

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT BOARD OF THE
HAILEY / WOOD RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
HELD APRIL 17, 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, Seth Martin, Pat Cooley and Jay Baillet. Staff present included City Administrator Heather Dawson, Hailey City Clerk Mary Cone, Hailey Fire Chief Craig Aberbach and WRFD Fire Chief Bart Lassman.

[5:00:26 PM](#) Call to order by Martha Burke

Open Session for Public Comments:

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

*Approval of minutes from April 3rd Meeting **Action Item**.....*

[5:01:32 PM](#) Martin moves to approve the amended minutes as handed out and explained, by the addition of the last conversation of the JPA, where Martin asked if the board has given direction to staff to draft amendments to the JPA for the next meeting.

[5:01:59 PM](#) Burke moves the New Business item next for discussion as Mike Chatterton is here. Chatterton is here to help us create a financial budget analysis.

New Business

*a.) Discussion of Chair's correspondence to Mike Chatterton, Financial Consultant, following Board's decision at the last meeting to utilize his service **Action Item**.....*

Baillet [5:03:45 PM](#) asks a question about paying different benefits to employees based on whether they work for Wood River or Hailey Fire, page 30 of packet, referencing an email by Heather Dawson. Dawson answered Baillet's question, that the conversation was between Chief Aberbach and Dawson but that no decisions have been made, it is a conversation. Stating that the benefits in each organization are different and the conversation is how will the benefits be paid in the future, replies Dawson. Adding that the cost of Wood River's benefits are a bit more than the cost of Hailey's benefits and how do we keep it affordable. Dawson, this is not a decision, only a discussion. Baillet, okay he hadn't heard that we are going in that direction.

[5:05:03 PM](#) Tim East asks, once the 2 departments join together, people getting less expensive benefits, what happens after joining? Aberbach responds, Hailey has 3 full time personnel, that would be the subject to negotiations between district commissioners,

attorney's and City of Hailey administration. What we have done so far is conceptual, trying to understand what is affordable. East discusses a situation that happened at the school district with teacher's getting different benefits based on hire date, causing trouble. As part of his contract with Wood River Fire, Aberbach's benefits are different than the other Hailey fire personnel. East thinks the benefits should be the same.

[5:07:05 PM](#) Lassman, comments, that ideas like this should be discussed before the meeting between he and Aberbach so that when we get into the meeting we can jointly present them, it will give us time to discuss and understand who brought it up and why it is being discussed.

[5:08:18 PM](#) Cooley comments, this is a Hailey issue right now and how we can afford to integrate (into Wood River). And is only a conversation. Any decisions would be made in these meetings.

[5:08:57 PM](#) Simms asks to speak and agrees with everyone's comments. The way the JPA and duties are lined out, we continue to run the departments as separate departments, right now we are running on concurrent tracks moving towards consolidation. Simms agrees with East's comments that under one management the benefits would need to be the same.

[5:09:58 PM](#) Martin agrees, and the employees need to understand that under a joint powers unified structure that there might be some differences in the short-term until there is a more solidified consolidation structure.

[5:10:19 PM](#) Mike Chatterton speaks, he might have been the person that brought up this topic because of what he experienced at the school district where people had different salary and benefits plans. Chatterton wants to see the little things worked out because he doesn't want to see a little thing drive a big wedge between these consolidation efforts.

[5:11:15 PM](#) Martin trying to bring together by design. Chatterton responds to the school district pay scale issue.

Burke asks [5:12:14 PM](#) Lassman if this discussion helps? Lassman receiving packets with this material showing emails between certain people, he wants to be a part of the discussions. [5:13:36 PM](#) Burke responds to Lassman's concern. Lassman wants to be a part of making the packet.

[5:14:50 PM](#) Chatterton didn't know until today who he could talk to. He will get with both Fire chiefs and look at 5 years back.

[5:15:37 PM](#) Burke, is very grateful that Chatterton is here to help.

[5:15:49 PM](#) Linda Haavik as you get closer to the form of integration, it is way too premature to decide, but good that it was brought up now early like this, this will make consolidation different.

Chatterton will get with Dawson and chiefs for information. [5:17:13 PM](#) Chatterton asks,

why does this board want an independent person to do this budget when you have individuals who can provide this to you from each side? Chatterton thought he would be representing Wood River Fire in this process, is that not the case?

[5:17:36 PM](#) Simms responds no that is not the case. And clarifies the intent of help from Chatterton. Both entities WR and Hailey have budgets, side by side, idea with this board, is to put together a joint budget for both parties. Chatterton, understands, okay.

[5:18:50 PM](#) Cooley reinforces all lines of communications that you (Chatterton) need are open.

