

# **CANYON CREEK RURAL FIRE DISTRICT**

## **Board of Trustees Bylaws**



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# Mission Statement

To provide fire suppression, fire prevention information, and emergency medical services within the District boundaries for the purpose of protecting the safety of human life and property.

Provide assistance to other rural fire districts, fire service fee areas, county, state and federal agencies under Montana Mutual Aid Agreements and other legal agreements as approved by the Trustees.

The Trustees and Fire Chief will work in concert to protect the life and safety of each fire company member while fulfilling this MISSION. All members are expected to work and train within the team and follow the direction of the Fire Company Officers and all Incident Commanders.

# Adoption Clause

The following Bylaws were adopted by the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District, Board of Trustees on **THURSDAY – MAY 21, 2026** with revisions to the following sections:

- Revised SEC.113 – “Purchases for the Fire District”

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Randy Williams, Chairperson (2026-2027 Term)

Date Signed

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Peggy Justesen, Vice-Chair (2026-2027 Term)

Date Signed

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Wendy Adamson, Secretary / Treasurer (2026-2027 Term)

Date Signed

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Ray Miller, Trustee (2026-2027 Term)

Date Signed

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Sam Stigman, Trustee (2026-2027 Term)

Date Signed

# Board of Trustees Bylaws

## **SECTION 101 - The purpose of the Board of Trustees Bylaws are:**

1. To define how the Board of Trustees governs its actions.
2. To implement the Mission Statement of the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District.
3. To provide guidance to the Trustees, all volunteer Fire Company Members and the public on the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District rules and policies.

## **SECTION 102 - Arranging and Amending**

These Bylaws may be amended at any time by the Board of Trustees. Amendments, additions and deletions, after approval by the Board of Trustees shall be added to the master copy by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Amendments should be added and new copies distributed as necessary to keep all Trustees, Fire Company members, and the public currently informed.

Amendments may be introduced by any Member of the Board at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose. All amendments proposed must be in writing before they are adopted. The Board Secretary shall be responsible for updating District Bylaws.

## **SECTION 103 - Authorization**

The Canyon Creek Rural Fire District was created by the Board of County Commissioners of Lewis and Clark County under the adoption of the resolution as noted in the Commissioner's Journal No. 30 on Monday – August 10, 1959.

## **SECTION 104 - The Terms**

“*District*” or “*CCRFD*” shall mean the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District.

“*Board*” shall mean the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District’s elected or duly appointed Board of Trustees.

“*Commissioners*” shall mean the Board of County Commissioners of Lewis and Clark County.

“*Volunteer Fire Company*” shall mean an organization of volunteer firefighters created under the authority  
of the Board of Trustees.

“*Fiscal year*” shall mean the 12-month period that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 thereafter.

“*Incident*” shall mean any event for which the Volunteer Fire Company is officially dispatched to provide  
emergency medical service, firefighting services, structure protection services, or other  
appropriate services directed by the Chief or an Incident Commander.

## **SECTION 105 – Powers and Duties of Trustees**

The Board shall be the policy-making body of the District as defined by MCA 7-33-2105 – “Powers and Duties of Trustees”:

1. The Trustees:
  - a. shall prepare and adopt suitable bylaws;
  - b. have the authority to provide adequate and standard firefighting and emergency response apparatus, equipment, personnel, housing, and facilities, including real property and emergency medical services and equipment, for the protection of the District;
  - c. may appoint and form fire companies that have the same duties, exemptions, and privileges as other fire companies for retirement purposes only;
  - d. shall prepare annual budgets and request special levies for the budgets. The budget laws relating to county budgets must, as far as applicable, apply to fire districts;
  - e. may enter into contracts as provided in 7-33-2107; and
  - f. may pledge income to secure financing of the district as provided in 7-33-2109.
2. All money received by the Trustees must be deposited in [conjunction with] the County Treasurer's Office and credited to the Fire District.
3. The Trustees will manage the Fire Chief in compliance to MCA 7-33-2001(3) – “Fire Chief -- Powers and Duties: ‘The fire chief serves under the direction of the trustees, if trustees have been designated to manage the fire agency under the provisions of this chapter

## **SECTION 106 - Board of Trustees**

SELECTION AND TERM – Each Trustee shall be elected or appointed in accordance with Montana Law as defined in MCA 7-33-2106 – “Details Relating to Board of Trustees of Fire District”. Generally the law states those terms shall be for 3-years and that not more than two positions will expire each year.

