

**Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 15, 2025**

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Heath Smith. Meeting was held upstairs in the meeting room at the Fire House.

The following board members were present: Heath Smith, Walt Cranor.

City Accountant present: Ben Cowan

Board Secretary present: Deborah Ferchau

Chief present: Hugo Ferchau

Deputy Chief present: Tom McDonough

Captain present: Tyler Brown

Board Attorney: Kendall Burgemeister

The following firemen were present: Rob Hughes, Joe Ricks – Assistant Chief.

Others: Tom Stoeber.

II. Swearing in New Members

Oaths of Office were administered to Tom Stoeber and Heath Smith.

A. Executive Positions:

1. Chairman: Smith and Cranor expressed interest in the position. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to appoint Heath Smith as Chairman of the Gunnison County Fire Protection District Board. Motion passed unanimously. Smith voting for quorum.
2. Vice Chairman: Stoeber expressed interest in the position. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Smith to appoint Tom Stoeber as Vice-Chairman of the Gunnison County Fire Protection District Board. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Treasurer: Cranor is amenable to retaining the position of Treasurer. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Smith to appoint Walt Cranor as Treasurer of the Gunnison County Fire Protection District Board. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Minutes:

The minutes from the April 17, 2025 regular meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to approve the March 20, 2025 regular meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Smith voting for quorum.

IV. Financial Report:

Cowan presented the financial report through April, 2025. Cowan advised the Board that the interest earnings and purchase card statement information is not included due to the early date of the May meeting. Stoeber asked about the heavy equipment line item. Cowan stated that Heavy Equipment is Capital Outlay with a separate repair and maintenance line item. Cowan handed out a banking structure sheet, showing the location of District funds. Cowan proposed closing 4 accounts at Gunnison Savings and Loan (Checking Capital Improvements, MM Reserve Fund, Savings General Fund and Savings Capital Improvements) and moving those funds into the Gunnison Savings and Loan Checking General Fund. This would simplify the accounting and bill paying process. Cowan further suggested moving some funds from the Checking General Fund into ColoTrust MM General Fund to take advantage of that interest. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to approve Cowan to make the presented changes to the District's bank accounts. Motion passed unanimously. A second motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to approve the financial report. Motion passed unanimously. Cowan advised the Board that authorized signers need to be changed. Checks require signature from two of the four approved signers and Cowan would like the authority of signer and control contact for ColoTrust ACH ONLY to make moving funds at the Board's request easier. Current signers are Dennis Spritzer, Walt Cranor, Hugo Ferchau and Tom McDonough. Stoeber still has some permissions as the previous accountant. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to remove Dennis Spritzer and Tom Stoeber as signers, add Heath Smith to all needed accounts and Ben Cowan to the ColoTrust ACH account. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Bills:

Cowan advised that the bills are being paid weekly and are a part of the financial report. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to approve payment of the bills. Motion passed unanimously. Going forward the Financial Report and Bills will be one agenda item.

VI. Correspondence:

A. Letter of resignation from Dennis Spritzer. Read aloud by D. Ferchau.

VII. Old Business:

A. **Board Bylaws:** H. Ferchau advised the Board that he was waiting until new Board was seated. Kendall stated that he and H. Ferchau had been busy with the City/District IGA's. They will start work on the new Bylaws.

B. **Election – Mil Levy Increase/New Station (November, 2025):** H. Ferchau handed out copies of some rendered drawings of the new fire house from Neenan. H. Ferchau advised the Board that since they don't have solid information from the hospital or that County regarding the Dollar Tree building or the back lots they asked Neenan to look at the properties currently owned by the District (City). They will come back with all the pricing information by June 17, 2025 and H. Ferchau would like to do a combined meeting with District and City to review this information 6/17/25 at 3pm. H. Ferchau advised the Board the he filed an intent to be in the November Election with County Elections. Amanda has been talking with Matthew Birnie, the County may not go to the ballot in November for road taxes, they may pull back so fire and county aren't on the same ballot if the fire department is willing to not go back to the voters in 2026 if the issue fails in 2025. H. Ferchau reported that they have hired an appraiser for the Dollar Tree building to be ready to make an offer. Smith asked Stoeber if he would be open to continue these

meeting as a Board member with Cranor for continuity since he has been involved in the process from the beginning. Stoeber accepted the appointment to that committee.

VIII. Chief's Report:

- A. H. Ferchau reported that the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event was on April 25th and 26th and went well. The costs for this event have increased greatly, last event was \$35,000 and this year the cost will be \$70,000. The County is asking the City and District to contribute \$5,500 each towards this event. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to approve payment of \$5,500 contribution to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event. Motion passed unanimously. H. Ferchau advised the Board that there was an incident at the collection event with Hydrofloric Acid that was brought in and spilled on one of the chemists. They had an antidote there so the spill was not catastrophic. Now that we know there is Hydrofloric Acid in the valley he has purchased two tubes of antidote to have on hand.
- B. H. Ferchau commented that they have recently completed an in-house instructor training that was attend by Ricks, Randlett, Krytal Brown, Johnson, Francia, Bongiovonnie, Hoots and Ruehle. All passed the course and are now certified Instructor 1. H. Ferchau also advised the Board that Klingsmith was signed up to take a 1403/Live Burn class in Boulder. The instructor for this class contacted H. Ferchau and told him that he would rather come to Gunnison to do the training because he is ready to hand over the program and would like to train some Gunnison fire fighters to be instructor and proctors. This class is happening this weekend, H. Ferchau will instruct and McDonough and Brown will be proctors.
- C. H. Ferchau handed out t-shirt designs that the GVFD insignia committee have been working on this. Board like the ideas and advised H. Ferchau to move forward with making the t-shirts.
- D. H. Ferchau commented that the Gunnison Basin Wildfire Council recently meet. USFS is fully staffed with fire fighters but don't have the support team they have had in the past with recent cuts. They may be looking towards GVFD a little more for help and/or assistance and response from USFS may not be as fast if needed. The weather offices lost almost all their staff so spot weather may take a lot longer to obtain during fires. It is dry and the snow pack is much less and mostly already melted. McDonough advised the Board that they have Fire Fighter Type 2's willing to go out on National Dispatch and a Fire Fighter Type 1 that is working on their Engine Boss certification. Smith asked if there is a list of certifications that the Board could have. H. Ferchau stated yes, he will get that to Board members. Cranor asked if Jim Ramirez was still around. H. Ferchau stated yes, but his availability is spotty. H. Ferchau commented that Ramirez has made a website and app called 'Be Wildfire Aware' that is really good and beneficial to wildland fire fighters. Cranor stated that there has been good wildfire mitigation in Quartz Creek. H. Ferchau stated that is West Region Wildfire Council and Colorado State Forest Service working on mitigation.
- E. H. Ferchau advised the Board that they have been working on switching Work Comp coverage from Pinnacle to CIRSA and realized that Board member may need to stay with Pinnacle for the Work Comp coverage extended to them. Cowan stated he could talk with CIRSA about how the coverage works for Town Council.

IX. Deputy Chief's Report:

- A. McDonough advised the Board that two command vehicles are in service and they are still waiting on parts for H. Ferchau's truck.
- B. McDonough commented that the Ladder truck is in Ft. Collins getting a new escape ladder installed.
- C. McDonough reported that some new inactive members of the fire department have moved back home for the summer or perhaps longer.

X. New Business:

- A. Appointment of New Director: Kendall said the statute states the Board has the power to fill a vacancy. Smith asked if it could be done tonight. Kendall said yes, the District just cancelled an election which shows that there is not a big pool of public wanting to be a Board member. Board consensus was to appoint. H. Ferchau advised the Board that there has been interest from Rob Hughes and Hal Hearne. Hughes is here and still interested and H. Ferchau has not heard from Hearne regarding the subject for awhile. Cranor stated the Board should go with the one who has been showing up to meetings and showing willingness to be a Board member. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stober to appoint Rob Hughes to the Gunnison County Fire Protection District Board until the next election, May, 2027. The appointment was re aloud by D. Ferchau. Rob Hughes was administered an Oath of Office.

XI. Unscheduled Business:

- A. D. Ferchau advised the Board the the County Road 10 bridge opening has been delayed until 5/22/25 as Gunnison County Public Works Department is waiting on asphalt.
- B. Cranor advised the Board that the McCabe's bridge is being worked on but open to one lane traffic.
- C. Smith commented that CDOT is starting work again on the middle bridge, no closures during the day but one lane traffic at night.

XII. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.