BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2026 TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Sourdough Station, 4541 S. 3rd Rd., Bozeman, Montana

CALL TO ORDER OF HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
Reminder to the public that meetings are being recorded.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA

HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Financial Reports
2. Approval of Warrants
3. Approval of October 20, 2026 Meeting Synopsis

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Volunteer Firefighters Association Report – *Standing Agenda Item*
2. Discussion – Capital Expenditures and Best Practices Guidance
3. Discussion and Decision – Appointment of Trustee to the Impact Fee Coalition of Gallatin County Fire District
4. Discussion – Annexation of Genesis Business Park Into City
5. Discussion – Replacement of Rae Fire Station – *Standing Agenda Item*
6. Fire Chief's Report
7. Trustees' Activities
8. Announcements

ADJOURNMENT

This notice is posted on the door of the Administrative Building of the Sourdough Fire Station, the Rae Fire Station, and the Cottonwood Fire Station, and is posted on the Hyalite website and/or Facebook Page at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Notice of the meeting is published in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA
NOVEMBER 17, 2026

HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
SYNOPSIS

DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2026 TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Sourdough Fire Station, 4541 S. 3rd Rd., Bozeman, Montana

In compliance with MCA 2017 2-3-212 and the Hyalite Rural Fire District Bylaws, the minutes of HRFD Board of Trustees open public meetings are comprised of an audio recording and a written synopsis. The audio recording is designated as the official record of a meeting. The written synopsis serves to assist the public in accessing portions of the audio recording and is a good faith attempt to provide the public with another method to be informed about the actions of the Board. The minutes are available to the public at www.hyalitefire.org/board-meeting-minutes/ or at the Hyalite Rural Fire District Administrative Offices, 4541 S. 3rd Rd., Bozeman, MT, during its standard business hours.

TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:
Justin Miller
Pete Geddes
Jason Jarrett
Ken Beideman
Bob Pailthorpe

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:
Brian Nickolay, Fire Chief
Chris Dahlhauser, Assistant Fire Chief
Sheryl Wyman, Administrative Assistant
Colin Prato, Division Chief of Maintenance

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:
Robert Holt, CVFD Trustee

0:00:01	**CALL TO ORDER OF HYALITE RURAL FIRE DISTRICT** Chairman Miller called the meeting to order and reminds everyone the meeting is being recorded. He asks for any public comment on non-agenda items. None given. **HYALITE CONSENT AGENDA** Chairman Miller asks if there are any requests to pull anything from the Consent Agenda for review. None given. **Motion**: **Trustee Jarrett moves to approve consent agenda as presented** Trustee Geddes seconded the motion.

	Vote: Jarrett-Yes; Pailthorpe-Yes; Beideman-Yes; Miller-Yes; Geddes-Yes-Unanimous approval. *[See September 15, 2026 Board Packet for Consent Agenda items Approved]*
0:00:30	**Agenda Item 1 – Volunteer Firefighters Association Report** No report given.
0:00:36	**Agenda Item 2 – Montana Rural EMS Funding** Chief provides background on rural EMS grants available in the State. The EMS funding for the State will be funded through the State DPHHS. Every year they do a grant program to any rural health EMS program. Every year we have applied but denied funding. To date, no further funding has been announced as available.
0:02:52	**Agenda Item 3 – Capital Expenditures and Best Practices Guidance** Trustee Beideman makes a request for three proposals for major purchases. He gives examples of the new HVAC system and the new ambulance purchase. Chief Nickolay gives the history of the HVAC system. Discussion is held among the board members and Chief. Trustee Geddes feels Trustee Beideman's request is more directed at the board being more informed on capital purchases. There is a capital purchase policy in the district. Trustee Beideman would like to see a couple more proposals before a purchase. Trustee Geddes would like the board to review the current procurement policy and if any changes are requested, we can discuss those changes after reviewing the policy. Chief Nickolay discusses the purchase of the ambulance. This item will be brought next month for discussion after everyone has had a chance to review.
0:21:31	**Agenda Item 4 – Volunteer Command Staffing** Chief advises the board he does not have a proposal to prevent at this meeting. He needs to meet with the staff to go over the proposal and what that would look like for command staffing.
0:23:58	**Agenda Item 5 – Appointment of a Trustee to the Impact Fee Coalition of Gallatin County Fire District** Chief Nickolay and Trustee Pailthorpe will be attending a coalition meeting with the Gallatin County commission on October 29, 2026. This is a pre-meeting to see how the county feels about this project.

