

**** Page 1** A SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT THREE FORKS RURAL FIRE DISTRICT BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, JANUARY 14, 2025**

JANUARY 14TH, 2025, The Three Forks City Council met with the Three Forks Rural Fire District Board of Trustees at the Ambulance Barn, 2 E. Hickory Street. (Zoom was not offered for this meeting, which is a virtual meeting tool which the City began using due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines and continues to use to encourage participation from the safety of one's home.) The meeting was presided over by Mayor Randy Johnston. Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Council members George Chancellor, Gene Townsend, (Warren) Garret Buchanan and Reagan Hooton were present. Roxi McDermott and Ed Tharp were absent. City Treasurer Kelly Smith, City Clerk Crystal Turner, Fire Chief Keith Aune, Asst. Chief Charles Eastty were present. Three Forks Rural Fire District Trustee Hannah Roadarmel, Linda Keene, Dale Kober and Diane Fuhrman were present. Chairman Roger Nerlin was excused. (Gene Townsend is also the secretary for the Rural District.)

The record reflects a quorum of both the City Council were present and four members of the Three Forks Rural Fire District present, and a meeting will be held.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** to the American Flag was led by Mayor Johnston.

Mayor Johnston reminded the audience that this meeting was recorded.

GUESTS: Colleen & David Hudspeth, Barbara Mutter, Jeri Crowe, Shawna Eva (who left before the meeting started), Eden & Steven Potratz, Liz & Butch Barton.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)
There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

JOINT CITY COUNCIL / THREE FORKS RURAL FIRE DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING

A. Discussion and Update on the Following Items within the Interlocal Agreement:

a. Officers & Firefighter

Fire Chief Aune reported there are currently twelve (12) active firefighters, seven (7) probationary firefighters and one (1) junior firefighter, of a total of twenty-eight (28) possible volunteers

b. Outside Agreements

There are no other agreements.

c. Services Provided

Assistant Chief Charles Eastty reported for 2024 there was a total of 218 calls. 50 of those were City, 168 were in the Rural boundary (51 of those were in Broadwater County). The Mayor thanked the Fire Department for its letter/report on the fire that occurred in City limits. He felt it was very informational and important in case he received any questions asked he receive those in the future as well.

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d. Emergency Medical Response

Charles added that the new reporting software classifies car wrecks as EMS, so of those calls 76 were car wrecks and emergency assists (like a lift assist).

B. Update and Report Addressing Issues in Broadwater County

Gene Townsend stated for the Rural's side, one year ago the Rural Fire District needed its own Subdivision Regulations for Broadwater County. "In Gallatin County, these go before the Gallatin County Fire Council, but in Broadwater County it is whatever the Broadwater County Commissioners allow," Gene said. "Our attorney got copies of several subdivision regulations and out of those five, we came up with our own. About a month ago we planned to vote on it but our attorney asked us to wait until Ed Shindell (Broadwater County Fire Chief) reviewed them. He has now and liked them very much and so we will have another public hearing scheduled to adopt and submit to the Broadwater County Commissioners," Gene reported.

Garret Buchanan asked how much Broadwater County does the Three Forks Rural Fire District cover? Gene replied it goes to the top of "Kamps Hill" which is the old Folkvord Farm. Keith Aune said it officially goes to mile marker 101, "That's the end of the district. It also goes towards Willow Creek at Meridian Bridge. I believe the entire district is like 202 square miles. We go to the cement plant and out to Logan-Trident Road back to the cement plant, and t Dimock's property." Mayor Johnston asked what Broadwater County's taxpayers pay into the entire budget. Gene said the total budget for the Rural, excluding capital improvements, is \$176,000. The Capital Improvement budget has about \$400,000 ear marked for a new fire apparatus. The Mayor asked if income was improving from the southern end of Broadwater County since there are so many more residences built in the district now. Gene answered that they get a total of \$12-15,000 a year from residential taxes in the southern end of Broadwater County.

C. Finance & Budget

a. FY2024/2025 Issues (if any)

Gene reported the Rural's budget is in good shape. "Spending picks up around the beginning of the fiscal year typically. I am a little concern, as we all should be, about insurance premiums increasing next year with all the fires and other disasters happening around the nation," Gene said. Mayor Johnston explained the Dike & Drain District's insurance premium went from \$3,000 one year to \$15,000 the next and their revenue was only around \$12,000. "We thought we were going to have to increase the mills taxed to cover the district's expenses, but fortunately the mill value came in higher and we were able to tax the same number of mills and generate \$16,000," he explained. Kelly Smith reported the City's budget is also in good shape for the Fire Department.

b. Anticipated purchases split costs for FY2025/2026

The Rural said they do not have any big expenditures planned. "We did have two trucks which the Chief informed the Board were *marginal at best* to be fit for duty. So we purchased a new truck in FY24/25. We will surplus sale the old ones which are 1999 and 2003. The Chief suggested maybe the City could purchase them but now as a City Council member I would question why the City would want to buy marginally fit for duty equipment?" he said. Kelly Smith asked why the City would need a brush truck. Chief Aune defended his suggestion, noting they could be converted to a command vehicle of sorts. One could be eliminated/sold and the other used for another purpose.

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Kelly also reported that the Fire Hall addition may not be complete in FY2024/2024 and may roll over into the FY2025/2026 year.

Gene added that it is nice how much revenue the use of the JAWS of life generate in order to save money, "That fund was able to pay for almost half the new truck the Rural purchased," he said.

D. Property and Inventory

a. Joint Existing Property & Future Joint Purchases

Chief Aune reminded all the SCBA masks will need replaced at 10 years, which are \$1,300 each quoted this year. This would be a split cost between the City and the Rural. There are 24 SCBA bottles currently, and they start expiring in 2031.

Assistant Chief Charles Easty said that the new ESO software allows tracking of inventory but has a lot of added items. He will get an updated list to both the City and Rural

b. Station Maintenance

Plans to have the generator finally hooked up for backup power – this is in the Fire Hall addition project.

E. Liability

Chief Aune asked if the City had backup power to the well(s)? Mayor Johnston replied this is covered in the existing Water Project the City is working on – to add a generator at Well 6 and up at the tank.

There was discussion regarding hydrant flushing. The Chief said they would like to do it more often. Mayor Johnston said we have 6, 8 and 10" mains. The Chief has concern about when those are not flushed that (say for a 6" main) 1/2 of that is just sediment. Mayor Johnston encouraged the Chief to reach out to the Public Works Director Steve Johnston.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Hannah Roadarmel made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Dale Kober seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:41PM.

Randy Johnston, Mayor

Attest: Crystal Turner, City Clerk

Roger Nerlin, Chair TF Rural Fire District

Attest: Eugene Townsend, District Secretary