**A red and blue fire department emblem

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**Canyon Creek Rural Fire District**

**Board of Trustee’s**

**Regular Board Meeting**

Monday – Nov 18, 2024

**This meeting was conducted in person and via Zoom. The meeting, in its entirety, may be accessed via zoom link below:**

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/9nXcn6FR7XRnY\_IvqV-I6c9nyyx6UIVikB1zQZ4tEZyor5G-A2r30KT6nGWp3-1-.XNQS3WbjcJCz3Ynw

Passcode: C6m#\*01I

**Attending:**

Rick Grady, Chair

Wendy Adamson, Treasurer

Jim Thomas, Vice Chair

Ellen Eskildsen, Secretary

Max Eskildsen, Trustee-at-Large

**Fire Company:**

Jeremy Gilliam, Interim Probationary Chief John Keller, Volunteer

Gregg Weed, Volunteer Mechanic Kai Bauer, Volunteer

**Community Members/Guest/Zoom:**

Mike Alkire Ed Betka Mary Bradford Brian Grady

Gegi Guay (zoom) Patty Butterfied Charles Bradford Will Adamson

Judith Owens(zoom) Lilian Miller Dale Hudec Judith Vincent (zoom)

David Ogle Ray Miller Charlie Spinning Sonny Tapia (zoom)

Connie Horder (zoom) Joane Bayer (zoom) Dave Hamilton (zoom)

**Meeting Commenced at 6:30pm; Welcome/Pledge of Allegiance/Introduction of Trustees**

**Board Minutes Approval:**

Chair Rick made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from Oct 21, 2024; Treasurer Wendy asked for discussion regarding the minutes as she felt the way minutes are approved by the board should include a review time for the public before the board votes to approve. She also stated that she had some changes that she would like to submit. An email was sent by the Secretary asking each Trustee individually if they had any changes or questions regarding the Oct 21 meeting and the Secretary didn’t receive any responses. Side note: all meeting minutes in writing are derived from the zoom meeting recording and personal notes taken at the meeting. Secretary Ellen stated that if we want to change the way we present meeting minutes to the public prior to approval by the board it should be addressed as a change to our bylaws as how we submit meeting minutes as its not mentioned currently in the bylaws. Wendy stated that she feels the Montana Statute states the community should be able to review the minutes prior to approval but the Secretary disputed that fact. Secretary Ellen seconded the motion, Vote: Secretary Ellen yes, Trustee Max yes, Chair Rick yes, Treasurer Wendy, No and Vice Chair Thomas said he voted to abstain from this vote and all other votes for the meeting. Motion passes.

Chair Rick made a motion to approve the minutes from Oct 23, 2024; Trustee Max seconded; Vote; Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstain. Motion passes.

Chair Rick made a motion to approve the minutes from Oct 24, 2024; Trustee Max seconded; Vote; Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy no; Vice Chair Thomas Abstain. Motion passed.

Secretary Ellen made a motion to approve the minutes from November 4 correcting a vote to approve a credit card for the interim fire chief that was not completed correctly. Chair Rick seconded the motion. Vote; Secretary Ellen yes; Trustee Max yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passed. Chair Rick made a motion to approve minutes from Nov 13, Trustee Max seconded. Vote: Secretary Ellen yes, Trustee Max yes, Chair Rick yes, Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passed.

**Outstanding Bills to be paid**

Interim Chief Gilliam asked for reimbursement for the blink camera service purchase, 1 year at $100. Also gave estimates for additional cameras needed to secure the station. Decision was made previously to purchase the blink cameras and service program.

**Treasurer Report**

Treasurer Wendy presented her monthly reports for the month of October 2024. Credit received from Insurance and state. Corrections made from error by Montana State. Will void check made out to prior Chief Cunningham and reissue a check for same amount as the check has been apparently lost. Everything is now in one bank account instead of through the state. WEX cards reflect the correct vehicles. Only two receipts for the month. Received $1800.00 check will have it deposited and will reflect in November report. Checks were sent out to reimburse outstanding debts.