If a Trustee resigns before the end of his/her term, an appointment to fill the empty position shall be in accordance with MCA 7-33-2106(3): “An appointment to fill a vacancy occurring during the term of office of a trustee must be made by the county governing body and the appointee shall hold office until the next trustee election.” Interested parties must contact the Lewis & Clark County Elections Office to file the required documentation. The Lewis & Clark County Commissioners are responsible for the time and date of the appointment.

### Onboarding New Board Members:

All new Board Members shall be provided with the following materials to become knowledgeable of the District's governing principles and documents:

- 1) District's Bylaw and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) documents
- 2) Access to the District's Minutes, both written and recorded, from the previous term (online or copies)
- 3) MSU Local Government Center's “Board Training Packet”
- 4) Any other manual, data or form(s) that the other active Trustees have access to

All new Board Members must be properly sworn in by an elected County Official before being able to vote on any decision. A copy of the Oath document or Certificate must be kept at the Fire Station and made available for public inspection

## **SECTION 107 – General Description of Trustee Duties**

Each Trustee will assist the other Board Members in conjunction with the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief to manage the development and implementation of Fire District and Fire Company goals, objectives, policies, and priorities. The Trustees will oversee the budget of the Fire District as provided by revenues from taxes and other sources of funding allowed under state law paid by the property owners of the District and/or through donations.

The Trustees will elect Officers of the Board from their Members by individual role nomination and adhering to voting and quorum rules in SEC.111. This shall be completed at the first board meeting called after the *certification* of the annual Special District election (which is held on the first Tuesday in May annually) and/or after receipt of *certification* if any Trustee is elected by Acclamation. In the case of a vacancy filled between annual elections, the Board may elect new Officers.

Examples of Important and Essential Duties:

1. Coordinate with other Board Members to acquire information needed to make decisions on topics brought before the Board by the Trustee Chairman and/or the Fire Chief.
2. Provide other Board Members with assistance in their duties when required.
3. Participate in decision making process on issues pertinent to the Fire District and Volunteer Fire Company.
4. Must be able to attend scheduled monthly meetings held at the Canyon Creek Fire Station and special board meetings and public information meetings as approved by the Board, except when excused for personal matters of priority.
5. Have a clear understanding of the legal responsibilities of the Board of Trustees under MT law.

## **OFFICERS OF THE BOARD ELECTED BY THE TRUSTEES:**

### **Trustee Chairperson**

#### General Description:

The Trustees will elect a Chairperson from one of the five (5) serving Trustees for a one-year term of office. The Chairperson will establish an agenda for each board meeting with input from the Trustees and will administer all meetings of the Board of Trustees. Coordinate with the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief to determine necessary expenditures for training needs for the membership and maintenance and operation of the District equipment.

The Chairperson will work with the Trustees and the Fire Company in the development and implementation of District goals, objectives, policies, and priorities.

#### Examples of Important and Essential Duties:

1. Coordinate with the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief to correct deficiencies, implement discipline and termination procedures to be presented to the Board for discussion and necessary action by the Board.
2. Coordinate with the Fire Chief on matters pertaining to fire fighting personnel equipment needs and present those matters to the Board of Trustees for discussion and necessary action by the Board.
3. Serve as liaison between the community and Fire Company to continuously monitor and evaluate the efficiency and functions of the department and identify opportunities for improvement.
4. Represent the Board of Trustees to other related agencies and community leaders.
5. Participate in decision making process on issues pertinent to the District and be willing to research and obtain information necessary to make knowledgeable decisions when required by the Board of trustees.