0:24:40	**Agenda Item 6 – Replacement of Rae Fire Station – Standing Agenda Item** Liz Loomis came out to the district on October 1st. We toured the district. She was able to see the district boundaries, current stations, and growth in the district. We will be sending out a newsletter explaining who we are and the volunteers. This was developed by Liz and her team. We were looking into putting signage around the district and were told by the County that this would not be possible. The other option would be to put signs on private property. Discussion is held between the trustees and the Chief. Trustee Geddes suggests having the volunteer association do some of the legwork on this endeavor. Discussion is held regarding the Loomis contract and what we want moving forward towards the mill levy campaign. Chief Nickolay has met with Falcon Hollow and Hyalite Foothills HOAs. The growth in the area is a big selling point. It is very apparent that when the station was initially built it was for protection of the trailer court and a few farms. Now the station has an additional of 1,000 – 2,000 homes to cover. The meetings were very productive. Trustee Pailthorpe asks about a visual campaign. Trustee Geddes asks about a Rural Improvement District.
0:43:51	**Agenda Item 7 – Fire Chief's Report** Chief goes through his fire chief's report. 58 calls in September. Membership is at 52. We have four of five of our needed captains. Questions are asked about the volunteers and who may be able to be promoted. Residences are full. In September our Firefighter 2 academy completed propane liquid fires. This training was made possible with help from Madison River Propane. We have two significant repairs at the Sourdough Station. Replacement of the fire suppression pump and replacement of one of the HVAC units. We received materials from the county for letting them store gravel while working on Cottonwood Rd. This was a great benefit to the Cottonwood Station parking lot. We should be received the new ambulance next week. *[See Attachment A-Fire Chief's Report]*
0:52:38	**Agenda Item 8 – Trustee's Activities** Trustee Jarrett reports on the EMS administrative board. Numbers are starting to work down and now under ten million. Work will be moving forward to see what can be presented to the public.

0:55:20	**Announcements** • Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, November 17, 2026 • Audit is currently underway.
0:56:18	**Adjournment of Meeting**

Hyalite Rural Fire District

Fire Chief's Report

October 2026

Prepared by: Fire Chief, Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire District responded to a total of 58 incidents in September 2026. Our total call volume for 2026 as of October 1st is 568.
    - Total calls September 2025 - 62
    - Total calls September 2024 - 45
    - Total calls September 2023 - 65
    - Total calls September 2022 - 57
    - Total calls September 2021 - 43

2. Our current roster is at 52 members (effective 10/1/2026).
    - 1 Career Fire Chief
    - 1 Career Assistant Fire Chief
    - 2 Career Division Chiefs
    - 3 Career Captains
    - 4 Volunteer Captains
    - 1 Volunteer Reserve Captains
    - 6 Volunteer Lieutenants
    - 10 Volunteer Firefighters
    - 10 Volunteers Apprentice Firefighters
    - 1 Volunteer Reserve Firefighters
    - 1 Volunteer Driver/Operator
    - 9 Volunteer Recruit Firefighters
    - 2 Volunteer Recruit EMTs

3. We are staffed with four (4) of five (5) needed volunteer captains for covering overnight command shifts. Alexi Ness left our department in September to pursue a job as a Paramedic in WA.
    - We currently have four (4) of our needed five (5) volunteer captains.
        i. Nick Blommel
        ii. Evan Jones
        iii. Jake Krieger
        iv. Ruby Weinberg
    - Training Captain Metta Trautmann remains on extended family leave.
    - Our Recruitment and Retention Captain continues to work a modified schedule and cover a night of command per week.

- Myself, Assistant Chief Dahlhauser, Division Chief Malone and Division Chief Prato still will provide coverage at night where we lack availability.
- I will soon have a long-term proposal for the board to review. This will include a permanent solution to our command coverage issues.

