

Ridgway Fire Protection District
Regular Meeting
March 17th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm by Board Chair, Christen Williams, at the Ridgway Fire Department located at 251 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. Also, in attendance were Board members Pam Kraft, Terry Schuyler, Jamie Gomez, and Adam Johnson; ex-officio Board member Chris Bolane; Chief Chris Miller; and Legal Counsel Bo Nerlin.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA INCLUDING ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

Williams added a discussion of upcoming board vacancies and Schuyler added a discussion regarding an upcoming Battery Safety Training. Both line items were added under *New Business*.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

❖ MOTION by Schuyler to approve the 2/17/25 minutes as presented. SECOND by Kraft. ALL IN FAVOR.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT

❖ MOTION by Kraft to approve financials as presented. SECOND by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

Board update on the Chief's Evaluation Document

Bolane reported that a draft evaluation is in progress and will be reviewed with the Captains. The evaluation includes approximately 50 to 60 ranked statements along with an open feedback section. As suggested by Johnson, Bolane confirmed that the process incorporate a self-evaluation by the Chief. Schuyler suggested drawing from models used by organizations like SMPA in the future, which focus on annual goal setting rather than traditional performance evaluations. The board discussed the importance of gathering input from EMS personnel and potentially including survey responses from volunteers to ensure comprehensive feedback. Bolane noted that he hopes to have the surveys completed by the April Board meeting. No action was taken.

Continued discussion of the new SMPA rate structure and update of actions taken to mitigate electrical usage

Williams stated that, per the District Administrator, we have implemented several measures to reduce peak electrical usage. These measures include the installation of breaker monitors, timers on truck outlet power supplies that disable during peak hours (4 PM to 9 PM), timers on air compressors to stagger their operation, and motion-sensor lighting throughout the building. The board discussed the advantages of switching to the Time-of-Day Peak Rate structure, particularly due to Ridgway's solar capabilities. It was noted that this rate would allow higher credit returns on solar-generated power and may be the most beneficial long-term. Williams requested the District Administrator reach out to San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) to schedule a formal review of rate options prior to May.

Continued discussion on a potential District newsletter and coordination with OCEMS Community Outreach Coordinator, Cat Lichtenbelt

Williams noted that there are no updates regarding a potential District newsletter or coordination with Miss Lichtenbelt. The board discussed establishing a monthly rotation for board members to contribute content to a quarterly newsletter. Members expressed that, although no one is eager to write, a scheduled rotation would ensure consistent content development. Standing sections could include past and upcoming events, with each

board member contributing a short update. The goal is to build content steadily for use in quarterly issues. No action was taken at this time.

Update on the Verizon equipment decommissioning on and in the building

Williams stated that, per the District Administrator, Verizon has announced plans to decommission their equipment from the firehouse but has not provided clear instructions or a timeline. Nerlin offered to draft a formal letter requesting both payment and coordination of equipment removal. The board acknowledged that Verizon may be unresponsive but agreed to proceed with the formal notice.

Update on building repairs from January's water main break and flooding

Chief Miller reported that the insurance claim related to January's water main break has been finalized, and a reimbursement check is expected. Repairs are scheduled to begin soon. No action was taken.

Update on the progress of the sale of the Trail Town property

Williams stated that an update from Charles Mueller on the Trail Town property sale noted that although there has been online interest, there have been no formal offers. The commercial land market remains soft, and the board will continue to monitor activity. No action was taken.

CHIEF'S REPORT

In addition to providing a year-to-date incident report, Chief Miller shared the following:

- The District has completed 80% of its assessed equipment valuation and 45% of its turnout gear inventory.
- Two Ridgway wildland firefighters are currently deployed to incidents in Texas, one in Fredericksburg leading a strike team, and the other in Childress.
- Two additional Connex storage containers have been ordered for the training compound to help organize gear and resources.
- A new voluntary shift calendar is now in place, encouraging members to commit to at least one evening shift per week, from 6 PM to 6 AM. This effort aims to address the decline in average call response, which currently stands at 2.33 responders per call. The department hopes to increase consistency and preparedness by providing a structured schedule.
- Several notable calls occurred in March as are listed on the provided incident report.

NEW BUSINESS

Board review and discussion of an Intergovernmental Agreement Establishing Ouray Fire Protection District Authority

The board discussed a redlined draft of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) aimed at establishing a unified fire protection authority between Ridgway FPD, Log Hill FPD, Ouray VFD, Ouray FPD, and Ouray County EMS. Nerlin stated that the IGA is still in draft form, and each board is in the process of reviewing and providing feedback. The proposal seeks to enhance cooperation and efficiency by forming a central authority, while preserving the autonomy of each participating district. Ridgway Fire Protection District would retain its own identity, budget, and property, but dedicate a portion of its resources to support the authority's operations. Each district would appoint a board representative with full voting power.

The board acknowledged that while the IGA would allow for shared staffing and resources, significant concerns remain regarding the formula for financial contributions, fair representation, and the integration of volunteer personnel. Both Nerlin and Miller reiterated that the goal is to create a scalable solution that improves response times and training coordination, while opening the door to future consolidation if proven successful. Williams

emphasized the importance of understanding the full implications before committing, and the board agreed to share Ridgway's redlined draft with partner agencies to continue the collaborative process.

Discussion of upcoming board vacancies

Jamie Gomez indicated a willingness to remain on the board if there are no other qualified candidates. Adam Johnson announced that he may retire from active fire service and expressed an interest in continuing to serve as a board member. The board discussed the possibility of reappointment and noted that the self-nomination deadline may have already passed. Nerlin will confer with the District Administrator and confirm eligibility and nomination status for upcoming appointments.

Battery Safety Training

Schuyler informed the board of upcoming battery safety training focused on EV systems and stationary battery installations. This training is being developed through EcoAction Partners and will be especially relevant for fire, EMS, and utility personnel. Ridgway's proximity to a planned \$2.5 million container-sized battery installation underscores the importance of ensuring readiness. Schuyler will continue to share information as it becomes available. No action was taken.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

❖ MOTION by Kraft to Adjourn. Second by Schuyler. ALL IN FAVOR.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:23.

Next meeting date is scheduled for 4/21/25.

Respectively submitted,

-Katy LaSala