CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

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MEETING PLACE: **Central Valley Fire District, Station 6**
775 Frank Road, Belgrade, MT

DATE: **September 8, 2026**

TIME: **5:30 pm**

ATTENDANCE:		***(Present)***	***(Absent)***
Trustees:	Ron Murray, Chairman	X	
	Rob Holt, Vice Chairman	X	
	Mark MacLeod, Sec/Treas.	X	
	Ramie Maulding	X	
	Joel Fassbinder	X	
Fire Chief:	Jay Wittwer	X	
Operations Chief:	Jeff Hurley	X	
Fire Marshal:	Jake Zlomie	X	
Acting Clerk:	Debbie Bloem	X	

NOTICE: **ALL MEETINGS OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE RECORDED**

GUESTS/VISITORS: Lee Shannon, Kathy Shannon, JoAnne Naro, Philip Naro, Jeff Royce, Nick Stinson, Joe Doidge, Deanna Barrick, Sean Rodino, Mason Bruno, Gabriel McManus, Steve Sorlie, Collin Brozka, Tyler

Samlowski, Justin Monroe, Miranda Johnson, Samantha, Honatke, Jackson, Whitaker, Rich Whitaker, Brad Appleton, Jim Martin, Chuck Romeo

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. at Station 6
Chairman Murray led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: As presented.

MINUTES: Trustee Fassbinder moved to approve the **August 11, 2026 minutes** as submitted. Trustee Holt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Trustee MacLeod moved to approve **the financial reports.** Trustee Fassbinder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS: A letter of thanks from the **Monforton School Foundation**, was read thanking firefighters from CVFD for their enthusiastic help building **Layton's Playground** at Monforton School as a tribute to Layton Smith, a young man who drowned at Harrison Lake.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Jim Martin** from Summer Ridge congratulated the District on the new Fleet Facility. He requested copies of the District's automatic and mutual aid agreements and inquired about the status of the accreditation effort and its ability to serve the entire district. *Mr. Martin confirmed that he had sent a message to residents in his area which apparently made some concerned that they would have no service adding that he thinks the fact is that there is a significant difference between what the department is able to do from station number two and what the department is now able to do from station number one, which is vastly different, and it will be a matter of life and death.*

JoAnne Naro has lived in the Station 2 area for 20 years and initially the close proximity to the station made her feel very safe with fire protection and EMS response. Now she is hopeful that Station 2 will be staffed soon.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

As submitted. **Chief Jay Wittwer** recognized Fire Marshal Jake Zlomie for his completion of the Executive Fire Officer certification. Chief Wittwer mentioned that the annual Employee Appreciation Award ceremony was held prior to the meeting. The District has been awarded a **$600,000 SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services) grant from the Department of Health and Human Services** for rural emergency medical services training, to be dispersed over a 2 year period. These funds are dedicated to the EMS program, specifically for paramedic education and instruction costs.

The operations report reviewed the high call volume of 296 calls in August. Wildland deployments are ongoing with positive feedback. The EMS division continues successful service delivery. **Revenue enhancement processes** show good results. The training division report was deferred until the training captain returns from deployment. Fire prevention engaged in community events and business compliance initiatives. The 20,000-gallon water storage at Station Four is fully operational.

Accreditation will be addressed later as a special agenda item. The District is monitoring multiple developments in the City of Belgrade that impact its services. The issue of the wells is a high priority and Chief Wittwer will share developments when information is available.

LOCAL 4939 REPORT:

As submitted. **Union President Nick Stinson** reported that crews are returning from California as the wildland season transitions. The Type III engine staffing performed well while maintaining local resources.

Two EMS members are nearing completion of paramedic school and will be able to function on the line as paramedics soon. District firefighters participated in community events like Digger Days and Belgrade Summer Nights. Public outreach included a kitten rescue video that reached ~120,000 views as well as an owl rescue. President Stinson is grateful for the great morale in the membership and the support of the board and administration.

