

Mosier Fire District

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Attendance:

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

Staff: Chief Carlson

Volunteers: Connor McKibben

Public: Dustin Posner, Steve Fisher, Brent Foster, Witt Anderson

MCFR: Chiefs Jensen and Beckner

Call to order at 1805

Agenda Additions or Corrections: None

Comments from the public:

D. Posner explained that he is a Hood River County Rd resident and was at the meeting to get information about MFD future plans including hiring of a fire chief or going with MCFR.

S. Fisher suggested that if MFD increases their partnership with MCFR that it's done on a 6-month trial basis. He also feels that the summer coverage is good for wildland so should not make a commitment to hiring a chief if we don't have to, wait to see if MCFR is a good fit for us.

Consent agenda: Question asked and answered about \$1500 charge to card that was a fee to give us access to apply for FEMA grants. **Motion** made by Miller to approve consent agenda; seconded by Reeves. Approved by Goter, McNall, Miller, Reeves.

Business:

1. Volunteer Report: Connor McKibben introduced himself, recently hired to provide administrative services and operations. He spoke on his own behalf, not on behalf of the volunteers. Currently there are 15 volunteers on the roster and 12 of them are active. He reported that the volunteers would like to eliminate PS Trax use. They are still waiting for delivery of some of the equipment for the volunteers for wildland firefighting, working on replacing expired meds, and pursuing a training on Narcan administration.

Connor also had a printed report (included in board packet) summarizing activities and training with the volunteers, his efforts of getting a new-ish brush truck, and his sense of a need for better communication between the board and the volunteers. He described his response plan for the summer -- "call-dependent". He stated that the volunteers would like more training and he's planning to add two more trainings per month.

Connor has heard suggestions and comments from the volunteers and wants to find out what the board would like to hear from the volunteers. The volunteers would like more communication regarding board's activities, particularly related to the MFD-MCFR partnership.

Reeves suggested that the volunteers choose a representative to report to the board and together with Connor, the volunteers will have two sources of information about board activities and decisions. The board would like to know what will keep the volunteers engaged with the district, what the volunteers would like to see happening in the district, unmet needs, etc. The board had questions about when ordered gear is expected and the Narcan administration training.

2. Board

a. Board Rep to June training: Reeves will go.

b. MCFR Update: Chief Jensen answered questions submitted by the board, and clarified that he was speaking as chief, not on behalf of the MCFR board. He explained that every call type has an "effective response force", which defines how many people are on a call and what they are doing.

For example, a burn complaint could be handled by one person, but a brush fire would require more. A medical call cardiac arrest would require 5-8 people, but a call for nausea not related to a head injury would only receive an ambulance. All calls in the district are treated the same regardless of where the call comes from. The proposed service concept with MFD relies on keeping the volunteer force in tact and even strengthening that force. The number of responders from MCFR would depend on how many and what type of MFD volunteers respond for any type of call to meet the effective response force. This formula will be built into their run card system.

Chief Jensen also addressed response time and turnout time, stating that with a professional crew, they can often reach a Mosier event close to the time that MFD volunteers -- who would have to arrive at station, assemble a crew, and respond from the station -- would be able to respond.

Q: How many calls does MCFR not respond to due to shortage of resources? Chief Jensen stated that they have no calls which are not responded to because of the expandable system in place which utilizes mutual and auto aid resources.

If MFD did not respond to a higher level medical call, MCFR would still rely on their effective response force. If a medical call required three people and two of them were the Hood River ambulance team, there would still need to be one more person, if not from MFD, then from MCFR Station 1.

Q: What will MCFR do to provide leadership for MFD volunteers without staff at the Mosier station? Chief Jensen stated that the highest need for Mosier was more financial investment in capital equipment so instead of paying staff, that money would be diverted to equipment and capital improvements. There was further discussion that if MCFR were to staff someone at Mosier they would have to pay the same wages that MCFR staff earns, which is higher.

Regarding volunteer training, they believe that training should happen mostly in Mosier, but there also needs to be integrated training between MFD and MCFR -- regardless of increased partnership between the two organizations. Chief Jensen said there needs to be leadership in Mosier (from the volunteers). Operationally speaking (response standards, maintenance facilities, etc.), this would fall under Chief Beckner's role. Chief Jensen would also meet with the volunteers.