[5:19:10 PM](#) Burke adds, the timeline we are following is indefinite and that the first step is how financing would be handled and things like that so that we don't run into the heartbreak that Ketchum is facing right now, with their partners. So, we want to look at everything first, move slowly, make sure questions are answered, problems are solved before we lunge ahead. And we don't want it to get anywhere so that if it falls apart, we've damaged 2 fire protection groups.

*B.Consideration of Resolution 2019-_____ to adopt a Draft Organizational Chart to become effective upon attrition of current key positions **Action Item***

Item b, new business on pg 66 of packet

[5:20:10 PM](#) You have seen this before, a draft org chart is on pg 66 of packet Burke asks for all to review and move forward as you want.

[5:21:53 PM](#) Aberbach, this has been before this board before in several renditions.

[5:22:25 PM](#) Tim East, notice that ops chief and the deputy chief will need to be paramedics. But not all employees need to be paramedics. Aberbach responds, all new employees under the collective bargaining agreement must be a paramedic, based on job descriptions.

[5:23:17 PM](#) Lassman, not union members. East, why do they have to be paramedics. Martin can answer that question as he wrote the job descriptions. Martin feels it is important for the training officer because of their title, to know what they are training and practice it and additionally the operations chief is the head person in charge of a fire or EMS scene, needs to be well versed in the highest level of care possible.

[5:24:20 PM](#) East asks about Mike Whittar, what is his level in Ketchum. Martin responds is a Captain and an advanced EMT, not a paramedic. Martin, one would still need to be a paramedic here.

[5:24:58 PM](#) Bailet, asks Simms why are we trying to memorialize this now? Simms responds, Turcke mentioned he would be available by phone if you want to try and call him now. Bailet stated that Turcke commented asking why this board to try to memorialize this now. Simms responds, this board can make recommendations to each of its boards, we have an upcoming hiring position soon.

[5:26:30 PM](#) Dawson also explains the necessity of having this discussion now. In order for Mike Chatterton to do a financial budget, he needs to know what the organization chart looks like. The financial element needs to be done in May.

East asks another question. [5:27:07 PM](#) are we going to have certain positions, Lassman responds, conceptual can be adopted. This has been discussed. East, asks, we are not adding people to the budget? No, we are not, Aberbach replies.

Aberbach, we are taking away ½ half - .5 FTE.

[5:28:23 PM](#) East asks this is not set in stone forever when we do this?

[5:28:39 PM](#) Martin responds to East's comment. This org chart is managed by the governing authority, not the fire chief. Wood River and Hailey have the authority to adopt it based on the recommendation by this board. This would not take effect until attrition took place in October 2019.

Simms stated to Burke, we are setting out the conference phone to call Attorney Paul Turcke to join meeting. [5:29:23 PM](#) Cooley, asked do we need to adopt this now or is this a conceptual for now to get budget decisions? Simms, feels that if he were in your shoes, he'd want to see the financial analysis before adopting the org chart. Bailet is fine with that approach, he just doesn't want to adopt this now.

[5:31:16 PM](#) Ron Taylor speaks to before time stamp. Taylor has concerns about formalizing an org chart prior to Chief Lassman's retirement.

Burke asks Bailet if he wants to ask this question to Turcke? Bailet comments, if we are not adopting this org chart, he is not so worried about it.

[5:32:07 PM](#) Simms adds, the way he reads the JPA, he has real questions and that this board does not have authority on its own to hire a joint chief. Thee JPA contemplates joint personnel, and contemplates making recommendations to the taxing districts, this board has made many accomplishments in working together. It does seem like the right time to have a discussion on this topic. Simms, is not here to push a decision. Simms has heard Bailet and Lassman's concerns and he and other staff are striving for the best communication, it is a challenge to get the dozen or so interested parties on the same page, we all want to see this succeed and be efficient. This board will get the financial analysis from Chatterton and will be able to see if this will work and then can make a decision and recommendation to the governing bodies. Simms wants us all to be mindful of these things. Simms left the room again to get Turcke on a call.

[5:34:21 PM](#) Lassman points out confusion based on the language of the agenda, leads Bailet and Turcke to believe that this must be adopted.

[5:35:10 PM](#) Paul Turcke attorney joins this meeting via conference call. Simms speaks to Turcke, asks him to speak to JPA, org chart and any other topics. Turcke speaks, feels this

is not a board decision, but an administrative decision. And the matter of policy to clear up first.