.

4. We currently have eight (8) resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.
    - Current Sourdough Residents -
        - Kade O'Brian, Evan Jones, Ruby Weinburg, Zach Fredach, Garrett O'Tool, Logan Gillespie, Henry Davis, and Miriam Genter.
        - Sourdough resident firefighters continue to fill weekend shifts Friday 7pm – Monday 7am.

5. We currently have four (4) resident firefighters living at the Cottonwood Fire Station.
    - Current Cottonwood Residents –
        - Keegan Torsdahl, Sarah Shenk, Jake Teselle, and Ben Tuma.
    - Cottonwood resident firefighters continue to fill weekday night shifts Monday – Thursday 7pm – 7am.

6. We currently have three (4) residents at the Rae house.
    - Current Rae Residents -
        - Kate Brownell, Tyler Palmer, Colton Rue and Brandon Pelton.

7. Non-resident volunteer firefighters continue to cover six-hour shifts at the Sourdough Fire Station on Monday - Friday 7am – 7pm. With our current level of staffing, we are able to cover 4 of our 10-day shifts with at least 2 volunteers.

8. We continue our regular multi company fire and EMS training every Wednesday night and command training twice a month. Our training through the month of September has focused on fighting attic fires. We then trained on gabel end fire attack for structure fire. For EMS we have been training on patient traumatic injuries.

9. Our fall recruit firefighter academy is moving along. Under the leadership of captains Leeper and Kuntz, the academy has completed exterior and interior fire attack. They have now moved on to enter, isolate, rescue. We unfortunately had to remove one of our recruit firefighters due to the individual not passing their NFPA required physical. We currently have nine (9) recruit firefighters and two (2) recruit EMTs. Our fall academy is expected to be completed in December.

10. In September our Firefighter 2 academy completed propane liquid fires. This training was made possible with help from Madison River Propane.

11. I met with the Falcon Hollow HOA on October 6th and the Hyalite Foothills HOA on October 13th. Both meeting provide good support for the Rae Fire Station Replacement. Engagement of homeowners has been positive and there is a good understanding of the need for a new fire station.

12. The fire district continues to be involved with the EMS Steering Group in Gallatin County. I am still one of the steering committee members.
13. I am still on the Board of Directors with Montana State Fire Chiefs Association as a combination section director.
14. I am still on the Montana State Fire Chiefs Wildland Fire Committee.
15. I am still on the Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee through the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services.
16. I am still on the operational committee for the Northern Rockies Coordination Group.
17. I continue to sit on the board of the Gallatin County Fire Council as Vice President. I also continue to chair the Gallatin County Fire Council communications committee.
18. I am still a Gallatin County Deputy Fire Warden.
19. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser continues to chair the SOP committees with the Gallatin County Fire Council.
20. Division Chief Prato continues to be a member of the Search and Rescue Communications group.
21. Division Chief Malone continues to be a member of the Tactical Emergency Medical (TEMS) group.
22. We had no firefighter injuries in the month of September.
23. All apparatus are in service.
24. Engine 6-4 was out of service from September 9th - September 11th due to an exhaust EGR issue. The Central Valley Fire District Fleet Services Shop performed the repair which was a disassembling and cleaning of the EGR.
25. We are moving forward with two significant repairs to the Sourdough Fire Station:
    a. One is the replacement of the fire suppression pump. Summit Fire Suppression will complete the replacement in mid October. They will also be installing a water alarm in the vault for the pump. This repair will cost an estimated $29,182.
    b. The second is the replacement of one of the HVAC units at the Sourdough Station. PJs Plumbing and Heating will complete this repair on November 3rd – November 6th. Part of this repair will also include a redesign of the heating and cooling zones for the resident wing of the station. These two repairs should fix the issues we have had with the zone in the past. This repair will cost an estimated $30,311.

Consent Agenda End

Regular Agenda Item 2

Capital Expenditures and Best Practices Guidance

Review of District Procurement Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with considerations for updating the district's current procurement policy as part of its review of 2020-001 v2.0 HRFD Procurement Policy. Specifically, I am requesting the Board consider revisions that would:

1. Explicitly recognize modern governmental cooperative purchasing programs as compliant procurement methods for capital purchases.
2. Provide authority for the Fire Chief to authorize emergency maintenance and repair expenditures exceeding established approval thresholds when necessary to maintain emergency response capabilities.

