

# Mosier Fire District Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, February 13, 2025

## following MFD Supplemental Budget Hearing

Held as a Zoom Meeting

**Attendance:**

**Board Members:** Carol Goter, Kris McNall, Rob Miller, Todd Reeves, Joanne Rubin

**Staff:** Chief Michael Carlson

**Public:** Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue, Steven Banks

**Call to order at 1808**

**Agenda additions or corrections:** Chief Carlson had addition for the Chief's Report.

**Comments from the public:** None

**Consent agenda -** McNall: Reclassify property tax income. Goter made **motion** to approve; McNall seconded; approved unanimously.

**Business:**

**1. Volunteer Report** - No volunteers were present. McNall stated that she had been to several drills and had asked volunteers for comments. The main comment was a recommendation that all engines are inspected on a regular basis, preferably weekly, but every 10 days would suffice. She further suggested that this be considered when discussing staffing needs.

**2. Board**

**a. Board Representative to March drill:** Reeves will go to March drill.

**b. Chief Review:** McNall worked on the tool and uploaded it to the board packet. She suggested that we discuss this as we consider the Chief Carlson's replacement, she commented that there should be a realignment of critical categories, but suggested that we can do this at a future meeting.

*Due to and time constraints, discussion of agenda items 2.d. - f. was deferred until after 6. Correspondence. Item 2.c. was deferred until after Executive Session. These items are recorded in the minutes in their original order.*

**c. Chief coverage discussion:** The board decided to advertise the Fire Chief position on Indeed. Chief Carlson recommended putting it on the website as well. He also stated that he would be mentioning it at all of the Chiefs' meetings, etc. Reeves suggested looking at other options for filling the position, but agreed to proceed immediately with Indeed. McNall stated that it's likely that this position is inherently seen as a stepping stone to career advancement because of our limited budget and the fact that we only have one full-time employee. Miller advised that we look to the pool of retired chiefs and firefighters since they tend to retire at an earlier age, they may be receiving some benefits already from their prior positions, making Mosier more of an economic possibility. Chief Carlson added that it's common for a fire chief to stay in a position for 2-5 years. He further stated that there are agencies that can help out in the interim. Reeves put forward an idea of partnering with another agency, including using their chief or their training or somehow splitting the load of what the Mosier fire chief is expected to do. McNall said that the total personnel budget should be at

about \$125,000 which would include salary, PERS, and health insurance for the employee only. Miller made a **motion** that Rubin and Chief Carlson work together on behalf of the board and post an ad for the Chief's position before our next meeting; seconded by Rubin; unanimously approved.

**d. Board Elections:** Reeves is up for re-election, Miller must run for election because of his filling an unexpired term, and McNall will not be running for election. McNall's last day is June 30, 2025. Chief Carlson will advertise the open seat in the Mosier Valley News and on the MFD website.

**e. Biweekly Board Meeting:** Due to the Chief's transition and the many agenda items we have, some of which get deferred, the board decided to have an additional Zoom-only meeting on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. until it's no longer deemed necessary.

**f. District Harassment Incident Reporting Policy:** Two policies were included in the packet. Miller described the longer sexual harassment policy as coming directly from SDAO. The shorter policy applies to any kind of harassment. He believes that the sexual harassment policy needs some revision and will do that and present at the next meeting for the board to discuss and approve.

Regular board meeting closed at 1818 for the supplemental budget hearing.

Regular board meeting resumed at 1829 following the supplemental budget hearing.

### 3. Financials

**a. Approval of Supplemental Budget-** McNall made a **motion** to approve the supplemental budget as presented. Seconded by Miller. approved unanimously.

**b. Budget Committee:** Chief Carlson reported that all budget committee members from last year agreed to serve on the Budget Committee for 2025-2026 budget year. McNall made a **motion** to appoint Tim Hudson to a 3-year term on the budget committee; Reeves seconded; approved unanimously. Budget will be due to the county by 6/30/2025.

**4. JUF Update:** Miller reported that at the last JUF meeting the city's representatives expressed concern over spending more money on a redesign because of the soft costs already spent on the project. He stated that the bill in the Oregon legislature that may provide \$2 million to the project is moving slower than anticipated. Reeves reported on a call to the JUF architect, Doug Minarek, to see specifically what amounts were attributed to each of the buildings and outdoor treatments. Minarek agreed to come to the next JUF meeting with information regarding changes to the design and subsequent savings. So far no progress has been made on a contingency plan in case the funds from the state are not granted.

McNall reported on the status of the Business Oregon loan, that it is supposed to be completed by October 14th. She advised that prior to asking for an extension on that loan, we have a solid and successful plan in place for the JUF. Also, the Oregon business loan was based on a phased approach to constructing the JUF which is no longer the plan. She does not recommend waiting until we hear back from the state legislature regarding the additional funding before we communicate with Business Oregon.

**5. Chief's report:** In addition to Chief Carlson's written report (included in packet), he stated there were 9 unstaffed calls, which he attributes to a lack of volunteers. Of the five volunteers currently in school, three are in the Structural Academy and two in the Wildland Academy. A class is being scheduled by ODF to help our volunteers progress in more advanced wildland firefighting skills.

**a. Discussion/possible action regarding contract with CL Premium to replace B11, potentially others.** McNall stated that without additional funding we would not be able to afford the proposed equipment. Reeves suggested deferring more discussion until after a new Chief is in place. No action taken.

**b. Discussion/approval to submit with Wasco County for Round 3 of Wildfire mitigation grant:** Our district would request funds for four 15,000 gallon water tanks with pumps at strategic locations within our district. The grant involves a cost sharing on the part of the district, but our district meets the criteria for that being waived. The grant also includes funding for mitigation work on the part of district residents. Chief Carlson assured the board that if the shared costs were not waived the

district is not locked into accepting this grant. **Motion** By Miller to allow the chief to proceed with the grant application as described, seconded by Rubin, unanimously approved.

**Added item:** Chief Carlson reported that the District's ISO rating has improved from a 5Y and 5 to a 4Y and 4. This could possibly benefit residents with regard to their homeowners insurance. He will post these results to the website.

**6. Correspondence:** None

**Entered Executive Session at 1921**

**Executive Session**

Executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) "To review and evaluate the employment related performance of the Chief Executive Officer of any public body , a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing."

**Reconvene Regular Session at 1938**

McNall made a **motion** to accept Chief Michael Carlson's resignation, his last day will be March 31, 2025, seconded by Ruben, approved unanimously.

McNall made a **motion** to continue to employ Chief Michael Carlson at a 30% rate starting April 1, 2025, seconded by Miller, approved unanimously.

**Comments from the public:** Representatives from Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue commented that their relationship with Mosier is important and they want to support us in our efforts to replace Chief Carlson, adding that we can feel free to reach out to them if help is needed. The Board expressed their appreciation to MCFR.

**Adjournment at 2000**

*Next month's board meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2025.*