

**COLUMBUS RURAL FIRE DISTRICT #3**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MONTHLY MEETING Minutes**  
**June 10, 2025**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

**Present** John Patterson, Chuck Kronz, Debbie Parod, Curt Robbins by cell phone, Brent Parkins by cell phone

**Fire Chief:** Rich Cowger **Assistant Fire Chief** Nick Jacobs **Battalion Chief** Travis Hansen

**Admin Assistant** Lisa Westervelt

**Visitors** none

**PUBLIC COMMENT** None

**Presentations of Communications** None

**APPROVE MINUTES** Minutes for the meetings of May 12th, 2025, were approved as presented.

**TREASURER REPORT** The treasurer's report was presented. See attached report. Income of \$218,586.11, expenses of \$124,809.73. Expenses included at \$38,000 truck payment from the 7216 account. **There was a motion made by Chuck to pay the bills in the amount of \$124,809.73. 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:** Meetings continue, and the consensus seems to be to keep moving forward. Park City should be meeting this week with their officers.

**NEW MEMBER APPROVAL** None

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Grants update:** SAFER Grant Parameters – Approval to move ahead: The SAFER grant is a 3-year grant and has been changed to a cost share grant. For the first 2 years the grant covers 65% of the costs for 3 new positions. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year would cover 35%. If selected for the grant, it looks like the funds would be awarded at the end of the year. **Debbie made a motion to apply for the grant. Chuck seconded the motion and all voted yes, motion carried.**

**Building design proposals – project overview and estimates:** Curt hasn't heard back from Ryan regarding the concrete flooring work at the 12<sup>th</sup> street building but confirmed that Ryan does know he was awarded the job.

**Mechanic/Maintenance Position Update:** Debbie is reviewing the draft interlocal agreement for the mechanic position.

**Permanent Seasonal Positions Discussion** Nothing new to report

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Adoption of DNRC EFF rates for contract personnel:** DNRC has published the new EFF rates for contract fires/severity. These rates are renewed annually. Rich would like to adopt these rates for our folks that go out on severity and/or contract assignments. Debbie made a motion to accept the rates as presented. Chuck seconded the motion, voted all yes and motion carried.

**Permissive Health Care Levy:** The auditors mentioned that by statute, we can utilize a permissive mill levy to help cover the cost of health care for our employees. We have to establish our base rate, which includes the total contribution for health benefits, and then utilize a permissive levy to help cover the yearly increases. We have a separate account in the county that these funds would go into, and we would then move into general account for payments. Curt moved to adopt the Permissive Health Care levy, Brent seconded the motion, all voted yes and motion carried.

**Pre-tax Benefits included in FURS Calculations:** Rich asked the board to consider including pre-tax benefits in the FURS (Firefighter's Unified Retirements System) contribution calculations for paid staff. This would result in an increased cost to the district but would allow an increased amount that staff members contribute to the retirement system. (Rates are about 14% from employer match and 10.7% from employees) **Debbie would like to include this in budget discussions.**

**Truck Income budget split – Permanent Seasonal Positions Discussion:** Rich would like to consider setting aside established percentage amounts from the revenue generated from the wildland trucks to go towards fuels/wildland program, Capital programs, and regular budget. As a starting point, it was suggested that 50% be set aside for Capital programs (these funds would then be restricted for capital only), 20% to the 7216 account for Fuels/Wildland program, and the remaining 30% to the regular budget. These can be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed. Curt felt this was a good idea to cover bases and build up funds for replacements, positions, and capital improvements. Debbie expressed a concern about committing funds to restricted accounts and thought this same could be accomplished through other budgeting plans. Curt moved to approve the suggested percentages of truck revenues be set aside in the suggested accounts. Chuck seconded the motion, Curt, Brent, Chuck and John voted in favor, Debbie voted no. Motion carried.

**Preliminary Budget –** There is no preliminary budget on docket tonight, as it's not required. Auditors told us that we can now go back to the original mill levy formulas, the overpayment issue has been resolved.

**VCOS Attendance:** Chief requested approval and funding to send a 3<sup>rd</sup> member to this conference. Brent moved to approve \$2,000 for a 3<sup>rd</sup> person to attend the Symposium conference. Curt seconded the motion, voted all yes and the motion carried.

## **OTHER MEMBERS BUSINESS**

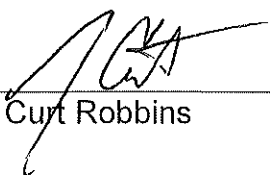
John said had heard about Red Lodge department buying a van to use for patient transports(transfers) to save on mileage/use of regular service ambulance. He asked if this was something we should do or look into. Nick and Rich said that we try to use A4, which is our older ambulance, for transfers for those same reasons.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/Public Comment** None

**ADJOURN** The meeting was adjourned at **6:35 PM**

**NEXT MEETING** July 14th 2025 – **5:30 PM** Fire Station 944 E. Pike Ave, Columbus

Minutes submitted by Lisa Westervelt

  
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Chairman: Curt Robbins

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Secretary: Debbie Parod

