

Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Minutes
Regular Meeting
August 20, 2026

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Heath Smith. Meeting was held upstairs in the meeting room at the Fire House.

The following board members were present: Tom Stoeber, Scott Frazier, Heath Smith, Rob Hughes and 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: Joe Ricks – Assistant Chief.

Others: The Neenan Company – Seth, Tim and Jordan

II. Minutes:

The minutes from the July 16, 2026 regular meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to approve the July 16, 2026 regular minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Report & Bills:

The financial report through July, 2026 was presented by Cowan. There were two payments that the Board needs to approve separate from the bill packet: Pitkin Volunteer Fire Department in the amount of \$12,000 and Rigging for Rescue in the amount of \$10,945. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Hughes to approved payment of these two invoices. Motion passed unanimously. A seconded motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to approve the financial report and payment of the bills. Motion passed unanimously. Stoeber asked what interest ColoTrust is paying? Cowan stated 4%.

Cowan advised the Board that acceptance of the 2025 audited financial statements were filed by the 7/31/26 deadline. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to accept the audit as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Correspondence:

None.

V. Old Business::

- A. Firehouse Design: Schematic Design Acceptance** H. Ferchau stated that this design is what we have been working on with Neenan. The schematic design is the basis of the design and progresses to construction documents. H. Ferchau commented that there may be some changes from the schematic design to construction design but that is just how the process works normally. Seth presented a printed set and a digital presentation. They are going with a precast structure with metal joists. Precast is more efficient for construction and is durable. The floor plans no longer include a basement due to the high water table in this location, which means that the mechanical and electrical rooms and work out room had to be moved. The proposed Dispatch area will evolve as the project moves forward. Cranor asked if Dispatch will help financially. H. Ferchau stated that would be a conversation with GHCETSA. Seth explained that they are doing a 4-pipe geothermal system with a supplemental boiler (90/10). They will be installing bores on either side of the apparatus bays tied to the mechanical room on the southeast corner of the building. They are also conducting some turning point studies regarding apparatus moving around the building. They are working with the City of Gunnison and Gunnison County about what the final lot lines look like. Tim commented that Pine Street will be rebuilt including asphalt, curb and gutter, lighting, etc. McDonough asked if they needed and info regarding apparatus? Seth stated they would like wheelbase and length information. As the process moves forward the budget is starting to take shape and coming out of more general information and is now \$22.8 million for construction, with a 10% contingency, design, etc., totaling \$30.4 million at this point, a reduction of \$5 million. Stoeber asked if the temporary building was included in these numbers. H. Ferchau said no. Stoeber asked if the new building has a flat roof and where the drainage of that roof is going? Tim stated that they will internally pipe into a main and both sides and then into the buried retention that percolates the water out. Stoeber asked if they were not worried about freezing? Tim stated no, they are not worried about freezing. Stoeber asked if the County has any more land to give for stormwater retention. H. Ferchau stated not to give but there was a conversation started about the potential for a retention pond on the county side of the fence that both fire and county would use. Right now, IF the ballot measure passes in May 2027 the timelines are as follows: February 2027 – finish up design, September 2027 – temporary building finished, November 2028 – construction completed on new fire house. Stoeber asked about the study comparing geothermal and boiler. H. Ferchau advised Neenan that it was an Energy One report. Seth will send one over. Tim stated he can get breakdowns on well costs as well. Stoeber clarified that Pine Street and the temporary building are the unknowns? Seth said yes. Tim commented that the powerlines in the alley need work and coordination (underground vs aboveground). Cranor was glad to see it has progressed this far and is less money. Stoeber asked if the training room is smaller. H. Ferchau stated not significantly, it is similar to the meeting space at the new library. Cowan had a call regarding ratings, if pass – hit the ground running and have funds early July. Cowan would be good to issue a reimbursement resolution at the next meeting so the District gets paid off the front end of the project. Board consensus is for Cowan to move forward. Cowan advised that he is hopeful to get a triple A rating. H. Ferchau stated that this can always be put in place and then revisit as the project moves forward.
- B. 2027 May Election Strategy:** H. Ferchau advised the Board that they are doing social media posts and have pushed back the first mailer to be sent out closer to the election. H. Ferchau reported that he has recently been presented with the

possibility of Gunnison Volunteer Fire Department being involved is a special program being run by CBS about Volunteer firefighters and the “forgotten” Colorado areas, Gunnison was the suggested department. Already in campaign mode.

VI. Fire Chief’s Report:

- A. H. Ferchau advised the Board that the wildfire season seems to be settling out. Going down to Stage 1 today.
- B. H. Ferchau stated that he has a budget prepared, very preliminary. Looking at an inflatable flat bottom boat, UTV, ropes, hoses, nozzles in 2027 and SCBA in 2028
- C. H. Ferchau reported that the department has been out in the community with the car show and pancake breakfasts.

VII. Deputy Chief’s Report:

- A. McDonough advised the Board that he and Brown went to the EVT academy – great training. Will use some of the information obtained to fix some issues with the super duty electrical.
- B. McDonough commented that crews are out on National Dispatch starting on 8/17/26 to the end of the month, locally.
- C. McDonough stated that the aerial inspection started Monday. Went ok but there is a wear block that is wearing fast. Inspector gave the information to Germany and they are looking at the third boom and the block will need to be replaced and cannot be done in our shop. This was the first truck to come out of Italy. Rosenbauer has been really good about covering the costs of the other repairs. This did not happen due to any operator error. This new inspector is very thorough.
- D. McDonough reported that they have put new tires on Brush29, Brush27 and Brush 28.
- E. McDonough clarified to the Board that since Chief 1 was hit by an uninsured driver our insurance paid initially to get the truck fixed and are now going after the driver at fault. The District had to pay the deductible of \$1,000.00 and there was a separate repair McDonough asked them to do while they had the truck that will cost \$800.
- F. Brown advised the Board that there will be an extreme delay in receiving payment for national dispatch rolls.
- G. Brown reported that the academy is starting 9/29/26 and will go through 11/19/26. This time it will be a combined academy with Crested Butte. Crested Butte has a new training Captain that is more in line with how Gunnison runs our academy. There will be 5 candidates from Gunnison and 4 to 6 candidates from Crested Butte.

VIII. New Business:

None.

IX. Unscheduled Business:

None.

X. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.