Burke clarifies what Simms stated about “Action Item” on the agenda, dictated by state law that boards may not take action on any item that is not designated with these words. We don’t have to take action today. [5:37:07 PM](#) In fact, what Burke is hearing today, this group wants to hold off on a decision but give this to Chatterton to help us with identifying a budget. Bailet understands. Simms asks if we can define scope of work with joint chief or continuing on same path as we are doing so today, so that this board, Wood River and Hailey can see needs on future financing. If I were in your seat this would be helpful to see. [5:39:13 PM](#) Burke summarizes, Hailey has been worried all along that our budget is not enough, it won’t increase substantially, we are trying to see how we can stand on our own and not lean to much on Wood River, so how do we consolidate, get most for our money and get the best fire service. Burke doesn’t want any firefighter to feel that this board is running away with their life.

[5:40:41 PM](#) East asks a question about Ron Taylor’s comments. If for some reason we don’t have an agreement by October 4th, then Wood River would continue to hire a replacement Chief and we would continue down the path towards consolidation, so this isn’t the end of the world if we don’t have this done.

[5:41:31 PM](#) Burke, shared one question we asked when interviewing for Fire Chief six years ago, how do you feel about consolidation? Aberbach’s response was that it is a necessity in this day and age, working together makes it possible to keep up with the demands by sharing resources. How do you view the future of the department? [5:43:05 PM](#) Lassman comments that he served as interim chief for 2 years before becoming chief.

[5:43:29 PM](#) Martin, there are many different ways, interim is a model, we haven’t talked about that yet.

[5:43:58 PM](#) Burke once we get finance info we can make a decision on the future. Martin agrees with Burke.

[5:44:28 PM](#) **Simms asks for a scope of work motion for Chatterton. Bailet moves to authorize Chatterton to produce a joint budget, one that contemplates a Joint Chief and a side by side budget that does not. East seconds, motion approved unanimously.**

[5:46:13 PM](#) Aberbach, joint policies and procedures manual (employee handbook). Is going to be reviewed by Hailey and Wood River.

[5:47:10 PM](#) **Cooley moves to table discussion on the employee handbook to a date uncertain and bring it back after careful consideration, motion seconded by Martin, Motion approve unanimously.**

Old Business:

- a. *Review of options for joint powers agreement amendments concerning the make-up of the Joint Fire Board, with Resolution regarding which option to recommend to governing bodies for consideration. **Action Item**.....*

Burke [5:49:01 PM](#) wonders if this is not time to change the make-up of the board. Let's talk about your thoughts on this topic.

[5:49:16 PM](#) East a 6-person board is scary, you should stay with 5 or go to 7. Another option, Wood River Fire 2, Hailey 2, Ambulance 2, Hailey might feel overwhelmed with this option. East came up with another option, keep 2 Hailey 2 Wood River, 1 at large position for the southern county and 1 at large position filled by the ambulance district where you would must have one vote from Hailey, and 1 from Wood River, would not have to have ambulance vote but would need at least one of the at large members vote.

Simms can draft this for the next meeting.

[5:51:11 PM](#) Haavik asked if is there any value to having an ex-officio position, ambulance district member?

Simms asks the value of a non-voting member. [5:52:09 PM](#)

[5:52:37 PM](#) Martin feels this falls short of what we discussed in the last meeting.

[5:52:58 PM](#) Simms, there is a way to address it later after consolidation, add an ambulance district board member later.

[5:54:10 PM](#) Martin, suggests chair, non-voting unless needs to break a tie.

[5:54:38 PM](#) Cooley suggests another option, have at-large person ex-officio and ambulance district voting.

[5:55:15 PM](#) Simms asks if this board would like Turcke to draft another couple of options for review. In the interest of keeping all informed, maybe we can have Turcke draft a couple of more options than what we've discussed tonight for the next meeting. Burke, thinks that is great.

*D. Discussion of next meeting May 8, 2019 regular meeting by which budget recommendations should be made to respective bodies. **Action Item** (no documents)...*

[5:55:54 PM](#) Burke in the next meeting May 8th, we will review Chatterton's budget.

[5:56:05 PM](#) Martin we should and then review the board options.

[5:56:13 PM](#) Cooley asked to be mindful of special meetings. Summers are very busy and monthly meeting are hard.

[5:56:39 PM](#) Martin we should review the draft policies and procedures handbook in next meeting also.

B. Follow-up on Blaine County's consideration of letter regarding Blaine Manor Property (standing item, no documents).....

[5:57:12 PM](#) Aberbach, gives an update about old business item b. Aberbach asked Blaine County Commissioner Jacob Greenberg about this property, his response that they view the community housing project is a priority right now, and based on that comment we should take this off of our agenda for future meetings. Unless the housing project falls short, then we can re-visit the topic.

Staff Reports/Other Discussion

No staff reports

Adjourn

[5:58:03 PM](#) Bailet moves to adjourn, seconded by East, motion passed unanimously.

Martha Burke, Chairman

Mary Cone, Hailey City Clerk