Background

The district's current procurement policy was adopted in July 2020 and was designed to balance fiscal oversight, transparency, accountability, and operational flexibility. The policy recognizes that public safety operations often require flexibility and allows sole source procurement when immediate purchases are necessary to maintain service and operational continuity. The policy further recognizes the use of cooperative contracts, including WSCA-NASPO and GSA contracts, as acceptable procurement methods.

The policy has served the district well; however, changes in governmental purchasing practices and the increasing complexity and cost of emergency response equipment warrant consideration of several updates.

Cooperative Government Purchasing Programs

Since the adoption of the current policy, governmental purchasing cooperatives have become an increasingly common procurement method for fire apparatus, ambulances, vehicles, communications equipment, technology, and other capital assets.

Organizations such as Sourcewell, HGACBuy, and NASPO ValuePoint competitively solicit and award contracts on behalf of participating governmental agencies. These contracts satisfy public procurement requirements while reducing administrative costs and procurement timelines.

Although the current policy recognizes cooperative contracts such as WSCA-NASPO and GSA, it does not specifically identify many of the modern purchasing cooperatives now widely utilized by fire departments and local governments.

Updating the policy to include similar governmental purchasing cooperatives would:

- Maintain compliance with competitive procurement principles.
- Reduce staff time and costs associated with developing and administering separate bid processes.
- Allow the district to leverage nationally negotiated pricing.
- Improve access to specialized fire service equipment with limited vendor pools.
- Reduce procurement timelines for critical capital purchases.

Such a revision would be consistent with the policy's stated objective of obtaining the best value for district taxpayers while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Emergency Maintenance and Repair Expenditures

The Board has historically maintained financial oversight of district expenditures through budget approval and procurement review processes. At the same time, the current policy recognizes that operational flexibility may be required when immediate action is necessary to maintain emergency services.

The district operates a fleet of fire engines, ambulances, wildland apparatus, tenders, support vehicles, and critical station infrastructure. As these assets age, the potential for major, unanticipated repairs increases.

Examples may include:

- Fire engine engine or transmission failures.
- Ambulance chassis or patient compartment repairs.
- Pump system failures.
- Generator replacements or repairs.
- Critical communications infrastructure failures.
- Major station mechanical system failures.

These repairs can easily exceed $5,000 and often require an immediate decision to prevent extended apparatus or facility downtime. Waiting for a regular Board meeting or a lengthy approval process may delay repairs by weeks, reducing operational readiness and limiting the district's ability to respond effectively to emergencies.

The district's ability to obtain timely repairs is further complicated by the limited number of qualified fire apparatus service providers available within our region. Unlike standard fleet vehicles, fire engines, ambulances, pumps, and other specialized emergency response equipment require technicians with manufacturer-specific training, specialized diagnostic tools, and access to proprietary parts and systems. As a result, repair options are often limited to a small number of vendors serving a large geographic area.

When a frontline apparatus experiences a significant mechanical failure, repair schedules may be measured in weeks rather than days. Vendor availability is often limited, and service appointments may only become available on short notice. Delays associated with obtaining additional approvals can result in missed repair opportunities, longer out-of-service periods, and prolonged reliance on reserve apparatus. In some cases, the district may lose its place in a repair queue, further extending the time a critical resource remains unavailable for emergency response.

In many situations, the cost of delaying repairs can exceed the cost of the repair itself through increased apparatus downtime, increased wear on reserve equipment, reliance on mutual aid partners, and the potential reduction in the district's emergency response capacity. Allowing prompt authorization of emergency repairs ensures the district can secure repair services and replacement parts as soon as they become available and return critical emergency response resources to service as quickly as possible.

