Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Minutes
Regular Meeting
September 17, 2026

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Tom Stoeber. Meeting was held upstairs in the meeting room at the Fire House.

The following board members were present: Tom Stoeber, Scott Frazier, Rob Hughes and Walt Cranor.

City Accountant present: Ben Cowan

Board Secretary present: Deborah Ferchau

Chief present: Hugo Ferchau

Deputy Chief present: Tom McDonough

Assistant Chief present: Not present.

Captains present: Tyler Brown

Board Attorney: Not present.

The following firemen were present: None

Others: Spencer Nicholl and Brad Bingman with Ohio City Volunteer Fire Department

II. Minutes:

The minutes from the August 20, 2026 regular meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Frazier to approve the August 20, 2026 regular minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Report & Bills:

The financial report through August, 2026 was presented by Cowan. Stoeber asked if the audit company specifically billed separately? Cowan answered yes. Brown advised the Board that he finally has access to the National Dispatch system and has billed $260,045.16 for wildland. The District will receive about $79,000 for apparatus use. Stoeber asked what line item the labor billing is rolling through. Cowan stated that it is a little behind. H. Ferchau added that the only firefighter that hasn't been paid is Bongiovanni. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Frazier to approve the financial report and payment of the bills. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Correspondence:

A. Ohio City Volunteer Fire Department funding request: Ohio City Volunteer fire department submitted a request for funding in the amount of $15,000 for operating expenses, bunker gear and medical supplies. A roster, and proof of

insurance was included with the request. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to approve paying the $15,000 request to the Ohio City Volunteer fire department for operating expenses, bunker gear and medical supplies for 2026 pending receipt of training schedule. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Old Business::

A. **Firehouse Design:** The geothermal report has been sent to the Board. Stoeber stated that he has read through the report and the 50-year cost is the bottom line and does answer questions of why we are doing what we are doing. Stoeber does not believe the District will receive any Federal credits and further commented that 42 bores for geothermal will be pretty tight on the site of the new station. H. Ferchau commented that they have been discussing use of city street and fairgrounds initially, but all bores will fit on the property slated for the new fire station build. H. Ferchau advised that Board that they are moving on with design plans. Jodie with dispatch is working on numbers with GHCETSA and making a list of needs for the potential Dispatch space within the new fire station. H. Ferchau stated that they are moving forward with the general idea of office spaces rather than a big blank space and possibly more rent revenue. Board consensus agrees with how things are moving forward. Infrastructure needs to be there for separate use that does not affect fire department and firefighters. Stoeber asked how far we are in paying for design and construction documents? H. Ferchau answered about a third, construction documents should be completed by the end of January.

B. **2027 May Election Strategy:** Nothing new to report at this moment. Still posing on Facebook.

VI. **Fire Chief's Report:**

A. H. Ferchau advised the Board there was a big call on Labor Day. Very complex extrication call, vehicle on fire. One fatality. Keeping an eye on the young fire fighters on the call.

B. H. Ferchau advised the Board that the Save the City of Gunnison Facebook posts are now dragging himself and the District budget into their comments. H. Ferchau advised the Board that he is absolutely willing to answer any questions from anyone, they just have to contact him. The accusations and information being put out by this group are generally not true or lack context.

VII. Deputy Chief's Report:

A. McDonough advised the Board that the aerial is still out of service. He is waiting on Rafeal out from Germany to reinspect. All arrows are pointing to a manufacturer's defect and Rosenbauer will handle repairs and costs. Gunnison Volunteer Fire Department has not done anything inappropriate with the truck to cause the problems. Stoeber asked if the ladder truck is still under warranty. McDonough stated yes.

B. McDonough reported that they are upfitting the F250's electronic filters.

C. McDonough commented that pump testing is going well.

VIII. Assistant Chief's Report:

Not present

IX. Captain's Report:

A. Brown stated that National Dispatch was good this season, they primarily stayed local and had good opportunities for networking. Larsen qualified as IC Type 5 and Dobie and McDonough received their Faller 2 certifications. Stoeber said thanks for everything.

B. Brown advised the Board that some fire department members have been in a drone training class this week that was taught by some highly qualified military personnel brought in by the City Police Department. The class is headed to Grand Junction to test to obtain their drone pilots license. This is a great base level certification and the drones are registered. This will make it easier for the fire department to fly drones in emergencies.

C. Brown reported that they will start another academy in two weeks. There are seven (7) candidates for Gunnison Volunteer Fire Department, one (1) from Taylor Canyon Volunteer Fire Department and four (4) from Crested Butte Fire Department. This is a combined academy with the training officer from Crested Butte. Academy will run through 11/19/26.

D. Brown commented that they will have a Hazmat course in January.

X. New Business:

Budget: H. Ferchau gave a quick overview and advised that revenues are slightly down. Cowan reminded that Board that they are under a new revenue limitation, so he will be working on what that will look like for the District. Cowan stated that he is conservative on interest rates for investments. H. Ferchau advised the Board that he kept the funding for the heart program because Tiffany who started the program has opened a private practice to keep this program going even though CSU is no longer involved in the program. Cowan commented that contracted services from the City of Gunnison is based on set calculations.

Increases to the budget are in the following line items: Travel for training, Meeting meals, Dispatch fees, Book and software subscriptions, Schools and training, Election costs and Household hazardous waste collection event.

Pension Board contribution: The Pension Board is looking at contribution amounts and interest spent for pensioners. They have not changed the contribution amount in 20 years. Contributions used to be tied to what would get the most match out of the State. Currently both City and District put in $40,510 each. H. Ferchau stated that the pay out is about $290,000 annually. Cranor commented that he will be abstaining because he is a recipient. Stoeber asked how much of an increase they are thinking about? H. Ferchau stated that any increase would help and he doesn't know what the City will do if anything. The District can be separate from the City in their decision. H. Ferchau stated that a 3% increase each year over the past 20 years would have been a $35,000 increase. Hughes stated they need to keep up with inflation and increase the contribution to the Pension for the retired fire fighters. Stoeber commented the he is good with an increase but not in one lump sum and suggested a $20,000 increase to start with this year, but wants to make sure they are supported for what they have done.

Capital:

- National Dispatch - another UTV, trailer and outfitted (open trailer, no tracks) coming out of National Disptach, then it is deployable and not from public money.
- Flatwater boat (idea came about from the recovery of the helicopter pilot) no rush, just wanted the idea on the radar.
- Hose and nozzles - $35,000. We are 15 years into our hose program and this showed at hose testing this year.
- Drone with thermal imagining capabilities - $12,000.
- Extrication tools to keep updated with new vehicle construction that needs different tools to be effective.
- Replace FO2 – Tom's truck is 26 years old.
- Look toward adding an Engine 24 back to the fleet.
- SCBA is timing out and will need to be replaced in 2028.

Cowan advised that the City is still in discussions to establish personnel steps, grades and escalation factors. Most people are projected to receive a 2% inflator. H. Ferchau stated that the District will have to follow what the City does as in the IGA.

Cranor commented that this was a well put together and realistic budget. H. Ferchau further commented that the election costs are bringing us over.

XI. Unscheduled Business:

None.

XII. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.