## **OFFICERS OF THE BOARD ELECTED BY THE TRUSTEES (cont):**

### **Trustee Vice Chairperson**

#### General Description:

The Trustees will elect a Vice Chairperson from one of the five (5) serving Trustees for a one-year term of office. The Vice Chairperson will manage and administer monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees, along with other duties necessary in the absence of the Chairperson.

### **Trustee Secretary**

#### General Description:

The Trustees will elect a Secretary from one of the 5 serving Trustees for a one-year term. The Secretary will record the minutes from all meetings of the Board of Trustees and any other necessary documentation of District activity, provide copies of the minutes from the previous months meeting to the Trustees for approval, maintain records of the minutes to be safely kept in a locked file at the Fire Station for public record.

#### Examples of Important and Essential Duties:

1. Keep accurate and up to date minutes of every monthly Board of Trustee meeting.
2. Coordinate with other Board Members to provide them with any necessary files or documents necessary to deal with pertinent issues.
3. Participate in decision making process on issues pertinent to the Fire Department and be willing to research and obtain information necessary to make knowledgeable decisions when required by the Board.

### **Trustee Treasurer**

#### General Description:

The Trustees will elect a Treasurer from one of the 5 serving Trustees for a one-year term. The Treasurer will manage and administer the financial operations of the District business as directed by the Board.

#### Examples of Important and Essential Duties:

1. Keep accurate and up to date records of financial transactions within the District.
2. Pay all debts incurred by the District and approved by the Board, in a timely manner.
3. Coordinate with other Trustees to provide them with any necessary records pertaining to financial transactions.
4. Provide the Trustees with timely financial statements, bank records, transactions, and the general financial status of the Fire District.
5. Prepare a draft budget for review and approval of the Trustees at the May board meeting to be submitted to the Lewis and Clark County Treasurer by July 1.
6. Coordinate with Lewis and Clark County Treasurer on records of allotted tax revenues.
7. Make timely reports as required by insurance carriers, pay all premiums.
8. Participate in decision making process on issues pertinent to the Fire District and be willing to research and obtain information necessary to make knowledgeable decisions when required by the Board.

## **SECTION 108 – Open Meetings, Public’s Right to Know and Public Participation**

Procedures for permitting the public to participate in CCRFD board meetings must follow the Montana Open Meeting Laws. These procedures shall assure adequate notice and assist public participation before a final board action is taken.

To comply with MT Open Meeting laws as defined by MCA 2-3-103, notice of any open board meeting and/or the agenda for that meeting should be posted no less than 48 hours in advance. A physical copy of the notice shall be posted on the west side door of the fire station and another may be posted at the Canyon Creek General Store for more distribution.

For compliance with online posting requirements, the notice and/or Agenda with supporting documentation (known as Agenda Packet) shall be posted on the District’s website [[www.canyoncreekruralfire406.org](http://www.canyoncreekruralfire406.org)] and may be posted on the District’s Facebook page [*Canyon Creek Rural Fire District: Official Board of Trustees*] for more distribution.

### Assist public participation:

The content of an Agenda needs to contain enough information to enable the reader to understand the subject matter to be discussed at the meeting.

The Agenda for a meeting must include an item allowing public comment on any matter on the Agenda or public matter that is not on the Agenda of the meeting and that is within the jurisdiction of the CCRFD. However, the Board of Trustees may not take action on any matter discussed unless specific notice of that matter is included on an Agenda and public comment has been allowed on that matter.

Agendas are the responsibility of the Chairperson to draft and release in compliance with MT Open Meeting Law expectations. The Regular Agenda shall include, but is not limited to:

- CALL MEETING TO ORDER (LOCATION, TIME & DATE)
- PLEDGE OF ALLIEGANCE
- ROLL CALL AND QUORUM ESTABLISHMENT
- GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT
- CONSENT ITEMS (optional)
- TREASURERS REPORT
- FIRE CHIEF REPORT
- ACTION ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS & NEW BUSINESS
- FOR GOOD OF THE ORDER (optional)
- NEXT MEETING DATE CONFIRMATION (optional)
- ADJOURNMENT

The Fire Chief will work directly with the Chair and/or Vice-Chair to introduce potential agenda item(s) for consideration at any scheduled meeting. Each Trustee may propose one (1) Action Item per board meeting and are responsible for its presentation to the Board for consideration during the open public meeting. The Chairperson is the exception as to not be limited to only one (1).

The Fire Chief and Trustees may submit the Action Item language or develop the wording with the Chair. All actionable Agenda Items shall be supported with relevant documentation for inclusion in the Agenda Packet for Board and public review prior to the public meeting.

The Fire Chief and Trustees must provide the Agenda Item and all supporting documentation to the Chairperson in a timely manner (at minimum 24 hours before the Agenda posting) to be compliant with posting requirements for public inspection as defined by MCA 2-3-103.

## **SECTION 108 – Open Meetings, Public’s Right to Know and Public Participation (cont):**

No person shall be deprived of the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public meetings. Documents may be examined by appointment at the Fire Hall in the company of at least two (2) Trustees. Copies of documents may be provided for a suitable fee. Document request form must be sent to the CCRFD Board.

## **SECTION 109 - Board of Trustee Principles of Civil Dialogue**

1. We provide a safe environment where individual perspectives are respected, heard and acknowledged.
2. We respect diverse opinions as a means to find solutions based on common ground.
3. We encourage creative approaches to engage in public participation.
4. We value informed decision-making and take personal responsibility to educate and be educated.
5. We believe that respectful public dialogue fosters healthy community relationships, understanding, and problem solving.
6. We acknowledge, consider and respect the natural tensions created by collaborations, change and transition.
7. We follow the rules and guidelines established for each meeting.

## **SECTION 110 - Personnel Ethics**

1. The Board shall provide an equal opportunity for volunteer membership without discrimination, to all people regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual preference, marital status, or any factor that is not directly related to the essential functions of the Fire Company. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination.
2. The Board and the Fire Company will respect the individual's right to privacy under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
3. Members will not use their status in the CCRFD for personal gain.
4. Board Members and Fire Company Members may not be intoxicated or impaired by any illegal substance when present at any Fire Company training sessions, emergency calls, other official CCRFD meetings, or while operating any equipment or apparatus.
5. Board Members and Fire Company Members will comply with MT law regarding smoking in public places.

## **SECTION 111 - Board Meetings and Records**

1. REGULAR MEETINGS - The Board shall fix the time for holding regular meetings and it shall be published according to legal requirements. Unless otherwise scheduled, meetings shall be held on the third Monday of each month, at 6:30 p.m. at the Fire Station at 7960 Duffy Lane.
2. SPECIAL MEETINGS - Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson or by the quorum. The Chairperson shall give all Members at least two (2) days advance notice of the special meeting. Special meetings must be given public notice as required by law.

**SECTION 111 - Board Meetings and Records (cont.):**

3. EMERGENCY MEETINGS – During an Incident or when it is properly deemed that time is of the essence, the Chairperson or any other Officer of the Board may conduct an emergency meeting of the Trustees by telephone, online app, or in person with as many Trustees participating as are available under the circumstances. Minutes shall be kept in accordance with the RECORDS requirement for the District.

During the next board meeting, a review of the circumstances and the RECORDS of the EMERGENCY MEETING are required. If a decision was made during the EMERGENCY MEETING, it shall be revoted on by the Board present with quorum required to ratify or amend where necessary.

4. MISSED MEETINGS – Board Members and the public who are unable to attend a Regular, Special, or Emergency Meeting may present their views regarding any item on the Agenda in writing, by email or hardcopy, and be delivered to any Officer of the Board for general circulation to all Board Members. Any written comment shall be kept with the internal RECORDS for that agenda item's meeting but is not required to be filed with the officially recorded minutes.

5. VOTING ON AGENDA MATTERS - A Trustee shall vote on motions and agenda items only if he/she is present at the meeting. If present via Zoom, the Trustee's camera is expected to be on their person as the public has the right to observe all votes. Proxy voting or secret ballot voting is not permitted.

6. QUORUM – A majority of Members of the Board shall constitute a quorum to conduct a meeting. A majority of the Board will decide all matters.

7. RULES OF ORDER – The District shall adopt a truncated parliamentary procedure to conduct the public meetings as established here:

STEP 1 – Chairperson reads the Agenda Item verbatim as written on the released Agenda.

STEP 2 – Responsible party for Agenda Item presents details to the Board and the public.

STEP 3 – Chair facilitates Board discussion. When complete, Chair asks if there is a motion from the Board, and if so asks for a second.

STEP 4 – Chair opens for Public Comment on the respective Agenda item.

STEP 5 – Chair asks for further Board discussion after Public Comments.

STEP 6 – Chair calls for the vote of the Board. When complete, Chair restates the vote result for the record.

Roberts' Rules of Order may be consulted for clarity of process if desired.

## **SECTION 111 - Board Meetings and Records (cont.):**

8. RECORDS – When board meetings are held via Zoom, the audio recording will be the official minutes record for the meeting. When Zoom is unavailable, the Board Secretary shall see that a record of all proceedings of the District board meeting is kept.

District meeting minutes are filed with the County Recorder Office in compliance with MCA 7-1-204. A copy of the document(s) shall be filed in chronological order in a book provided for that purpose as well as may be made accessible on the District's website.

The audio recording must be available for the public if requested. The audio recording shall be kept on secure digital means and stored with the official District records, and may be available on the website.

The official District records shall not leave the Canyon Creek Rural Fire District Fire Station, except when required for litigation purposes. All records must be returned to the District.

9. FIRE CHIEF PRIVELEGES – The Fire Chief is invited to sit at the table with the Trustees during board meetings and participate in the board discussion on any fire matter. The Fire Chief is not permitted to vote on any Agenda Item motion.

## **SECTION 112 - Committees**

**SELECT COMMITTEES** – Select committees of the Board may be appointed by the Board Chairperson. Upon creation, the Board Chair will provide:

- I. The Purpose or Mission (investigative not legislative; no budgetary authority)
- II. Number of committee members (minimum three and always an odd number).
- III. Committee Chair (responsible for the public meetings, records in accordance with the District's requirement & reporting back to the Board)
- IV. Length of time of the Select committee

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES** – A Special committee will differentiate by three factors: (1) it will be provided a budget; (2) encourages public participation due to public funds involvement; (3) due to the budgetary factor, a Special committee shall only be launched after an affirmative vote of the Board. This includes defining its purpose or mission and selecting the Special Committee Chair from the CCRFD Trustees.

Upon creation, the Committee Chair will oversee:

- I. Coordinating a broad group of seven (7) total committee members:
  - a. Another CCRFD Trustee
  - b. Fire Company Officer
  - c. Auxiliary Board Member
  - d. Three (3) members of the public
- II. Committee Chair is responsible for the public meetings, records in accordance with the District's requirement & reporting back to the Board
- III. Length of time will be dependent upon the budget and the mission

The Board can vote to close the Special committee at any time regardless if the mission has been completed

## **SECTION 113 – Purchases for the Fire District**

No Trustee shall obligate the District for any purchase in excess of \$500 without Board approval. All purchases must serve a legitimate District purpose and shall not benefit a Trustee for personal gain. All receipts and/or invoices must be submitted to the Treasurer in a timely fashion for payment and/or reimbursement.