Recommended Policy Revisions

I recommend the Board consider revisions to Policy 2020-001 that would:

1. Expand Recognition of Cooperative Purchasing Programs

Revise Section I to clarify that cooperative governmental purchasing organizations, including but not limited to Sourcewell, HGACBuy, NASPO ValuePoint, GSA Schedules, and similar competitively awarded governmental contracts, satisfy the district's procurement requirements and may be utilized for capital purchases and other procurements when determined to be in the district's best interest.

2. Establish an Emergency Maintenance Exception

Authorize the Fire Chief to approve emergency maintenance and repair expenditures exceeding normal purchasing thresholds when:

- The expenditure is necessary to restore or maintain emergency response capability.
- Delaying repairs would adversely affect public safety or district operations.
- Funding exists within an approved budget, reserve account, or board-authorized funding source.
- The Board Chair is notified as soon as practical.
- The expenditure is reported to the Board at the next regular meeting for review and ratification.

Given the limited availability of qualified fire apparatus repair vendors in southwest Montana, this authorization would allow the district to promptly secure repair appointments, specialized

labor, and replacement parts when vendor availability exists, reducing the risk of prolonged out-of-service periods for critical emergency response apparatus.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

These proposed revisions would not reduce Board oversight of district finances. Rather, they would clarify existing procurement practices while providing administrative flexibility necessary to maintain emergency response readiness.

The proposed changes would:

- Improve purchasing efficiency.
- Reduce administrative burdens.
- Maintain procurement transparency.
- Minimize apparatus downtime.
- Improve the district's ability to maintain uninterrupted emergency services.
- Continue to ensure accountability through regular reporting to the Board.

Conclusion

The existing procurement policy appropriately emphasizes fiscal responsibility while recognizing the unique operational requirements of emergency services. Updating the policy to expressly recognize modern governmental purchasing cooperatives and establish clear authority for emergency maintenance expenditures would further support the district's mission while preserving the Board's oversight role.

These revisions would allow the district to take advantage of competitively awarded governmental contracts, reduce procurement timelines, and ensure that critical emergency response apparatus can be returned to service as quickly as possible when significant repairs are required.

Brian Nickolay
Fire Chief
Hyalite Rural Fire District

Regular Agenda Item 3

Appointment of Trustee to the Impact Fee Coalition of Gallatin County Fire District

Synopsis of October 29, 2026, Meeting with Gallatin County Commissioners Regarding Fire Service Impact Fees and Building Oversight

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with a synopsis of a meeting held on October 29, 2026, between representatives of fire service agencies throughout Gallatin County and the Gallatin County Commissioners regarding the potential establishment of a fire service impact fee. The Hyalite Rural Fire District was represented at the meeting by Fire Chief Brian Nickolay and Trustee Pailthorpe.

Background

Fire service agencies throughout Gallatin County continue to evaluate funding mechanisms that can assist in addressing the capital needs created by rapid growth and development. One option under consideration is the establishment of a fire service impact fee that would allow a portion of growth-related capital costs to be serviced by new development rather than existing taxpayers.

The October 29, 2026, meeting was convened to discuss the feasibility of implementing a fire service impact fee program under current Montana law and to seek feedback from the Gallatin County Commissioners regarding the County's potential role in administering such a program.

Discussion

A significant portion of the meeting focused on the impacts of legislative changes adopted during the 2025 Montana Legislative Session, which amended Montana's impact fee statutes. Participants reviewed the requirements contained within Montana law and discussed the practical challenges associated with implementation.

Several key issues were identified:

- Impact fees may only be imposed by a county, city, town, or consolidated government. Fire districts do not have independent authority to impose impact fees, although a governmental entity may impose fees on behalf of a local district.
- Under current law, impact fees must be paid no earlier than the issuance of a building permit when a building permit is required, rather than at subdivision or final plat approval as has historically occurred in some jurisdictions.
- Impact fees are intended to fund additional service capacity resulting from new growth and development and may not be used to address existing deficiencies in service.

- Impact fee revenues must be used for capital improvements and facilities that increase service capacity. Fire protection facilities are specifically identified within Montana law as eligible facilities.
- Impact fee revenues may not be used for operating expenses, maintenance costs, or personnel expenses. The law specifically requires the exclusion of operations and maintenance costs from impact fee calculations.
- Impact fees are subject to statutory accounting, expenditure, and refund requirements and must be expended consistent with the adopted impact fee ordinance, service area report, and applicable Montana law.