VOLUNTEER

ASSOCIATION REPORT: **None.**

TRUSTEE REPORT: **Trustee Rob Holt** reported that he and Chief Wittwer met with the **Gallatin Gateway Fire District**, alleviating initial concerns and emphasizing shared goals. He recommended that a couple of trustees visit other districts monthly to share best practices and identify synergies.

Chief Wittwer reported that the Fire Council supports pursuing impact fees for fire districts, as the county currently collects them for water and sewer but not fire. Constituents were encouraged to attend county commission meetings to support this.

Trustee Ramie Maulding pointed out that the District protects new developments for two years before tax revenue is collected due to the state tax cycle.

Chairman Ron Murray stated that the new Fleet Facility was the result of long-term vision and team execution. The facility will generate revenue by performing fleet work for neighboring districts like Big Sky Fire, aiming to alleviate financial pressures rather than seek profit.

The property is designed for future expansion, and in-house fleet work reduces costs. A waste oil system, using community-sourced oil, was highlighted as a cost-saving innovation.

Trustee Maulding requested a report on heavy and specialty rescue and the value that is added to the department with that division.

Trustee Joel Fassbinder expressed appreciation for personnel who sacrificed during this wildland season on deployment or working extra shifts to cover the District.

Trustee Mark MacLeod shared that Chief Wittwer and he attended a memorial service remembering and honoring former Fire Chief, Chum Howe. Trustee MacLeod played the bagpipes at the ceremony.

Trustee Holt moved to accept **the reports** as submitted. Trustee Fassbinder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ITEMS: None.

ACTION ITEMS: **Discussion and Approval of the Next Steps in the Accreditation Process.**

Battalion Chief Dylan White, the accreditation manager, presented his **report on the accreditation process.** CVFD is over a year and a half into the process and progressing rapidly, possibly ahead of schedule.

The four main steps are the Strategic Plan (completed), Community Risk Assessment/Standards of Cover (CRASSC) (in progress, under review), Self-Assessment Manual (SAM) (next phase), and Peer Review/Commission Hearing. The District is a little more than halfway through the process.

Integration of AAR/IAR Data into Accreditation Process

Accreditation data covers 2023-2025, with 2026 data to be added before the final review. Annual appraisals are required to maintain accreditation.

Dashboards are being developed for immediate response visibility, but the commission expects at least one full year of data for review.

There are special challenges for a District since they face a higher workload for accreditation; they must perform their own data collection (e.g., GIS mapping using Esri ArcGIS) without the support that municipal departments have from city resources.

Accreditation Benefits, Peer Review, and Funding Implications

Accreditation does place the agency in an elite group, potentially opening up funding levers due to demonstrated data quality.

The process involves peer review, which adds credibility to the agency's reports and data, a key aspect of accountability in the fire service.

ISO Ratings and Insurance Implications for Constituents

The District has an ISO 3 rating for any property within five miles of a fire station, regardless of whether it is staffed 24/7.

Constituents were advised to confirm their ISO 3 status with their insurers and to consider switching providers if told otherwise. The District operates seven stations, two of which are staffed 24/7.

Establishing Service Level Expectations and Growth Projections
The goal of accreditation is continuous improvement, using deep data analysis to inform long-term policy and financial decisions. The process will identify areas of opportunity (e.g., response availability to population densities) rather than mandating specific actions like building new stations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A 9/11 Memorial Service will be held at Fire Station 1 on Friday at 6:30 a.m. The department will also participate in a memorial service at Gallatin Speedway at 7:00 p.m. displaying the large American flag from the ladder truck.
The next regular meeting of the Central Valley Fire District Board of Trustees is scheduled for **October 13th, immediately following the Quarterly Meeting of the IFC Board of Appeals.**

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Ron Murray, Chairman

Mark MacLeod, Secretary/Treasurer

ATTEST: Debbie Bloem

Debbie Bloem, Clerk