

# Yellowstone County Fire Council

P.O. Box 53, Billings, Montana, 59103, 406-256-2775



## MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2024

1. Introductions made including a guest, Diane Casanova, from KULR 8 TV.
2. Minutes from May 14 meeting approved.
3. Treasurer's Report: There is currently \$162.42 in our checking account.
4. DES/Fire Warden Report: KC Williams has resigned and taken a job with FEMA. Kent O'Donnell is acting DES director through July 31. Annemarie Overcast remains in her position. She was not present and was at a meeting in Bozeman. Derek Yeager, current head of the City County Dispatch Center will take over as the DES director and Fire Warden on Aug. 1. Notes from Annemarie stated that all the 24/25 county grass fire contracts have been signed. Over the 4'th there were about a dozen smaller fireworks fires in the county. DES has and is using new software to track resources and other information at larger fires. She reminded everyone that the DES communications truck which also has StarLink can be called out to fires and other emergencies. The burn permit system remains off because of unusually hot weather being forecasted for the next week.

## OLD BUSINESS:

5. County Grass Fire Contracts: Phil would like everyone to keep good records of grass fire fighting costs because he would like to present updated financial figures to the commissioners early in 2025. He would like to see payments more in line with what the actual costs of grass fire fighting are.

## NEW BUSINESS:

6. Bo Fire: Fuego IC, Jeremy House was unable to attend the meeting as planned. Larry Carpenter, the new Fuego fire chief, was not on the initial attack, but did help with mop up. The consensus was that Jeremy did an exceptional job as IC - calling in initial mutual aid partners and then requesting county wide mutual aid, DNRC, and air support. There was an accusation that Fuego did not respond with water in their trucks which was completely untrue for both initial attack and mop up. With one media company in attendance, Larry wondered why down through the years, Fuego has never been recognized. Even on this fire, nearly all the mutual aid partners were mentioned, but not one word of Fuego fighting the fire in their own service area. Fuego was founded in 1988 with the purchase of a grass fire truck from O'Donnell's Fire Service. The name of the fire was also explained as being the name of a much loved dog owned by Jeremy House. The dog's name was Bo.
7. Agency Reports: Billings - have dealt with numerous small grass fires. Been working with DNRC to bring their firefighters up to readiness with DNRC. Molt - appreciating having room for training and running water. Doing some goal planning. Need a water tender with automatic

transmission - hard to find drivers for manual transmissions. Broadview - their new type 6 truck is almost finished. Fuego - Colin Sturgill took a job with DNRC in Miles City. Larry Carpenter is the new fire chief. Blue Creek - thanked everyone who responded to the Mile 22 Fire on 87 East. Working on a fuels mitigation grant for spring of 2025. Lockwood - busy with medical, grass fires, and a garage fire. Have some new employees. Will be starting a new reserve fire fighter program this fall. Looking at forming a water rescue group within their department. Hosting advanced ICS classes this fall which will be open to everyone qualified. Getting a new ambulance. Shepherd - Jarid Clark working well covering weekends. AMR - hiring! Sheriff - anticipating river rescues as hot weather approaches. Helicopter going to Columbus to help search for a missing man. Also hiring! DNRC - keep up good work on turning in DNRC grass fire reports. Jeff Brown asked that fire departments to please check in with deputies before leaving a grass fire. Deputies may know of hot spots or have other information for the firefighters. Will be updating the rosters on CrewSense. Staffed station may start next week. Some air support now available in Billings - 2 SEATs at the airport. BLM - the air tanker base is open. Mentioned the 2 SEATs and other air support available soon. Feels this fire season might be lining up with the (bad) 2017 season. Some fire crews are heading back to Billings from other assignments. Their new Ford engine broke down immediately but initially could not be repaired because spare parts had not been manufactured yet! But now both their engines are ready. BLM will investigate grass fires, but the request must go through DNRC. Issac Wald is willing to do an introductory fire investigation class for rural fire depts. There is new realization that not investigating causes could lead to liability issues. Fire Service Training School (FSTS) - quiet time for instructing right now. The ATF is available to help investigate fires.

8. KULR 8 news director Diane Casanova said they would be willing to help with publicity for volunteer fire departments. They can get messages out to the public. Also offered to help publicize the need for more volunteers.

Larry Carpenter, Sec/Treas.

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