Chief Jensen was asked about volunteer recruitment in Mosier. He spoke to the importance of participating in activities to maintain connection with the community, meeting with the volunteers to better understand their motivation in their role, keeping a strong response from Mosier -- this is key to success of the partnership. Reeves confirmed with Chief Jensen that MFD volunteers would be welcome by MCFR and utilized in local calls and mutual aid situations, and that they would have an established line of communication to leadership in MCFR.

Q: Who will be responsible for Mosier stations and equipment being ready and properly maintained in the winter? MCFR fire equipment captain/operations chief would oversee. Chief Beckner would be following up with the MFD lead volunteer if there were local issues. Chief Jensen added that the main concern for the MCFR board is keeping a strong MFD volunteer force, responsive to equipment and other local needs as well as calls.

Q: The proposal indicates keeping Stations 11 and 13 and letting Station 12 go. Chief Jensen: With the two different districts working together, there is less of a need for duplicate reserve apparatus. One of the big drawbacks for Station 12 is lack of a bathroom. Therefore, options for Station 12 could include using it as a source of funding through intergovernmental partnerships with the US Forest Service or the Oregon Department of Forestry, who both have indicated an interest in the property. His opinion is that would be an ideal scenario, allowing for seasonal wildland crews as well as state or US forest services to work out of that space which would provide added force for response. There isn't an ISO need or a response need for the station. Further, if/when the JUF is built, there also will not be a need for the station.

Q: What do you think of a "trial period" of six months, as suggested by some? Chief Jensen has also heard that from the MCFR board, including that some of the higher commitment/investment actions should probably not happen until even later in the agreement (longer than six months, maybe

a couple of years).

Q: If after a couple of years, Mosier decided against continuing with the partnership, would it be difficult to separate from MCFR? Yes, and that kind of scenario should be discussed in detail with SDAO. Chief Jensen stated that the proposal would have Mosier keeping their own equipment and stations; money reserved or appropriated for capital expenditures would stay with Mosier and planned through their budgeting process, capital purchases would be made according to whatever the final agreement has in place (for example, in the Clackamas/Sandy agreement, major capital expenses have to be approved by a committee of members from both agencies). MFD would retain final say over reserve fund capital expenditures. Materials and services for MFD would move into the MCFR budget.

Q: Would Station 11 be equipped such that it would not effect Mosier's ISO rating? Yes. Station 11 currently has an engine that is one ladder short of being a Type 1 engine and a ladder could be attached to meet that requirement. Currently wild land apparatus is being made that would qualify as Type 1 which could be used for structure response, plus have 4-wheel drive, which would work better in winter.

Q: Wouldn't it be hard to put a ladder on Engine 11? Also, it only holds 500 gallons. Is that enough for a response to the west side of the district? If there were a chimney fire, for example, MCFR would additionally dispatch a tender to that. Regarding the ladder, Chief Jensen is confident the issue can be overcome. Free fly-section ladders are now made and MCFR is using them in places where space is an issue. Chief Jensen was pressed on having only 500 gallons of water at Stations 11 and the time it would take for a tender to get to Mosier from Station 1 in The Dalles. He stated it would not effect the ISO rating, but suggested querying ISO on various scenarios to see the effects.

A question was asked of the board regarding a plan by Chief Carlson to get a grant for two large water tanks to be placed strategically in the district; MFD was not able to get the grant this year.

Questions from the MCFR Board for MFD

Q: In the JUF plans, are there accommodations for crew quarters? If not, is it possible to make that change to the JUF plans? MFD asked for this, but it was too expensive. MFD is still hopeful that a third bay can be built. The last version of the plan includes the third bay, but not crew quarters. Chief Jensen asked if the JUF doesn't get needed funding, what happens to the Business Oregon loan and other monies, can it still be used by MFD? Reeves and McNall replied that the Business Oregon and other funding is all tied together and available only for the JUF.

Q. Given that MFD sees local staffing as a priority, why is daytime staffing and not nighttime staffing the bigger priority? Does the presence of one person locally make that much difference when there are so many types of calls that require a team? Volunteers are often better able to respond to nighttime calls. Discussion ensued regarding the desire of volunteers to also have a local leader. Chief Jensen suggested there may be another way of looking at local leadership that would satisfy the community/volunteer desires, emphasizing that usually a team is needed for the effective response force, not just one person. McNall stated that from a volunteer perspective, if there's already someone at the station when the volunteer arrives, they can respond to a call together. She added that on medical calls, because of where she lives it may be most effective if she is able to meet someone from the station who would bring medical equipment to the call, rather than her having to go to the station and pick up the equipment and then go to the call.