**Public Comment Time: 29:20**

-Brian Grady stated that he would like to see the treasurer report on the website to review prior to monthly meetings. Board will add this to the agenda at the next meeting for discussion. Secretary Ellen stated that it may be a good idea to provide the treasurer report as well as the meeting minutes ahead of time for the community to review prior to approval of both. Further approval of this at the next meeting.

No other comments.

**Fire Chief Report**

Interim Probationary Chief Gilliam reported that image trend training is going great and working on providing reports soon. Will also be able to incorporate the inventory of the station into image trend for further reporting. Application for medical certification is due; $35.00 good for two years; will send a check in to pay for this. Had a medical inspection last Friday and passed. Radio frequencies need to be verified by state contractor. Insurance cards are up to date and placed in each vehicle.

**Public Comment Time 37:07**

Ray Miller- Asked if we had a fire call how many people would respond. Chief said that it depends on who is available. John Keller stated that with mutual aid assistance there are several people that could respond. Mr. Keller also asked if the Chief is willing to follow the SOG’s. Chief Gilliam said yes.

**Board Comments**: Vice Chair Thomas asked about training and how many attendees; Chief said 3. Dave Ogle stated that there are many people prepared to join the department; Chief Gilliam stated that 7 people are poised to begin.

**No other comments**

**Building and Facility Maintenance Update**

Chair Rick stated that 3 Brothers need to come out and finish the repair of the outside filling station; When outside cameras are installed the Chief will inform the board of the locations installed and allow access to the cameras; video is located in the cloud and can be accessed; Outside security light is fixed; good to go on propane.

**Public Comment Time 45:30**

Dale Hudec asked if a report was filed for vandalism; Chair stated no; Treasurer said that her husband was named to the sheriff that he may be possible suspect as they called her home.

**Old Business**

Chief Gilliam stated that several radios are missing; 12 handheld and 1 mobile unit; he tried to contact prior Chief but no response; decided to table this pending further research into the whereabouts of the missing radios. Treasurer Wendy stated that she will have to go back and look at purchase history of radios to determine how many we should have; may also need to look at previous inventories. Wants to get the facts of the purchases. Chief Gilliam said Capital communications has an inventory of the frequencies that are assigned to Canyon Creek. Capital Communications has the access to the frequencies that Canyon Creek uses. They can see if radios are being used and they can tell us how many are active and those serial numbers. Seems that the radios that are missing are the newer ones. We have several older radios at the station but are obsolete and not working. Because of a lack of accountability in the past there is not an accurate accounting of the radios and who they were issued to.

**Public Comments Time 54:53**

Kai Bauer asked if the Chief had spoke to other Chiefs about the radios; Chief Gilliam stated yes; Chief from Birdseye; Joane Bayer stated that the Board has not purchased 13 radios in the past 3 years; they approved purchase of 2 new radios per year. John Keller mentioned that it is important to get a radio installed in the new QRU.

**Board Comments:** Chair Rick motioned to table this business issue until further research by Wendy on the purchase of radios in the past; Trustee Max seconded the motion; Vote: Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Chair Rick yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passed to table.

Equipment to be purchased by the Auxiliary and installed in the QRU. Awaiting the topper to be painted, when that is done will schedule a time to get all items installed at once. Additional items needed for QRU to be purchased and installed. Lights, sirens, running boards. Quote from Capital Communications for radio and will come out to program after installed. Wendy made a motion to purchase the mobile radio up to 4k now and table the installation by auto trim; Secretary Ellen seconded the motion. Vote: Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Chair Rick yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passes. Wendy made a motion to table the purchase of the other items needed for the QRU until Kori Dee gets with Auxiliary about the purchase of the additional items needed, Kori said she will get with the other auxiliary members and let us know at the next meeting. Secretary Ellen seconded the motion.

**Public comments**. No Comments

Vote; Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Chair Rick yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passed.

Chair Rick stated that the 1987 brush truck was sold to Ed Betka for $7k; Chair Rick said he would send to Wendy at the PO Box.

Discussion and decision on installing baffle balls in the water tender with a donation from Ed Betka of $2500.00.