Administrative Challenges

The discussion identified a significant practical challenge for Gallatin County. Because impact fees must be collected in conjunction with the issuance of building permits, an administrative mechanism must exist to issue permits and collect associated fees.

Gallatin County currently does not operate a countywide building division capable of serving as a collection mechanism for a fire service impact fee program. As a result, implementation of such a program would likely require the County to establish additional permitting and administrative infrastructure.

Commissioner Feedback

The Gallatin County Commissioners acknowledged the continued growth occurring throughout the county and recognized the challenges that growth places on fire and emergency services. However, commissioners indicated that establishing a county building division or similar administrative program necessary to support countywide impact fee collection is not currently a priority for Gallatin County.

Based upon the discussion, there does not appear to be a near-term pathway for implementing a countywide fire service impact fee program under the current legislative framework. The legal requirements associated with collection through the building permit process, combined with the absence of an existing countywide permitting mechanism and the County's current position on establishing such a program, present substantial barriers to implementation.

Building Oversight and Growth Management

While the commissioners expressed limited interest in pursuing a countywide impact fee program, they did indicate a willingness to work collaboratively with the fire service agencies of Gallatin County to address broader concerns regarding building oversight and development review in rapidly growing areas of the county.

The commissioners acknowledged that portions of Gallatin County are experiencing significant residential and commercial growth while receiving limited building oversight from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). Concern was expressed regarding the Big Sky area, the Central Valley Fire District, and the Hyalite Rural Fire District, where development activity continues to increase and the current level of state oversight may not be sufficient to meet the demands created by such growth.

Commissioners recognized that inadequate building oversight can create long-term challenges for public safety agencies, including fire and emergency service providers. As a result, they expressed an interest in continuing discussions with county fire service agencies regarding potential solutions to improve oversight of new construction and development.

Potential future discussions may include evaluating opportunities for enhanced building permitting, plan review, inspections, code enforcement, fire code compliance, and other measures intended to ensure that new development meets applicable life safety and fire protection standards.

Fire service representatives emphasized that effective building oversight is a critical component of community risk reduction and an important tool for ensuring that growth occurs in a manner that protects the public, supports emergency responders, and reduces future fire and life safety risks.

Implications for Hyalite Rural Fire District

The Hyalite Rural Fire District continues to experience growth-related increases in service demand that place pressure on district facilities, apparatus, equipment, and infrastructure. While impact fees remain a potentially valuable mechanism for funding growth-related capital improvements, current statutory requirements and the County's position indicate that implementation is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

The discussion regarding building oversight may present a separate opportunity for collaboration between Gallatin County and the fire service agencies operating within the county. As development continues throughout the district, ensuring appropriate building, fire, and life-safety oversight during the construction process will remain an important consideration for protecting public safety and supporting sustainable growth.

The commissioners' recognition of oversight deficiencies in high-growth areas, including Big Sky, Central Valley Fire District, and the Hyalite Rural Fire District, represents an important first step in addressing concerns long identified by the fire service. Continued collaboration may present opportunities to improve development review processes and ensure that future construction adequately addresses fire protection and life safety considerations.

As growth continues throughout the district, alternative funding mechanisms will likely need to be evaluated to ensure that the capital costs associated with expanding service capacity are appropriately addressed. District staff will continue to participate in countywide discussions regarding both growth-related funding mechanisms and opportunities to improve building oversight in areas experiencing significant development pressure.

Recommendation

This report is submitted for the Board's information and discussion. No formal action is requested at this time. Staff will continue to monitor developments related to impact fee legislation and collaborate with regional fire service partners and Gallatin County officials regarding future opportunities to address growth-related capital funding needs and building oversight concerns.

Brian Nickolay
Fire Chief
Hyalite Rural Fire District

Regular Agenda Item 4

Annexation of Genesis Business Park Into City

Request for Annexation of Genesis Business Park into the City of Bozeman

Background

The Hyalite Fire District has received notice of a request for annexation of the Genesis Business Park into the City of Bozeman. Genesis Business Park is a 27-lot commercial development located off Stucky Road and consists primarily of large commercial office-space buildings.

