

Yellowstone County Fire Council

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



Minutes for March 11, 2025 Meeting

1. Hosted by Laurel VFD. Introductions made.
2. Guest speaker: Thad Lensing gave a presentation about First Responder Task Force insurance now available to firefighters. Application cards were passed out to those interested.
3. Minutes: Approved from last meeting.
4. Treasurer's Report: There is \$622.42 in our checking account. Fuego and Custer have not paid their annual dues yet. Second notices were sent out. Our non profit paper work has been filed with the IRS for 2024.
5. DES/Fire Warden Reports: The last CWCC (community wildfire plan) public hearing - has been held. The final plan should be ready by July 1. Burn permits - over 800 permits issued already for this spring. Derek asked for communication with him if you see changing conditions that call for shutting down open burning etc. Custer repeater - is now fully operational from the Hysham Hills. Derek wants feedback on how it is working. He is also looking for a place to move the current Greenough repeater to. Grants - there is a lot of uncertainty about grants involving federal money. Have no answers at this time. Fuels projects - one fuels project planned for the Blue Creek area is on hold due to funds being withheld by the federal government. Workman's comp. insurance - please get your rosters in to DES to be eligible. Annexation - in the Blue Creek area are plans to annex a major subdivision into the Blue Creek FSA. Hazmat training - Since BNSF has taken over Montana Rail Link, the movement of hazardous materials is doubling by rail. They are hosting hazmat training in Laurel on May 17. Gallatin County - has invited Yellowstone County fire departments to observe a functional exercise planned for May 1 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. County hazmat plan - was last done 5 years ago. Has been updated with new contact information. Generally, local fire depts. handle handle minor hazmat incidents. Major incidents are handled by the regional hazmat crew from the Billings Fire Dept. The printed copy is available to fire depts. Spring flooding - sand bags and sand are available in Laurel, Lockwood, and Huntley. Keep Derek informed of local conditions.

OLD BUSINESS:

6. State Firefighters Memorial: Plans are to add another statue, this one of a wildland firefighter. It will cost about \$60,000. There is also a need to have funds for maintenance of the park area. For a donation of \$500 or more, a Maltese Cross plaque is given. For a continuing donation of at least \$250, a "year" plaque is given. On the evening of June 13 there is a fund raising run with the winner receiving a "traveling trophy." And on June 14, a ceremony will be held to honor those recently added to the memorial. The committee overseeing the memorial is looking for new members to join. A motion was made for the YCFC to donate \$250 to the memorial, and it was accepted by the members.

NEW BUSINESS:

7. Plans and Contracts: The Staffed Station Plan and Automatic Response Plan (mutual aid) are being combined into one document. In the same regards the Grass Fire Contract and County Wildland Fire S.O.P.s are being combined into one document. These should be reviewed by fire chiefs. A motion will be made in May to accept these. There was a suggestion that the fire chiefs have a spring fire season meeting.

8. County Fire Chief: Mark Morse spoke to the members about the hiring of Derek Yeager into the DES office. He feels Derek's experience as a wildland firefighter, fire chief, and 911 Center operations chief will be positive for wildland firefighting operations in the county.

9. Agency Reports: Billings - watching their budget in response to cuts in federal grants etc. Billings Airport - nothing to report. Laurel - inspecting a new engine being built in LA. They are working on specifications for a new tender. Molt - acquiring a new used tender. Fuego - have new members. Installing a base station radio. Have a new logo. Sent out the first of their new biannual newsletter to area residents and businesses. Blue Creek - have new members. Lockwood - have new members and are hiring two more. Broadview - have new members. Haley Bench - replacing a brush truck. Shepherd - Heiman Fire Equipment has surplus equipment for sale. Adam Poulos can be contacted through Phil Ehlers. Have a new Suburban to replace an older one. Phil took vacation time off. Worden - getting a new water tender and brush truck (type 6). Custer - nothing to report. Sheriff - trying to hire to fill 6 open spots. DNRC - fill out your EFF packets! Be sure to do grass fire reports. If by cell phone, do not forget to tap "Okay" to submit report. There are fake fire shelters being sold again. Hiring for helicopter crews. FSFS - burn trailer is broke down. Central division is fully staffed. Building new fire props.

NEXT FIRE COUNCIL MEETING IS MAY 13 AT 7:00 PM AT THE BILLINGS AIRPORT FIRE STATION.

Larry Carpenter, Sec/Treas.

YCFC

Billings . Billings ARFF . BLM . Blue Creek . Broadview . Custer . DNRC
Firego . Haley Beach . Laurel . Lockwood . Multi . Shepherd . Worden