

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT BOARD OF THE  
HAILEY / WOOD RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
HELD November 13, 2019  
IN THE HAILEY MEETING ROOM**

The Meeting of the Joint Board of Hailey / Wood River Fire Protection District (WRFD) was called to order at 4:30 P.M. by Chair Martha Burke. Also present were board members, Jay Bilet, Seth Martin, Tim East, and Pat Cooley. Staff present included City Administrator Heather Dawson, Hailey Deputy City Clerk Nancy Arellano, Hailey Fire Chief Mike Baledge and Wood River Interim Fire Chief Ron Bateman.

[4:30:51 PM](#) Call to order by Martha Burke.

Open Session for Public Comments:  
No public comment.

Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes from July 17, 2019 Meeting *Action Item*

[4:31:39 PM](#) **Bilet moves to approve minutes from July 17, 2019, as presented seconded by East. Martin abstains as he was absent from the meeting. Motion passed with a roll call vote. Bilet, yes. East, yes. Cooley, yes. Martin, abstains.**

Reports

Reports from Wood River Fire District:

WRFD Chair Jay Bilet

Chief Ron Bateman

WRFD Commissioner Seth Martin

Introduction and Goals of Newly Elected Commissioners Dennis Kavanagh and Steve Garman

[4:32:33 PM](#) Burke begins by stating we are trying to catch up where we are. We are here to talk about how we got here, what are we doing here, and where we should be going. Burke turns the floor over to Wood River Fire District.

Bilet speaks. They are getting ready to hire a new chief. There are new commissioners coming in. Unsure how it will go forward. Bilet is open to all suggestions.

[4:33:36 PM](#) Ron Bateman introduces himself, going on seventh week as Wood River Fire's Interim Fire Chief. Bateman is curious and has the same questions as Burke; Where are we? Where are we going together in the future with this?

[4:34:45 PM](#) Martin, it has been an interesting road to this point. There have been some stumbling blocks and hurdles. Martin looks forward to seeing the newly elected representatives, what their views are and how they choose to or not to carry things forward. Martin is happy to have been a part of the board. Martin encourages everyone to work together and support the mission of the fire departments which is to serve the public and answer their calls in the best way we can.

[4:36:53 PM](#) Dennis Kavanagh introduces himself. Kavanagh is newly elected and recently

introduced to the whole subject of Fire District and the interactions between the different fire departments. Kavanagh states he has a lot to learn; Open to learn. Steve Garman told him about a recent fire and how jointly the fire departments responded and cooperated. Clearly everyone is willing to do it.

[4:38:57 PM](#) Steve Garman introduces himself. Garman is willing to learn. Garman speaks about the recent fire Kavanagh refers to. Everything went really well. It was mainly staffing; they didn't have the volunteers they needed. This is a problem. We need more people. We need more strength. Garman states that is going to be one of his priorities. Garman is open to listening to learn.

[4:40:30 PM](#) Burke congratulates both newly elected commissioners.

### Reports from City of Hailey

Mayor-Elect Martha Burke  
Chief Mike Baledge  
Councilman Pat Cooley

[4:40:57 PM](#) Burke states nothing has changed in Hailey's goal to continue working toward consolidation. We can do more with more volunteers, more firefighters, better response and better service for the public. Members at the table will have other ideas. It has been slow. We wanted everyone to have a firm foundation of what we understood what we were doing. Burke states she is in support.

[4:42:40 PM](#) Hailey Fire Chief, Mike Baledge introduces himself. Officially Hailey Fire Chief since October 18<sup>th</sup>. They have responded to several major incidents. That is the goal; to be able to work these incidents, serve the public, and the only way is to work together. As we change over to a new council, new fire commission, new joint powers board don't lose sight of the big picture. We are here to serve the public. To protect.

[4:44:18 PM](#) Cooley reiterates Hailey is in support for consolidation. Cooley has learned about the fire service. We were fortunate in bringing Mike Chatterton in to review our budget and show us that things will work. One of the best things that can happen is for this board to unanimously include the ambulance district as a participant on this board. It is important the ambulance district be included in whatever form that they choose. Cooley is disappointed even though this board unanimously voted to invite the ambulance board, the topic hasn't been put before the Wood River Rural District Board for voting. We voted to bring forward an organizational chart that was motioned to turn down by the Wood River Rural District Board and even a call for abandoning the JPA agreement with Hailey. Cooley hopes that even if there is a change in personnel in the fire departments we should still move towards consolidation. It seems as though that the wheels aren't coming off the bus. Cooley repeats Hailey is committed to moving forward with consolidation.

### Reports from Ambulance District and Member at Large

Jacob Greenberg  
Tim East

[4:47:22 PM](#) Greenberg speaks, there are issues on the agreement itself. Greenberg, some

of the language is vague and references the Joint Powers Agreement as amended that considers a five-member board. Greenberg had the County's administrator look at it. Greenberg states they will need to sit with Simms, Derek Voss, and their attorney, Tim Graves and himself so that the language that provides for a proxy vote or alternate from the Ambulance Board. Greenberg guesses the representative from the Ambulance Board will be him, and he travels, so he would need to have a plan for alternative in his absence. Greenberg's perspective is the Ambulance board hasn't said yes or no. There are new members. This will take time. [4:50:54 PM](#) Greenberg urges everyone to talk to Bateman about unified demands and how to allocate resources. There would be a lot of benefits if the properties were consolidated.