The primary reason provided for the annexation request is that the business park is now surrounded by land within the City of Bozeman. Property owners have indicated that annexation is necessary to address limitations associated with the development's shared sewer system and to facilitate future infrastructure improvements and potential expansion opportunities that are now restricted as a private sewer system.

Financial Impact

Based on current property tax valuations and Gallatin County revenue projections, the annexation of Genesis Business Park is anticipated to result in an annual reduction of approximately **$40,000 in property tax revenue** to the Hyalite Rural Fire District.

While this represents a relatively small percentage of the district's overall operating budget, it is nevertheless a permanent reduction in revenue that supports fire suppression, emergency medical services, personnel, apparatus replacement, and facility maintenance throughout the district.

Service Considerations

Following annexation, primary fire protection and emergency response responsibilities would transfer to the City of Bozeman Fire Department. The change would result in a modest reduction in the district's service area and response obligations.

Bond and Debt Service Considerations

An important consideration associated with this annexation is the properties' responsibility for the debt service associated with the **Sourdough Fire Station bond**.

The City of Bozeman has acknowledged that the properties within Genesis Business Park will remain responsible for their proportionate share of the Sourdough Fire Station bond debt service. However, the mechanism by which that debt obligation will continue to be assessed and collected following annexation remains unclear at this time.

I am currently working with City of Bozeman and Gallatin County to better understand the legal and administrative pathway necessary to ensure these obligations are maintained after the properties are transferred into city jurisdiction. While there appears to be agreement that the debt obligation remains with the benefiting properties, additional clarification is needed regarding the collection and distribution process.

Staff will continue to work with all parties involved and provide updates to the Board as the annexation process moves forward.

Recommendation

The estimated loss of approximately $40,000 in annual tax revenue should be considered alongside the reduction in future service obligations within the annexed area. While the City has acknowledged that the affected properties will remain responsible for their share of the Sourdough Fire Station bond debt, clarification is still needed regarding the method by which those payments will be administered after annexation.

Conclusion

The proposed annexation of Genesis Business Park appears to be driven primarily by municipal infrastructure needs and the property's unique circumstance of being surrounded by the City of Bozeman. The annexation will reduce annual operating revenue to the district by approximately $40,000.

From a service delivery perspective, the annexation is unlikely to significantly impact emergency response capabilities in the area, as the properties are adjacent to existing City of Bozeman service territory and would continue to receive fire and emergency services from a nearby provider. The primary considerations for the district are the long-term revenue impact and ensuring that existing debt obligations are preserved and appropriately administered.

I will continue discussions with City of Bozeman staff and Gallatin County and will provide updated information and recommendations to the Board as additional details become available.

Brian Nickolay
Fire Chief
Hyalite Rural Fire District

Regular Agenda Item 6

Fire Chief's Report

Hyalite Rural Fire District

Fire Chief's Report

November 2026

Prepared by: Fire Chief, Brian Nickolay

1. The Hyalite Fire District responded to a total of 66 incidents in October 2026. Our total call volume for 2026 as of October 1st is 634.
    - Total calls October 2025 - 62
    - Total calls October 2024 - 60
    - Total calls October 2023 - 50
    - Total calls October 2022 - 63
    - Total calls October 2021 - 56

2. Our current roster is at 51 members (effective 11/1/2026).
    - 1 Career Fire Chief
    - 1 Career Assistant Fire Chief
    - 2 Career Division Chiefs
    - 3 Career Captains
    - 4 Volunteer Captains
    - 1 Volunteer Reserve Captains
    - 6 Volunteer Lieutenants
    - 6 Volunteer Firefighters
    - 15 Volunteers Apprentice Firefighters
    - 1 Volunteer Reserve Firefighters
    - 1 Volunteer Driver/Operator
    - 9 Volunteer Recruit Firefighters
    - 1 Volunteer Recruit EMTs

3. We are staffed with four (4) of five (5) needed volunteer captains for covering overnight command shifts.
    - We currently have four (4) of our needed five (5) volunteer captains.
        i. Nick Blommel
        ii. Evan Jones
        iii. Jake Krieger
        iv. Ruby Weinberg
    - Training Captain Metta Trautmann remains on extended family leave.
    - Our Recruitment and Retention Captain continues to work a modified schedule and cover a night of command per week.

