

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE MEHLVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF
ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI, ON THE
5TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Mehlville Fire Protection District of St. Louis County, Missouri, met at the Mehlville Conference Room, 11020 Mueller Road, St. Louis County, Missouri, on the 5th day of January, 2022.

Present at the meeting were:

Aaron Hilmer, Chairman and Director of the Board;

Bonnie C. Stegman, Treasurer and Director of the Board;

Edmond Ryan, Secretary and Director of the Board; and

Brian Hendricks, Fire Chief of the Mehlville Fire Protection District.

Mr. Hilmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and announced the Board to be in session for the transaction of business.

Dr. Stegman made a motion to pay the bills of January 5, 2022. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Chief Financial Officer Brian Bond said that in April of 2009, the District gave taxpayers an opportunity to roll back the tax rates, saving the taxpayers millions of dollars. The rollback consisted of \$0.36 related to General Fund tax levy and \$0.04 related to the Pension Fund tax levy. The reduction allowed the District to have the lowest blended tax rates of all fire protection districts in St. Louis County since 2006 with the exception of Kinloch in 2017. The District was able to successfully pay off the debt from the certificates of participation, replace three Engine Houses, and build a burn tower training facility without any new debt or tax rate increases. At the same time, EMS call volume began to accelerate, increasing from 9,674 in 2010 to 14,844 in 2021. The

District expanded services, establishing a Critical Care Paramedic program and restructuring the EMS system to include an Assistant Chief for EMS and an EMS Administrator. In 2017, the District began hiring Critical Care Paramedics, and in 2019, the District implemented the Mobile Integrated Healthcare division through a high-utilizer program. The MIH division continues to expand, administering over 5,000 COVID vaccinations by July of 2021 and currently performing an average of 75 COVID tests daily for first responders. As of November, the District is one of 27 programs implementing the ET3 pilot program with Medicare. In 2020, the District promoted 4 employees to Battalion Chief positions in EMS and MIH. They provide advanced level supervision of EMS calls and daily responsibility for training crews. The District expanded from six to seven ambulances in 2020 and now provide five 24-hour ambulances plus two 12-hour ambulances that respond during peak times. In the third quarter of 2020, the District began a medical direction agreement with Washington University that provides physician oversight to all clinical areas and allows physician-level 911 response. That means the District has medical doctors out in the field on medical calls responding to the most intense situations. The physicians are available to respond remotely to all EMS calls. Advances in patient care include use of REVEL ventilators, Sapphire infusion pumps, rapid sequence intubation, and point-of-care ultrasound. CFO Bond said that the District strives to be a leader in the EMS arena and provide optimum care for District residents, demonstrated most recently by two awards from the East Central Regional EMS Committee for lifesaving EMS responses that result in a positive outcome for a patient who presented with atypical or unique circumstances. According to the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES), which is a

partnership of 1800 EMS agencies and 2200 hospitals in 41 states that collect data for cardiac arrest resuscitation and associated patient outcomes, MFPD outperforms the region, the state, and the national results. In terms of survival to hospital discharge without neurological deficit, nationally the average is 8.7%, in Missouri 7.6%, in our region 8.7%. Within the District, the rate is 14.4%.

Mr. Bond said that the District continues to face financial challenges from many directions. Historically low interest rates have reduced interest income. While the District could once count on receiving around \$500,000 annually from interest income, it now receives less than \$40,000. Multiple cell phone tenants have terminated their tower leases, resulting in a reduction of rental income. Annual health insurance renewal increases have been substantial; the 2022 renewal rate increase was 18%. Unscheduled overtime has increased due to COVID and employee non-service injury and illness. In 2021, expenses were forecast to exceed revenue by \$1.4 million. In 2022, expenses are forecast to exceed revenue by \$3 million. A preliminary five-year projection shows that the deficit could be as much as \$7.5 million per year.

Mr. Bond said that even with the addition of the two ambulances during peak time, the District was at Status 0 on 399 occasions in 2021, meaning that all ambulances were on calls and unavailable to respond. There is an industry-wide lack of qualified candidates, and wage and benefit competition from other fire protection districts poses a challenge to attracting and retaining employees. Two engine houses are old and in need of replacement. In order to remain a high-performing EMS system, the staff believes that the District needs to pursue a tax rate increase. If the District were to explore a \$0.20 tax increase, it would generate \$6.21 million of tax revenue, which would balance the \$3.1

budget deficit and retain all EMS services. The remainder could be used to strategically address engine house replacement. The District would still have the lowest blended tax rate in St. Louis County. The \$0.20 tax rate increase would cost the owner of a market rate \$20,000 home \$95 per year, or \$0.26 per day. Mr. Bond will bring forward ballot language for Board approval at the next Board meeting. The proposition would go on the ballot as soon as April, 2022.

