

RESOLUTION NO. 04-2017

**RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO CREATE
JEFFERSON VALLEY REGIONAL EMS & RESCUE AMBULANCE DISTRICT**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Jefferson County, Montana (the Commission and Jefferson County, respectively), as follows:

Section 1. Intention to Create the Jefferson Valley Rural Ambulance District. Pursuant to the provisions of Mont. Code Ann. § 7-11-1103(1)(a)(ii), the Commission deems it to be in the public convenience and necessity to order a referendum on the creation of a ambulance district to serve the inhabitants of the special district.

Section 2. Proposed Name. The proposed name of the special district is the Jefferson Valley Regional EMS & Rescue Ambulance District.

Section 3. Necessity for Proposed Special District. The Commission finds the provision of emergency services is paramount to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Jefferson County. The Commission also recognizes the Town of Whitehall has in place an ambulance service. However, the Commission has received public comment in which citizens living outside the Town of Whitehall believe they have no representation in matters regarding the Whitehall ambulance.

In this regard, it has been argued to the Commission there is an advisory board to Whitehall ambulance which includes citizens who reside outside of the Town of Whitehall. This board is advisory in nature only, and the Whitehall Town Council is the final decision-making body with respect to Whitehall ambulance. Further, the Commission has received comment from citizens who reside outside the Town of Whitehall that efforts by them to influence decisions regarding emergency medical services provided by Whitehall ambulance were dismissed out-of-hand or limited.

The Commission also received public comment regarding the perceived quality of services provided by Whitehall ambulance. Many commented they do not want Whitehall ambulance to provide services to them or their families and desire the ability to select an alternate service provider. The Commission recognizes this reasoning may be somewhat arbitrary, but dissatisfaction with Whitehall ambulance by citizens living outside of the Town of Whitehall is apparent.

The Commission attempted to facilitate mediation between the Town of Whitehall and those citizens who sought the creation of the special district. Although Jefferson County offered to facilitate the mediation and pay for a professional mediator, the acrimony between the two sides was too much of a hurdle to overcome and the mediation process was never initiated.

When taken as a whole, the comments received in support of the creation of the proposed special district lead the Commission to conclude it in the public convenience and necessity to order a referendum on the creation of the special district. Rather than creating the special district by resolution (*see*, Mont. Code Ann. §7-11-1003(1)(a)(i)), the Commission deems it proper order a referendum to provide those citizens within the proposed district the opportunity to vote and to voice their support or opposition to the district.

Section 4. General Description of Territory or Lands Included in Special District. (Attached to original resolution on file in the Clerk and Recorder's office.)

Section 5. General Character of Proposed Program and Location. The proposed special district will provide emergency medical services to serve the inhabitants of the district and will be available to provide emergency medical services in areas surrounding the special district when emergency situations arise which require the provision of additional emergency medical services.

The special district proposes to construct an ambulance barn on a donated half-acre lot. The proposed location for the ambulance barn is 1166 Montana Highway 55 South.

Section 6. Estimated Cost and Method of Financing. The estimated annual budget for the special district is \$120,000.00 (one hundred twenty thousand dollars) to \$130,000.00 (one hundred thirty thousand dollars). Funding for the special district annual budget and improvements will be from an initial assessment of \$29.00 (twenty-nine dollars) per year which will be imposed on each residential lot or parcel within the special district which contains a dwelling unit and upon developed commercial properties. There shall be no assessment on agricultural or vacant properties with no dwelling unit. The special district and improvements will also be funded from fees paid for emergency and non-emergency services provided by the special district.

Section 7. Specific Requirements Applicable. The annual assessment cannot be increased except upon majority approval by vote of the owners of real property residing in the special district.

Section 8. Administration. The special district will be administered by an elected board of five qualified citizens who reside within the boundaries of the special district.

Section 9. Duration. The duration of the special district shall be perpetual or until dissolved under the applicable provisions of Montana law.

Section 10. Notice of Passage of Resolution of Intention. Pursuant to Mont. Code Ann. § 7-11-1007(3)(a), the Jefferson County Commission shall cause to be published and mailed, in accordance with Mont. Code Ann. §§ 7-1-2121 and 2122, respectively, and mailed in accordance with Mont. Code Ann. § 7-11-1107(3)(c), notice of passage of the resolution of intent.

Passed and Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Jefferson County,
Montana, this 17th day of January, 2017

Cory Kirsch
Chair

Leonard Wortman
Commissioner

Bob Mullen
Commissioner

Attest:

Bonnie Ramey
Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder