

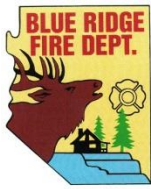
# Blue Ridge Fire District

March 10, 2023 10:00 AM  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 10:10 by Chair Brian Alexander  
Laurie Hawke was appointed to take minutes

In attendance: Brian Alexander, Mike Bourne, Laurie Hawke, Chief Phil Paine,  
Beth Wise

1. Fire Chief Phil Paine distributed a Tentative Budget for 2023-2024 and gave a history/background of where fire district revenue comes from, how it is calculated by the county, how much revenue the district has had for the last few years, legal restrictions for increasing revenues, and the strategic plan for replacing capital equipment and personnel.
2. The committee went through the Tentative Budget line by line with the Chief giving an explanation and background, and discussion for each item.
  - a. Items of significance:
    - i. Personnel costs account for @ 90% of the budget
    - ii. An additional full time position needed
    - iii. Some vehicles in use are years past their planned obsolescence age.
    - iv. Legal restrictions on increasing revenue
    - v. Inflation (8.7% currently) is outpacing our 5% increase in income from property taxes from the county
    - vi. Recruitment and retention of quality firefolk
3. Fire Chief Paine asked the committee for direction in the following areas:
  - a. Assistant Fire Chief position; Bob Lashua will retire at the end of the year.
  - b. Hiring an additional full time Captain/Paramedic with Engine Boss qualification
  - c. PSPRS liability
  - d. How much to keep in the Reserve Account
  - e. Continuation of volunteer program after the SAFER Grant expires at the end of the year



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4. Discussion followed
  - a. Reserve Account:
    - i. Liabilities to the District, approximately
      1. \$400 thousand on a truck
      2. \$400 thousand to PSPRS
      3. \$225 thousand for an ambulance
  - b. Are we able to maintain operation if the income level dropped out?
  - c. Importance of maintaining services at current or improved level
  - d. What is driving the increased cost of business?
    - i. Cost of Living currently is 8.7%
    - ii. SAFER Grant is going away but continue volunteer program
    - iii. Replace Assistant Chief position
    - iv. Additional full time personnel
    - v. Recruitment and retention of personnel at all levels
    - vi. Equipment replacement for aging equipment
    - vii. Increased costs of equipment and supplies
    - viii. Rejection of Prop 310
  - e. How do we have a good solid budget for the coming year?
    - i. Possible with the increased property tax levy and an 8% tax increase. We would still be below the State cap on the property tax levy.
    - ii. There is a cost to maintaining the level of service we have.
    - iii. Can't operate for a profit, but also can't operate at a deficit.
5. The Budget Committee will meet on April 14, 2023 at 10:00 AM  
Possible timeline:  
Tentative approval of the Budget at the April 15, 2023 Regular Board Meeting  
Posting of the budget April 15-May 12, 2023  
Public Hearing on May 13, 2023 at 9:00 AM  
Discussion and possible approval at Regular Board Meeting on May 13, 2023 at 10:00 AM
6. Meeting adjourned 1:48 PM by Chair Brian Alexander