Chief Hendricks added that the District has tailored its services to the needs of the community, continuing to enhance service. He also pointed out that MFPD is also the only fire protection district to have a full running Rescue Squad and is one of the few that has a stand-alone Rope Rescue team and Boat team. Mr. Ryan asked if the funds towards engine house replacement would also cover a training facility near the burn tower, and Chief Hendricks said that would be at the Board's direction.

Mr. Hilmer pointed out that the extraordinary expenses related to COVID in 2020 were damaging to the budget and that the District's service enhancements, while valuable to the community, do not bring in additional revenue. He encouraged Board members to review information provided by staff regarding other fire districts, some of which have tax rates 400% higher than MFPD, approximately \$2.50 versus the District's \$0.62. He praised District staff for accomplishing as much as they have while maintaining the low tax rate. He pointed out that changes made in 2005, such as to the health insurance plan, the pension plan, workers' compensation, and sick leave, held costs down for a number of years. In more recent years, the District's budget has taken a hit from substantial reductions in interest rates on the revenue side, and COVID-related expenses and industry-wide health insurance increases on the expense side.

Captain Ty Cardona addressed a previous request from the Board for clarification on a request from the employees for a schedule change. He provided the Board with results of employee surveys. 74% of responding employees selected the 48/96 as their first choice. Breaking that down into divisions, 68% of 24-hour EMS employees selected 48/96, and 74.5% of Fire employees selected 48/96. Regarding the concern about MFPD running too many calls to make the change to 48/96, Florissant Valley's busiest ambulances over the last two years have run 1,041 and 565 more calls, respectively, than MFPD's.

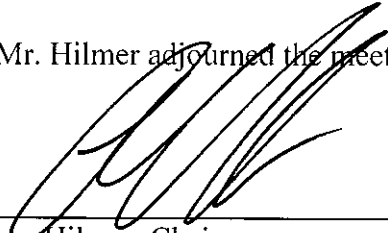
Mr. Hilmer made a motion that a closed meeting be held for the purpose of discussing legal and personnel matters immediately following the adjournment of the regular meeting. Mr. Hilmer, as part of said motion, moved that said closed meeting not be open to members of the general public under the provisions of Chapter 610 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Sunshine Act. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stegman. A roll call vote on said motion was taken.

Director Hilmer yea.

Director Stegman yea.

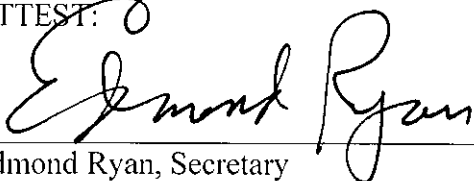
Director Ryan yea.

There being no further business, Mr. Hilmer adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.



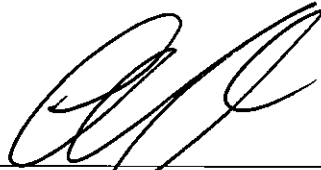
Aaron Hilmer, Chairman

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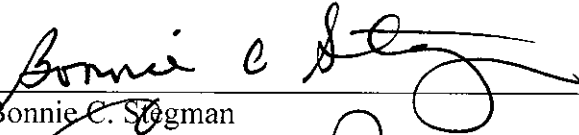


Edmond Ryan, Secretary

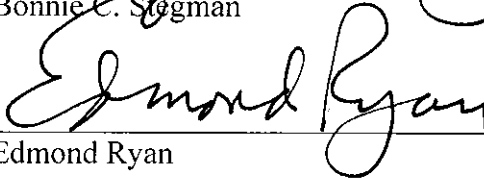
The undersigned, being all members of the Board of Directors of the Mehlville Fire Protection District, have affixed their names thereto in evidence of their consent to the meeting at the time and place indicated, and in evidence of their approval of the actions taken at the said meeting.



Aaron Hilmer



Bonnie C. Stegman



Edmond Ryan