

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT
Wednesday, February 29, 2012 10:00 AM – 10:55 AM
Council Chambers, 140 West Pine Street, Missoula, Montana

Members Present: Dave Strohmaier, Adam Hertz, Cynthia Wolken, Jon Wilkins, Caitlin Copple, Dick Haines

Members Not Present: Bob Jaffe,

Other Present: Jason Diehl, Jeff Brandt, Mike Johnston, John Anderson

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1. Approve minutes from [February 22, 2012](#). Minutes approved unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Authorize the use of \$40,000 of fire department revenues received as reimbursement for fire equipment rental for the purchase of two Rescue Water Craft from Gull Boats in Missoula for \$18,500 plus the purchase of \$5,000 of accessory rescue gear and \$16,500 of personal protective gear and other firefighting equipment. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jason Diehl)
(Referred to committee: 02/27/12) **(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)**

MOTION: The committee recommends that the city council approve and authorize the Mayor to use \$40,000 of fire department revenues received as reimbursement for fire equipment rental for the purchase of two Rescue Water Craft from Gull Boats in Missoula for \$18,500 plus the purchase of \$5,000 of accessory rescue gear and \$16,500 of personal protective gear and other firefighting equipment.

Jason Diehl stated that the \$40,000 in funds was generated from wild land fire contracts with the U.S. Forest Service. The Fire Department receives reimbursement for personnel and also receives fees for use of equipment. The funds would be used to purchase two river rescue watercraft. Jason presented a [slideshow](#) with details. The Missoula Fire Department currently has a jet boat. The Fire Department has performed sixty actual river rescues, and many more river searches over the last decade. Jason predicts increased recreational activities on local waterways due to the removal of the Milltown dam, the newly installed boat ramp, and the development of the confluence park at Bonner. Since the Milltown dam was removed, there has been greater fluctuation in the river flow. More debris and silt is present in the water. Increased recreation activities will increase demand for services. The current rescue boat is underpowered, and has a deep draft. Sometimes the water level too low to use the jet boat. Silt and debris tends to clog the cooling system. The jet boat has a tendency to break down, and the Fire Department has no backup craft. The proposed replacement rescue water craft are Personal Water Craft. They are maneuverable, reliable, have a greater range, and cost effective. Two crafts can work in tandem. The cost, \$18,500, is less than half the price of a replacement jet boat. Jason described the rescue sled setup. The crafts can accommodate a driver and a swimmer.

Cynthia Wolken asked about the scope of the response area covered by the MFD.

Jason Diehl responded that the response area is technically within the City limits. Due to the Missoula Fire Department's historically superior capabilities, the Fire Department sometimes responds outside the City limits to provide mutual aid to cooperating districts. The Fire Department can respond anywhere from downtown Missoula to the Blackfoot river.

Cynthia Wolken asked if the previously described funding covers the entire purchase.

Jason replied that it will.

Jon Wilkins asked if the new watercraft can be used during the winter.

Jason responded that they can be used as long as there is no ice in the river. The watercraft will be located in the boathouse at McCormick Park. They can also be loaded onto a trailer.

Dave Strohmaier moved to authorize the use of \$40,000 of fire department revenues received as reimbursement for fire equipment rental for the purchase of two Rescue Water Craft from Gull Boats in Missoula for \$18,500 plus the purchase of \$5,000 of accessory rescue gear and \$16,500 of personal protective gear and other firefighting equipment.

Jon Wilkins asked for details regarding the \$5,000 of accessory rescue gear.

Jason Diehl responded that the \$5000 is for rescue sleds and personal gear. The Fire Department recently hired 4 firefighters that they need to equip.

Mike Johnston, a local river guide, offered his support for this purchase. He stated that the Missoula Fire Department has a great reputation in the rescue community. He described the proposed watercraft as efficient and safe. He described specific rescue situations. He discussed upstream and downstream safety. He feels that the proposed purchase would allow for more versatility.

John Anderson with the Trailhead read letter from owner of the Trailhead supporting the proposed purchase. He noted that much of the river recreation activities by the public involve no personal floatation devices and alcohol use. He feels that the personal watercraft is superior to the jet boat.

Dick Haines indicated his support for this purchase.

Adam Hertz indicated his support for this purchase.

Jon Wilkins asked about maintenance costs and life expectancy.

Jason Diehl responded that the life expectancy of the personal watercraft is at least ten years. He indicated that the equipment is easy to maintain.

Dick Haines feels that the purchase is a good investment.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. REGULAR AGENDA ITEM

V. HELD AND ON-GOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Police Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Mark Muir)
2. Fire Department Update – Ongoing in Committee (Jason Diehl)
3. Health Department Update – Ongoing in Committee. (Ellen Leahy)
4. Eat Smart Coalition information. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 07/11/11)
5. Consider Discuss revisiting cell phone restrictions. ([memo](#)) – Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 10/17/11)
6. Discuss air quality issues related to railroad operations in and through Missoula. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 10/24/11)
7. Authorize Discussion with Crime Victim Advocate Office. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jon Wilkins) (Referred to committee: 02/06/12)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:33 A.M. Submitted by Gregg Schonbachler.