

# **COLUMBUS RURAL FIRE DISTRICT #3**

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **MONTHLY MEETING Minutes**

#### **August 11, 2025**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 5:29 pm.

**Present** John Patterson, Chuck Kronz, Debbie Parod, Brent Parkins

**Fire Chief:** Rich Cowger **Assistant Fire Chief** Nick Jacobs **Admin Assistant** Lisa Westervelt

**Visitors** Connor Hunter, Travis Goddard

**PUBLIC COMMENT** None

**Presentations of Communications** None

**APPROVE MINUTES** Minutes for the meetings of July 14th, 2025, were approved as presented.

**TREASURER REPORT** The treasurer's report was presented. See attached report. Income of \$189,637.09, expenses of \$205,137.94. Expenses include payrolls and expenses for contract assignments, tuition for 3 to attend FF1 Academy. **There was a motion made by Chuck to pay the bills in the amount of \$205,137.94. Debbie seconded the motion, voted all in favor, motion carried.**

**CHIEF REPORT** See attached.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Park City Fire and Ambulance/Columbus potential merger update

**NEW MEMBER APPROVAL** None

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**SAFER Grant/AFG Grant Closeout:** Reimbursement for the FF Physicals from the grant has been requested, \$76,000 should be coming back soon.

#### **Maintenance building update**

**Mechanic/Maintenance Position Update:** There was general discussion on this position and a request to approve advertising the position. This position will be advertised as a Certified Mechanic position, no response requirements. Debbie mentioned that worst case scenario, we pay the position ourselves, but we are paying those maintenance costs to other vendors already. Debbie asked if we had the budget to pay. Nick said yes, this position was included in the budget for FY 2025/2026. We do know that Laurel and Red Lodge are interested in the maintenance co-op, so there would be funds coming in to contribute to wages for the position. It was discussed that we will need to budget for training to get department certifications, Belgrade hosts a lot of these classes. **Brent moved to advertise the Mechanic position. Debbie seconded the motion, all voted yes and motion carried.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Permissive Health Care Levy:** There were questions about when the funds would start to come in, Debbie wanted to make sure the funds weren't included in the budget for FY 25/26 unless it's really coming in during that budget cycle. Every year is an independent calculation, and the

money generated must be used specifically for health care cost increases over the base year. Calendar year 2024 will be used as our base year, and expected increases are included in the request for Permissive Health Care levy amount. Nick will get the public notices listed in the Stillwater County News on August 14<sup>th</sup> and August 21<sup>st</sup>, as required by statute. August 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM was set as the public hearing date.

**Pre-tax Benefits included in FURS Calculations:** This would be an “all-in or all-out” option for eligible paid staff. Debbie said we’ve always covered employees and will continue, if the budget covers the additional costs for the district, it should be fine. This will be further reviewed at the next meeting to approve the final budget.

#### **Preliminary Budget**

- **Items included in Budget**
- Set budget adoption meeting to coincide with public hearing: Budget will be reviewed and voted on at the August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting after the permissive health care levy discussion.

**OTHER MEMBERS BUSINESS:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/Public Comment items not on agenda:** None

**ADJOURN** The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM

**NEXT MEETING** September 8th, 2025 – 5:30 PM Fire Station 944 E. Pike Ave, Columbus

Minutes submitted by Lisa Westervelt

  
Chairman: Curt Robbins

  
Secretary: Debbie Parod