

Gunnison County Fire Protection District
Minutes
Special Meeting
February 5, 2026

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: Tom Stoeber, Rob Hughes, Heath Smith and Paul Morgan.

City Accountant present: Not present

Board Secretary present: Deborah Ferchau

Chief present: Hugo Ferchau

Deputy Chief present: Tom McDonough

Captain present: Not present.

Board Attorney: Kendall Burgemeister

The following firemen were present: None.

Others: Amanda Wilson, City Manager

II. **New Business:**

A. **Survey Results – Magellan Strategies:** H. Ferchau received the results and passed them out to the Board. The results of the survey gave some very valuable information and showed a pathway forward. The results also showed that there are just some people that will not be swayed to vote Yes for a mil levy increase regardless of the reason. H. Ferchau advised the Board that they are looking at other funding options such as grants, sponsorships, etc. so maybe they don't have to rely on just property taxes alone. Education efforts will continue. Morgan stated that he felt there was miscommunication of incorrect information regarding tax calculations and he would like to see more clear and concise examples given to the public using general amounts like \$500,000, \$750,000, 1 million, etc. Stoeber stated that the Board needs to be very targeted and public, advertising in the paper, multiple times, stating we heard your concerns, we did a survey, giving more information and a contact number for the community to contact some to talk with directly and, DO IT NOW. Stoeber further stated that the Board should be in touch with the Assessors office to make sure that if the community contacts the Assessors office looking for information that the Assessors Office is answering calculation questions concerning only the District portion of their property taxes that would be affected by a mil levy increase. More information out, more often, videos, hire someone to do Facebook, webpage etc. Some people have commented that the fire department should be paid, but the community doesn't fully understand the actual cost of that or the full value of the volunteers. Heath asked Amanda if the City has

a PIO. Amanda stated they have a communications officer but the City may not have the capacity to take on the type of campaign being discussed, but they will still help support efforts moving forward. If we start right now we have a better timeline to educate much more prior to the setting of the ballot language. H. Ferchau suggested that maybe they don't think about 100 year building but maybe 20 year building. Morgan stated that no one sees the fire house in its current location so maybe we can save money by not having a good looking building and maybe talk phases as well as not 100 year building. Smith stated that he understands that there are possibly areas that can be scaled back on but there is definitely a need for a fitness center and sleeping quarters. Stoeber commented that if we are going for the May, 2027 election we have to start now, getting information out, hiring help, etc. Board consensus is to start looking for a PR firm and keep moving forward. Morgan suggested to get the new newspaper owner and staff to put something in the paper now prior to hiring a firm. Amanda advised the Board that the City has put a look ahead article in the paper in January that included the fire house. Kendall agrees with the Board that it will take education and down scaling to get the mil levy increase to pass in the District.

- B. Contract Award - Fire Station Design (Phase 2a):** H. Ferchau passed out a timeline regarding the fire station history and a path forward. By splitting the work into Phases 2a and 2b it opens up the opportunity to apply for a grant. H. Ferchau needs approval from the Board to continue with the grant application. Morgan asked if Neenan is the right company to continue forward with? Stoeber, Smith, Hughes, and H. Ferchau prefer staying with Neenan. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Smith that the District Board support the City of Gunnison in moving forward in signing Phase 2 service fees and approve H. Ferchau to pay \$482,000 to Neenan. Motion passed unanimously. Heath asked Amanda if City Council is still along the same thinking as the Board with moving forward and should Council and the Board meet again. Amanda stated they are and it would be good to meet again.
- C. Recommendation for City to submit DOLA Grant Application - Fire Station Design (Phase 2b):** H. Ferchau stated that the District is the entity that has access to funds needed for grant matching but the City is applying for the grants so there needs to be known District support for the City. A motion was made by Stoeber and seconded by Hughes in support of the City submitting a DOLA grant and the District will cover the match for the DOLA grant. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Unscheduled Business:

H. Ferchau advised the Board that the Colorado Emergency Management Conference is next week in Loveland and he and Amanda will be attending that conference at the bequest of Dana, DOLA representative. This conference deals with grants and other types of funding. They will also be meeting with Neenan.

IV. Adjourn:

A motion was made by Morgan to adjourn that meeting at 7:41p.m. Motion passed unanimously.