

GRRFD Annual Report to GRRHOA

The Gallatin River Ranch Rural Fire District (GRRRFD) covers all of GRR and several adjacent properties. The District is a quasi-governmental entity organized under the Gallatin County Commission. Its budget is based on the Fire District property tax collections within the District.

The GRRRFD has five trustees who are elected in staggered three-year terms. Elections are held each May. The trustees include: Chair Spencer Millimen; Vice Chair Richard Anderson; Secretary/Treasurer Susan Piechowski; Wendy Ward; Rick McCourt. Meetings of the Trustees are open to the public; the public is encouraged to attend. These meetings are held on the third Wednesday each month and are announced on the Pony Express bulletin board and on the GRRRFD website: <http://www.grrrfd.org/>. Meeting location varies and is always specified in the announcement.

The GRRRFD website is the primary tool the Trustees and Department use to communicate information to District residents. It is a public website that does not require a password. It includes the agenda for each meeting, the approved minutes and financials, and the chief's report. The chief's report gives a month-by-month view of Gallatin River Ranch Fire Department readiness and operations. The website includes information about the District and Department and provides additional public information about fire prevention, life in the Urban-Wildland Interface, medical and fire preparedness in rural life, and COVID-19 information.

The GRRRFD is in good financial condition, the details of which are posted on the website. In addition to the \$111,857 in the FY 2020 budget, the District received the following grants in the past year:

1. We were recently awarded a FEMA AFG grant with a budget of \$39,500 for the purchase of a new cardiac monitor/defibrillator and a video laryngoscope. The older LifePak 12 we now use will be kept in reserve. These will keep us up to date in our advanced life support capability.
2. Rural Fire Capacity Grant: \$1,400. This was used to purchase wildland PPE and equipment.
3. Town Pump Charitable Foundation Grant: \$5,000. This was used to defray part of the cost of purchasing 9 SCBA air cylinders
4. Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant: \$8,773. This was used to pay for three sets of structure-firefighting PPE.
5. Rural Fire Capacity Grant: \$1,929. This grant was used to purchase wildland firefighting equipment.

The 2019 Fire Station fundraiser included an appeal for direct donations and a public raffle. This raised \$17,620, all of which will be used in the Fire Station Project.

The Trustees are in the process of developing a contractual relationship with the Manhattan Volunteer Fire Department to share a number of mutually-needed services. This is part of a plan to develop a closer relationship with MVFD.

The Fire Station Project is progressing. The GRRRFD has proposed to purchase a 40 x 60-foot section of the GRRHOA maintenance building. The GRRHOA and District Board have agreed in

principle and GRRRFD is working out the details of the proposal. In the meantime, GRRRFD has started architectural and engineering planning for the site. If all goes as expected, a new fire station should be completed in 2021.

There is very little reason for GRRRFD to exist for long after the completion of the new Nixon Bridge. The GRRRFD Board and the Manhattan Rural Fire District Board started discussing this fact three years ago. There is general agreement that a consolidation of the two districts is probably in the best interests of the residents of both districts. Two of the prerequisites for this are the new Nixon Bridge and the new fire station on GRR. Serious consolidation discussions will not take place until both are completed. We estimate that consolidation may take place in about 2 years if everything goes smoothly.

A successful fire department is a team effort. This involves the Fire District Trustees mentioned before along with the people who staff and run the department. These include:

1. Chief Marlin Sprow.
2. Assistant Chief Ken Weskamp (NST)
3. Medical Officer and Executive Assistant John Andrews, MD, EMT (NST)
4. Firefighter Wayne Langel
5. Firefighter and AEMT Anthony Powell
6. Firefighter Bruce Reynolds.

Reserve members include:

1. Reserve Supervisor Spencer Millimen
2. Julie Brown
3. Bruce Buccilli
4. Ray Rigel
5. Sue Wassersleben. (NST)

Auxiliary members include:

1. Lucy Curran
2. Patti Draude (NST)
3. Rob and Maria Fraser
4. Jorge and Cookie Gonzalez (NST)
5. Cathy and Stewart Levin
6. Vanessa McMurray (NST)
7. Jessica Millimen
8. Mara Rigel

NST denotes members who serve as Neighborhood Support Team Coordinators.

One of the challenges of living in a rural area is to receive notifications of emergencies that might affect us, such as wildland fires. Gallatin County has purchased and set up a system created by Everbridge. This is a county-wide emergency notification system. Those who have registered with this system will receive telephone calls on their land line (if they have one), cell phone, and receive a text message and an email in the event of a wildland fire or other disaster. We strongly encourage all homeowners on GRR to register at:

<https://www.readygallatin.com/public-warning/community-notification-system/>.

The Fire Department needs more volunteer firefighters and reservists. Our fire department is GRR's first line of defense in non-law enforcement emergencies. Of all the volunteer opportunities available in the community, this is the most important to public safety. We also need more EMTs. Firefighters and Reservists are eligible to train and serve in this important capacity. Please consider serving our community. If you are interested, email us at admin@grrfd.org.