD Fire Station #1

1234 Fire Lane

Anaconda, MT 59711

Members Present: Fred Bjorklund Michelle Hall

Bill Hall Mike Hayes

Kurt Unger Allen Clark

Tom Dunne Dick Verstraete

Mike Zugg Rex Young

Bob Logue

Meeting called to Order by Chief Fred Bjorklund at 6:07 pm MDT.

### **Reading of Minutes**

Secretary Michelle Hall read the minutes from the April 26, 2023, GTLVFD Business meeting. There were no changes and stand as presented. Mike Hayes moved to accept as presented and Allen Clark seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report/Old Business/New Business**

Accountant Shelly Finnegan presented the GTLVFD budget and ledger data and information. Shelly addressed questions and assured members that she will get answers and resolve any outstanding issues.

Member Kurt Unger spent due diligence discussing fee structure. Details are outlined below.

History:

1. In April 2021, our FSA received approval for a new fee structure based primarily on the need to reserve funds for scheduled equipment replacement based on the established replacement schedules. The approved fee structure is \$95.00 base for the first \$1,000.00 taxable value + \$17.00/\$1,000.00 taxable value above the base. The anticipated revenue at the time of approval was \$118,257.00.
2. In April 2022, an audit was completed of our fee base and added structure that had been missing for years. This added \$29,171.00 to our fee base. A 2022 Fee Certification (Original Base + Audit + New Construction) was completed.

Kurt reported that GTLVFD is at least a year delayed in seeing the results from the audit and our efforts. There may be a difference between what we certify and what we receive. Kurt emailed Fee Statistics to the membership and a hard copy is available in the Station #1 files. It is all about TAXABLE VALUE – mobile and leased property values will stay the same for an undetermined amount of time. For example, at Echo

Lake, there is a \$95.00/year fee on leased land and properties valued at less than \$1,000.00. Therefore, restructuring of our fee may be necessary in the future as property values increase, decrease or inflation. The most recent tax assessment, we went after \$118,000.00. When the equipment replacement schedule was established, we did not anticipate a year delay.

What our income records show is hard to reconcile with our fee certification submitted to the Montana Department of Revenue ( MT DOR). The MT DOR transmits our fee certification to each county. We do not get reports on what the DOR sends to each County. Discussion was around the lack of information provided by the County Treasurer with each fee deposit to our account. It is therefore, impossible to reconcile fee collection and deposits against our fee certification submitted to The DOR.

Much discussion and explanation of how current Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Treasurer Eric Hoiland provides reports and describes the income source when fees are collected. Chief Fred Bjorklund and accountant Shelly Finnegan would like to meet with Hoiland to gain a better understanding of the process and determine if better reports could be put in place. The goal would be that when we receive a deposit Shelly can code it in our books as to source. We could then reconcile our fee submittal against our income. Rex Young volunteered as a member of the FSA to join the meeting.

Profit and Loss (P & L) was presented by Kurt and discussed. Kurt emailed the report to GTLVFD members.

Discussion was held pertaining to FY 2022 and FY 2021. Bob Logue noted that GTLVFD is healthy and discussion held on identifying reserved monies and using them for the needs and use and expenditures. This would demonstrate the use of the funds generated by the tax assessments and our due diligence. Questions remain pertaining to the Reserve Fund Account – i.e.; How can we use the funds per Eric Hoiland?; Are there parameters on the county-controlled money that we would like to do something else with?; - Dick Verstraete suggested talking to the respective county attorneys and see what they say and go from there. Making sure that the county attorneys know GTLVFD has a county account and agreement by commissioners that we can reserve for equipment.

**Discussion:** Obviously as taxable property values increase so will the Fire Revenue. Kurt believes that the FSA is responsible and accountable to manage our fee structure. The DOR and Counties only implement what the FSA certifies.

Kurt stated that, “The FSA Board needs to make a decision to certify or modify the fees as presented as long as it delivers to GTLVFD what our needs are”.

**Sidebar:** Chief Fred Bjorklund has had occasional conversations with Tri-Lakes VFD (Helena Valley) member Bob Drake. They are an FSA that our fee is modeled after (\$17.00/\$1000 is the Fee Escalator that Tri-Lakes uses). Drake recommends not to give up on the Tax Fee Assessment. Keep continuing to work hard on what we have already accomplished.

### **2023 Fee Certification:**

Kurt Unger suggested that \$202,000.00 fee certification be considered by the FSA for approval. If approved, it would be submitted to Myrna Green, MT DOR, under Dick Verstraete’s signature, for 2023 Tax Assessment. The FSA board members present discussed. FSA Board members present: Dick Verstraete, Allen Clark, Mike Hayes, and Rex Young, unanimously approved the 2023 fee certification with no modifications.

**Budget Discussion:** Kurt Unger suggested that the FSA consider for approval the Operating Budget of \$70,000.00 and Equipment Replacement Budget as presented by GTLVFD. FSA Board members present: Dick Verstraete, Allen Clark, Mike Hayes, and Rex Young, approved the Budget as presented by GTLVFD.

**Sidebar:** Granite County FSA representative Steve Peters (GTLVFD member) was presented as a replacement for Chip Hogenson. FSA member Mike Hayes noted that Chip Hogenson has not attended any meetings and it appears that Chip Hogenson is no longer interested. Allen Clark moved, "Due to lack of involvement by Chip Hogenson, we replace him with Steve Peters and his name will be presented to county commissioners". Rex Young seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **GTLVFD EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION RESULTS**

Chief – Fred Bjorklund 3-year term

Secretary – Michelle Hall 3-year term

Director-at-Large – Mike Hayes 3-year term

\*\*\*Assistant Chief John Orrino's term will expire in 2024 2-year term

Mike Hayes moved to adjourn. Rex Young seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned by Chief Fred Bjorklund at 7:55 pm MDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hall

GTLVFD Recording Secretary

August 31, 2023