Q: If MCFR and MFD enter into an agreement, and later decide to cancel the agreement, MFD volunteers would have become MCFR volunteers and may be administratively considered part-time employees and not volunteers. Volunteers in some agencies are compensated when on a call or in training. What would this look like if the agreement is ended? Reeves responded that they may return to their original MFD volunteer situation (uncompensated), or it's possible that if it was clean and economically sound to continue in a similar fashion, we may do that. Chief Jensen stated that if they were considered part-time MCFR employees, they would be governed by the labor union, and if the partnership ended, the MFD personnel would have to be laid off. How would

volunteers feel about returning to an unpaid position? Chief Jensen suggested that in the short term, the MFD volunteers would remain volunteers, not part-time employees. He was questioned about the "culture gap" between volunteers and the paid professionals at MCFR. He responded that with the exception of their new apprentices, all of the firefighters and chiefs were volunteers -- some employees are volunteers in their home community -- and if there were issues, he feels that it could be managed.

He was asked about the new dispatch system that will be coming online in the next year and described the improvements it will make in responding to calls.

He was asked about volunteers who are currently aligned with a Mosier community identity, and he explained that the history of MCFR is the joining of different organizations over the years and part of those identities are retained, but that there needs to also be a recognition of being on the same team.

Question from the public: What happens to the MFD board if the agreement with MCFR goes forward? The board will continue to exist, meet monthly, and Chief Jensen would give the Chief's report to the board. Until there is a merger, both boards will continue to function.

c. Accessibility of Board Documents - Kris will work on linking the packet directory to the website.

3. Financials

a. MFD Funds Continuation and Abolishment:

ORS 294.346(2) "Not less frequently than every 10th anniversary of the date upon which a reserve fund is established under subsection (1) of this section, the governing body of the municipal corporation shall review the reserve fund and determine whether the fund will be continued or abolished."

McNall **resolved** that the board approve five different resolutions (in board packet) that will **dissolve** the UP Dry Hydrant, UP Joint Use Facility, and the UP Equipment funds (none of which have any funds and some do not have any historical data), and **continue** the Capital Reserve Fund and the Gisvold Bequest Fund. These are Resolutions 2025-05-1, 2025-05-2, 2025-05-3, 2025-05-4, and 2025-05-5. Miller seconded. Approved by Goter, McNall, Miller, Reeves..

b. Audit: MFD will need to either do an audit or some similar process. Previously it was thought that all that was needed was an "in lieu of" form in place of an audit since our revenues and expenses are less than \$1M. However, it turns out the MFD spends too much money to do the "in lieu of" form. McNall was advised by someone at the state to fill out the "in lieu of" form to demonstrate that MFD is aware of reporting requirements, and at the same time we can look for an auditor to audit our books. Since Chief Carlson resigned effective immediately by text during this meeting and he is the budget officer, by proceeding with an audit or a similar process, which may take months, it will fortify our efforts in following applicable laws. McNall received a list of possible auditors from the state and asked for permission to pursue that angle in addition to completing the "in lieu of" form. The board agreed.

Regarding our budget process, McNall stated that we needed a budget officer and she didn't think it could be a board member or a budget committee member. Reeves and McNall will work on finding a budget officer.

4. JUF Update

Representative Helfrich's chief of staff contacted Mosier Mayor, Witt Anderson, and asked that Mosier provide testimony on May 9 for another committee dealing with capital construction funds. Mayor Anderson is going to do that. Board member/JUF committee member Miller sees this as a signal the Rep. Helfrich's office is engaged and interested in seeing the JUF built. We should have an idea in the first half of June how that will go, though not a final decision. Reeves added it still does not mean there will be funds for a third bay or crew quarters. Mayor Anderson added that when this was last discussed about a year ago, the architect felt that if funding became available, crew quarters

could be added to the north of where the office space currently is planned.

5. Chief's Report

a. Resolution to accept OSFM wildfire seasonal staffing grant: McNall **resolved** to accept the grant, seconded by Goter, approved by Goter, McNall, Miller, Reeves.

b. Payment for District Wildland Strategic Plan: deferred

6. Correspondence: None

Comments from the public: Question from D. Posner about getting burn permits without a staff person in Mosier. Per Chief Jensen, they would be given by MCFR with an online process.

Entered Executive Session at 2031

Executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(a) "To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent."

Reconvened Regular Session at 2100

The Board is continuing the interview process.

Comments from the public: None.

Adjournment at 2100