Fire District “Procurement and Purchase Policy” for volunteer Command Staff and Firefighters to be directed in a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which dictates the approval process, budgetary consideration and emergency situations (as defined by MCA).

Guidance for purchases requiring Board approval in excess of \$3,000:

1. Apparatus, Equipment, Appliances and Small Tools with a cost over \$3,001 and under \$80,000 shall be presented by gathering minimum two (2) written itemized quotes to satisfy due diligence efforts, and a variation of models may be presented for consideration.

Apparatus, Equipment and Appliances with a cost over \$5,000 may be funded by the Capital Improvement Fund instead of from the current annual budget.

2. MCA 7-5-2301 directs Fire Districts to use a formal procurement process for purchases valued at \$80,000 and over; unless falling into the following limited exemptions:

- |                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. Purchases at Public Auction | MCA 7-5-2303    |
| b. Emergencies                 | MCA 7-5-2304(2) |
| c. Cooperative Purchasing      | MCA 7-5-2304    |
| d. Sole Source Procurement     | MCA 18-4-306    |

## **SECTION 114 - Legal Assistance**

The Board of Trustees may seek legal assistance from the County Attorney and/or private counsel.

## **SECTION 115 – By-Law Amendments**

*(Repealed – Consolidated text into SECTION 102 – Arranging and Amending)*

## **SECTION 116 – New Board Members**

The CCRFD logo presented on the cover sheet of the Bylaws document was created and adopted by the District, and is the official image representing Canyon Creek Rural Fire District. The likeness of the logo has been placed on the following items: apparatus decals, equipment, PPE & gear, promotional materials, official documentation, online platforms, and more.

Any changes to the logo image for CCRFD moving forward must be approved by the Board of Trustees before release to the public and implementation on (but not limited to) the above-listed items.

## **SECTION 117 – Use of District Buildings, Equipment and Grounds**

### Use of the District Building:

In accordance with the Mission of the District and for liability reasons (including risk of property damage or loss), the fire station building shall not be used for any reason other than district related events. This includes, but is not limited to: all fire district activity, noticed public meetings and district adjacent events like Auxiliary hosted fundraisers. Authorized fire district representatives must be present when the general public are in the fire station building.

### Use of the District Equipment:

In accordance with the Mission of the District and for liability reasons (including risk of property damage or loss and safety of the general public), only authorized, trained and active fire personnel may operate the equipment. If the equipment was used for Mutual Aid purposes, the Fire Chief will inform the Board at the next scheduled Regular meeting.

### Use of the District Grounds:

In accordance with the Mission of the District and for liability reasons (including risk of property damage or loss), all use of the district property shall not interfere with fire district operations.

### Parking:

Vehicle(s) parked in the no parking zones (as marked by signage and ground paint) is strictly prohibited. A vehicle(s) found parked in the no parking zones will be towed at the owner's expense.

## **SECTION 118 – Donations to the District**

All cash or check donations shall be accepted without requiring Board approval. If the donor dictates specific use of the funds, it will be deposited into the general account, used accordingly and recorded for public inspection. If the donation does not provide any specific use of the funds, it will be deposited into the Capital Improvement Fund and governed for use under MCA 7-6-616.

Non-cash donations of goods or services valued up to \$1,000 may be received by any Trustee and/or the Fire Chief without requiring Board approval first. At the next board meeting, the Trustees or Fire Chief will inform the entire Board and the public of the donation received to enter into the District records.

Non-cash donations of goods or services valued over \$1,000 require Board approval. The Board shall take into consideration all costs associated or anticipated as a due diligence exercise. An Action Item will be placed on the Agenda for approval before the donation is officially received and/or put into service.

Since donating to the District is a tax-deduction for the donor(s), the District's Treasurer will send an acknowledgement letter to the donor(s) for both cash and non-cash donations in a timely fashion.