

Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Minutes
Regular Meeting
October 16, 2025

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 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, Tom Stoeber, Paul Morgan, 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: Not present.

The following firemen were present: Joe Ricks, Assistant Chief (left at 6.41pm)

Others: None.

II. Minutes:

The minutes from the September 18, 2025 regular meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to approve the September 18, 2025 regular meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Report & Bills:

Cowan presented the financial report through September, 2025. Cowan advised the Board to expect one or two rate decreases by the end of the year. Cowan further advised the Board that the invoice from Mountain West Insurance needs a separate motion for payment due to the amount. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to approve payment of the Mountain West invoice. Motion passed unanimously. Brown advised the Board that he has been in touch with the State regarding National Dispatch payment, gave them some clarification they were looking and provided needed paperwork so payment should be sent out soon. A second motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Stoeber to approve the financial report and bill statement. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Correspondence:

A. Taylor Canyon Volunteer Fire Department: Letter of request for funding in the amount of \$17,309.00. Stoeber stated that he does not feel comfortable paying for

property tax or accountant fees. Morgan agrees with Stoeber. The District has already purchased radios for Taylor. Stoeber commented that gear, radios, utilities are important. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Cranor to contribute \$7,500 to Taylor Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, which will be \$15,500 minus the cost of the three radios that have already been purchased. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Old Business:

- A. **Board Bylaws:** H. Ferchau stated there is nothing new to report.
- B. **Election – Mil Levy Increase/New Station (November, 2025):** H. Ferchau and Amanda are still doing presentations (GOP, League of Women Voters, American Legion, etc.) There have been a lot of questions about size and cost. A lot of what they have been doing has been clarification. There has been lots of support for the fire department and volunteers, just caution over a raise in taxes. The white books are out and have both Gunnison and Carbondale ballot issues in them which is a benefit to Gunnison because Carbondale runs about the same number of calls but has a paid department at a cost of \$8.9 million dollars annually. Moving forward, when the ballot issues pass the District will have to transfer land to the City, finish the IGA between the City and County for the back lots, then they can borrow money to start the building process. The Shop, Training Facility and New York lots are not a part of the land transfer. Stoeber commented that he attended the Rotary presentation and advised the Board the Hugo does a very good job with his presentation and answering questions. Smith had a question about campaigning rules for Smith and Hughes. H. Ferchau stated that because of their volunteer status they have to be careful, in plain clothes, don't tell people how to vote, just give the facts and make sure that the people you are talking to know you are acting as a District Board member. Morgan, should we regroup after the election or wait until the next meeting. H. Ferchau stated that they can wait to meet until the November meeting.
- C. **2026 Budget:** The budget is the same as was handed out last meeting. Full time Fire Marshal position is still in regardless of the ballot issues passing or not. The goal was to keep full time Fire Marshal position and volunteer and outlying department line items the same or better. H. Ferchau commented that he would like to see outlying department gear, radios etc. under one budget and the District outlying contributions be for operational support in 2027. Smith asked why the outlying department can't be included under Gunnison Fire. H. Ferchau stated that is the goal, jurisdiction is District and the outlying departments know that. Morgan commented that he noticed the wellness benefit line item is only using half the money budgeted. H. Ferchau stated that he hasn't sent many fire fighters recently due to schedules but there is still interest. This program has helped to identify half a dozen issues. Smith asked if Board members can partake in the program. H. Ferchau stated he would have to ask CSU because it is a study about fire fighter heart health. Smith would like to program to continue. Cowan advised that there will be some adjustments to the presented proposed budget where you will see just the District property taxes and loan payment will be paid by City.

VI. Chief's Report:

- A. H. Ferchau reported that they got the determination letter from the IRS and the department is officially 501C3.
- B. H. Ferchau stated that call volume has been a lot of car wrecks recently.
- C. H. Ferchau advised the Board that the department now has two Officers in Training that are taking call now.

- D. H. Ferchau advised the Board that he, McDonough and Tomlin will be attending the Chief's conference in Keystone next week.

VII. Deputy Chief's Report:

- A. McDonough advised the Board that they have completed pump testing and all apparatus passed no mechanical issues.
- B. McDonough commented that Rescue 21 sold on GovDeals for \$25,000.00 to Global Emergency Vehicles out of Pennsylvania.
- C. McDonough advised the Board that the Almont tender went to Colorado Fire Camp.
- D. McDonough gave the Board an update on the closing of the Sargent Volunteer Fire Department. The old City 1 that was sold to Sargents is back in the District's name and the skid-steer purchased by Sargents was sold back to the original owner so there is no equipment out there now. The funds from Sargents were donated to the historical society and the building used for the fire station turned back over to Saguache County. The State had a periodic report for 2024, but no report for 2025. The 5013C for the Sargents Volunteer Fire Department will be cancelled after 3 years of no reporting. District has no responsibility there. Smith asked if there is a plan for the old City 1. McDonough advised that it will just be stored at the shop for some future use. It will take some work to get back running, tires, ball valves, etc. but we know the history of this truck and would be good to keep it around rather than buying some unknown piece of used equipment. Doyleville area station, Brown has been talking with some neighbors and might be an opportunity to do something, details unknown at this point.
- E. McDonough reported that Academy is underway and they are doing an engineer class as well.

VIII. New Business:

- A. H. Ferchau commented that since the old Rescue 21 sold they need to discuss compensation for Hugh Cane. H. Ferchau recommended \$10,000 for a 6-day class which several member of the fire department attended. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to approve payment to Hugh Cane in the amount of \$10,000 for training. Motion passed unanimously.
- B. Morgan extended a thank you to the volunteers for fire prevention and being visible.
- C. Cowan advised the Board that the Fire Pension was submitted and accepted.

IX. Unscheduled Business:

- A. Smith asked about the status of job descriptions. H. Ferchau advised that he is working on them. The bylaws, job descriptions and employee handbook have been shelved by the election.

X. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Cranor to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.