**Public Comment Time 1:16;** no comments.

Board Comments- Treasurer Wendy asked for clarification on the process of installing baffle balls; she looked into the initial cost of getting this water tender and the work done to it at the time didn’t include baffle balls. She is not exactly sure how installing baffles will make a difference or not in the operation of the vehicle. Volunteers are exempt from having a CDL to operate the vehicles. Secretary Ellen stated that since it’s a donation to us and it will enhance the safety of the vehicle we should accept the donation. Secretary Ellen made a motion to approve the donation and installation of the baffle balls; Trustee Max seconded.

**Public Comments Time 1:23**

Dave Ogle stated that the baffle balls are needed for safety. John Keller stated that if the truck is full or empty the baffle balls are irrelevant. When the tender is not full should agree on safe traveling speed. Ed Betka stated that the CDL doesn’t exempt a person from following the rules of the road. He has seen a firefighter lose his life because of unsafe driving only safe way is empty. Charles Bradford stated its silly to sit and argue over a donation and the government would insist on installing them for safety of the vehicle.

No further comments.

Chair Rick asked for a Vote on the motion; Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstain; Chair Rick yes; motion passes.

Update on 8111, Trustee Max said the brakes have been repaired; speedometer parts ordered; has a steering issue they addressed and got it as centered as they could.

Treasurer Wendy stated that we no longer go through the county for banking issues we have a personal account and will have to go through the bank to apply for credit cards. Previously approved getting the Chief a card limit of $1k

Secretary Ellen stated she received two comments regarding Bylaw and SOG review by the public; 1 comment from the board. She said it’s a work in process and will continue to update. Asked the board to discuss and provide comments on proposed changes. Vice Chair Thomas volunteered to help with the changes.

**Public Comments Time 1:33**- John Keller asked if the board can provide a clean copy of the bylaws as he had trouble deciphering the proposed changes highlighted in yellow and gray. Kai Bauer said that the firefighters need to get together to discuss the SOG proposed changes before they are submitted to the board.

**New Business**

Discussion and decision on approving the 7 new recruits as probationary members. Chief Gilliam asked for approval by the board to accept the 7 as new members as they have had background checks completed.

Board discussion- Treasurer Wendy doesn’t know who the members are and their qualifications. Chief Gilliam stated that many of the recruits have extensive fire fighting experience. Would like to know more about the recruits before accepting them into the CCRFD. The SOG’s don’t state the process for voting for probationary members.

**Public Comments Time 1:39**

Dave Ogle introduced himself and let everyone know he was previously on the CCRFD; has wildland experience and would like to volunteer his time.

Mary Bradford introduced herself as having medical certification and firefighting background would like to volunteer. Has submitted her application prior and it was ignored. Charles Bradford introduced himself and stated he has many years of experience as a volunteer firefighter; engine boss currently and has excellent reviews of his performance. Ed Betka stated that its great that we have 7 experienced volunteers ready to join. Will Adamson stated that you have to have FF1 qualified or no other firefighter will go into a fire situation with you. Should not come off probation until they are qualified. Shouldn’t expedite people into positions until they are trained. John Keller said there is no provision in the SOG’s for the board to approve new recruits unless they are denied acceptance by the firefighters. He said he has not been afforded the opportunity to vote on their acceptance. Will Adamson spoke again off topic. Treasurer Wendy stated that the SOG’s allow for recruits but with approval of the members. Chief Gilliam stated that the members have not showed up for meetings and most have not responded to his calls, text, or emails. Chair Rick called for a 5 minute recess at zoom time 1:47. Secretary Ellen restated that the new recruits don’t need board approval that they are selected by the Chief and members. Nothing for the board to vote on. Chief Gilliam stated he will call a meeting with the fire members. No Vote.

Board discussion on removing Chief Gilliam off probationary status to full membership. Training was mentioned by Treasurer Wendy. It is stated that someone can be brought off probationary status if they are previously trained and has experience. Treasurer Wendy stated that due to pending litigation we have to be careful because of decisions made previously may come into effect. Secretary Ellen made a motion to approve removing Chief Gilliam off of probation and making him an active member; Chair Rick seconded the motion.

