

**Gunnison County Fire Protection District**  
**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**April 16, 2026**

**I. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:46 p.m. by Tom Stoeber. Meeting was held upstairs in the meeting room at the Fire House.

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

City Accountant present: Not present

Board Secretary present: Deborah Ferchau

Chief present: Hugo Ferchau - remotely

Deputy Chief present: Tom McDonough

Captain present: Tyler Brown

Board Attorney: Kendall Burgemeister

The following firemen were present: Nico Randlett.

Others: Kyle Blakely, Avant Strategies (PR Firm) – remotely

**II. Minutes:**

The minutes from the March 19, 2026 regular meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to approve the March 19, 2026 regular minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Financial Report & Bills:**

The financial reports through March, 2026 were emailed to the Board. A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Hughes to approve payment to Public Alliance for the 2025 election mailing costs in the amount of \$10,672.00 Motion passed unanimously. A second motion was made by Hughes and seconded by Cranor to approve the financial report and payment of the bills. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Correspondence:**

None.

**V. Old Business:**

A. **Board Bylaws:** H. Ferchau reported that they did Lexapol to assist with creation of those documents. Stoeber asked if \$7,000 is a annual fee? H. Ferchau stated that the cost is \$7,000 this year and next and \$4,000 the next years. Lexapol provides procedures for law enforcement and fire departments across the state and keeps up with new things. Stoeber asked if Lexapol could assist the Board with their Bylaws.

H. Ferchau stated that he doesn't know that yet. H. Ferchau advised the Board that the initial quote when he first called the company was actually \$24,000 and he negotiated down to \$7,000.

- B. **Firehouse Education:** Kyle Blakely with Avant Strategies was present via zoom. Kyle stated that after looking at the number from the last election there are 167 no votes that need to be changed to the yes bracket. It is possible for second home owners that reside in Colorado to vote if they opt in. The Board needs to decide how much they want to pursue this audience. Some questions asked by voters were will the increase get a fire truck to my house faster, is there a financial benefit or not an unfair burden, are you being fiscally responsible. Kyle suggested that a general chart showing the financial affect to the voters be created so they do not have to calculate how the mil levy increase will affect them.

5 supporting themes were suggested:

1. The current fire house building is failing;
2. Having volunteers is an extreme advantage;
3. Firefighter health;
4. 100 year investment;
5. Community unity.

Who were talking to:

1. Persuadable District residents (primary);
2. Colorado registered second homeowners (opportunity);
3. Outer District residents (secondary);
4. Committed no voters (no).

How we reach them:

1. Community events;
2. Presentations to organizations;
3. Direct mail;
4. Facebook;
5. Local newspaper;
6. Public meetings and open houses;
7. Project website.

13-month campaign timeline:

- Phase 1 - Discovery and Strategy;
- Phase 2 - Awareness and Education;
- Phase 3 - Pre-Ballot Intensification;
- Phase 4 - Final Push and Election.

This campaign is winnable!

Stoeber suggested to include that the new EMS building is NOT FIRE, and create a cost comparison with this building. Kyle, higher safety and security construction for fire houses, held to a higher standard. H. Ferchau stated that he has asked CJ for those numbers and he is working on that. Hughes asked for clarification regarding second home owners being able to vote if they opt in. Kyle stated it is only for second home owners in Colorado that are registered where they live. No out of state second home owners are allowed to vote in Colorado. Kendall asked if we are having a May or November election. Kyle advised that there is no coordinated election in May, so the District would have to administer the election. Kendall asked

Kyle if he had any relative information for Tabor issues passing in May or November. Kyle sated no but can research that. Morgan stated that Gunnison County Fire Protection District is often thought to be Gunnison County and we are not associated with them. Kyle wants to makes sure that all aspects of what the fire department does are shown. Kyle is putting together an election budget and putting together a talking points and frequently asked questions document. Kyle needs the Board to think about who the spokespeople should be.

Stoeber suggested that information is put on Instagram as well as Facebook. He further suggested that videos be taken of the fire department while training at the training facility and posted on Facebook. Stoeber would also like to run an add in the newspaper to the community advising them that the District Board heard their concerns but are still pursuing this project with that information in mind. Kyle that message can be at the front of every presentation and then in the paper closer to the election. Kyle further suggested that earlier next year they put out an annual report of everything the District did in 2027, calls, training, expenses, etc. Kyle left the meeting at 7:24pm

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

- A. H. Ferchau advised the Board that the design workshops on 4/1 and 4/2 went well with good feedback.
- B. H. Ferchau stated that he will be working with Dana from DOLA regarding what our presentation should look like for the grant.
- C. H. Ferchau reported that Fire Fighter 1 testing was last week. I went very well and all the candidates passed.
- D. H. Ferchau advised that there has been another Fire Commission meeting. The big concern at this meeting is the potential severity of the upcoming fire season. Six wells have dried up in municipalities, and finding water to fight fires with could be a problem. There is also the prediction of a Super El Nino that could bring floods after fires. FEMA has rejected the appeals for assistance for the floods in Pagosa Springs and the fires in Craig. H. Ferchau advised the Board that this is a first, and may be a sign that there will not be any financial assistance coming from the Feds. H. Ferchau stated that the State Legislator tried to delay the approval of the Resiliency Code but that attempt failed, so they are looking for more jurisdictions to start to adopt the code. They are putting together a team to travel around and educate entities regarding this code. They are also making sure everyone is on the surfs this year so we know what resources are available in the State. Insurance IBHS wildfire prepared home program and senate bill is talking about how they can help make sure that people can get insurance around the State.

**VII. Deputy Chief's Report:**

- A. McDonough advised that they have attended 2 OP meetings. Both went well. The State has a lot of resources but will probably be heavily competed for. Mutal aid agreements are good. Manpower and apparatus and fast attack will be key this year. Moisture content is low and will take awhile to become wet. Stoeber asked if there will be a fire ban?? McDonough stated they are looking at the data and having discussions regarding this very thing. Gunnison Basin Wildfire Council will start meeting every Wednesday to keep an eye on the situation. No restrictions are currently in place, but every burn should be called into Dispatch. The fire department is educating the public of when to burn, how to be safe, etc.

**VIII. New Business:**

Nothing.

**IX. Unscheduled Business:**

A. Morgan stated that he has talked to Smith, H. Ferchau and Stoeber and read aloud his letter resigning from the Gunnison County Fire Protection District Board. He is proud to have served with the current Board members and staff. He is in support of a new fire house but feels that everyone needs to be on the same page. He personally cannot back the fire house project due to restrictions placed on acquiring the back lots. The District needs five Board members that are all on board. He wants the fire house to pass and is not campaigning against the new fire station. He also still wants to be a part of the GVFD Swift Water team. He doesn't want to be detriment to moving forward with the fire house. Cranor said thank you for the honesty but he doesn't want to see him leave. Stoeber stated that he appreciated Paul as a Board member and his honesty and welcomes his support in the ways he can offer it in the future. Kendall advised the Board that Morgan's letter makes his seat available immediately. The Board will need to proceed with an appointment of a new Board member to finish out Morgan's term and if they are not able to appoint a new Board member in the next 60 days, technically the BOCC can appoint.

**X. Adjourn:**

A motion was made by Cranor and seconded by Morgan to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.