[4:52:17 PM](#) East speaks. East has been on the EMS Council since the beginning. Consolidation should involve all districts. The goal is consolidation. There is always going to be friction when people are trying something new. If someone is unhappy with what is happening in this room, the best way is to speak up. East looks forward to seeing the changes. Let's move forward.

[4:55:09 PM](#) Dawson, reference the ten-year old ESCI study to talk about the efficiencies in that study were to be gained through savings and stations and utilize the stations we had tonight as well as then personnel was identified; there is never enough personnel to respond. We have been operating under a work chart that has nearly thirty paid per call responders. Dawson, we have focused on trying to build the morale among the personnel. We have the SAFER Grant to try to help. That has been our mission in the interim.

[4:56:55 PM](#) Open session.

[4:57:09 PM](#) Kavanagh speaks. Kavanagh wants to hear any opposition comments because all points of view should be heard. He is encouraged by what all have said.

[4:58:36 PM](#) Linda Haavik speaks. Haavik is encouraged hearing everyone want to move toward consolidation. The term Haavik heard is cost savings. It is better to say cost efficiency. The mission is in providing emergency services, how that can be improved, and better provide it with the resources we have what needs to be focused on.

[4:59:45 PM](#) Ron Taylor is encouraged by what he has heard. Taylor is confused, Burke's message from Mayor Haemmerle a few meetings ago stating we are not going to give up the Hailey Fire Department. Taylor asks how do we move forward?

[5:00:32 PM](#) Simms comments there is a lot of context to be added to what's been said. Simms suggests look to Bateman.

[5:01:35 PM](#) Bateman shares his experience with the Millican Fire Protection District in 2009 and a neighboring agency. Bateman has a wealth of knowledge. It is doable. Bateman is optimistic and has ideas of how it could be done. We have the infrastructure, remarkable people, there's some youth in Hailey that compliments Wood River. He has a wealth of knowledge and would love the opportunity to share it.

[5:04:33 PM](#) Greenberg goes back to what he said earlier about three different governing bodies here trying to make a decision. The goal is increased level of service. Bateman adds the document doesn't speak to firefighter safety. It is not listed. Firefighter safety is a critical reason why you would move towards it as well.

[5:06:13 PM](#) Burke, we need good equipment. We need safe buildings to house this equipment. How to recruit the firefighters? Mayor Haemmerle was hoping that we could reestablish the volunteer program that Hailey has had in the past. It isn't the number of fire trucks, it's the number of people that fight the fire. Burke speaks on an incident. If we are having a disparity, it needs to be addressed not just budgetarily, not just equipment or building. It has to do with working together and bring out the best in each other. Burke asks if they cannot work together to let her know now.

[5:09:04 PM](#) Bateman responds to Burke. We have to model that behavior. Model that appreciation.

[5:10:25 PM](#) Greenberg attended the Mountain Trauma Conference. The attendees felt like family with the person next to them. Once separated they are unique units. There are a lot of positives to consolidation.

[5:11:57 PM](#) Rune Haavik makes a suggestion to the board. The volunteer design might not work anymore. When the economy is up there are less volunteers. If the economy is down there are more volunteers. Haavik hopes the board keeps in mind all possibilities.

[5:14:10 PM](#) Garman, echoes what Haavik said. Those days are over. That model doesn't work anymore. Consolidate and be more efficient.

[5:15:29 PM](#) Bass Sears comments, feels this is important, respect for all agencies, respect for the full time employees as well, there is a lot of heavy lifting to do.

[5:16:36 PM](#) Burke, asks if all that spoke if they see consolidation working. Suggestions?

[5:17:23 PM](#) Haavik likes the idea of consolidation and likes Bateman saying he's done this before. It is possible and better for the community.

[5:18:10 PM](#) Taylor, agrees and echoes Greenberg put this underneath one roof.

[5:18:29 PM](#) Garman is optimistic it will work. First thing that has to happen is train and work together. The budgetary consideration is getting people paid better and getting more people.

[5:19:38 PM](#) Cooley, to Garman the intertwined entities is key. That is the fundamental idea.

[5:20:21 PM](#) East, it's great. There's a lot of work that goes behind the scenes. Two choices, one taxing district or consolidation. East suggests Bateman makes a presentation to the board and to the public.

[5:22:01 PM](#) Cooley agrees with East and suggests advertising and get the public informed.

Burke suggests a town hall type meeting. Greenberg, there is a trust and fear issue. Once we let go, a lot more can be accomplished faster. The other part is the community; rural taxing district rate is less than a city but when it's combined there is a total savings. There will be efficiencies.

[5:24:57 PM](#) Burke thanks all for their input. Thanks Martin and Cooley.

[5:25:26 PM](#) Martin states he is encouraged. Things have moved slowly. The safety of the firefighters and the response to citizens are his driving factors. Safety is paramount. Martin suggests to look bigger. Use Bateman as a resource.

[5:30:11 PM](#) Applause from the room.

[5:30:26 PM](#) **Martin moves to adjourn, seconded by Bailet, motion passed unanimously.**

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Martha Burke, Chairman

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Mary Cone, Hailey City Clerk