**Public Comment Time 2:01**

Kai Bauer stated he is not sure of Chief Gilliams credentials to be a Chief and should be given at least a week to have a meeting with Chief Gilliam and the other recruits to make sure they are a good fit for the company. John Keller stated that he feels Jeremy has done a lot for the company as far as training, image trend, inventory etc. Although he has been on a few medical calls with Gilliam he hasn’t demonstrated his fire fighting abilities and thinks he should remain on probation for the entire 6 months. Joane Bayer disagrees with approving of the Gilliams as she has had previous altercations with them on the department.

**Board Discussion**

Treasurer Wendy stated that we should slow down on our decision making and she will be following the legal advice. Chair Rick asked for a Vote on the motion; Secretary Ellen yes; Trustee Max yes; Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstained; Chair Rick yes; motion passes.

Purchase of scanner to use for scanning multiple pages to input items on the website. Ellen made a motion to table the purchase until next meeting. Chair Rick seconded the motion. Vote; Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy No; Vice Chair Thomas abstained. Motion passes.

Discussion and decision to send a certified letter to previous members for return of equipment. Chief Gilliam said he received items so no longer needed.

Discussion and approval of wildland and structural gear to be purchased for Chief Gilliam; Chief Gilliam got quotes from two different companies for the gear. Total for all gear is 5K.

**Public Comments Time 2:11**

John Keller stated maybe we should hold off on the wildland gear. Chief Gilliam stated that he has been on wildland fires in December. Connie Horder wanted to know why the 10 sets of Structure gear that were purchased before can’t be used. Chief Gilliam tried on the gear that is available and it doesn’t fit.

**Board Discussion**

Treasurer Wendy said she cannot vote to approve more gear as she needs to follow the legal advice that the board is under. Chair Rick made a motion to approve spending 5k for new wildland and structure gear for Chief Gilliam; Secretary Ellen seconded the motion; Vote: Secretary Ellen yes; Trustee Max yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy abstained; Vice Chair Thomas abstained; motion passes.

Discussion and approval of 10 new radios to provide to new recruits. Chief Gilliam provided two quotes and the lessor of the two came in at $24,360.00 for 10 each radios. Secretary Ellen asked if we can get away with just 5 or 6 radios. Treasurer Wendy asked if quotes can be provided to the board ahead of time for review. Need to follow a process for requesting supplies, etc. Doesn’t feel we are at a place currently where we need the radios. Need to provide at least three quotes. Going to fast. Need documentation. Motion to table this request until next meeting. Vice Chair Thomas asked about the quality of the radios since the price is much less than that of the other radios we’ve purchased in the past.

**Public Comment Time 2:24**

John Keller recommended buying only what we need. Dale Hudec stated that we should request grants to purchase high dollar items. Kai Bauer doesn’t feel this is a necessary purchase. Connie Hoder stated that we are getting ahead of ourselves and may want to think of the legalities it may come back and bite you in the butt. Charles Bradford said that a better accounting of equipment should’ve been done and this situation wouldn’t have happened. Ed Betka thinks you should report the missing radios to the Sheriff and report it to the insurance company. Will Adamson said that new probies didn’t get gear until after probation. Stated that the radios were in the file cabinet and went missing when Gilliam came on. All radios issued were annotated in personnel files. Joane Bayer stated that we aren’t missing 13 radios we never purchased 13 radios. Treasurer Wendy made a motion to table the motion to purchase until next month, Chair Rick seconded the motion; Vote: all in favor, motion carries.

Discussion and decision to hold Regular and special meetings via zoom for the winter time until March 2025. Trustee Max stated that in inclement weather its hard for people to travel for the meetings; having to put vehicles outside during the meeting; having to heat the bays for comfort. Treasurer Wendy stated that some people don’t have zoom and its unfair to not afford them the opportunity to participate. Vice Chair Thomas says that he thinks we should have zoom and in person meetings. Treasurer Wendy made a motion to maintain meetings as zoom and in person; Vice Chair Thomas seconded the motion.

