

**COLUMBUS RURAL FIRE DISTRICT #3**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MONTHLY MEETING Minutes**  
**April 8th, 2024**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order at 17:36

**Present:** Curt Robbins, Chuck Kronz, Debbie Parod, John Patterson, Brent Parkin

**Fire Chief:** Rich Cowger **Assistant Chief:** Nick Jacobs

**Battlion Chief:** Travis Hansen

**Admin Assistant:** Lisa Westervelt

**Visitors:** Kyle Starr, Andrew Porter

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**APPROVE MINUTES:** Minutes for the meeting of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, were approved as presented.

**TREASURER REPORT:** The treasurer's report was presented. See attached report. The month's bills were reviewed. **There was a motion made by Chuck to pay bills in the amount of \$131430.48. Brent seconded the motion. Motion was approved.**

**CHIEF REPORT:** See attached. There was discussion about the proposal from Connect Group for a new internet-based phone system. Debbie asked that we make sure our current internet service is reliable/stable enough for phone systems and asked that also check with other providers for services provided and cost comparisons.

**MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Park City/Columbus potential merger discussion

**NEW MEMBER APPROVAL:**

None at this time

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Current Grants Update:** SAFER grant is ready to submit. There are a couple rotating DNRC grants open, and we were awarded another.

**Fleet Management Discussion:** Information on a lease program from Ford was reviewed, and it is significantly more expensive than purchasing outright. Brent recommended that we come up with some guidelines on a cut off point for guidelines on purchasing replacement vehicles.

**Feasibility Study of Fire Station upgrades:**

Chief Cowger shared that the old Mountain Fire Protection building across the street may be available to purchase, and this location may be a better fit for our needs than the second building we currently have. Chief feels this highlights the need for moving forward in getting a feasibility study done. Chief stated that while we need to be mindful of costs for a station upgrade project, he would like to keep the option of a new station included at some level to show due diligence. Chief is working with our county GIS person to look at best places to recommend satellite station locations to best serve the community and that could change the ISO ratings for insurance and lower rates for residents within the 5 road miles of those stations. The architect who provided the project proposal would provide help with any related bond issues.

John stated that he isn't against the idea, but cautioned that it could be a tough challenge, facing opposition from the community for tax increases. Brent stated that we need to look into options for updating the station, possible satellite stations, the community needs to know what could be at risk, and needs to know the budget details. The board also asked if we could provide the architect with an idea of what we would like to do, so they can provide good plans back to us.

**Fuels Crew Wages:**

With DNRC increasing the pay rates for their EFF's, we need to look at what our rates are for our fuels crew members. As an example and starting point for the discussion, Red Lodge rates are \$21-\$27. Nick was suggesting something close to \$21 at the top for our crews. Nick will bring back more information to the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Still no final report from the last audit. There is concern that the auditors may be losing staff and not keeping all their clients. We are under mandate from the state for annual audits, but no firms are taking on new clients. Chief will follow up again and see what response we get from the auditors.

**Executive Session:** None needed

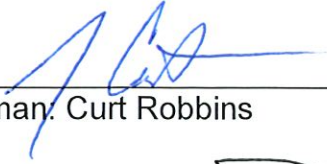
**OTHER MEMBER'S BUSINESS:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/Public Comment:** None

**ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 18:33

**NEXT MEETING:** April 8th, 2024 5:30 PM FIREHALL

Minutes submitted by Lisa Westervelt



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Chairman: Curt Robbins



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Secretary: Debbie Parod