- Myself, Assistant Chief Dahlhauser, Division Chief Malone and Division Chief Prato still will provide coverage at night where we lack availability.
- I will soon have a long-term proposal for the board to review. This will include a permanent solution to our command coverage issues.

.

4. We currently have eight (8) resident firefighters living at the Sourdough Fire Station.
    - Current Sourdough Residents -
        - Kade O'Brian, Evan Jones, Ruby Weinburg, Zach Fredach, Garrett O'Tool, Logan Gillespie, Henry Davis, and Miriam Genter.
        - Sourdough resident firefighters continue to fill weekend shifts Friday 7pm – Monday 7am.

5. We currently have four (4) resident firefighters living at the Cottonwood Fire Station.
    - Current Cottonwood Residents –
        - Keegan Torsdahl, Sarah Shenk, Jake Teselle, and Ben Tuma.
    - Cottonwood resident firefighters continue to fill weekday night shifts Monday – Thursday 7pm – 7am.

6. We currently have three (4) residents at the Rae house.
    - Current Rae Residents -
        - Kate Brownell, Tyler Palmer, Colton Rue and Brandon Pelton.

7. Non-resident volunteer firefighters continue to cover six-hour shifts at the Sourdough Fire Station on Monday - Friday 7am – 7pm. With our current level of staffing, we are able to cover 4 of our 10-day shifts with at least 2 volunteers.

8. We continue our regular multi company fire and EMS training every Wednesday night and command training twice a month. Our training through the month of October has focused 2 ½" hose deployments with a Blitz Fire appliance. As well as pressurized hydrant operations and LDH hose lays. For EMS we have been training on patient traumatic injuries.

9. Our fall recruit firefighter academy is moving along. Under the leadership of captains Leeper and Kuntz, the academy has successfully passed their state firefighter 1 testing on exterior and interior fire attack. We currently have nine (9) recruit firefighters and one (1) recruit EMTs. Our fall academy is expected to be completed in December.

10. Thanks to the hard work of volunteers Evan Jones and Jake Teselle we were able to visit several schools in our district for Fire Prevention Week which was October 7th – 11th. All school were very appreciative for the visits. This would not have been possible without the work of Evan and Jake.

11. We provided a fire engine for the Anderson School Haunted House October 23rd and 24th. We have done this annually for several years.

12. In September myself, Division Chiefs Malone and Prato, and Captain Kuntz attended the Montana Fire Convention in Helena. Each of us enjoyed the training and networking with other fire agencies across the state.

13. The fire district continues to be involved with the EMS Steering Group in Gallatin County. I am still one of the steering committee members.

14. I am still on the Board of Directors with Montana State Fire Chiefs Association as a combination section director.

15. I am still on the Montana State Fire Chiefs Wildland Fire Committee.

16. I am still on the Montana Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee through the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services.

17. I am still on the operational committee for the Northern Rockies Coordination Group.

18. I continue to sit on the board of the Gallatin County Fire Council as Vice President. I also continue to chair the Gallatin County Fire Council communications committee.
19. I am still a Gallatin County Deputy Fire Warden.

20. Assistant Chief Dahlhauser continues to chair the SOP committees with the Gallatin County Fire Council.

21. Division Chief Prato continues to be a member of the Search and Rescue Communications group.

22. Division Chief Malone continues to be a member of the Tactical Emergency Medical (TEMS) group.

23. We had no firefighter injuries in the month of October.

24. All apparatus are in service.

25. Water Tender 6 was out of service from 10/5 – 10/7 due to a blown-out coolant hose. The repair was performed by the Central Valley Fire District Fleet Services shop.

26. Our new ambulance has arrived, and Maintenance Chief Prato is working on getting it into service. Our old Ambulance 6 has been traded into Apgar Ambulance Dealer.

27. The repairs at the Sourdough Fire Station HVAC and fire pump have been completed.