**Public Comments Time 2:37**

Kai Bauer stated that zoom meetings are hard to hear sometimes especially Chair Rick who sits far away from the microphone. Ray Miller asked why the meetings cant be just Rick, Wendy and Jim at the meetings and not the Eskildsen’s. John Keller thinks the meetings should be in person and via zoom. Connie Horder is concerned that two trustee’s aren’t going to be available to the community for months at a time. Need to get a better microphone system and currently its not good, very hard to hear the meetings. Dale Hudec doesn’t agree that the trustees should be gone for months at a time. They should resign.

No further comments.

**Board Discussion**

Chair Rick asked for a Vote on the motion; All in favor; motion passes.

Discussion on getting an audit done; Trustee Max stated that due to the amount of missing equipment he feels that an audit should be done going back 3-7 years. Treasurer Wendy wanted specifics on to the extent of the audit. Wouldn’t vote to pay for an audit as it would be very expensive. If there’s specific concern about finances we as a board can look at the history of our finances. Discussion is tabled.

Retention of an individual to provide Grant Writing services to help us apply for grants to help pay for expensive equipment and apparatus. Chief Gilliam stated that you have to go on a certain amount of calls to even qualify for certain grants. Our current SCBA’s are outdated and will need to be replaced which will cost an enormous amount of money to replace. We are hoping to get hand me downs from another full time station. Hoping to find a grant to help pay for the SCBA’s. Vice Chair Thomas remembered talking with Kai Bauer about grants. Kai stated that SAM system of award management was a government agency that you go through to request grants. Treasurer Wendy stated that Chief Kyle is the grant writer for Birdseye and he would be a great resource to tap to learn how to go about writing grants for our needs.

Discussion and decision on the sale of the two portable pumps on trailers to an interested person who wants to purchase the two units. Chair Rick asked for discussion. Treasurer Wendy stated that one pump is seized up; we received a payout on one of the pump from insurance. Need to get fair market value for them before we sell them. We have two portable trailers. Chief Gilliam stated that we have no needs for the trailers; we don’t have the personnel to even use them. Haven’t used them except one time last summer per John Keller.

Treasurer Wendy made a motion to table the decision to sell until we have a fair market evaluation.

**Public Comments Time 3:02**

Kai Bauer stated that the pump trailers are being used

**Board Comments**

Vice Chair Thomas seconded the motion to table; Vote: Trustee Max yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Chair Rick yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained, motion passes.

Discussion and decision on selling and/or donating the excess Jaws of Life ext. cable unit to the Townsend Fire Department; Chief Gilliams stated the unit is so old he doesn’t know a value. Trustee Max made a motion to table until a value is given for the items wanting to sell; Treasurer Wendy seconded the motion.

**Public Comments; no comments**

Vote Chair Rick yes; Secretary Ellen yes; Trustee Max yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained.

Discussion and decision on selling the 1000 gallon pull trailer with broken pump; Treasurer Wendy made a motion to table this item until value is given; Secretary Ellen seconded the motion.

**Public Comments Time 3:09**

Dale Hudec asked about the SCBA’s and wanted the Chief to ask OSHA for free bottles; Chief Gilliam said they can be refilled but they cant be hydrotested properly. Kai Bauer said to keep the bottles until more information is found out about the bottles.

No further comments. Vote: Secretary Ellen yes; Trustee Max yes; Chair Rick yes; Treasurer Wendy yes; Vice Chair Thomas abstained motion passes.

Chair Rick tabled the remaining items on the agenda. Opened up for public comment.

**Public Comments Time 3:12**

Connie Horder can use the equipment to train instead of getting rid of it or selling the equipment that has taken years to get. Slow down.

Vice Chair Thomas read a statement from Jon Cunningham; talked about current leadership and the lack of abilities. Current board is not upholding their responsibilities. Training is not being accomplished properly. Let us restore the leadership and stand united in holding the board accountable. Connie Horder wanted to thank the firefighters for their hard work and dedication.

**Non Agenda Comments Time 3:17**

Dale Hudec asked for an application; no further comments.

**Chair Grady adjourned the meeting at 9:48 pm**.

Copy of Joane Bayers email with her comments on Bylaws/SOGS

Treasurer report October 2024

**Meeting Minutes approved by the Chairperson** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date Approved**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_